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ANU KOIVUNEN

Performative Histories, Foundational Fictions

Gender and Sexuality in Niskavuori Films

Studia Fennica
Historica

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Gender and Sexuality in Niskavuori Films

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List of Contents

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS 9

INTRODUCTION: PERFORMATIVE FRAMINGS, FOUNDATIONAL FICTIONS 11
Prologue: from Niskavuori to Tara 11
Public fantasies across the cultural screen: questions and aims 11
Exploring the "given-to-be-seen": the theory 14
Performativity and film studies: the background 19
Interpretive framings, narrative images: the method 24
The roots and routes of Niskavuori: the intermedial framework 32
The sites of framing: the research material 40
Outline of the book 45

THE ARCHIVE – NISKAVUORI AS HERITAGE AND HEIMAT 49
Anathema to history? Niskavuori films in the televisual age 53
Versions of history 54
Television as a history machine 60
A heritage experience: Niskavuori (1984) 64
The making of national cinema 67
Museum aesthetics: simulating heritage 71
Remembering Heimat: post-war Niskavuori films 80
History or memory: Niskavuori Fights (1957) 82
Blut und Boden: Aarne Niskavuori (1954) 88
Picturing the homeland: Loviisa (1946) and Aarne Niskavuori (1954) 94
Heimat as history and memory 101
In the beginning there was history 105

THE MONUMENT-WOMAN: MATRON, MOTHER, MATRIARCH, AND MONSTER 113
A modern monument to tradition: *The Women of Niskavuori* (1938) 118
The power and persistence of tradition 119
The secret warmth underneath 124
Monumental, memorial, museal – modern 129
The monumental "Finnish woman" 132
The making of the monument, or becoming-a-woman in Loviisa (1946) 134
The "Finnish woman": peasant, national, and feminist 144
Mother Earth: Aarne Niskavuori (1954) 153
Matriarch and monster: deconstructing the monument in the 1950s 162
Cornerstone of the propertied class 163
Masculine women, pathological "(s)mothers" 166
Power-figures and she-devils: Louhi, Loviisa, and Heta Niskavuori (1952) 174
From doubling to splitting: postulating authorial intentions 179
A rye dynasty: matron or mafioso? 181
Parodic reiterations: Pohjavuorelaisia (1972) 188
Seductions of the monument 192

THE MAN-IN-CRISIS: FROM THE WEAK MAN TO THE SUBJECT OF HISTORY 195
Protect the Finnish man! Aarne and Juhani Niskavuori in the age of television 199
The unhappy Oedipus in The Women of Niskavuori (1938) 213
Half peasant, half gentleman 220
The sovereign man: Tauno Palo as the spectacular lover . . 225
Rehabilitating manhood: The prodigal son and the missing father 232
Niskavuori is a male tragedy! 234
Akusti as the missing father 235
The Subject of history: The narrative re-focalization in the 1980 241

SEXUAL POLITICS: PASSION, REPRESSION, AND TRANSGRESSION 247
Reading against the grain: reading repression in the 1990s and 1980s 249
The decades of innocence and the stubborn drive . . 254
The gendered and classed grammar of nation 262
Malviina 263
Siipirikko, the Broken-Winged 268

Steward. 270
The first reception: The Women of Niskavuori (1936, 1938) and the cultural crisis 273
A drama of ideas or a marital drama? 276
A new woman 281
The hysterical wife. 285
The fallen peasant and other scandals: re-viewing the censorship debate 291
Appropriating censorship. 292
The lure of lyricism, or the cinematic sex appeal . . 297
Passion without politics? Readings of Niskavuori as soap opera. 310
Haunting signatures: framing the authorial legend. 313

RE-CITABLE LEGACIES, MELODRAMATIC PLEASURES 316
Re-citable legacies 319
Melodramatic pleasures 322

BIBLIOGRAPHY
Primary research material 325

Appendix 1: Niskavuori films (1938—1984) 354
Appendix 2: The Niskavuori story on radio and television (1945–2000) 356
Appendix 3: Niskavuori plays in theatres (1936—2000) 359
Appendix 4: Review journalism and articles in newspapers, popular magazines and trade press. 363
Appendix 5: Archival sources (trailers, posters, programme leaflets, pr-material). 406
Appendix 6: Other published material on Hella Wuolijoki and Niskavuori plays and films. 408
Appendix 7: List of audiovisual citations 413

INDEX 415

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Helsinki, 26 June 2003
Anu Koivunen

Introduction: Performative Framings, Foundational Fictions

Prologue: from Niskavuori to Tara

> *"[Hella] Wuolijoki's important position in Finnish drama stems from the series of five plays about the Niskavuori estate and its passionate owners. The story of the women born out of the earth of Tavastlandia in [Central] Finland has its background partly in reality, in the history of the family at the Wuolijoki estate in Sahalahti, Finland. As drama, the Niskavuori epic represents the essence of the Finnish rural melodrama. The core of the story deals with a conflict between the fulfilment of duties and giving way for love. The story-line is built upon several generations of strong women who carry on their shoulders the responsibility of the estate, its people and its traditions while their men are absent.*
>
> *This [setup] goes against the grain of the mainstream melodrama in which the female character in the first place is seen and not heard. No matter whether the Niskavuori men are in the city escaping from their responsibilities or in public service, they always seem to be consumed by a craving for the unattainable. The women, in (…) turn, stay at home, immutably rooted in the earth, and lace up their corsets in order to face the day, and control their emotions, which can only be traced in the scant retorts and the skilful mimicry of the actresses."*[1]

With these eloquent words, *Nordic National Cinemas* (1998) introduces the series of seven Niskavuori films (1938–1984) to an international readership. The quoted paragraphs – and the mere presence of these films in this particular context of packaging national cinemas into comparable products – suggest that the films in question enjoy a special status in their country of origin. What is more, the book's description summarizes what in the Finnish context can be termed as the common sense of the Niskavuori films, pulling together several threads of their long-standing and continuing reception. *First*, the quote frames the films as anchored "in reality" as it connects them with the biography of the female playwright Hella Wuolijoki on whose five plays

1 Soila 1998, 62.

(1936–1953) the films are based.[2] Wuolijoki's persona, her family history, and political activism have always loomed large in public discourses around Niskavuori plays and films. In this quote, the biography is linked to a specific place and region, Häme (Tavastlandia), which is both the region where Hella Wuolijoki had relatives through her marriage, the narrative landscape of the Niskavuori family, and in the nationalist imaginings, a privileged locus of Finnishness since the early 19th century. *Second*, the quote frames the Niskavuori films in terms of gender history, anchoring them firmly in a woman-centred and feminist point of view. In implying a parallel between the fictional world and the history of Finnish women, it reiterates another common narrative offered since the 1930s, women shouldering the household burden while men worked (in forestry, on the railroad and in log floating companies) or waged wars. An emphasis on the distinctive "power" and "strength" of Finnish women is an inherent feature of this reading. The source of this narrative – and, by implication, also the origin of a specific gender discourse featuring "strong women" and "weak men" – is located within a past, pre-modern, agrarian world. *Third*, the quote employs mythological language and folkloric notions of genesis in characterizing the Niskavuori women as "born out of the earth of Tavastlandia" or as "rooted in the earth". Through these expressions, the quote enacts a reading of the films and characters as place- and soil-bound; it suggests that the representations be seen as more "authentic" or "essential", as less mediated or fabricated than some other representations. In addition, this reading evokes a folkloric narration. It establishes links to national mythology (the *Kalevala* as the Finnish "national epic") and, hence, implies that the story of the Niskavuori family not only retrieves the linear time of history, but also a mythical timelessness of repetition and monumentality. Indeed, the matrons of the Niskavuori farm are recurrently termed "monumental" and described through metaphors of trees and stones. *Fourth*, the quote places the Niskavuori films within the framework of melodrama and, thus, reiterates earlier readings of the Niskavuori saga in terms of affective impact, as well as recent readings of Niskavuori in terms of soap opera narration. Interestingly, there is no contradiction between the "realist" content (Niskavuori as history) and the melodramatic narration. In this reading, on the contrary, the melodramatic mode, i.e., the manner in which strong emotions are concealed yet visible as traces in camera movements ("scant retorts") or "skilful mimicry" [sic] appears as an essential counterpart to the history as it is articulated in Niskavuori films. Indeed, the melodramatic mode is a key element in this image of a Finnish mentality. *Fifth* and lastly, as the quote does not differentiate between the Niskavuori plays and Niskavuori films, but speaks of them as one, the films are framed as inherently intertextual or, rather, *intermedial*. In this respect, the quote also reiterates earlier readings: promotional publicity around films has referred to theatre productions, and theatre reviews have commented on films. For

2 In this book, I subsequently spell "Wuolijoki" following Hella Wuolijoki's own usage. In my sources, however both "Wuolijoki" and "Vuolijoki" appear, and when quoting, I follow the original.

almost 70 years, the story of the Niskavuori family has been "everywhere" in Finnish culture: in 168 productions in professional theatres, in thousands of performances, in innumerable amateur productions in summer theatres or theatre clubs, in seven feature film adaptations, in forty screenings on TV, in seventeen radio plays, in three television dramas, and even in a ballet. As a result, it has become virtually impossible to differentiate between copies and originals or to single out *one* text. In every singular production or reading, numerous others have been present.

The above cited quote, like any other discussion of the films, cites, repeats, and re-assembles an array of previous readings of the Niskavuori saga, which have been articulated, established, and recycled in countless advertisement slogans, promotional texts, stills, posters, trailers, film reviews, and scholarly commentaries since the 1930s. Over the past decades, these framings have, to varying degrees, emphasized a reality-effect (*vraisemblance*), cultural and national imaginary ("Finnish mentality"), regionalism (Häme), folkloric elements (connections to national mythology), melodramatic narration (desires, passions, repression), and the playwright and her biography (family history, political activism) as key interpretive matrices that account for the Niskavuori saga and explain its continuing popularity. In its final sentence, the book quote performs yet another important interpretive move; it refers to *Gone with the Wind* (Victor Fleming, 1939), one of the most famous Hollywood melodramas ever, and quite specifically to the well-known scene where the black Mammy (Hattie McDaniel) is dressing Scarlet O'Hara (Vivien Leigh). This intertextual reference is intriguing in many senses. It illustrates a pleasure taken in the films in question: it suggests that viewing Niskavuori films provides enjoyment comparable to that experienced when watching *Gone with the Wind*. In addition, it associates Niskavuori films with women's popular pleasures, implying that women, in particular, might enjoy the films. The reference is particularly interesting also because it, in fact, is an incorrect figure of speech, a *slip*; In Niskavuori, unlike in Tara, neither the waistline nor the underwear of the matrons is ever an issue – in the films, neither Loviisa nor Heta Niskavuori are ever shown to "lace up their corsets". They do tie up their aprons, but corsets they lace up only in the minds of audiences, the intertextually knowledgeable and imaginative spectators.

This kind of imaginary re-membering of images, this linking and layering of two separate texts, exhibited in the quote is, however, nothing exceptional in the history of the reception of the Niskavuori saga. Instead, it is a vital component of all reading and viewing as an activity of framing. Evoking intertextual frameworks (folklore, media, genre, and iconography) and anchoring films or images at specific discursive fields (gender, sexuality, nation, and history) are key mechanisms of this performative process, which can be termed interpretive framing. In this process, films are given significance in relation to other texts and in terms of cultural discourses. *Through* and *with* the legacies of these different interpretive framings, Niskavuori films are given meanings, watched, and talked about. And through the interpretive framings, Niskavuori films have become constituents of "the cultural screen" (Silverman 1996) and achieved the status of "public

fantasies" (de Lauretis 1999). Moreover, through the interpretive work, through reiterated readings, "Niskavuori" has become a sign that, in the cultural imaginary, articulates notions of history, nation, and gender. Like the frame around a painting or the edges of a book, the interpretive framings are not something external to the films – a coil or a coating to be removed in order to uncover "the film itself" – but constitutive of them as cultural artefacts.

Public fantasies across the cultural screen: questions and aims

> "It seems to me crucial that we insist upon the ideological status of the screen by describing it as that culturally generated image or repertoire of images through which subjects are not only constituted but differentiated in relation to class, race, sexuality, age, and nationality"
> Kaja Silverman 1992, 150.

> "Popular culture forms have the effect of something *deeply felt and experienced*, and yet they are *fictional* representations. (…) The narratives inscribed in popular forms and their scenarios or mise-en-scène, complete with characters, passions, conflicts, and resolutions, may be considered *public fantasies*."
> Teresa de Lauretis 1999, 304.

How do films, images, and narratives become coordinates for thinking about nation, gender, and history? How does a film, an image or a narrative become incorporated in what Kaja Silverman (1992, 1996) has termed "the cultural screen" or "the cultural image-repertoire", the realm of representations that enables and constraints how we perceive ourselves and others, how we read images and narratives and what passes for "reality" in any particular context? How does a film or a group of films operate as public fantasies, moving and affecting its viewers and functioning as a social technology and a discursive apparatus, to quote Teresa de Lauretis (1984, 1999)? In this book, I investigate these questions through a particular case of Finnish cinema: the seven Niskavuori feature films released between 1938 and 1984. The films include the two versions of *The Women of Niskavuori* (*Niskavuoren naiset* 1938 and 1958, dir. Valentin Vaala), *Loviisa* (*Loviisa* 1946, dir. Edvin Laine), *Heta Niskavuori* (*Niskavuoren Heta* 1952, dir. Edvin Laine), *Aarne Niskavuori* (*Niskavuoren Aarne* 1954, dir. Edvin Laine), *Niskavuori Fights* (*Niskavuori taistelee* 1957, dir. Edvin Laine), and *Niskavuori* (1984, dir. Matti Kassila). While the imaginary realm of "Niskavuori" is an intermedial construction, if anything, my focus in this book is on the films, and more specifically, their interpretive framings. Instead of reading the films as objects of textual or narrative analysis, I trace their "diachronic life" and their "post-origin appearances" (Klinger 1997) and attempt to take seriously the notion of film reception *in time*. Hence, I explore the historicity as well as the intertextuality and intermediality of meaning-making: the ways in which the films have been read and framed for further readings in contexts of cinema, television, theatre, and radio; in and through promotional publicity (posters, ads, lobby cards, publicity-stills, trailers, features), review journalism, and critical

commentary. In this respect, the two key concepts in this study are framing (Klinger 1994; see Derrida 1987; Culler 1983, 1988; Bal 1991; 1999) and performativity (Butler 1990a, 1993, 1997; Bhabha 1991; 1994a; Bell 1999), which both refer to the formation of cultural meaning not as a textually determined finality, but as a contingent process. Operating with these concepts as my analytical tools, I scrutinize the processes of citation, repetition, and recycling, which have sedimented the interpretive repertoires and matrices through which "Niskavuori" has become an apparently self-evident, stable, and quotable sign and vehicle for articulating meanings of gender, nation, and history.[3] In my reading, I not only trace the stability, continuity and sameness characterizing the cultural screen or the public fantasies, but also the instabilities, differences, contradictions and exclusions inherent in them (cf. Butler 1992; Silverman 1996). As in my previous work (Koivunen 1995), I approach cinema as inherently dialogical (Bakhtin 1981). Hence, my approach is informed by Richard Dyer's (1993, 2) astute guidelines for analyzing the "matter of images": "what is re-presented in representation is not directly reality itself but other representations", he writes and continues: "The analysis of images always needs to see how any given instance is embedded in a network of other instances". In my understanding, to explore what Dyer (ibid., 3) calls "the complex, shifting business of re-presenting, reworking, recombining representations", is to investigate the dynamics of the cultural screen or the public fantasies.[4]

In exploring the cultural screen as a national imaginary, as a projection of "Finnish gender","Finnishness", and "our history", I find Judith Butler's (1990a, 1993, 1997) account of performativity a compelling analytical framework.[5] In my understanding, Butler's notion of performativity as historicity enables a critical investigation of the "given-to-be-seen" (Silverman 1996, 122). With this notion, I refer to what seems to contain any reading of "Niskavuori": that which "goes-without-saying", the common sense form of nationalism-as-narrative (Landy 1996, 19; Layoun 1992, 411; Keränen 1998, 152ff), the massive repetition that characterizes the Niskavuori phenomenon and its habitual rhetoric of familiarity.[6] As "narrating the nation" (Bhabha 1990; 1994a) does not involve one, but many stories, the lure for

3 Cf. O'Regan 1996, 6, 145ff. Tom O'Regan has studied "Australian national cinema" in terms of socially meaningful "interpretative protocols", intertexts, and contexts which operate in the meaning-making processes. He has identified "repertoires" which, over time, have become "self-evident, and are un-reflexive, interpretative and creative norms" (ibid., 160–163).

4 One must mention, however, that Richard Dyer's approach lacks the psychoanalytic framework which informs both the notion of cultural screen (in Kaja Silverman's Lacanian reading) and the notion of public fantasy (in Teresa de Lauretis's joining of Gramsci and Freud). The emphasis on the mattering of representations is, nevertheless, a common denominator for all approaches.

5 Here I follow Tuija Pulkkinen (1993; 1996) who has suggested that nationality, like gender, can be conceptualized in terms of performatively constituted identities that enact and effect what they claim to express or be founded on. See also, for instance, Sneja Gunew (1996, 168–169) and Anne-Marie Fortier (2000, 5–6) who have investigated how ethnicity is constructed performatively.

6 Cf. Marcia Landy's (1996) argument on the melodramatic pleasures of repetition.

the investigator is to start *explaining* one story with another according to what might be called the hermeneutics of the nation. In this approach, the nation – be it imagined, invented, narrated, or not – is never at stake. On the contrary, the interiority of what counts as national or Finnish is over and again confirmed (Koivunen 1998). To avoid this lure, this sense of an overwhelming and self-explaining familiarity of the context, I take the massive repetition itself as my object of study and pose genealogical questions in a "Butlerian spirit", starting from the present, from the existing readings and framings and tracing their historical legacies. Even writing in a foreign language is a part of this project of "defamiliarization". In the case of the Niskavuori films, the question is not *whether* the films are *about* history, nation, or gender. On the contrary, these meanings are overt and explicit, attached to the Niskavuori saga in public framings since the 1930s. Instead, then, the question here concerns the repetition and its historicity, its contexts and dynamics. In my approach, I want to underscore dissonances and that which has been left unnoticed or concealed and, hence, to question that which appears as *mere* repetition, continuity, and sameness.

In a genealogical move, then, this book aims to show that what the films through their framings posit as the *basis* of representation – and, thus, as the origin of gender and nationality, i.e., the time and space of the nation – is, an *effect* of their representation (Butler 1993, 2). At the same time, this book draws attention to the fragility of that "basis" by uncovering "historicality" as an effect of repetition in time, by tracing the divergent meanings and by locating the unfamiliar and disturbing in the assumed familiarity. As Giuliana Bruno (1984, 50) has argued, "according to Nietzschean genealogy, what is found at an historical beginning is not origin but dissention or disparity. And questioning origin in light of genealogy is to open historical work to dissention, disparity, and contradiction."[7] While problematizing the notions of identity, home, and belonging, this approach takes all these concepts very seriously. The *force* of performativity is at issue here.[8] Even if the emphasis is on texts and the mode of analysis is deconstructive in spirit, my focus is on the oft-articulated and "deeply-felt" force, persistence, and compelling nature of the Niskavuori narrative. (Cf. de Lauretis 1999, 307; Landy 1996, 19.) As Andrew Parker, Mary Russo, Doris Sommer, and Patricia Yaeger write in their introduction to *Nationalisms & Sexualities* (1992), to suggest that a nation is "imaginary" does not "consign it to the category of (mere) fiction".[9] On the contrary, as Parker and the others state, "if it is a 'dream' it is one possessing all the institutional force and affect of the real." (Parker et al. 1992, 11–12.) Hence, a question addressed indirectly in this study concerns the long-standing popularity of the Niskavuori films. I assume

7 Bruno is, here, quoting Foucault (1977, 142) who in "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History" argues: "What is found at the historical beginning of things is not the inviolable identity of their origin; it is the dissension of other things. It is disparity."

8 On the Nietzschean and Foucauldian roots of the concept of force, see Butler 1987/1999, 180–183.

9 In fact, Benedict Anderson (1991, 6–7) develops his concept of "imaginary communities" in his critique of Ernst Gellner who draws a distinction between "true" and "false" nations.

that the popularity of a cultural product like film is dependent, to a large part, on the diversity and complexity of the issues it opens for discussion. The capacity of the film to engage its audiences, to touch them, and to move them is equally important. When examining the interpretive framings in this study, I also analyze the perceived compelling nature of the Niskavuori films and try to unpack the citational legacies from which the "binding force" and affective impact derive.[10]

Approaching the Niskavuori films from this perspective, I draw on three fields of study and theoretical discussions that are partly distinct, partly overlapping. First, my work adds to the 1990s proliferation of studies on the "popular European cinema" (Dyer & Vincendeau 1992; Eleftheriotis 2001), on "national cinemas" (Kaes 1989; Higson 1989, 2003; Landy 1991, 2000; O'Regan 1996; Street 1997), and on cultural identities and national narratives (Bhabha 1990, 1994a; Parker et al. 1992; Bammer 1994). While not aiming to be a book *on* national cinema, this study involves analyzing how and what in Niskavuori films has been framed for the nation building processes, how the Niskavuori films have been framed and cited as images of "our past", as indexical evidence of "where-*we*-come-from". Following Doris Sommer (1990), I investigate how the Niskavuori films have become "foundational fictions" and scrutinize the complex and conflicting attachments to and investments in "Niskavuori" as a representation of the nation. As I ground the Niskavuori films via their interpretive framings to specific Finnish discussions and phenomena, I attempt to reach beyond the national boundaries and to studies of other European cinemas. Even if the comparison remains a suggestion, I find it important to question the "indigenous" logic, the effect of interiority that a focus on "national cinema" often produces. To quote Andrew Higson (2000a, 36): "Is the national heritage ever really 'pure', or is it always to some extent a cultural collage, an amalgam of overlapping and sometimes antagonistic traditions, a mix of ingredients from diverse sources?" (Cf. Hayward 2000, 101; Higson 2000b, 67–68.)

Second, this study is informed by the "turn to history" which characterized film studies as an academic discipline in the 1990s, as well as by concurrent debates on cinematic meaning making and the agendas of film historical research (Bruno 1984; Gunning 1990; Staiger 1992; Stacey 1993; Klinger 1994; Shattuc 1995). On an imaginary continuum where textual analysis grounded in psychoanalytic theory represents one pole and an ethnographic or historical study of audiences the other, my study takes a mixed position. While I problematize the notion of reception and argue for a historicizing, intertextual, and intermedial approach to reception studies – inspired, in particular, by Barbara Klinger's (1994, 1997) and Jane Shattuc's work (1995) – I also engage with questions of meaning and with the legacy of critical theory and post-structuralism. While I explore the "cinematic uses

10 For the cultural construction of emotions, see Abu-Lughod & Lutz 1990, 1–23; Scott 1992, passim; Cvetkovich 1992, 26–44. On the construction of affect in 1990s costume cinema, see Pajala 1999.

of the past" (Landy 1996), I also trace the way films, narratives, and images themselves become signifiers of histories.

Thirdly and most significantly, my approach owes to feminist theorizing of gender, sexuality, and cinema, especially to the work of Kaja Silverman (1992; 1996) and Teresa de Lauretis (1984; 1987; 1999). Although their Lacanian (Silverman) and Freudian (de Lauretis) terminology will only surface in passing in my analysis, their insights into the mattering of representations, the centrality of visual culture, and cinematic representations for the construction of a popular imaginary and the cultural screen provide the *raison d'être* of the questions I pose. In her notions of cinema as a social technology (1984, 84–86; 1987, 2–3) and as a public fantasy (1999, 304–308), Teresa de Lauretis underlines the importance of considering films complex signifying practices, involving both cognition and affects. In the case of the Niskavuori films, then, one must explore how the framings have articulated not only meanings of the films, but also those of history, nation, gender, and sexuality, and, furthermore, how the films, the images, and the narratives have become their signifiers. Quoting Antonio Gramsci's writings on popular forms, de Lauretis highlights the power of fictional representations to have the effect of "something deeply felt and experienced" while they function as "matrices in which thought takes shape out of flux".[11] In emphasizing this connection between affect and meaning, de Lauretis, in my reading, meets Silverman (1996, 174, 221) whose notion of the cultural screen highlights the "representational logic" or the "representational coordinates" which, in the manner of Michel Foucault's (1972, 220) "discursive rules" or Judith Butler's (1990a, ibid., 151 n.6) "grid of intelligibility", guide our perceptions, what we see and what we make of it.[12] For this reason, one must study the interpretive work surrounding Niskavuori images and narratives: Which representational coordinates are used to frame the films, and how do they – over time – become coordinates for making meanings in other cultural texts? What are the connections between the Niskavuori films and the wide circulation of "Niskavuori" as a sign outside cinema or arts context? Finally, what kinds of "public fantasies", "coordinates", scripts, and schemes do the films, the images, and the narratives, as parts of the cultural screen provide and articulate?

11 Teresa de Lauretis (1999, 307) defines public fantasies as "dominant narratives and scenarios of the popular imagination" expressed in various cultural texts that "tell the story of a people, a nation, or a representative individual (Everyman) and reconstruct their origin, their struggles, and their achievements". She argues: "[T]he construction of a popular imaginary by means of cinematic representations, cinema's public fantasies, produces in the spectator structures of cognition as well as feeling, what Gramsci calls 'matrices in which thought takes shape out of flux," and these interface and resonate with the subjective fantasy structures of individual spectators."

12 "The screen or cultural image-repertoire inhabits each of us, much as language does. What this means is that when we apprehend another person or an object, we necessarily do so via that large, diverse, but ultimately finite range of representational coordinates which determine what and how the members of our culture see – how they process visual detail, and what meaning they give it." (Silverman 1996, 221.)

Exploring the "given-to-be-seen": the theory

> "[A] performative 'works' to the extent that *it draws on and covers over* the constitutive conventions by which it is mobilized. In this sense, no term or statement can function performatively without the accumulating and dissimulating historicity of force."
> Judith Butler 1993, 227.

In *The Threshold of the Visible World*, Silverman explores the domain of the visual in order to rethink the relationship between idealization and normativity. Reading Lacan, she summarizes an agenda for cultural change:

> "If it is through textual production, especially in its visual or imaginary forms, that the subject is encouraged to idealize certain bodily parameters, it can only be through the creation and circulation of alternative images and words that he or she can be given access to new identificatory coordinates." (Silverman 1996, 81)

While theorizing change, introducing history into the Lacanian model of the visual as an interaction between the gaze, the look, and the screen, and repoliticizing it, she (ibid., 131–135, 174, 178–179, 221) offers a new, historicized, de-essentialized and re-politicized theory of the screen as the cultural image-repertoire. According to Silverman, the cultural screen "encompasses the particular representational logic and range of material practices through which a given society at a particular moment in time apprehends something which is itself unchanging" (ibid., 174). She concludes:

> "The full range of representational coordinates which are culturally available at a particular moment in time constitute what I have been calling the 'screen', and those which propose themselves with a certain inevitability the 'given-to-be-seen'." (Ibid., 221)

The notion of "given-to-be-seen" is of particular interest in the context of the Niskavuori films. It captures the "it-goes-without-saying" quality that is so characteristic of cultural artefacts with a nation-effect. The sense of familiarity and self-explanatory logic is vital to narratives of belonging. Furthemore, the givenness is an effect of the massive repetition, a central feature of the Niskavuori framings.

As "representational coordinates" the cultural screen, however, is not something that just exists. Instead, the coordinates gain their "appropriatedness" through repetition:

> "And just as certain words suggest themselves to us more readily than others, because they are the currency of daily use in our society, so certain representational coordinates propose themselves as more appropriate frames through which to apprehend the world than others, simply because they are subject within our society to a more frequent and emphatic articulation." (Ibid., 221.)

In Silverman's own thinking, "given-to-be-seen" coincides also with another concept, the dominant fiction, which she has developed in her previous work

and which she in *The Threshold of the Visible World* characterizes as a "system of intelligibility" (ibid., 178–179). In this manner, she links her own work to that of Judith Butler (1993) and underlines the connection between power and the cultural screen: dominant fiction, in Silverman's formulation (1992, 16) is "what passes for reality in a given society". According to Silverman (1992, 16; 1996, 178), the dominant fiction is not "only – or even primarily" about conscious belief, but "involves, rather, the activation of certain desires and identifications". As developed in *Male Subjectivity at the Margins* (1992, 48), dominant fiction does not exist in abstract, but as discursive practices. As such, its closeness to the notion of the cultural screen becomes apparent. The concept of the dominant fiction focuses on the relationships between gender and power: according to Silverman, the distinction between masculinity and femininity is the most rudimentary binary opposition, the equation of penis (male) and phallus (power) its fundamental issue, and the family its most central signifier. (Silverman 1992, 16; 1996, 178.) While this core story reverberates with certain tendencies in the framings of the Niskavuori films, dominant fiction is not a key concept in this study. More importantly, Silverman herself develops the notion of dominant fiction in her re-reading of Lacan:

> "This system of intelligibility does not go unchallenged at the site of the screen or cultural image-repertoire. It figures there more prominently than any other system of intelligibility, but is often sharply contested by competing views of 'reality'. Indeed, I will go so far as to suggest that the screen conventionally consists not only of normative representations, but also of all kinds of oppositional and subcultural representations." (Silverman 1996, 179.)

Hence, the cultural screen encompasses both the dominant fiction and its contestations, both normative and oppositional representations. Furthermore, Silverman relativizes the transhistorical and universal nature of the dominant fiction:

> "Parts of the dominant fiction are in constant fluctuation, historically and culturally. Other aspects have much greater longevity and persist from one culture to another, even though they may be dependent for their survival on a perpetual reiteration, within which local variations inevitably find expression." (Ibid., 178.)

As such, the notion of the cultural screen as a temporality and a representational logic is instructive for my analysis, propelling questions concerning the construction of gender and sexuality in Niskavuori framings, in the same manner as the work of Judith Butler on performativity and citationality as historicity.

The notion of performativity entered feminist theory in *Gender Trouble* (1990a) in which Judith Butler famously argues, "[t]here is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender; that identity is performatively constituted by the very 'expressions' that are said to be its results." (Butler 1990a, 25.) Specifying her argument, Butler proposes that "sex" which is often postulated as the "biological", stable foundation of socially, culturally constructed and more unstable gender, is not to be understood as a "core" or "origin" of gender

identity but as "a performatively enacted signification" (Butler 1990a, 33). She claims that sex should not be understood as a premise, but as a postulation, an effect, and that she foregrounds an analysis of gender as a matrix, "a grid of cultural intelligibility" (ibid., 151 n.6). Her argument also exemplified an analysis of power as dissimulated effects, power appearing in this movement as something other than itself. (Butler 1993, 251 n.12; Butler 1997, 35–36.)

As for the theory of gender as productive and performative, Monique Wittig's influential article "One is Not Born a Woman" (1992, orig. 1981) with its critique of "sex" as itself a gendered category is an important source for Butler's thinking. For Wittig, as summarized by Butler (1990a, 115), language is "a set of acts, repeated over time, that produce reality-effects that are eventually misperceived as facts". Whereas Wittig focuses on language – the collective, repetitive, and continuous naming of sexual difference or the repeated positing of sex as the cause of gender that naturalizes them as "real" – as the domain of gender as power, Butler proposes that gender is constituted performatively by "bodily acts". She maintains, "the various acts of gender create the idea of gender, and without those acts, there would be no gender at all". These "acts and gestures, articulated and enacted desires" produce the gendered body as a truth effect of "a discourse of primary and stable identity". (Ibid., 136, 140.) In this manner, then, Butler introduces the notion of performativity as a way of questioning feminist identity politics; she criticizes understanding all actions – whether speech acts, bodily performances, or political choices – as expressions of a more or less stable identity, self or subject. Instead, she reconceptualizes gender as "punitively regulated cultural fictions", as temporal processes of repetition and "sedimentation", effecting identities "tenuously constituted in time". (Ibid., 140–141.)

Arguments that identities are unstable, construed as effects of representation and imbued with conflicts, are no news for feminist film scholars informed by psychoanalysis and semiotics (e.g., de Lauretis 1984; Penley 1988). In this field, the concepts of representation and fantasy have been used to undermine the issue of profilmic situation ("reflectionist model") and to promote anti-essentialist agendas. In addition, a stress on the affective power of representations is a familiar feature of "psycho-semiotics" (cf. "social magic" in Butler 1997, 153). However, Butler's emphasis on temporality, sedimentation, and historicity as fundamental features of *construction* makes her approach highly significant for feminist film studies. Her theory of performativity recurrently emphasizes *historicity*, even if this aspect has been mostly disregarded in subsequent debates surrounding Butler's work.[13] Performativity in her usage is an aporetic concept which highlights both historicity and potential for re-signification, both conventionality and instability, both regulation and trouble as the constitutive elements of gender

13 Katariina Honkanen also put forward this aspect in her paper "Temporality and historicality in theories of political agency: the case of 'butler-benhabib' in *Feminist Contentions* " presented at *Power, Ethics, and Feminism* -seminar held 8–9 December 2000 at the Centre for Women's Studies, University of Turku.

– no matter how stable, unitary, and common sense the cultural fictions seem (e.g., gender matrix). Here, instability does not equal de-legitimation or subversion. Instead, "constitutive instability" can be simultaneously both stabilizing and destabilizing. (Cf. Deutscher 1997, 31–33.) From the perspective of performativity, stability, sameness, and continuity are re-conceptualized as "semblances" (cf. Benjamin 1999, 486) – as dissimulated effects of power to be scrutinized in terms of critical genealogical investigation.[14]

In *Gender Trouble* (1990a, 140), Butler conceptualizes "the action of gender" in terms of performance like any "other ritual social drama" with references to Victor Turner and Clifford Geertz. In *Bodies That Matter* (1993), she again emphasizes is on "that reiterative power of discourse to produce the phenomena that it regulates and constrains" (Butler 1993, 2, 224ff). Here, the notion of performance is put aside as a "bounded act", as an act of will, while the notion of performativity is foregrounded as the key concept: performativity understood as "a reiteration of norms which precede, constrain, and exceed the performer" (ibid., 234; see also Butler 1995, 134–136).[15] Via this conceptual reframing, scrutinizing the workings of power and discourse, the three key aspects of Butler's gender theory, as I understand them, are highlighted: gender as a matrix, as a grid of intelligibility; identities as tenuous, temporal processes; and performativity as the both binding and productive power of discourse.

When discussing "the politics of performative", in *Bodies That Matter* and *Excitable Speech* (1997), Butler draws on J.L. Austin's speech act theory and on Jacques Derrida's (1988) critique of it. In *How To Do Things with Words*, Austin (1980, 6) introduced the notion of the performative in his study on utterances, which, instead of describing an action, themselves perform actions (betting, marrying, challenging, christening ships, posing questions, etc.). While Austin (ibid, 12ff) studied the "felicity conditions" of the successful performatives he termed "happy" and strove to distinguish between serious and non-serious speech acts, Derrida questioned these distinctions altogether. Whereas Austin (ibid., 22) excluded performatives uttered in theatrical or literary contexts as "parasitic" forms of language use,

14 On genealogy, see Butler 1990a, 5, 32–33, 147. Judith Butler draws on Michel Foucault's reading of Nietzsche's *On the Genealogy of Morals*. She reads Foucault's (1978, 92–93) notion of discursive power as a re-appropriation of Nietzsche's (1969, 77) notion of "sign-chain". See also Butler 1993, 223–224.

15 This shift in emphasis becomes even more clear when *Bodies That Matter* is compared to "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory" (Butler 1990b), published in an anthology focusing on performance arts. In this article, Butler reveals the ways in which theories of ritual social drama (developed by anthropologists Victor Turner and Clifford Geertz, but also by Richard Schechner) and "the theatrical metaphor" have influenced what she calls "conception of social performance (…) applied to gender" (Butler 1990b, 277–278). Neither here, nor in *Gender Trouble*, is J. L. Austin mentioned, whereas in *Bodies That Matter* and *Excitable Speech* his notion of performative utterances is central. Elin Diamond (1996, 4–5), Emily Apter (1996, 16) and Jon McKenzie (1998, 217–235) have discussed the relationship of Butler's theorization to performance studies and the shift in her thinking from performance to performativity. A useful summary of feminist understandings and critiques of Butler's notion of performativity can be found in Lloyd 1999, 195–213.

Derrida argued in his "Signature Event Context" (1988) that "parasitism", or citationality, is indeed characteristic of all acts. He maintained that no performative act would succeed "if its formulation did not repeat a 'coded' or iterable utterance" (Derrida 1988, 17–18). He introduced the notion of *iterability* (ibid., 7) as the condition of all communication. The concept emphasized the conventionality of all speech acts, but, at the same time, it underlined that there is an alterity, a difference (*itara* = other, Sanskrit) in every repetition (*iterum* = again, Lat.). In this manner, Derrida questioned Austin's (1980, 148) notion of "the total context" and the idea that a context can be exhaustively determined. (Derrida 1988, 14.) Instead, he emphasized the ability of all signs to break with their "original" or "prior" contexts:

> "[T]his is the possibility on which I wish to insist: the possibility of disengagement and citational graft which belongs to the structure of every mark, spoken or written, and which constitutes every mark, spoken or written, and which constitutes every mark in writing before and outside of every horizon of semio-linguistic communication. (…) Every sign (…) can break with every given context, engendering an infinity of new contexts, in a manner which is absolutely illimitable." (Derrida 1988, 12.)

For Derrida, then, while any "mark" can be repeated in another context, a context "is never absolutely determinable" or, rather, "its determination can never be entirely certain or saturated" (ibid., 3). The understanding of power implicated in the notion of performativity as iterability was at stake for Butler in reading of Derrida. This concept comprises both the power of conventions (performative acts as authoritative) and the promise of re-signifiability of acts (iteration is not mere repetition). As for theorizing gender and sexuality, the notion of iterability defies deterministic or functionalist understandings by emphasizing the power of performative acts to break with prior contexts or common usages, to enact unanticipated or uncalculated effects. From this perspective, all performatives are, at least partially, unhappy and infelicitous, and therein lays their political potential. (Butler 1997, 145, 15, 40.)

Butler's discussions of performativity as iterability in *Bodies That Matter* and *Excitable Speech* enhance the emphasis on historicity already evident in *Gender Trouble*. In her words, the notion of sedimentation refutes an understanding of temporality as "a simple succession of distinct moments" (Butler 1993, 244, n.8–9). Historicity for Butler is not the property of a context, but constitutive of all discursive practices: "It is not simply that discourses are located *in* histories, but that they have their own constitutive historical character", she writes (ibid., 282, n.7). In this sense, Butler (1993, 225) writes about performative power as *citational legacy*, which provides the performative acts with both "constitutive conditions" and "binding power".[16] The force of an act is seen to derive from this legacy: performative acts work through "the accumulating and dissimulating historicity of force". (Butler

16 As for her notion of historicity as legacy, Butler draws on Friedrich Nietzsche's *On The Genealogy of Morals*, Michel Foucault's *The History of Sexuality* and Paul de Man's *Allegories of Reading*.

1993, 226–227; Butler 1997, 51.) When gender and sexuality are analysed in terms of performativity, an *act* should not be understood as a deliberate, singular deed, a distinct moment. Instead, Butler argues, "every act is itself a recitation, the citing of a prior chain of acts which are implied in a present act and which perpetually drain any 'present' act of its presentness" (Butler 1993, 244, n.7).[17] Hence, an act is better described as a "nexus of temporal horizons, the condensation of an iterability that exceeds the moment it occasions" (Butler 1997, 14).

Thus far, I have endeavoured to link the notion of performativity to the notion of the cultural screen and to argue for its relevance for historical inquiry. In what follows, I discuss this concept in relation to film studies and for studying interpretive framings in particular.

Performativity and film studies: the background

To evoke a linguistic metaphor – such as that of performative utterance – in cinema studies at the turn of the 21st century is something like dancing through a minefield. The notion of the speech act as a linguistic metaphor, on which Butler's notion of performativity rests, risks evoking eternal debates among film theorists. In *Film Language* (1974, orig. *Essais sur la signification au cinema* 1968), Christian Metz investigated the linguistic metaphor, asking whether one could apply contemporary linguistics to the study of an assumedly "iconic" medium. Judging from the major English-language books and anthologies in the field today, Austinian or other speech act theories have only had a marginal status within film studies despite the long-standing interest in linguistics, which has characterized this discipline. For both Metz and his followers, the primary linguistic framework has derived from Ferdinand de Saussure. Unlike in literary scholarship, speech act theory has not become popular as a theoretical framework within cinema studies. In 1981, Joan Copjec (1988, 229) made a similar statement as she initiated her reading of two films by Marguerite Duras (*India Song/Son nom de Venise dans Calcutta desert*) by proclaiming a shift in film theory from "attention to the *enoncé*" to "concern for the *énonciation*", from "statement" to "speech act" or "speech event":

> "Attention to the statement alone suppresses the source of the statement, makes of it an object, a found or historical (or profilmic) object which seems to come from nowhere. Concern for the speech act or event, on the other hand, uncovers the presence of the subject, a point of view, of the statement, locates it in a present moment, a *context* of speaker and speech, rather than a historical, an apersonal past." (Copjec 1988, 229.)

17 In *Excitable Speech*, Butler (1997, 3) writes of the "moment" as "a condensed historicity" which "exceeds itself in past and future directions, an effect of prior and future invocations that constitute and escape the insistence of utterance". Cf. ibid., 45.

Citing Roland Barthes (1977, 114) who had, within literature, suggested a shift "from the purely constantive plane" to "the performative plane", Copjec noted that the distance between French linguistic theory and Anglo-American speech act theory (her terms) had not been examined by film theorists. As film theory "first formulated the profilmic as an *event*", she, however, believed that film theory did share "some common ground" with speech act theory. (Copjec 1988, 230.) While Copjec framed Austinian speech act theory for studying enonciation and the question of the subject, the most recent interest in speech act theory has emerged from an opposite camp, among film scholars grounded in analytical philosophy and cognitivist psychology (e.g., Allen & Smith 1997).[18] Their interest, in any case, is very different from Derrida's critical, deconstructive reading of Austin. So are uses of the notion of performativity as a subversive mode, as in Bill Nichols' (1994; 1996) work on documentary. In his usage, performativity is a qualitative category, evoked to signify productivity as transgression.[19]

Some theorists have argued (Brunette 1998, 91; Stam 2000, 184) that Derridean influence on film studies is the most evident in feminist and post-colonial work. Not surprisingly, cinema studies has used the Butlerian notion of performativity within feminist and queer-theoretical work.[20] In this field, however, the impact of this concept has been limited to readings of individual films that are thought to problematize gender and sexual identities (e.g., Brinks 1995; Straayer 1996; Foster 1998a & b; Gregory 1998; DuttaAhmed 1998, Pinfold 1998) as well as those that spark discussions of "spectatorship-as-drag" (Berenstein 1995, 40–44). In these cases, performativity is conceived as a special quality of *some* characters or performances. Also, films are sometimes seen as "using" identities "in a performative way" (Allen 1995, 74, 77), or performativity is linked to parody and drag as forms of feminist practice and "gender trouble" (Robertson 1996, 11–13; Straayer 1996, 29–30, 38, 174–176). In other words, performativity is understood as a textual or narrative strategy, as a quality of *some* films. Even Butler (1990b, 3) herself seems to invite this kind of approach when analyzing *Imitation of*

18 As a precursor, Noël Carroll's "Language and Cinema: Preliminary Notes for a Theory of Verbal Images" (1980–1981) deserves to be mentioned. He followed the incentive to map out "felicity conditions" by classifying the "constitutory", "warranting", and "facilitating" conditions.

19 In Bill Nichols' understanding, "performative mood" refers to "those aspects of the film that deflect our attention away from the referential claims of the text to the more expressive, poetic, or rhetorical dimensions of the text *per se*". For him, performativity is "an insistence on the expressive gesture itself" which "counters the ideological effect of a text" by heightening "our awareness of how referential meanings are themselves produced without entirely dispensing with the meanings so produced" (Nichols 1996, 60–61). In Nichols' understanding, therefore, performativity is about transgression; in *Blurred Boundaries* (1994), he writes how performative documentary "attempts to reorient us – affectively, subjectively – toward the historical, poetic world it brings into being" (1994, 99) and bursts "the contemporary prison world (of what is and what is deemed appropriate, of realism and its documentary logic) so that we can go traveling within a new world of our own creation" (ibid., 102).

20 In recent overviews of feminist film theory, interestingly enough, Butler's theory of gender is hardly visible at all (Thornham 1997; Kaplan 2000).

Life (Douglas Sirk 1959) as "a cultural site in which an 'example' of gender performativity is enacted".

My use of the concept of performativity, however, is significantly different. I propose that the theory of the performative is a methodologically fruitful framework for examining "public fantasies" like Niskavuori films and for investigating naturalized mentalities. When using the concept of performativity, hence, the aim of this book is not to engage in theoretical discussions started by Raymond Bellour (1975, 19–20) about the "unquotability" of the film text or to promote an idea of citationality as cinematic writing (Brunette & Wills 1989, 87ff). Even if performativity as iterability here refers both to the necessary condition of all utterances and to identifiable quotations, I understand, as discussed above, the concept first and foremost as a mode of *historicity*. While in many studies inspired by Hayden White the historicity of film has been discussed by focusing on narrative modes or tropes (e.g., Burgoyne 1991; Salmi 1993), I employ the notion of performativity to propose a different approach. I suggest that the historicity of film, i.e., its "reality-effect" (Barthes 1986, 139, 148), be understood as an effect of "repetition or citation of a prior, authoritative set of practices" (Butler 1993, 227; cf. Derrida 1988, 18). Citational practices are not only features of cinematic narration that reiterate conventions and cite established and recognizable discourses, performing history, nation, and gender, but they are also, and very importantly, features of its interpretive framings. Quite literally, both the Niskavuori films and their productional publicity and review journalism, not to mention their scholarly analysis, are constructed in terms of "citational legacy" (Butler 1993, 225); films cite plays or earlier films, and public framings draw on previous descriptions, characterizations, and receptions. As Homi K. Bhabha (1991, 91; 1994b, 203) underlines in his work of nation building, repetition must be understood as "doubling, imitation, mimicry, archaism" involving non-synchronicity and overlapping, conflicting temporalities.[21] In other words, I maintain that the persistence and force of "Niskavuori" as a locus of national imaginary derives from this "citational legacy" and, hence, from the history of its readings, from the diversity of meanings attached to it, from the accumulation of intertexts and contexts linked with it.

Interpretive framings, narrative images: the method

"*There is* frame, but the frame *does not exist*."
(Jacques Derrida 1987, 81.)

By examining the ways in which production-related publicity (posters, ads, publicity-stills, lobby cards, features, and trailers), review journalism, and commentary have framed Niskavuori over the past decades, I unpack the historicity of the Niskavuori discourse, the different historical meanings

21 See also Landy 1996, 19–21.

available for, located, and invested in Niskavuori films. In this sense, this book is neither about the films "themselves" nor about the "actual" audience responses. Instead, it is about the meanings produced for and attached to the films both in visual, audiovisual and verbal *framings*. It is about the readings performed in the public cultural sphere, in the discursive frameworks that have surrounded the films and their audiences at different points of time, constructing and mediating their encounters. I share the assumption of many cultural critics, reception theorists, and media historians that texts – be they written, composed, or filmed – become meaningful in a web of interactive relations between the texts and their contexts. (Cf. Bennett 1987, 71ff; Bennett & Woollacott 1987, 59–69; Staiger 1992, 211; Klinger 1994, xvi.) In this book, I work with the assumption that public framings provide one route for films to come into existence. For me, here, the film "in itself" is not an object of study. Instead, the attention is on the *frames* which, as Jacques Derrida writes in *The Truth in Painting* (1987, 9), are "neither inside nor outside" the work. In his words, the frames are not "merely around the work", but give rise to the work and, hence, are constitutive of it. While Derrida did not write about cinema explicitly, Peter Brunette and David Wills (1989, 103–105) argue that his writings on the image and, especially, on the frame – the question of what is inside and what is outside a work – are relevant to film studies. In their view, frame in cinema exists on many levels. On a material level, it refers to the borders of the celluloid strip, marked by the sound track and sprocket holes. In terms of projection, the frame is constituted by light and darkness. Furthermore, films are framed virtually by the real worlds we as spectators imagine and construct against and in relation to the screen.[22] All of these frames, while marking the outside, also constitute the inside with the film as a function of the two.

In *Screen/Play: Derrida and Film Theory*, Brunette and Wills discuss the hermeneutic process, making and viewing of a film, as a "frame effect" which problematizes the distinction between the outside and the inside of a text. They suggest that a film can be seen as "a graft or citation of numerous elements from the culture and history (including the history of the medium, of genres, of art in general) within which this text has come to existence" (Brunette and Wills 1989, 106–107). In this understanding, both filmmaking and film viewing are seen as processes that simultaneously construct the frame, perform the limit, and destabilize it. On the one hand, in the filmmaking, the "outside" is folded into the "inside" which, in every reading of the film, is reinscribed to the "outside". On the other hand, every critic transports "interpretive assumptions" from the "outside" into "the inside". (Brunette & Wills 1989, 105–106.) This notion of the hermeneutic process as a frame and as a performative domain links the argument of Brunette and Wills to my approach: reading Niskavuori through its interpretive framings. More

22 According to Brunette and Wills (1989, 105), "the image creates its own frame that, conversely, constructs its own inside. The outside is folded chiastically back into the inside, and what was external – real life, the mirror, consciousness, desire, film history, genre conventions, a society's culture, and so on – becomes internalized through invagination."

specifically, in this study, I investigate the multilayered and temporal "being" of the Niskavuori films by using a combination of three theoretical concepts. In addition to the notion of *framing* – and, more specifically, *interpretive framing*[23] – I use the notions of *discursive field* and *intertextual framework*. These concepts are used as if they were interconnected, although they are not interchangeable.[24] I understand discursive fields and intertextual frameworks as designating different dimensions of interpretive framings.

Read through and in relation to the notion of iterability, the concept of "interpretive framing" (Klinger 1994, xvi) is used here as the operative analytical tool to refer to the historical readings and meanings of the Niskavuori films articulated in production publicity, review journalism, and scholarly writing.[25] As a concept that stresses historicity, it is apt for studying "the diachronic life" of cinema and "the historicity of meaning beyond origins" (Klinger 1997, 123, 112). The diachronic approach assumes the historicity of a film to be a "fluid, changeable and volatile relation" which is why it focuses on "all of the semiotic intrigues surrounding films during the course of their social and historical circulation" (ibid., 112). For me, the strength of the concept of interpretive framing lies in its approach to reception as both a historical, temporal process, and a constitutive meaning-making mechanism. It signals a theory of reception that emphasizes the social and cultural context as a source for meaning production. As Barbara Klinger argues, "factors that accompany the presentation of a film, including such materials as film reviews and industry promotions as well as specific historical conditions, serve as signs of vital semiotic and cultural space that superintend the viewing experience." (Klinger 1994, xvi.) At stake here is the notion of *context*, much debated within cultural studies (see Kovala 1999). On a pragmatic level, my understanding of context equals a network of contemporary writing, films, and visual material from which I extract the different framings. On a theoretical level, however, the notion of iterability – as discussed above – defies any easy definition of the context as "determining" "historical conditions" (cf. Staiger 1992, 80; Staiger 2000, 1).[26]

23 For me, framing is an act of meaning-making and, as such, an act that articulates interpretations. Therefore, in this text, I use the concepts "interpretive framing" and "framing" as interchangable.

24 Cf. Barbara Klinger's (1997, 113) distinction, in describing areas of the synchronic study of film, between "cinematic practices", "intertextual zones" and "social and historical contexts". Though I do not share her subdivision, I do endorse her motivation: "I do not mean to deny the intertextuality and discursivity of all that surrounds the film, as well as the film itself: but for the purposes of clarity in discussion, I wish to avoid collapsing everything contextual into a single, chaotic category" (ibid.).

25 The concept is used by Barbara Klinger (1994, xvi) to study how different institutions have created meaning and ideological identity for the films of Douglas Sirk. Beyond that, the concept of the frame has circulated widely in communication studies (Alasuutari 1999; Karvonen 2000). In film studies, it has been discussed as a metaphor of the screen equalling formalist positions against realist ones that favour the metaphor of window. See Altman 1985, 521–523.

26 For different models and metaphors for context (texture, environment, intertextual, genre, act, psychological, event, discourse, rhizome), see Kovala 1999, 120ff.

In order to avoid discussing the "vital semiotic and cultural space" (i.e. the context) as a monolith, I differentiate between "discursive fields" and "intertextual frameworks". With "discursive field", I refer to large social and cultural formations: in a Foucauldian sense to the configurations of knowledge, power, and truth. Thus, nationality, gender, class, and sexuality are discussed in terms of discursivity that does not exist outside the materiality of representations and practices (Foucault 1972, 1981).[27] The second dimension, intertextual framework, again, is used to describe "the presence of cultural history within a text" (Iampolski 1998, 29) as this history is articulated in the interpretive frameworks. Intertexts are activated in the interpretive framings: other films, literary texts, plays, stage performances, radio- and TV-programs, genres, star images, iconographic motifs, themes, etc.[28] The concept of the intertext, then, captures the idea that no single text, cinematic or otherwise, exists in isolation. Instead, a text exists in dialogue with its contemporaries.[29] In my usage, interpretive framings and intertextual frameworks invoke, foreground, and hierarchize discursive fields by connecting the film in question to other cultural products. Interpretive framing is a concept that attempts to catalogue and distinguish between historical readings and meanings, whereas intertextual frameworks and discursive fields are potentially limitless and, thus, defy cataloguing. In my reading, this kind of understanding of intertextuality echoes the notion of iterability as defined by Derrida, as well as the historicity of discourse emphasized by Butler. As Mikhail Iampolski (1994, 247) puts it, the intertext "binds a text to a culture, with culture functioning here as an interpretive, explanatory, and logic-generating mechanism". Hence, together with discursive fields, intertexts are seen as generate "logics", not as providing a "phantasm of origin" (ibid., 9).

An important mechanism of framing is the construction of *narrative images*, visual and verbal, for the Niskavuori films. Stephen Heath (1985, 121) uses the narrative image (e.g., production stills or trailers) to denote the construction of "a film's presence" in publicity, "how it can be talked about, what it can be sold and bought on". In John Ellis's (1985, 31–33) view, the narrative image is an essential part of cinema as narration and a cultural event: it refers to a "film's circulation outside its performance in cinemas"

27 On discourse as "practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak", see Foucault 1972, 49.

28 I am well aware that for some, discourse analysis would cover all the aspects mentioned. See, for instance, Fairclough 1995. Even the concept of intertextuality is contested. See Bennett & Woollacott 1987, 44–45. In my usage, it refers to cultural products (cinema, drama, literature, music, painting etc.) and to textual features (mode, genre, star image, structural and formal components). I will use the concept of the discursive field to refer to more abstract social and cultural formation, for example, to discourses of gender, class and nationality.

29 Since "[n]o communication is comprehensible unless it could be repeated or cited", citationality is "a characteristic of any sign and not simply an aberrant use of language" (Still & Worton 1990, 24). Hence, citationality is close to the Bakhtinian notion of dialogism, developed in the 1930s, as the necessary relation of any utterance to other utterances. (Stam 1989; Pearce 1994; Pearce 1997, 66–78.) On the notion of intertextuality within film theory see Stam 2000, 201–212.

and it is constructed for each film as a "promise" which feeds into the public sphere an idea of what the film is about. More important, however, is that the narrative image is both about the particular film in question and about cinema as an experience (ibid., 25). Narrative images indicate the thematic of a film by posing questions and enigmas that the films themselves will solve, but they also function through references to other films and cultural phenomena (ibid., 31). Hence, narrative images function something like stills in Roland Barthes' (1977, 67) discussion, "not a sample (…) but a quotation", "at once parodic and disseminatory":

> "The still, then, is the fragment of a second text *whose existence never exceeds the fragment*; film and still find themselves in a palimpsest relationship without it being possible to say that one is *on top of* the other or that one is *extracted* from the other." (Ibid.)

In my analysis, I pay special attention to the narrative images (repetitions and changes, intertextual and intermedial ramifications) created for the Niskavuori films, constructed in the visual and audiovisual framings: trailers, publicity-stills, lobby cards, posters, and press advertising. (Wolfe 1985; Haralovich 1982; Klinger 1989; Staiger 1990.) I am especially interested in the publicity-stills (Hürlimann & Müller 1993; Finler 1995; Wilhelmsson 2000) as promotional publicity and the primary form of visual interpretive framing. The stills articulated narrative images and participated in the construction and dissemination of star-images (cf. Dyer 1979, 68–69; 72). As my interest lies in the variety of readings and framings offered, I pay particular attention to dissonances and incongruities between visual and other promotional texts and review journalism or later commentary, and also to repetitions in the visual iconography.[30]

Studying interpretive framings, discursive fields, and intertextual frameworks involves studying the historical processes of meaning-production as well as the institutional, cultural, and historical conditions that enable differing readings (and meanings) to emerge. In this sense, my work contributes to a specific strand within recent research on public film reception and interpretive framings: investigation of the framings of Shakespeare (Uricchio & Pearson 1993), Sirk (Klinger 1994), and Fassbinder (Shattuc 1995), in different contexts,. Richard Dyer's (1979, 1987) work on star images is a classic example of such approach. To state the obvious, I do not assume that the reading routes I analyze have determined historical audiences. Nor do I believe that an analysis of the public framings could ever be exhaustive in terms of audience reception. However, I do consider it relevant to analyse the frames of interpretation and meaning making provided by diverse historical agencies, such as review journalism and criticism, promotion and advertising. As Lynn Spigel (1992, 8–9) has suggested, magazines, advertisements, and other sites of public framing "tell us what various media institutions assumed

30 For a commentary on the conventions of theatre still-images, see Helavuori & Räisänen 1990.

about the public concerns and desires". In this manner, they do not represent the public's response, but "begin to reveal a general set of discursive rules".

In this study, I regard review journalism as one key site of public framing and, hence, an important province of meaning.[31] As Barbara Klinger (1994, 69) has suggested, film scholars have long rejected reviews as "pieces of failed criticism". Indeed, not until very recently have reviews been deemed relevant and interesting sources for reception studies (cf. Staiger 1992; Staiger 2000; Street 2000.) The paradigmatic shift in film historical research since the 1980s with its orientation away from textual analysis and towards studies of reception and historical audiences has given reviews an important, if problematic status as source material. Instead of being viewed as failed criticism, they are seen as distorted indicators of contemporary reception. According to Jackie Stacey (1993, 263; 1994, 56), authenticity has often been regarded as the main problem with diverse historical sources, such as letters from the readers of a film magazine. Stacey points out, however, that in labelling the mediation characteristic of *all* representation as "distortion" and "a stumbling block", a problematic underlying assumption is revealed. She questions the existence of any unproblematic source of audience response. She maintains that all audience research "must deal inevitably with the question of representation not as a barrier to meaning, but as the form of that meaning". In other words, she underlines the generic structuring of all texts: "any expression of taste, preference, and pleasure is necessarily organized according to certain conventions and patterns" and "all audience 'data' has its textual formations, produced within particular historical and cultural discourses" (ibid.; see also Stacey 1993, 260–274). Hence, one cannot discredit review journalism as a regime of meaning production merely because it is, indeed, a form of published journalism regulated by the rules of the genre and to a varying degree influenced by the promotion material and other industry-led publicity that surrounds all films (studio announcements, press handouts, magazine ads, posters, lobby cards).[32]

While my approach in this book foregrounds the different interpretive framings, images and texts surrounding the films, I do not share the rhetoric of, for instance, Janet Staiger (1992) who insists on *not* doing "textual hermeneutics" or "presentist interpretation". She proposes what she calls "a historical-material approach to reception studies" as a way of explaining instead of interpretating, to "show how meanings and values are produced" instead of producing them. In Janet Staiger's (1992, 81) words, the goal is to provide "a historical explanation of the event of interpreting a text".[33] According to my understanding, explanation and interpretation cannot be separated in this sense, not even on a conceptual level. Instead, I believe that it is important to resist the temptation of using science-driven language and to reflect upon one's own role in meaning-production: my role, here, as a

31 Studies by Pirkko Koski (2000) and Jukka Ammondt (1980) on the reception of the Niskavuori plays serve as a valuable frame for comparison.

32 For the history of Finnish review journalism in the field of film, see Uusitalo 1965, 166–174; 1998, passim.

33 See also Klinger 1994, xvi; Uricchio & Pearson 1993, 14.

writing subject, as a situated narrator. Tracing the genealogies of "Niskavuori" – tracking down readings, excavating connections, and unpacking layers of meanings – is very much an interpretive process grounded in the moment of writing. Like the films and their interpretive frameworks, this text is also performative, as I produce a reading from a certain position that is both theoretically and methodologically framed, historically situated and politically motivated. (Cf. Modleski 1991, 45–58.) While grounding my readings in interpretive framings and, hence, in traces of historical meaning making, I accept the responsibility which interpretive activity always brings about. In other words, the public fantasies of Niskavuori haunt this text as well.

The roots and routes of Niskavuori: the intermedial framework

As this book investigates films through their interpretive framings, the large intermedial network in which the Niskavuori story has circulated is an important framework for analysis. (Cf. Lehtonen 2001, 91–93.) Along with familiarity, a sense of proliferation is an important feature of the experience of Niskavuori as "public fantasy", with the Niskavuori story featuring in theatres, on the silver screen, on the radio, in books, on television, as a ballet, and on the video. (See Appendixes 2–3.) The exceptional success of the theatre productions, the films, and the radio plays has resulted in recurrent retrospectives. The first retrospective of radio plays was broadcast in 1954 and the latest one of the films on television in 1998. For several months in both 1986 and 1992, for example, Niskavuori fictions were available almost weekly, on the radio as well as on television. In what follows, I try to capture something of this sense of proliferation as I outline the history of the Niskavuori story as an intermedial phenomenon of which the Niskavuori films form only one part, albeit a very important and visible one.

a) Theatre

The story of the Niskavuori family was launched in 1936 with the opening night of *The Women of Niskavuori* at the Helsinki Folk Theatre.[34] The play became an immediate box office success and later the same year several other theatres – in Lahti, Pori, Tampere, Turku, and Viipuri – staged their versions of it.[35] Soon after the première, it became known that the name of the playwright, Juhani Tervapää, was, in fact, a pseudonym. The name that implied a male Finnish author hid the identity of the true, Estonian-born female author, Hella Wuolijoki. As a well-known left-wing activist, her previous play, *Law and Order* (*Laki ja järjestys*), had in 1933 been banned

34 For a historical account of the première, see Koski 1987, 63–71; Koski 1992, 98–108; Koski 2000, 89–111.

35 Koski 2000, 111–112. The information included in Appendix 3 is not complete with regard to statistics concerning productions of *The Women of Niskavuori*.

by the Ministry of Justice at the very same theatre where this play opened (Rossi 1990, 169–201; Koski 1997, 219–225). Under the male pseudonym, however, Wuolijoki enjoyed great popularity despite her controversial public image and wrote one more Niskavuori play before the Second World War, *The Bread of Niskavuori* (1938), an explicit sequel to the first play. Within a year, the play was performed in 13 other theatres around the country. At this time, Hella Wuolijoki/Juhani Tervapää was framed as "a European name"[36]. In 1936–1938, *The Women of Niskavuori* was performed in eleven European countries: in Nordic countries (Stockholm, Oslo, Copenhagen), England (London, Manchester), and Germany (Hamburg), as well as in Estonia (eight theatres), Latvia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Croatia, and Slovenia. (Koski 2000, 113–118. See also Koski 1986; Koski 1997.)[37]

While the first two Niskavuori plays were set either in the present or the recent past, 1932–1938, in the third play, *The Young Matron of Niskavuori* (1940), the narrative framework was different, the play functioning as a flashback to the 1880s, investigating family history. It opened at the National Theatre in Helsinki and was quickly staged in 12 other theatres. Since the 1950s, it has been an established part of theatre repertoires. The last two Niskavuori plays, *Heta Niskavuori* and *What now, Niskavuori?*, were finished in 1950 and 1953 respectively. *Heta Niskavuori* was an immediate success at the Tampere Workers' Theatre where it was first performed, and there were nine other productions in 1950–1951. In the wake of its success, *What now, Niskavuori?* Had been staged in 19 theatres by the mid-1950s. (Koski 2000, 240, 248.)

The series of five Niskavuori plays was written over 18 years and enjoyed a remarkable popularity in theatres around the country, as did Wuolijoki's other plays (especially *Hulda Juurakko* 1936, *Justiina* 1937).[38] Indeed, she was said to have received 60% of *all* royalties paid by the Finnish Playwrights' Association by 1944. *The Women of Niskavuori* was performed over 100 times at the Helsinki Folk Theatre in 1936, and the popularity of her plays has sustained to the present; only Aleksis Kivi and William Shakespeare outnumber Wuolijoki's plays in the all-time statistics of Finnish theatre premières.[39] Of the five Niskavuori plays, *The Women of Niskavuori*, *The Young Matron of Niskavuori*, and *Heta Niskavuori* have enjoyed steady

36 For example, Lauri Viljanen stated Wuolijoki's new renommé in a review of *Justiina* (*HS* 16.11.1937). He accounted for foreign review reception and mentioned that the Prime Minister was present at the première.

37 In all, the play has been staged in approximately 40 different versions, and it has been translated into 13 European languages. Especially after the death of Stalin, Niskavuori plays also became popular in the Soviet Union. See Koski 1986, 27–28; Koski 2000, 111, 293.

38 For an English translation of and an introduction to *Hulda Juurakko*, see Koski 1996, 214–217; Kelly 1996.

39 Mäkinen 1996, 27. On the stage productions of different Niskavuori plays, see Appendix 3. Statistical information indicates that the plays have been performed around 3600 times since 1951. There is no information on the running times of 41 productions prior to 1950. As for popularity of the première at the Helsinki Folk Theatre, see Koski 1987, 64; Koski 2000, 103–111.

popularity over the decades, whereas *The Bread of Niskavuori* and *What now, Niskavuori?* have been staged only sporadically after their first staging. (Koski 1986, 13. See also Koski 2000.) Besides a total of 168 productions and, in all, over 4000 performances in professional theatres since 1936 (see Appendix 3), Niskavuori plays have become a part of the basic repertoire of summer theatres (in Hauho and elsewhere) and innumerous amateur groups characteristic of Finnish theatre life (Koski 1986, 9). As Pirkko Koski (2000, 207–213) has argued, however, until the 1960s, Wuolijoki and her plays were excluded from the literary canon. Her work was omitted from literary histories and she never received any literary prizes or awards. Only one of her plays, *The Young Matron of Niskavuori*, had its première in the National Theatre, the authoritative theatrical institution. In addition to Hella Wuolijoki's personality and political reputation, even the popularity of her oeuvre has been a burden. Apparently, whenever theatre professionals or scholars have taken stock of their field in a self-reflexive mode, whether in 1969 (TV programme named "What now, Niskavuori?") or in 1992 (Paavolainen 1992b), they pose a question referring to Niskavuori: What happens after Niskavuori? In these characterizations, Niskavuori plays are evoked as the emblematic of Finnish theatre life.[40] At the same, however, the turn of the 21st millennium has seen two Niskavuori revivals in the context of theatre. In 2000, three amateur groups and summer theatres in South-East Finland (Iitti Theatre Society, Elimäki Youth Society, and Korvenkylä Summer Theatre) produced three Niskavuori plays also performing them as a marathon. Since 1999, theatre director Mikko Roiha has figured as an auteur behind a new Niskavuori renaissance, as he has directed three Niskavuori plays for three different theatres: *The Women of Niskavuori* (Pori Summer Theatre 1999), *Heta Niskavuori* (Kajaani City Theatre 1999), and *The Young Matron of Niskavuori* (Seinäjoki City Theatre 2002). In 2002, when the Seinäjoki City Theatre had two Niskavuori plays in its repertoire, the local newspapers proclaimed it "the official Niskavuori theatre of Finland".[41]

b) Cinema

From today's perspective, one can argue that the proliferation of the Niskavuori saga owes very much to the seven film adaptations that have reached all of Finland – first on the silver screen, later on television, and as video tapes circulating, for instance, in public libraries. (See Appendix 2, 8.) It is thanks to films and their regular broadcasting on the national television network that a journalist could write in 1987: "Also to us, they are still living

40 On uses of Niskavuori as a trope in discussions on Finnish theatre life, see also Lehtola, Lundán &Pajunen 2002. In 1986, the Finnish theatre magazine *Teatteri* (6/1986) published a special issue asking, "What has come, and what will come after Hella?" A portrait of Hella Wuolijoki was published on its cover. In 1981, Irmeli Niemi (1981, 16–17) published an article in the form of a letter "And quiet flows the Finnish play" (playing upon the title of Mikhail Sholokhov's novel), in which she addressed "Hella" as her recepient.

41 *Ilkka 11.1.2002.* In Seinäjoki, "Niskavuori marathons" were also organized. See also *HS* 27.2.2002.

people, these members of the Niskavuori family".[42] On the other hand, the Niskavuori story was discussed in similar terms already in 1938, as the first Niskavuori film was released. The plethora of theatre productions and the censorship incident preceding the film's opening night had received so much public attention that the plot and the theme of *The Women of Niskavuori* were proclaimed so "familiar" to the readers that there was no need to give any account of them in the film review.[43] Suomi-Filmi produced the first film adaptation and *The Women of Niskavuori* was released in January 1938, two years after the stage première at the Helsinki Folk Theatre. The company had bought the rights for the film at the end of 1936, but its release was delayed by another Wuolijoki/Tervapää-adaptation in 1937, *Hulda Juurakko* (*Juurakon Hulda*), a comedy that became Suomi-Filmi's most profitable production of the late 1930s.[44] *The Women of Niskavuori* became a box office success, but the third Tervapää film, *The Green Gold* (*Vihreä kulta*), released by Suomi-Filmi in 1939 did not fare as well. As Suomen Filmiteollisuus adapted a fourth Tervapää play, *Justiina*, on film, releasing it as *Forward – into Life!* in 1939, it seems relevant to talk about a Tervapää boom in Finnish cinema in the late 1930s.[45]

The cinematic adaptations of the Niskavuori plays (see Appendix 1) did not follow the order of theatre productions. The second play, *The Bread of Niskavuori*, was not adapted for the screen until 1954 as *Aarne Niskavuori*, and before it, two other Niskavuori films were released. The second Niskavuori film and a product of Suomi-Filmi, *Loviisa*, was based on *The Young Matron of Niskavuori* and it had its debut after the Second World War, in 1946. Six years later, in 1952, another production company, Suomen Filmiteollisuus, released an adaptation of *Heta Niskavuori,* and two years later the aforementioned *Aarne Niskavuori*. Thus, a play from 1938 was not filmed until 16 years later. Two more Niskavuori-adaptations were made during the 1950s: the last Niskavuori play, *What Now, Niskavuori?* was released by Suomen Filmiteollisuus as *Niskavuori Fights* in 1957 and the following year Suomi-Filmi released a remake of its first Niskavuori film, *The Women of Niskavuori*, this time in colour. Matti Kassila directed the latest adaptation in 1984, *Niskavuori* (1984), which focuses on the story of Aarne and Ilona by combining the first two Niskavuori plays, *The Women of Niskavuori* (1936) and *The Bread of Niskavuori* (1938).

Although Kassila's 1984 film was not the box-office hit producers hoped for, the previous Niskavuori films were all either very successful or more successful than average. The exact popularity of the films is very difficult to measure since there is no precise data on the number of spectators per film

42 *Anna* 1.12.1987.

43 *Hämeen Sanomat* 18.1.1938.

44 See statistics by Suomi-Filmi (dated 28.3.1958) on the production costs and the rental proceeds of its films (Finnish Film Archive). In a document dated 28.2.1945 *The Women of Niskavuori* is rated "very good" in terms of profit.

45 Laine 1994, 60–67. During 1931–1959, Hella Wuolijoki was the third most popular author for film adaptations; those years saw 14 adaptations of Agapetus, 13 of Mika Waltari and 12 of Hella Wuolijoki. See Sevänen & Turunen 1990, 139.

prior to 1970. In terms of running time and the number of screenings in a sample of cities – the calculation method adopted by the editorial board for *Suomen Kansallisfilmografia* (The Finnish National Filmography) – *The Women of Niskavuori* (1938) is estimated the third most successful film made in 1938 and the ninth most successful of all the domestic films of the decade. *Loviisa* was clearly the number one film made in 1946 and *Heta Niskavuori* (1952) and *Aarne Niskavuori* (1954) were both number three in respective years. However, the relative popularity of *Niskavuori Fights* and *The Women of Niskavuori* was somewhat lower. In terms of the number of screenings, the former rated sixth in 1957, the latter fifth in 1958.[46] Niskavuori films also did well in the popularity polls organized by *Elokuva-aitta*, a film magazine that began in 1948. Among domestic films *Heta Niskavuori* and *Aarne Niskavuori* were both voted first in 1954 and 1955, whereas *Niskavuori Fights* was but fifth in 1958.[47] In addition, actors featuring in these films won prizes in the popularity polls, especially Tauno Palo, but also Emma Väänänen and Rauni Luoma.

c) Television

All the Niskavuori films have been screened regularly on television – three to eight times each, in total forty times – since 1963 and their audience ratings have been remarkably high (see Appendix 2).[48] Especially during the first decade of the Finnish television, domestic films were a major form of entertainment programming, many times the principal attraction of the TV evening, considered a guaranteed source of pleasure. From the very beginning of the television era in Finland, old domestic film has been among the most popular and often contested programme types as shown in audience ratings, polls, and questionnaires as well as viewers' letters published in TV magazines. [49] The screening of old Finnish cinema was used as a way of enticing citizens to acquire television sets and pay license

46 See information in *Suomen Kansallisfilmografia* 2–6 (Finnish National Filmography). Since data on precise number of spectators is lacking prior to 1970, Kari Uusitalo has developed "Eki" (Esityskertaindeksi), i.e., a numerical indication of the number of screenings indexed by compiling data on the number of key cities (Helsinki, Jyväskylä, Kuopio, Lahti, Oulu, Pori, Tampere, Turku and Vaasa) from newspaper ads. The second figure mentioned in parenthesis gives the total quantity of screenings in Helsinki, the third one in other key cities: *The Women of Niskavuori* 1938 (1475/701/774), *Loviisa* 1946 (965/451/514), *Heta Niskavuori* 1952 (890/403/487), *Aarne Niskavuori* 1954 (673/283/390), *Niskavuori Fights* 1957 (581/329/252), *The Women of Niskavuori* 1958 (518/232/286). See "Guide to the use of the filmography" in any volume of *Suomen Kansallisfilmografia* (The Finnish National Filmography) published since 1992.

47 For results of the polls, see *EA* 4/1954, 6; *EA* 4/1955, 28; *EA* 5/1958.

48 On the role of television in establishing films as "classics", see Heiskanen 1991, 216–220. *Aarne Niskavuori* is one of the films that, according to Heiskanen's sample, has been given that status.

49 According to Heiskanen, Finnish films scored the highest ratings in 1974–1982, after which they declined. Based on Kari Uusitalo's statistics, which he has kindly provided me with, the popularity has sustained, even if in a different format; since the introduction of the MTV channel, the number of Finnish films on television has increased, while audience rates per film have declined. For a discussion of "old Finnish cinema" as a programme type in the 1960s television, see Koivunen 1999.

fees. The first Finnish film that YLE (the Finnish Broadcasting Company; then Finnish Television, Suomen Televisio) screened on 18 November 1957 was *Suominen Family* (*Suomisen perhe*, 1940), a box office hit during the Second World War.[50] In 1958, a total of 64 feature films were broadcast, 25 of them Finnish. The popularity of domestic films within programming has sustained over the decades and the number of Finnish films screened on television has increased from an average of 44 in the 1960s up to 140–150 films per year in the 1990s.[51]

In the 1960s, the reported audience ratings for Niskavuori films varied from 380 000 to 1.13 million. In 1964, for instance, Niskavuori films reported having audiences of 650 000 to almost 1 million. These numbers are tantalizing considering the fact that there were only half-million TV licenses in the country. As *Heta Niskavuori* (1952) was screened on TV for the first time in April 1963, YLE reported having scored one million viewers. This indicates that there were more than three people sitting in front of each TV set in the country.[52] Looking at the programme chart on the day in question (Easter Sunday) highlights the status of domestic film as major entertainment at that point. In the 1970s, the ratings for Niskavuori films were 1.4 million on average, in the 1980s about 980 000 and in the 1990s about 840 000. The figures indicate sustained popularity that cannot be denied even if the audience ratings reported by the Finnish Broadcasting Company (YLE) and MTV3 raise doubts. On 24 January 1981, over 2 million people were reported as having watched *The Women of Niskavuori* (1958). It was not until the mid-1980s, after a steady increase in programming hours and the advent of daytime television for elderly people, that domestic films were scheduled outside prime-time. Until then, old domestic films were broadcast prime-time and, hence, for "the whole TV nation" which suggests that television carried on the rhetoric of national cinema that film production companies had used especially in the 1930s and 1940s. (Koivunen 1995; Laine 1999.) Even in the 1990s, prime-time TV screenings of the Niskavuori films have attracted large audiences. In 1992, as six of the films broadcast during the summer months, rating an average of 780 000 viewers. In 1998, however, as the films were shown in the afternoon programming or in parts as a TV series, the average rating dropped down to 350 000.

50 *HS* 18.11.1957.

51 Statistics by Kari Uusitalo; Uusitalo 1975, 266–268.

52 Statistics by Yleisradio. The popularity of Finnish films has sustained. In the 1970s and 1980s, screenings of Finnish films ranked regularly among the top 10 for Channel 1 and among top 5 for Channel 2 in monthly charts published in TV magazines and newspapers. Whereas annual "media events" such as Eurovision Song Contests and Miss Finland Beauty Contests attracted 2.5–3 million viewers, Finnish films scored in average an audience of 1.5 million. In the mid-1980s, the figures dropped to approximately 600, 000, but in 1987 – as the latest Niskavuori film was televized for the first time, it reached an audience of 1.2 million.

d) Radio

Radio Theatre has produced a significant number of adaptations of the Niskavuori plays as well (see Appendix 8). The first three Niskavuori radio plays – comprising all existing Niskavuori plays written until this point – were broadcast in 1945 and a second round took place in 1954 shortly after Hella Wuolijoki's death. In 1954–1955, when radio was still a major entertainer in homes around the country, Radio Theatre produced new adaptations of all five Niskavuori plays. The popular novelty was to broadcast them in a chronological order according to the time of the plays, telling the story of Niskavuori from the beginning to the end, from the 1880s to the 1940s. This model was adopted by television first in 1986. Since the 1950s, the plays have been adapted twice more for radio: in 1967–1968 in connection with the commemoration of 60 years of YLE and in the summer of 1992 as a series celebrating the 75th anniversary of Finnish independence. In addition, director Laura Ruohonen's latest adaptations are circulated in public libraries.

e) Events

Celebrations, jubilees, commemorations, and centennials have regularly occasioned performances, screenings, and broadcastings of the Niskavuori story. In particular, the centennial of Hella Wuolijoki's birth in 1986 called forth, in the words of many journalists, a "Niskavuori renaissance", and she was celebrated in an exhibition at the Theatre Museum and at two conferences at the Jyväskylä Summer Festival and at the Tampere Theatre Festival.[53] New editions of her memoirs (Wuolijoki 1986; Wuolijoki 1987) were also published and she was the subject of one biographical play, a ballet, two radio features (*Elämäni ensimmäinen näytös* 1 July 1986, *Ylen ehtoisa emäntä* 28 July 1986, orig. 1976), and a two-part television docudrama (*Valkoinen varis – punainen kajava* TV2 13–14 September 1986). An independent dance theatre group, Raatikko, staged a ballet called "Nightingale" (*Satakieli*) based on Wuolijoki's life, and Jukka Ammondt, who had in 1981 published a dissertation on the ideological framework of Wuolijoki's plays, used her texts and the archive material he had studied for a play called "Hella the Fierce" (*Taisteleva Hella*), which premièred at the Kouvola theatre.[54] In addition, Radio Theatre commemorated its former chief by broadcasting old radio adaptations of four plays and a series of five Niskavuori films were screened on television in 1986. The boom did not cease at the end of

53 As for the visibility of Hella Wuolijoki and the Niskavuori-saga with her, see *Taiteen Maailma* 2/1986; *Pellervo* 10/1986; *Books from Finland* 2/1986; *Anna* 1.12.1987; *Kulttuurivihkot* 5–6/1987; *HS* 15.3.1987; *Oma Markka* 9/1987; *AL* 25.1.1986. For the exhibition in the Theatre Museum, see Koski 1986; on the conferences, see *AL* 11.6.1986; *KSML* 11.6.1986; *AL* 11.8.1986. For the Jyväskylä conference, the papers were published in Ammondt 1988. About "excessive flood of speech, images and memories on radio and television" see *Hämeen Sanomat* 2.8.1986.

54 Wuolijoki's daughter, Vappu Tuomioja, disapproved of Ammondt's actions, and in the end, the play was banned. See *AL* 25.1.1986.

1986. The following year, the Finnish Broadcasting Company (YLE TV 2) produced three television dramas based on Niskavuori plays (*The Young Matron of Niskavuori*, *Heta Niskavuori*, and *What now, Niskavuori?*) and Eero Hämeenniemi composed a ballet based on *Loviisa*, performed by the Finnish National Ballet.[55] (See Appendix 8.) Overall, the 1980s were a renaissance for Niskavuori plays in theatres around the country as nineteen new productions were staged in 1980–1989 (see Appendix 3). According to the publicity surrounding the centennial, Wuolijoki was primarily seen as the creator of the tale of Niskavuori. The new subtitle of the 1986 edition of Wuolijoki's (1986a) memoirs, "Before Niskavuori", also suggested this view

The Niskavuori story has also been appropriated for tourist purposes. Since 1989, Hauho, the small community in Häme where the estate of the Wuolijoki family is located, has organized a "Niskavuori week" every summer. The week is a long-standing example of heritage tourism featuring a summer theatre production every year, seminars with authors, scholars and biographers as well as actors and directors involved in both stage and screen Niskavuori productions. This annual event illustrates the breadth and popular appeal of the Niskavuori saga, and it has developed into "Niskavuori of Hauho" (Hauhon Niskavuori), a regional venture and a development project in culture industry, funded by the European Social Fund (2001–2003). In 2000, a new Wuolijoki event was introduced in Iitti where Wuolijoki owned the Marlebäck estate in 1920–1940. As mentioned in the context of theatre, three amateur groups and summer theatres in South-Eastern Finland produced three Niskavuori plays and in 2001, the Iitti municipality and Kyme Summer University organized a high-profile two-day seminar "Hooked by Hella" (Hellan koukussa). (See Appendix 8.)

As for the intermedial phenomenon "Niskavuori", the films are the most oft cited and presumably best known, at least among post-1950s generations. That the 1995 compiled edition of the Niskavuori plays (Wuolijoki 1995) – unlike the 1979 edition (Wuolijoki 1979) – used film stills as illustration is one case in point.[56] The same applies for much of the publicity around Hella Wuolijoki and Niskavuori plays. When, for instance, in 1992, adaptations for radio were discussed, a magazine feature was filled with film stills.[57] Although this use of film stills might suggest that the films are somehow more "relevant" or "important" than, for example, theatre or radio plays in disseminating the Niskavuori story, I choose to focus on films not because of such an assessment, but because I am interested in the intermedial construction of meaning in cinema. As Teresa de Lauretis (1999, 305–307)

55 On the television movies, see promotion articles in *Viikkolehti (KU)* 7.11.1987; *Apu* 20.11.1987; *Kainuun Sanomat* 1.12.1987; *US* 2.12.1987; *Kansan Lehti* 4.12.1987; *KSML* 6.12.1987; *Länsi-Suomi* 6.12.1987; *Kaleva* 6.12.1987; *Hämeen Sanomat* 6.12.1987. On the ballet, see *HS* 15.3.1987; *US* 21.3.1987; *HS* 1.4.1987; *Ssd* 2.4.1987; Heikkinen 1988.

56 See even coverage of the radio plays in 1992, for example, in *Kotiliesi* 12/26.6.1992.

57 Wuolijoki 1995; *Kotiliesi* 12 (26.6.) 1992, 18–22. Symptomatically, two articles that omit Niskavuori's life in cinema are published in *Taiteen maailma* (= The World of Art) and Hiidenkivi, a journal published by the Finnish Literature Society. See *Taiteen maailma* 2/1986, 10–13: Mäkinen 1996, 26–27.

argues in her discussion of public fantasies, cinematic representations contribute to the construction of a popular imaginary by re-using, re-mixing, and re-articulating other popular forms and existing cultural narratives. As remakes of plays, theatre productions, and even of previous films, Niskavuori films are particularly interesting.

Until the current boom of adaptation research (Horton & McDougal 1998; Cartmell & Whehelan 1999; Giddings & Sheen 2000), however, cinematic adaptations have most often been understood as either weaker or deformed versions of "original" literary works. The Niskavuori films have certainly been regarded as "secondary" versions, "commercializing", and "romanticizing" the value of the "original" plays and their spirit (Palmgren 1979, 13). But in this study, I neither compare in this sense or search for media-specific qualities of the different adaptations (cf. Ammondt 1986). I do not intend to argue for the films as the "essential" locus of the Niskavuori story, and neither am I interested in proving their role as an overdetermining discourse on history, gender and nationality. The aim is not to locate an origin or the *roots* of the readings. Rather, I aim to trace the *routes* of "Niskavuori". Here, I invoke the words "roots" and "routes" with emphasis, borrowing from Paul Gilroy (1993, 19) who has suggested that identities should not – at least in the first place – be discussed in terms of roots and rootedness (where does the true meaning reside?) but rather in terms of routes emphasizing movement and mediation in time and space (Within which contexts have meanings been articulated?). Hence, the phrase "the Niskavuori story" refers, here, to the imaginary totality of social and cultural networks (interpretive frames, discursive fields, intertextual frameworks) articulated in readings during the 60 years of the Niskavuori story. Indeed, in this discursive realm of all different readings, the route from Niskavuori to Tara makes perfect sense. In this book, I will argue that cinema culture as a context for producing "foundational fictions" functions in both centripetal and centrifugal ways. Whereas some features of cinema as a medium and a mode of narration have contributed to an understanding of Niskavuori as "our history", others – such as the context of exhibition, links to consumer culture and intertextual references – have also disseminated and complicated the workings of nationalism-as-narrative.

The sites of framing: the research material

The research material includes, first, a sample of *material used in the promotion and publicity campaigns surrounding the films*. (See Appendix 4–5.) This material includes verbal, visual, and audiovisual material. As for visual material, I have studied the posters, newspaper ads, and other published advertisements of the films as well as the large amount (in total around 500) of publicity-stills photographs that, together with posters, were used as lobby cards.[58] As for audiovisual material, not all the film trailers

have been preserved. However, three existing trailers for *Loviisa* (1946), *The Women of Niskavuori* (1958), and *Niskavuori* (1984) are included in my study. As for printed, verbal material, I have investigated film magazines published by the production companies themselves; Suomi-Filmi published *Suomi-Filmin Uutisaitta* (= later*, Uutisaitta*) in 1935–1960, Suomen Filmiteollisuus its equivalent *SF-Uutiset* in 1935–1946. Along with these, any studio announcements, press releases, or documents of the production or distribution process preserved in the Finnish Film Archive or in the archives of the National Broadcasting Company have been scrutinized.

As a *second* source, my research material includes a sample of *contemporary and later review journalism and articles in popular magazines* (women's magazines, family magazines) as well as *trade press* (*Kinolehti*, *Elokuva-aitta*). (See Appendix 4.) As for the popular magazines, the sample is random; it is based on database searches and the collections at the Finnish Film Archive. I have studied the trade press so that the publicity surrounding each Niskavuori film has been analyzed. As for newspapers on the other hand, the sample follows the logic of the Finnish National Filmography, containing clippings from daily newspapers and magazines (reviews of first releases and following TV screenings that vary in number). I started my inquiry with the collections at the Finnish Film Archive and supplemented the sample when necessary. In principle, the reviews from the main daily newspapers of all the key cities (Helsinki, Jyväskylä, Kuopio, Lahti, Oulu, Pori, Tampere, Turku, and Vaasa) should be included, but the sample varies from film to film, sometimes containing more clippings from smaller dailies published in other towns and from different magazines. In regional terms, the sample promoted by the Finnish National Filmography excludes all newspapers published in northern Finland, which is an obvious drawback. On the other hand, the newspapers included are both Finnish and Swedish-speaking, both right-wing and left-wing, both national and local in circulation, both urban and rural in readership.[59]

The time frame of my study is so extensive that it contains significant changes with regard to the review journalism. By the Second World War, regular film reviews appeared in the section for culture in the newspapers. After the war, the distinction between promotional texts and film reviews became more clear. The 1950s saw a proliferation of "intellectual" or "critical" film journalism and since the 1960s, the film reviews have appeared

58 The number of photos and lobby cards per film (the first figure indicates the number of lobby cards, the second the total number of photos in Finnish Film Archive): *The Women of Niskavuori* (1938) 109/403, *Loviisa* (1946) 80/348, *Heta Niskavuori* (1952) 47/173, *Aarne Niskavuori* (1954) 57/299, *Niskavuori Fights* (1957) 58/425, *The Women of Niskavuori* (1958) 102/456, *Niskavuori* (1984) 30/65.

59 Hence, the research material cannot be described as representative of regionality, political stance, or readership in statistical terms. I intend to neither to present nor discuss it as such. Instead, my approach is qualitative and based on problem-driven readings organized as case studies; I will provide a reading of the material organized in terms of themes discussed, questions raised, arguments presented, and my material is sufficient in this respect.

in both the section for culture and on the television pages. (Uusitalo 1965, 173–174; Honka-Hallila, Laine & Pantti 1995, 151; Kivimäki 1998, 49–55.) Scholars have pointed out that marketing, production-related material, and film criticism were indistinguishable in the 1920s and 1930s. The line between them was sometimes blurred even at the beginning of the 1950s (Kivimäki 1998, 52). Frequently, blurring also occurs in the publicity surrounding the TV screenings. The same formulations deriving, most often, from press releases and/or the Finnish National Filmography circulate in different newspapers not all of which allow space for proper reviews. However, this recycling is not a problem for my investigation. From my perspective, the recycling of framings is merely intriguing, and any particular reading that occurs at a given point is interesting to me independent of its "originality".

As a rule, the reviews will be discussed in terms of "readings" without any reference to the source, which can be found in the footnotes. This approach views the review material as "utterances" operating performatively through iteration and, thus, the approach downplays the role of individual critics. Even if the references are given to newspapers and magazines instead of writers, in Appendix 4 where the material is listed, some aliases and signatures (and names behind them) occur more often than others do. The recurrent names of critics, well-known personalities as regular, long-standing film critics in given newspapers or magazines, include Hans Kutter (*Hufvudstadsbladet*, *Svenska Pressen*, *Elokuva-aitta*), Raoul af Hällström (*Uusi Suomi*, *Elokuva-aitta*), Heikki Välisalmi, Toini Aaltonen (*Suomen Sosialidemokraatti*), Paula Talaskivi (*Helsingin Sanomat*, *Elokuva-aitta*), Juha Nevalainen (*Ilta-Sanomat*), Heikki Eteläpää (*Ilta-Sanomat*, *Uusi Suomi*), and Salama Simonen (*Uusi Suomi*), all of whom represent the older generation. From the generation which, in the 1950s, was seen as representing a new, "critical" generation, wereEugen Terttula (*Suomen Sosialidemokraatti*), Martti Savo (*Työkansan Sanomat*, *Kansan Uutiset*), Jörn Donner (*Vapaa Sana*), Jerker A. Eriksson (*Hufvudsstadsbladet*, *Nya Pressen*), Bengt Pihlström (*Nya Pressen*), Ywe Jalander (*Vapaa Sana*), and Matti Salo (*Suomen Sosialidemokraatti*, *Päivän Sanomat*) should be mentioned.[60] As for the television age, Tapani Maskula (*Turun Sanomat*), Antti Lindqvist (*Kansan Uutiset*, *Katso*), Mikael Fränti, Jussi Karjalainen (*Helsingin Sanomat*), and Kari Uusitalo (*Hyvinkään Sanomat*) are the most cited. While all the major film critics are included in the material, my approach does not allow discussing them as authors or cultural agents. Instead, the reviews are analyzed as texts among others.

It is also necessary to underline that I am not interested in the reviews as statements of quality. Thus, I do not intend to argue for the value of the films, or to make claims for a "correct" interpretation. Instead, I want to argue for the complexity of the Niskavuori films by examining the diverse ways they have been talked and written about, conceived and made sense of. In this respect, the film reviews are interesting material. The reviews of a single film often reiterate similar, recurring characterizations concerning the plot, the

60 For studies of 1950s film review journalism, see Malmberg 1997; Kivimäki 1998, 1999a, 1999b; Pantti 1998.

setting, or the thematic. They may also share structural and stylistic features, such as detailed listings of not only directors and actors, but also of those responsible for photography, lighting, settings, and clothing. Special attention is paid to the directors and their assumed or explicated intentions, the quality of cinematography as well as to actors' performances. In addition, especially in the 1930s–1950s, shooting locations are often accounted for. Surprisingly many reviewers, however, do not summarize the plot, but mention the intrigue only in passing. When close reading the reviews, I have paid special attention to phrases that name and categorize (genre or else), as well as to those that characterize (adjectives, rhetorical figures) and contextualize (linkings, references). Thus, I have looked for comments that explicate the perceived contents and thematic of the film and its assumed context.

The *third* category of research material includes all the intertextual frameworks evoked in the interpretive framings: other films, genres, star images, novels, paintings, etc. This category contains the reviews of theatre premières of the Niskavuori plays, especially the review reception of the first stage productions of each play, but also reviews and programme booklets from later decades. I also discuss the theatre context using available secondary sources (Paavolainen 1992; Koski 1986; Koski 1987; Koski 1992; Koski 2000). Besides theatre, I also study the reviews of radio plays and television movies in a similar fashion. (Appendixes 4–5 contain detailed lists of all journalistic and archival material used.)

Fourth, I have analysed a sample of the audiovisual readings of the Niskavuori films, such as Peter von Bagh's "small introductions to films" which literally framed the broadcasting of the Niskavuori films on TV2 in 1992. These introductions can be compared to verbal essays, as they consist of von Bagh's voice-over, and their history goes back to the 1960s and 1970s when Kari Uusitalo initiated the genre now associated with von Bagh's connoisseurship. In terms of intertextuality, these introductions are significant, as their image track often features old production stills. In addition to von Bagh's introductions to Niskavuori films, I have also included in my material a TV programme where Matti Kassila assesses – with film quotations – the meanings of the Niskavuori films, as well as the two 1990s TV series on the history of the two biggest film production companies, Suomi-Filmi and Suomen Filmiteollisuus. Peter von Bagh and his team authored both of these series, *SF-tarina* (SF Story 1991) and *Suomi-Filmin tarina* (The Story of Suomi-Filmi 1993).

Fifth, I have excavated *citations* of Niskavuori in quite a literal sense: citations of the Niskavuori films in other film reviews, cultural products, or in television programmes; uses of the Niskavuori imagery in advertising; or evocations of the Niskavuori story as a point of reference in different contexts from popular journalism to scholarly research. Whereas the analysis of TV citations is based on searches in STAIRS-database run by the National Broadcasting Company (and, hence, the analysis is based on citations only within YLE productions), the analysis of other material is more randomly collected, also using Internet search engines. (See Appendix 7.)

Sixth, my research material includes critical essays and scholarly studies that investigate and comment upon Niskavuori films and plays.

(See Appendix 6.) The Niskavuori films have been examined in a handful of essays (Hannula 1958, Varjola 1979; Uusitalo 1988; von Bagh 1992), overviews of Finnish cinema (Uusitalo 1975; 1977; 1978; 1981), in the Finnish National Filmography (Hannula 1992; Ammondt 1995; Koivunen 2001), comparative studies on the relations between theatrical and cinematic narration (Ammondt 1986; see also Ammondt 1988; Räsänen 1988), and in relation to the formation of "national cinema" in the late 1930s (Laine 1999). The Niskavuori films also feature in the English-language overviews of Finnish cinema (Cowie 1990; Sihvonen 1993; Soila 1998; von Bagh 1999). Feminist analyses of the Niskavuori films include Anne Ollila's writings (1986, 2000) and my own previous work (Koivunen 1998; Koivunen 1999; Koivunen 2001).

Jukka Ammondt studied the Niskavuori plays in his 1980 doctoral dissertation on the ideological framework of Wuolijoki's rural dramas. More recently, Pirkko Koski (2000) published a monograph on Hella Wuolijoki and her plays. Koski studied Niskavuori plays even in her earlier work on the Helsinki Folk Theatre (Koski 1987) and Eino Salmelainen, the director of many Niskavuori plays (Koski 1992). The first larger commentaries on Wuolijoki's writing were published in the 1930s and 1940s (*Ahjo* 1938; Laurila 1938; Olsoni 1942; Laurila 1947), but the plays only entered the Finnish and foreign overviews of Finnish literary history the plays in the 1960s (Niemi 1965; Laitinen 1981; Deschner 1990; Schoolfield 1984a; Schoolfield 1984b; Schoolfield 1998). They have also been examined in terms of labour literature (Kilpi 1963; Palmgren 1966, 1979, 1984a–b; Kangasniemi 1972) and women's literature (Kuhmonen 1969; Niemi 1988; Vapaavuori 1989; Koski 1996, 1997; Witt-Brattström 1997). In addition, Wuolijoki's plays and Niskavuori films feature in studies on censorship (Rossi 1990).

Hella Wuolijoki's person – or, more precisely, her two *signatures* (Derrida 1988; Rojola 1998, see Chapter 5) as Hella Wuolijoki and Juhani Tervapää – has often overdetermined discussions about her work. Almost without exceptions, her authorship has been studied in relation to her personal and other professional life. Wuolijoki's own autobiographical texts (Tervapää 1945; Wuolijoki 1945, 1947a, 1953)[61] have also inspired such readings. Her biographers (Lounela 1979a; Koski 1998; Kruus 1999; Koski 2000) have further enhanced this tendency, and formative readings of "her life and her work" have been articulated particularly in the memories of contemporary "witnesses", family members, directors, and cultural critics (Salmelainen 1954, 1957, 1972; Kurjensaari 1966; Laine 1973; Tuomioja 1997). Hella Wuolijoki's reputation as a leftist activist, her involvement in peace

61 It is noteworthy that new editions of Wuolijoki's biographies were published both in 1972–1973 and 1986–1987. See Wuolijoki 1972;Wuolijoki 1973; Wuolijoki 1986; Wuolijoki 1987.

negotiations during the Winter War (1939–1940), and her imprisonment during the Continuation War for treason have inspired commentary, polemic, and studies on her political radicalism (Laurila 1938; *Ahjo* 1938; Kangasniemi 1972; Koskinen 1974; Ervasti 1976; Ammondt 1978; Järvinen 1977; Karhu 1977) and on her activities in the field of foreign policy (Ammondt 1979a–b; Tuomioja 1979; Ervasti 1979; Lounela 1987; Heikkinen 1990). Likewise, Wuolijoki's period as the Director General of YLE during the post-war "years of danger" has prompted studies of her radio programming policy (Rouhiainen 1971; Koskinen 1974; Elo 1985; Virratvuori 1991; Laakkonen 1995; Oinonen 2001). Since late 1960s, her life and actions have been framed by women's history (Halpio-Huttunen 1972; Ervasti 1976; Niemi 1980; Heikkinen 1990), and, more recently, Wuolijoki and her literary oeuvre have been discussed in terms of Estonian background (Melberg 1996; Witt-Brattström 1997; Kruus 1999).

Finally, the last portion of my research material includes the Niskavuori films (see Appendix 1) and their manuscripts preserved in The Finnish Film Archive. The analysis of these films and manuscripts function as one context for my investigation. My readings of these films take place via their interpretive framings, which function as prompts for further contextual and narrative analysis. In this sense, my approach is not so much contextualizing as it is *re*-contextualizing; I single out individual scenes that have been evoked in narrative images (visual or verbal) and place them in a dialogue with other texts.

Not all of this material can be quoted within this book, although all categories of the research material will be referenced. The appendixes featuring the research material are meant to highlight the abundance and proliferation of the material as well as prompt further research.

Outline of the book

In this book, I have chose to discuss the vast empirical material and the long period in question through four figures or figurations that have circulated in the framings as key themes from the 1930s to the 1990s: *the archive*, *the monument-woman*, *the man-in-crisis*, and *sexual politics*. Underscoring the genealogical attitude and the deconstructive spirit of this study, the chapters focus on framings, images, themes, and discourses that are readily recognizable – "give-to-be-seen" – in the research material. In these figures, my critical reading and the interpretive legacies articulated in the research material meet. Through a re-reading of the citational legacies of the four figures I approach the cultural screen and its guiding logic of intelligibility. As I do so, I discuss many of the most explicit topics in review journalism and critical commentary surrounding Niskavuori (history/memory, gender, sexuality, class, and romance). While questions of authorship, stardom, and genre are discussed in passing over the course of this study, issues such as adaptation or the relationship between cinema and theatre escape the scope of this study. Each chapter moves between the 1930s and the 1990s, in either direction, but in a chronological fashion, attempting to bring forth the

reiterative work of interpretation and to create a sense of the temporality.

In the second chapter "The Archive – Niskavuori as Heritage, Heimat, and Museum", I investigate the framing of Niskavuori as *the archive*, as a figure of history and memory and their limits; as a figure of what is recognized as history and memory. The chapter concentrates on the different discourses and the politics of history and memory articulated in the promotional publicity, review journalism, and critical commentary surrounding Niskavuori films. In a genealogical manner, I start with the readings of "today", i.e., the diverse 1990s readings of Niskavuori films – in the context of television – as both nostalgic and official history. Investigating the interpretive legacies of these understandings, I proceed from the late 1990s to the mid-1930s. While the public framings of *Niskavuori* suggested a reading of the film in terms of heritage culture in 1984, *Aarne Niskavuori* 1954 and *Niskavuori Fights* 1957 were surrounded by rhetoric of memory and loss, and, following the framing of *Loviisa* in 1946, framed as Heimat films. *The Women of Niskavuori* (1938) was not proclaimed a historical film on its release. Only in the 1950s, it was framed as a historical document of the 1930s. I suggest, however, that both Heimat and Heritage discourses – and, indeed, of a nostalgic gaze – were already present in the 1930s cultural debates. I propose that the "pastness" in the framings of Niskavuori is also about the cinematic past: previous versions, other Niskavuori fictions, and other films.

In the third and fourth chapters, I focus on the gender logic of the cultural screen; on the theme of "strong women, weak men" which has circulated in the framings of Niskavuori films since the 1930s. In these chapters, I attempt to de-construct and re-contextualize this catchphrase of "the Finnish gender" by demonstrating the inherent instability and ambivalence of the two figures of gender that are evoked in the interpretive framings: "the monument-woman" and "the man-in-crisis". As titles of the chapters indicate, I focus my analysis on *figures* of gender, on the representational coordinates for making-meaning of bodies, identities, and desires.

In the third chapter "The Monument-Woman: Matron, Mother, Matriarch, and Monster", I examine the citational legacy of *the monument-woman*, i.e., ways in which the notion of the monument has operated as a gender performative since the 1930s. My focus is on the repetitive uses of the notions of the monument and monumentality in the readings of Loviisa Niskavuori. These readings, I argue, have articulated a cultural fiction I, here, term the monument-woman or, alternatively, the matron-mother. In this chapter, my interest lies in the question of force: from which discourses and legacies does the notion of the monument-woman, as an ambivalent and even disputed figure, draw its force, affective power, and effectiveness. I examine a variety of different contexts – discursive fields (modernity, nation, Christianity, agriculture, gender, family, and motherhood) and intertextual frameworks (theology, literature, literary criticism, folklore, women's associations, popular psychology, films, and star images) – which have been linked to the Niskavuori films and plays either via the notion of monument or through the frequent citations of "the matron of Niskavuori" as an intertextual framework in itself.

The fourth chapter "The Man-in-Crisis: From the Weak Man to the Subject

of History" traces the genealogy of "the weak man" focusing, again, on both the affective force and the ambivalence of this figuration. I start from the 1990s readings, in the review journalism and critical commentary, of *The Women of Niskavuori* (1938, 1958), *Aarne Niskavuori* (1954) and *Loviisa* (1946) as portrayals of "men in crisis". Tracing this figure and tracking its reiterations in a variety of intertextual frameworks (men's movement, sociological research, men's movement, films, novels, literary debates), I show how the 1990s notion of male trouble, in this sense, echoed the interpretive framings of the Niskavuori films since the 1930s. However, I argue that the figure of the man-in-crisis has been both enforced and overturned in the visual framings of the Niskavuori films that have eroticized and spectacularized the male protagonists. In this respect, the star image of Tauno Palo is a significant intertext. Furthermore, analyzing the visual pleasure and the underlying notions of a proper man/masculinity in the review journalism, I contrast these ideas with a recurrent urge, in the history of the framings, to "rehabilitate", liberate, and emancipate, the Niskavuori man. My reading will show how the urge to rehabilitate has followed from 1938 and the première of *The Bread of Niskavuori* to the 1950s leftist theatre productions and to the 1984 remake by Matti Kassila. It is precisely in relation to the ambivalent figure of the Niskavuori man that Akusti, the working-class male protagonist of *Heta Niskavuori*, was unanimously praised as "a proper man at last".

In the fifth chapter "The Sexual Politics: Passion, Repression and Transgression", I examine the figuration of *the sexual politics*. In this chapter, I focus on framings of the Niskavuori saga in terms of *sex as politics*. In other words, I trace the genealogy of a typical reading of romantic and sexual plots in Niskavuori films (and even plays) as allegorical of social conflicts and political struggles. Starting with an analysis of the 1980s–1990s readings of Niskavuori films in terms of the "repressive hypothesis" (Foucault 1978, 17–35), I proceed to close-read "the first reception" of the Niskavuori saga and the sexual politics articulated in the framings of the first Niskavuori play and film in 1936 and 1938 respectively. Besides sexuality and politics, the discursive fields discussed in this chapter include history and censorship. In the 1980s and 1990s, "Niskavuori" was framed as a representation of "the repressive past" both in sexual and political terms. Instances of film censorship were, together with the film narratives, posited as evidence of a past mentality of repression, and inter-war Finland was framed as "a Victorian age of our own". I this chapter, I show how the tropes of passion, repression, and transgression were, interestingly enough, employed as early as the 1950s leftist interpretations in the theatre context *and* in the 1930s right-wing readings of both the 1936 play and the 1938 film. The figures invoked and marginalized in this gendered, sexualized, and classed grammar of the nation include the hysterical wife (Martta), the sexualized maid (Malviina), and the eroticized male steward ("pehtoori"). As the repressive hypothesis insists that sex is not "just" sex, I conclude this genealogical reading by discussing framings of the Niskavuori films as soap opera which claims to be. The chapter closes with a note on authorship, which – in the case of Niskavuori films – is yet another site of contest. It, too, has also been articulated in terms of passion and politics, in terms of repression and transgression.

The sixth chapter features a brief closing discussion of the different citational legacies of Niskavuori investigated in the book and the melodramatic pleasures the Niskavuori fictions continue to provide.

The Archive – Niskavuori as Heritage and Heimat

> "The further the past recedes, the closer it becomes. Images, fixed on celluloid, stored in archives, and reproduced thousands of times, render the past ever-present. Gradually, but inexorably, these images have begun to supersede memory and experience. … Cinematic representations have influenced – indeed shaped – our perspectives on the past; they function for us today as a technological memory bank."
> Anton Kaes 1989, ix.

The persistence and force of "Niskavuori" as a locus of national imaginary, a particular figuration of the cultural screen, is dependent on a "history-effect".[1] Readings of Niskavuori fictions as depictions of "key moments" in Finnish history or as a "nation's" memory of "how-it-really-was" provide the foundation for their status as meta-texts of nation and gender. Indeed, since the 1980s public framings have frequently referred to Niskavuori films as "documents of social and cultural history", as "agrarian cultural history", or as "history of Finnishness"[2] However, they have not only been interpreted as *historical* articulations of "the 1930s" or "the 1950s", but also in terms of *memory*, as depictions of the "Finnish" "mental landscape" and the past of "all Finns".[3] In 2002, director Kaisa Korhonen explained the relevance of Niskavuori fictions in terms of their "psychological and historical information of Finland that can only be expressed through art":

1 Here, I paraphrase Roland Barthes's notion of "reality-effect" (*l'effet de réel*). See Barthes 1968/1986, 141–148.

2 *Treffi* 5.2.1998; *KU* 16.8.1986; *HS* 27.2.2002 (review of the Niskavuori marathon at the Seinäjoki City Theatre); "Viikolta valittua" Vko 28 06.–12.[7].1992; YLE/Tiedotus, TV2; 30.6.1992, 5 (pr-material on *Aarne Niskavuori*, screened prime-time on TV2 July 9th, 1992). In her dissertation on the formation of "historical consciousness" among Finnish young people, Sirkka Ahonen (1998, 56) discusses "public historical culture" as a framework and mentions Niskavuori films as "illustrating" the mentality of the 1950s, i.e., the beginning of the so-called great migration. Although she confuses a 1946 publicity still (Fig. 14) and a narrative located in the 1880s with a standard interpretation of the 1950s, Ahonen herself exemplifies a common indexical reading of Niskavuori films as symptomatic of Finnish history.

3 Viikolta valittua" Vko 29 13.–19.0[7].1992; YLE/Tiedotus, TV2; 30.6.1992, 4 (pr-material on *Niskavuori Fights*); *Katso* 25/1992, 4–5; see even Peter von Bagh's introductions to the 1992 TV screenings of Niskavuori films.

> "Finland and its history frame Hella Wuolijoki's Niskavuori plays. Her texts feature a great deal of experiential knowledge of being human that we carry in ourselves."[4]

In this manner, promotional publicity and review journalism have posited "Niskavuori" both as "that 'larger temporal spread we live and narrativize socially (rather than individually) as 'History' or 'histories'" (Sobchack 1996, 2) and as a national "memory bank", to quote Anton Kaes, a "characteristic chronotope of a national mentality" (Donald 1992, 52), and a Finnish *lieu de mémoire*, an "embodiment of a memorial consciousness" (Nora 1989, 12, 24). Moreover, in this manner, the public framings of Niskavuori films have challenged and defied the distinction historians have often suggested between memory and history, with the former understood as repetitive, emotional, arbitrary, and selective, and the latter defined in terms of critical distance and documented explanation (Zemon Davis & Starn 1989, 4; Nora 1989, 9).

Indeed, while many historians define history as "the professional organizing and contextualizing" of memory, others have questioned such an understanding of history as a meta-language (cf. Eley 1997, ix). In *Theatres of Memory*, Raphael Samuel (1994, x, 15) regards both history and memory as interrelated, present-bound, and future-oriented perceptions of the past: "The sense of the past, at any given point of time, is quite as much a matter of history as what happened in it (…) the two are indivisible". For Samuel, memory, "far from being merely a passive receptacle or storage system, an image bank of the past is, rather, an active, shaping force", which is "dialectically related to historical thought, rather than being some kind of negative to it". From his perspective, history is "an organic form of knowledge" which draws "not only on real-life experience but also memory and myth, fantasy and desire; not only the chronological past of the documentary record but also the timeless one of 'tradition'" (ibid., x).

As if to illustrate Samuel's argument, a 2002 review of the Niskavuori marathon at Seinäjoki City Theatre framed the plays as having "a national demand". It described how the audience, following "the journey of one generation from the 19th century language battles [between the Swedish and Finnish-speaking] to having an independent Fatherland, from a bitter civil war to peasant wealth", "fully identifies itself with the fates of the landowners" and gives standing ovation at hearing the Finlandia hymn by Jean Sibelius. The Niskavuori fiction appeared as an "organic form" of historical knowledge as the review invokes the European Union and its effects on agriculture as well as employs notions of the "mythical, almost Kalevalaic history of Finnishness", an "archaic Ur-Finnishness". The theatre review referred to state formation and law reforms as well as the 19th century national romanticism in costume design and music. Indeed, a sense of the past is an issue equally important as the events of the past, and one can note a similar overlapping of history and memory in the framings of Niskavuori films.[5]

4 *Pohjalainen* 10.1.2001 (pr-material on *Heta Niskavuori*); *Pohjalainen 9.2.2002* (pr-material on the Niskavuori marathon at the Seinäjoki City Theatre).

5 *HS* 27.2.2002 (review of the Niskavuori marathon at the Seinäjoki City Theatre).

Following Samuel, I focus, in this chapter, on the "senses" and "perceptions" of the past articulated in the interpretive framings of Niskavuori films, tracing the various discourses on history and memory that inform the citational legacies of the films and excavating the different "uses" of the films for history- and memory-making. (Cf. Knuuttila 1994, 17–27, passim; Landy 1996, 16–24.) Close-reading the rhetoric of the sources (promotional publicity, review journalism, and critical commentary), I ask what in the films has counted as history or how they have been framed in terms of memory, in which contexts and for what purposes. Borrowing from both Samuel and Marita Sturken (1997, 4), I regard history and memory not as opposites, but as two discourses of the past that are fundamentally intertwined. For Sturken, "cultural memory" is essential in the construction of history. Rather than oppositional, she argues, cultural memory and history are entangled; there is "so much traffic across the borders" that "it may be futile to maintain a distinction between them" (ibid., 5). She regards cultural memory as "a field of cultural negotiation through which different stories vie for a place in history", which she discusses as "a narrative that has in some way been sanctioned or valorized by institutional frameworks or publishing enterprises". (Ibid.,1–2).[6] It is produced "through objects, images, and representations", such as films and television programmes. "These", she states, "are technologies of memory, not vessels of memory in which memory passively resides so much as objects through which memories are shared, produced, and given meaning". (Ibid., 10.)

What I call the *archive* is comprised of the various "senses of the past", the different perceptions and uses of the past articulated in the discursive surround of Niskavuori films. It includes the different uses and functions of history and memory for which Niskavuori has been framed. Furthermore, it includes the citational legacies as part of which Niskavuori itself has become a signifier of "Finnish history" and "national memory". In this chapter, I argue that since the 1930s, the framings of the Niskavuori films have been characterized by a dual desire for the past. On the one hand, the films have been framed as an identity-narrative ("Heimat"), highlighting the continuity between the past and the present. Within this discourse, the past has been conceived in various, conflicting ways, but it has always been actualized for the present purposes of identity politics, whether in terms of nation, class, or gender. On the other hand, the framings of the Niskavuori films have continuously posited the past in terms of distance and loss, as a museal object of display, or as beautiful imagery to be admired from a distance ("Heritage"). This discourse of the past assumes and posits a distance, dispossession, and renunciation and can be characterized as a nostalgic or melancholic attitude towards the past, but the objects of these affects are often unclear and leave room for fantasy and imagination.

6 Raphael Samuel, however, operates with the notion of *popular memory*. See Samuel 1994, 6ff. Following both Samuel (1994) and Sturken (1997), I do not distinguish "collective" memory from "public" memory (Hartman 1993, 241–245) or "lived" memory from "imagined" memory (Huyssen 2000, 27).

In the word's conventional sense, an archive refers to a collection of traces and elements already recognized as worth remembering, preserving, and reactivating. In a sense, this meaning coincides with understanding history as a non-problematized account of the past. According to Pierre Nora's (1989, 13–14) usage, "archive" refers to modern memory, which he characterizes as fundamentally "archival" because of its absolute reliance on trace; the past is understood to be located in "the specificity of the trace, the materiality of the vestige, the correctness of the recording, the visibility of the image". Niskavuori films have been framed as historical evidence in this sense, as indexical and symptomatic representations of the past, as visible traces of their time and, in this chapter, I examine the ways they are interpreted as such. My interest lies in the performative work of the interpretive framings: how do films become recognized and cited as history or as "memory banks"? In formulating these questions, I use the notion of archive in a sense different from the way Nora does, as referring to different relationships to the past and conceptions of it, the various discourses of history and memory. For Michel Foucault (1991, 59–60), an archive does not imply a repository of traces (a memory bank) but, instead, the rules that govern discursive practices in a particular context, the regulation and negotiation of how the past is articulated, preserved, represented, reactivated, and appropriated.[7] (Cf. Nash & Neale 1977/1978, 77–78.) Jacques Derrida (1996, 1) formulates a similar idea of the archive as "at once the *commencement* and the *commandment*". Like Foucault he, too, conceives of the archive as both enabling and regulatory. In this chapter, I suggest that as the archive, Niskavuori is more than "a repertoire of ideologically differentiating images". While it encompasses "the images by means of which a given society articulates authoritative vision", it also determines "the representational coordinates" for "how the members of our culture see" (Silverman 1996, 135–136, 221). The archive, then, is about methods of apprehending temporalities and constructing histories.

Starting my investigation from the televisual age and proceeding towards the 1930s, I trace the genealogy of the Niskavuori films as an archive, asking how notions of history (political, social, mental, cultural, etc.) and memory have been employed, in different framings, as a framework that creates meaning for the films. Furthermore, I ask how Niskavuori films have been framed to articulate conceptions of history and memory. This chapter consists of four cases in which I investigate how the interpretive framings have created an identity for the Niskavuori films as forms of history or memory. In the first section, I look at the framings of the Niskavuori films as history in the televisual age. While television has often been theorized as a medium destroying history-as-identity, I argue for a different reading by tracing the versions of history attributed to Niskavuori films within and by

7 In *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, Foucault (1972, 129–131) underlines that "it is not possible for us to describe our own archive, since it is from within these rules that we speak". My whole project takes a different view, closer to Foucault's later historical studies – e.g., *The History of Sexuality* – emphasizing the relations between knowledge and power, and enabling self-reflexive excavation of the politics of cultural memory: how is "my"/"our" archive constituted? Cf. Berlant 1997.

television. Second, I investigate the latest Niskavuori film, *Niskavuori* (1984) arguing that its framings in promotional publicity and review journalism connected to two larger discursive fields and intertextual frameworks. While it coincided with the European trend of heritage cinema and the concurrent debate on history and heritage, it also connected with the topical debate on postmodernism in the art scene and in cultural theory. In the third section, I scrutinize the post-war framings of *The Women of Niskavuori* (1958), *Niskavuori Fights* (1957), *Aarne Niskavuori* (1954), *Heta Niskavuori* (1952), and *Loviisa* (1946). In readings of *Niskavuori Fights*, history and memory were distinguished not only to mark interpretive differences, but also to implicate a national audience for the film. Whereas the framings of *Aarne Niskavuori* as a Heimat film emphasized landscape imagery and folkloric elements, both *Heta Niskavuori* and *Loviisa* were read in terms of grand narratives. In the fourth section, I locate the issue of history and memory in the context of the first Niskavuori film, *The Women of Niskavuori*, doing a close-reading of the 1930s debates concerning modernity, history, cinema culture, and the new agendas for "ethnological film". While the framings of the television age and the post-war era posited the 1930s as the agrarian past to be retrieved or remembered, I would argue that even in the 1930s, the agrarian world was always-already a question of retrieval, remembrance, and representation. In sum, then, this chapter discusses interpretive framings that have evoked the discursive fields of memory, history, identity and nation by drawing on a variety of intertextual frameworks (heritage film, Heimat film, family photography, landscape photography, tourism, popular music, historiography, ethnology).

Anathema to history? Niskavuori in the televisual age

For many scholars, television appears as an "anathema to history" (White 1997, 129; cf. Dienst 1994, 69). According to Stephen Heath (1990, 279), for instance, "television produces forgetfulness, not memory, flow, not history". The specificity of TV as a medium has been repeatedly located in liveness, immediacy, simultaneity, and present-ness (Heath & Skirrow 1977, 54; Feuer 1983, 13–14; Ellis 1985, 135; Sorlin 1999, passim). Furthermore, in analyses of "the postmodern condition", television has served to embody the Zeitgeist, i.e., the aesthetics of simulation that breaks down the distinctions between objects and their representations, between the imaginary and real. (Jameson 1985, 125.) Within television, according to this post-industrial logic, "[h]istory [also] dissolves into a self-referential sign system cut loose from experience and memory" (Kaes 1992, 317; Baudrillard 1983, 2–3). In this way, television is seen as promoting "detemporalized subjectivities" (Friedberg 1993, 2) and even feature films are considered at risk. According to Geoffrey Nowell-Smith (1990, 166–168), films risk losing their historicity and contextual specificity when displayed on the "single boundless surface from which the dimensions of depth and historical time have been banished".

The televisual modes of historicity and temporality that television in its different contexts and constellations constructs and promotes have attracted

few scholars and there is little empirical work (McArthur 1980; White 1989; Sorlin 1998b; 1999; Anderson 2000).[8] Based on my research on the TV screenings of the Niskavuori films, however, I find Nowell-Smith's argument concerning the fate of the feature films problematic. Singular films may lose their status as individual "works" in overall TV programming. In addition, the proliferation of Finnish TV channels and programme time in the course of the 1990s and the concurrent increase in the number of Finnish films in the programming may contribute to a sense that the films have a less important status.[9] Since the mid-1980s, the Niskavuori films have also been increasingly framed in terms of their intrigues and affective impacts as soap operas or serial melodramas in international style.[10] At the same time, however, the Niskavuori films, among many other old Finnish films, have been framed rather persistently as representations of Finnish history and as audiovisual evidence of the past. In fact, one could argue that, if anything, television has enhanced and fortified the notion of cinema as a document. The summer of 1992, when six Niskavuori films were broadcast prime time on television and four radio plays (each in two or three parts) were sent on radio, is indicative of this aspect of television.

Versions of history

In 1992, review journalism offered several readings of Niskavuori in terms of history. To begin with, Niskavuori films were framed as historical epics capturing Finnish history "from the breakthrough of peasantry at the end of the 1880s to the Continuation War".[11] This interpretation foregrounded the diegetic framing of the family history with references to the events of *political history*: Fennomanian nationalism, the Civil War, Second World War, governments, and parliamentary decisions. Hence, history was understood as public events on the level of the nation-state. For example, in 1992, framings of the Niskavuori films raised the topical issue of European political and economic integration. The current historical and political context brought a new dimension to viewing *Loviisa* featuring the theme of the 19th century Fennomanian nationalism. In the film, Juhani Niskavuori is elected a member of the Diet as a representative of the peasantry, and two known Fennomanian politicians, Yrjö Sakari Yrjö-Koskinen and Agathon Meurman, visit the Niskavuori farm.[12]

8 In 2000, the journal *Film & History* published two issues (vol. 30, issues 1–2) on "Television as Historian".

9 During 1958, a total of 64 feature films were broadcast, 25 of them Finnish. The popularity of domestic films within programming has, however, sustained over the decades: the number of Finnish films screened on television has increased from an average of 44 in the 1960s to 140–150 films per year in the 1990s. Statistics by Kari Uusitalo; Uusitalo 1975, 266–268.

10 See Chapter 5.

11 *Katso* 25 (15.–21.6.)1992, 70.

12 *Katso* 25/1992, 71. For a connection between the Niskavuori story and European integration, see also *HS* 23.7.1992; *Pellervo* 19–20/1993; ***Apu* XX.6.1992**; *Katso* 25/1992; *HS* 31.3.1998. For readings of *Loviisa* which highlight the political history as a backdrop for the story, see also *Ssd* 5.3.1977; *Katso* 43 (25.–31.10.) 1982.

If framings as political history foregrounded the background, linking the film with a grand historical narrative, so did the interpretations of the Niskavuori films as *social history*. In addition, this second type of history connoted linear developments over a long period. These readings focused on the central thematic conflicts that propel the film narration and interpreted them as symptomatic of a larger social framework. For instance, in 1992, the Niskavuori films were framed as portrayals of modernization depicting the dissolution of the countryside "in the rupture caused by urbanization".[13] In addition, *Loviisa* was marketed, in a Finnish Broadcasting Company press release, as a "depiction of class society" where "the affairs of the Niskavuori family intertwine with a portrayal of contemporary Finnish society".[14] The same framing was evident in review journalism as the film series was framed in relation to the assumed intentions of the author: "Wuolijoki's idea was to depict the erosion of the old class system in its own aristocracy. Decade by decade the rural gentry blends into the people, but the land persists and the events of history are discernible in the background."[15] In the 1980s, *Loviisa* was read as a social historical narrative in this sense. "In the spirit of Wuolijoki", the film was thought to "deliver" "historical information about the social development in Finland during that time" so that besides the family history "the common issues of the nation are also considered".[16] Moreover, the interpretations of Niskavuori as illustrating social history had emerged already in the 1970s when, for example, both *Aarne Niskavuori* and *Heta Niskavuori* were framed as portraying the history of "sexual morals" and "social layers" respectively.[17] Interestingly, in 1972, *Heta Niskavuori* was framed as women's history as "the Niskavuori series" was read as a representation of "the position of woman in Finnish society".[18] The readings of Niskavuori as both class and women's history have served to frame Niskavuori as a form of counter-history in opposition to the dominant national narrative of unity and consensus.

Furthermore, in 1992 a TV magazine presented the series of Niskavuori films as documenting the *history of Finnish mentality*: "Even in the Finland of the 1950s, the Niskavuori estate with its cows and horses was still the reality. Land was highly valued and it would not have occurred to anybody to take acreage out of cultivation." This framing was backed up by interviews with female actors who in the 1950s had appeared in the Niskavuori films. For example, Rauni Luoma (Heta in *Heta Niskavuori* 1952, Loviisa in *Niskavuori* 1984) said that she "had spent a lot of time in the countryside" and "knew that it was just like that". Likewise, Miriami Novero (Siipirikko in *Heta Niskavuori*) praised the depiction of Finns and "Häme people", referring to her own background.[19] These "witness" statements echoed, for instance, the

13 *Katso* 25/1992, 71.
14 "Viikolta valittua" Vko 25 15.–21.06.1992; YLE/Tiedotus, TV 2; 8.6.1992, 3 (pr-material on *Loviisa*).
15 *HS* 18.6.1992.
16 *HS* 2.8.1986; *HS* 30.10.1982. See also *Katso* 31 (28.7.–3.8)1986; *Ssd* 30.10.1982.
17 *HS* 18.8.1978; *Katso* 32/1978 (7.–13.8.1978); *Maaseudun Tulevaisuus* 11.8.–10.9.1978.
18 *HS* 7.2.1972. For framings of *Heta Niskavuori* as class history, see *TS* 25.6.1992; *KU* 25.6.1992; *Demari* 25.6.1992; *Katso* 26–27 (22.6.–5.7.) 1992; *KU* 9.8.1986.

1970s readings of a newspaper supporting the policies of the Central Union of Agricultural Producers and the Centre Party. In its columns, both *Loviisa* and *Heta Niskavuori* were read, above all, in terms of a Finnish and peasant mentality and with reference to political and social history. In these framings, as well as in the 1992 TV magazine, the fictitious world and standard versions of national history merged with personal, lived histories.[20] This reading of Niskavuori as the history of mentality was articulated earlier. For example, in 1964 the films were described as "sovereign representations of Finnish milieu and mentality", and in 1972 as having "evidential power as a depiction of the national character".[21]

In yet another kind of historical framing, the Niskavuori films have been read as *cultural history* featuring characters and settings typical of the depicted era. In 1992, *Niskavuori Fights* was framed as historical in this sense: "The Niskavuori films give a picture of the Finnish natural and mental landscape as well as Finnish customs."[22] Historicality, here, referred to photographic indexicality, the history of mentality, and cultural history ("customs"). The notion of "cultural historical value" was, in the 1970s and 1980s, often used in the framings of *Loviisa*, *The Women of Niskavuori,* and *Heta Niskavuori* referring mainly to agrarian and especially peasant culture.[23] In a 1970 interview of a film historian, old Finnish films were framed as "documents of cultural history". He attributed the documentary quality to photographic technology, to the recording and to the indexical nature ascribed to cinematic representations. From this perspective, films were seen "by their nature" to "capture more of the reality than books, for instance, do". The old films were seen to "display clearly" "the changes of the society". It was concluded that "the attitudes of each age [were] more clearly visible in the films than in history-writing".[24] The importance of the "photographic truth" was exhibited in the repetitive readings of the 1958 version of *The Women of Niskavuori* as anachronistic and hence "failed" history.[25] While the story is set in the 1930s, the decor of the film with imagery of modernized agriculture represents the 1950s. Also when broadcast in 1993, the film was framed as anachronistic: "the contradiction between the lines and the decor is too flagrant".[26]

Whereas the interpretations of Niskavuori as cultural history have

19 *Katso* 25/1992, 4–5.

20 *Maaseudun Tulevaisuus* 10.3.1977; *Maaseudun Tulevaisuus* 15.8.1978.

21 *Keskipohjanmaa* 1.4.1964 on *Niskavuori Fights*; *Savon Sanomat* 9.2.1972 on *Heta Niskavuori*.

22 "Viikolta valittua" Vko 29 13.–19.0[7].1992; YLE/Tiedotus, TV2; 30.6.1992, 4. (pr-material on *Niskavuori Fights*). These press releases reiterated a reading published in *Filmihullu* 7–8/1979.

23 *Katso* 9/1977; *IS* 30.10.1982 (on *Loviisa*). See even *KU* 16.8.1986 (*The Women of Niskavuori* 1938); *Ssd* 1.8.1975; *Kaleva* 1.8.1975; *Katso* 32/1978 (7.–13.8.1978); *KU* 9.8.1986 (on *Heta Niskavuori*).

24 Sakari Toiviainen in Peltonen 1970, *Antenni* 2/1970, 4–5.

25 See, for instance, *Katso* 36 (3.9.–9.9.1967), *Katso* 4 19.1–25.1.1981. In 1981, this film, too, was framed as a "realistic depiction of rural life" *HS* 24.1.1981. Many of the remakes of 1930s films were criticized of being anachronistic, see Kivimäki 1998, 67. See even Chapter 5.

26 *Hyvinkään Sanomat* 16.2.1993; *Katso* 7/1993.

emphasized indexicality as the key feature of historicality, the framings of the Niskavuori films as political, social, and mental history have all, even in different ways, adhered to the sociological-psychological approach to cinema Siegfried Kracauer introduced in his *From Caligari to Hitler* (1947). Famously, Kracauer argued that, with the benefit of hindsight, Expressionistic cinema could be read as a depiction of the German mentality and used to explain the rise of National Socialism. This interpretive framing assumed a correspondence between social and cultural phenomena, national mentality, and aesthetic – not a photographic realism (Petro 1983, 51). Kracauer-like readings of the Niskavuori films as indicative of a Zeitgeist have been very common. In 1992, this interpretive route was employed, for example, in TV introductions to *The Women of Niskavuori* (1938) which was understood to exhibit "how the countryside was understood at the very moment". Accordingly, the TV introduction concluded, "cinema audiences in the countryside and in towns went to see the events of their own time".[27] What is characteristic of this interpretive strategy is its focus, to different degrees, on implicit meanings "beneath" the explicit narrative surface. In this "symptomatic" reading (cf. Bordwell 1989, 71–78), a new text is constructed, one which is framed as a hidden level. Such performative readings include the interpretations of the Niskavuori films in terms of whatever-is-seen-missing, in relation to forms of extra-cinematic knowledge. (Cf. Chapter 5.) For example, in 1992, *Niskavuori Fights* was framed as defective history both in Finnish Broadcasting Company press releases and in many reviews since the plot of the film disguises the fact that the character of Juhani Mattila is a conscientious objector.[28] Hence, the film was framed as a narrative in which the "real" history, the portrait of a wartime dissident, was hidden. This reading of *Niskavuori Fights* has been repeated since the 1960s broadcastings and the première in 1957.[29] In 1992, the "dilution" of political history and avoidance of political conflicts was also read as symptomatic of the time of its release, the late 1950s.[30] While pointing to the "absence" of history within the film, these readings simultaneously produced a historical frame that has become

27 *Pieni johdatus elokuvaan* 2.7.1992 TV2. For a description of Vaala's direction as "the history of contemporary thought", see also von Bagh 2000, 20. Kracauer's influence is visible even in *Suomalaisen elokuvan kultainen kirja* ("The Golden Book of Finnish Cinema") in which von Bagh (1992) writes about "the national state of mind etched on the celluloid". For Finnish films as "a mirror of culture" and on the "euphemisms" and "evasions" in their representation of history (avoiding "the responsibility of chronicling history") as "integral and symptomatic", see von Bagh 2000, 5–6. For a reading of the 1950s Finnish cinema as testifying to the 1950s mentality, see von Bagh 1994, 189–190.

28 "Viikolta valittua" Vko 29 13.–19.06.1992; YLE/Tiedotus, TV 2; 30.6.1992, 4 (pr-material on *Niskavuori Fights*). The press release was reproduced, for example, in *ESS* 16.7.1992; *Kaleva* 16.7.1992; *Savon Sanomat* 16.7.1992. See also *Demari* 16.7.1992; *Hyvinkään Sanomat* 16.7.1992; *KU* 16.7.1992; Katso 29 (13.–19.7.)1992; *TS* 16.7.1992.

29 See *Katso* 13 (29.3.–4.4.) 1964; *Katso* 39 (18.–24.9.)1972; *Etelä-Saimaa* 26.9.1972; *Antenni* 38 (18.–24.9.)1972; *Katso* 37 (11.–17.9.)1978; *HS* 16.9.1978; *KU Viikkolehti* 30.8.1986; *HS* 30.8.1986; *Hämeen Yhteistyö* 29.8.1986; *Katso* 35 (25.–31.8.) 1986. In the 1980s, *Loviisa* was also framed as a film that – while providing visible evidence of the past – does not tell "the whole story". See *Katso* 43/1982 (25.–31.10.1982); *IS* 2.8.1986.

30 *KU* 16.7.1992.

a permanent part of the film itself. Even framings that posited Niskavuori films as "national-romantic pathos" brought in a historical, symptomatic reading which referred to the plays or to author's intentions.[31] It seems, then, that the historicity of the Niskavuori films has in no way been threatened on television, at least not by the early 1990s. On the contrary, the films have been repeatedly framed as saturated with the history of the Finnish nation-state and the key elements of national identity formation: political, social, cultural and mental, dominant, and counter-histories.

In the context of television, the "historicality" has been located in narrative elements, in photography as a mode of recording, and in implicit meanings highlighted by reviewers. As for the intermedial Niskavuori story even other devices for producing the history-effect have been employed. In the context of theatre, the use of rhetorical devices in programme leaflets has performed the sense of history. By the 1980s, it had become convention to endow the programme leaflets of the Niskavuori plays with time charts displaying Hella Wuolijoki's life course and literary production. The leaflets often featured reminiscences about Hella Wuolijoki from her family (Vappu Tuomioja, her daughter) or her contemporaries (director Eino Salmelainen and writers Pekka Lounela and Matti Kurjensaari), emphasizing the biographical framing and that of the author, at the same time, the reality-effect. In the 1980s, time charts also emerged to represent the landmarks of Finnish history. In some cases, the time of "history" (Finland) and the time of "fiction" (Niskavuori) were explicitly intertwined. In others, it was merely suggested by placing them side by side. As a third rhetorical device, the trope of the family tree appeared to clarify kin and represent the time of the family.[32]

Programme leaflets also featured quotes from scholarly sources, mainly from Jukka Ammondt and Raoul Palmgren. Both Ammondt's 1979 dissertation on the ideologies of the Niskavuori plays and Palmgren's introduction to the 1979 collection featuring all Niskavuori plays, in addition to Palmgren's 1984 history of oppositional literature, have been used to read "Niskavuori" as history. It seems that Raoul Palmgren's (1979, 9–10) edition of the Niskavuori plays has been especially significant. By publishing the plays in a chronological order according to the story-time, instead of arranging them in order of the publishing date, Palmgren highlighted their "sense and knowledge of history". This way, he emphasized "the view that, in social and cultural historical terms, the series of plays is exceptionally broad and representative" (ibid., 9). The time of Niskavuori, in Palmgren's (ibid., 10) reading, featured all crucial nodes in the agrarian history: nationalism and the language conflict between Swedish and Finnish-speaking groups, the

31 For instance, *Hbl* 2.7.1992.

32 See, for example, programme leaflets for *Heta Niskavuori* in Kemi City Theatre Kemin Kaupunginteatteri, (TeaM: käsiohjelmat 1982: 44–1), Hämeenlinna City Theatre (Hämeenlinnan Kaupunginteatteri ,TeaM: käsiohjelmat 1985), Lahti City Theatre (Lahden Kaupunginteatteri,TeaM: käsiohjelmat 1987), and Pori Theatre (Porin Teatteri,TeaM: käsiohjelmat 1989); for *The Young Matron of Niskavuori* in Turku City Theatre (Turun Kaupunginteatteri ,TeaM: käsiohjelmat 1984) and Lahti City Theatre (Lahden Kaupunginteatteri, TeaM: käsiohjelmat 1987), and for *The Women of Niskavuori* in Tampere Theatre (Tampereen teatteri ,TeaM: käsiohjelmat 1997).

economic rise of the peasantry in the early 20th century, the Crofters' Act, and the post-war Land Acquisition Act. Palmgren framed the plays as historical traces of the 1930s mentality, explaining the popularity and success of the plays with this "cultural-social" quality:

> "[I]t is apparent that, in the first Niskavuori plays, something essential about the 1930s atmosphere was captured: in *The Women of Niskavuori* the early 1930s conservative, self-complacent, gossipy mentality of the parish (even though the Lapua movement or Mäntsälä rebellion are never even mentioned), and in *The Bread of Niskavuori* the optimistic early stage of Cajander's so called red-soil government." (Palmgren 1984a, 115.)

Hence, while framing the plays as Marxist-socialist history, revelatory of the oppressing structures, Palmgren also read them as allegories of political development. This symptomatic reading as of the Niskavuori family saga as a political allegory was reiterated in 1979 in the context of cinema, as *Filmihullu*-magazine published an essay that performed a reading of the plot by focusing on the men of Niskavuori as subjects of history (cf. Chapter 4):

> "Aarne might be a social democrat who deserts bourgeois society (*The Women of Niskavuori*), returns to the government (*The Bread of Niskavuori*), is frustrated, and gets killed in the war whereas Juhani, the communist, moves from being an outlaw to the reins of the stateship.""[33]

In this framing, the romantic plots, too, acquired new meanings as Juhani's dilemma in *Loviisa* is read as a social democrat's "choice between communism (Malviina) and capitalism (Loviisa) or between opposition to peace and official state politics".[34] (Cf. Chapter 5) On the one hand, this *allegorical* interpretation performed a symptomatic reading as it produced a new text. On the other hand, it simultaneously revealed distrust in indexicality typical of post-war film criticism where "old Finnish films" were usually framed as void of the history *proper*. Within 1970s–1980s modernist and Marxist traditions of film criticism, old Finnish cinema was usually thought to be of interest "merely" in terms of "sociology of film and cultural history". "We should not turn to the cinema for a picture of Finnish society during this century", critics maintained.[35] Unlike in the television reviews cited above, cultural history was here not considered history proper – a category reserved for "courageous", i.e., oppositional, depictions of society.[36] In other words, in this identity seeking framing, "cultural history" was identified as a superficial discourse, a surface, to be distrusted.[37]

33 Varjola 1979, 22.

34 Ibid.

35 Toiviainen 1975, 27; Malmberg 1975, 10.

36 See, for example, Malmberg 1975, 10.

37 In 1981, Markku Koski wrote that as an alternative to approaches evaluating Finnish film in terms of artistic quality there has been what he characterizes as an "understanding", "cultural historical", "sociological", "humanistic", and "emphatetic" way of seeing mass cultural products. See Koski 1981, 142. He has even argued that both in politics and in cinema, the tense is "an eternal now, a hysteric and ahistorical situation" (Koski 1983,

Television as a history machine

In my analysis, television as an apparatus has contributed to the framing of the Niskavuori films as history in at least three different ways: through the programme structure, through television's own mode of historicality based on citationality and seriality, and through scheduling. Television has provided the films with a context different from the cinema culture of earlier decades. In the TV programme charts, Finnish films have appeared in a context of both multinational entertainment and national public service television where historical discourses abound, as television uses history in many ways in fiction films, serials, documentaries, and newscasts. In these different versions, history is estimated to make up one-fifth of the TV programming. (Sorlin 1998b, 210.)

Furthermore, television programming has, since the 1960s, made extensive use of archival film footage as quotation and fragmentation have been the dominant modes of televisual historicality (cf. Samuel 1994, 13; Sorlin 1998b, 214; Snickars 1999).[38] Niskavuori films, among other feature films, have been cited as the indecixal illustration of "the past". Indeed, the Finnish Broadcasting Company literally founded its cinematic memory bank or archive in 1963 by acquiring the rights of all its 220 feature films from Suomen Filmiteollisuus (SF) and by buying a large amount of short films and newsreels from three other companies (Filmi-Kuva Oy, Lii-Filmi, Filmimies).[39] Since the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s, in particular, not only documentary, but also fictitious film footage has been recycled as illustrative material. Niskavuori films, for instance, have been cited in various programmes to represent political history (nationalism, the Civil War, Finland before EU-membership), economic history (agriculture, telecommunications, division of inheritance), social history (class relations, rural depopulation, unions), women's history (images of women, premarital sex), and cultural history (reading newspapers, clothing, trotting, architecture). (See Appendix 8.) As an archive of the past, the Niskavuori footage has also been cited for educational purposes. In 1993, for instance, a school TV -programme on the Finnish national TV network discussed Finland's historically divergent positioning in relation to European economic and political integration. In this programme, archival documentary footage from anti-EEC-demonstrations in the early 1970s was contrasted with inserts showing President Mauno Koivisto and Prime Minister Esko Aho signing the Finnish application for EU membership. An academic expert's commentary on political history was illustrated with the closing of scene of *Loviisa* (1946) in which two key figures in Fennomanian nationalistic movement at the end of the 19th century,

5).

38 According to Pierre Sorlin (1998b, 214) "television is self-referential and self-representative; it does not stop recalling its own past". Sorlin describes television history as fragmentary; it "easily jumps from films to stills and from immediate interviews to past conversations and speeches". Raphael Samuel (1994, x) writes of the historian's labour as "a matter of quotation, imitation, borrowing and assimilation".

39 Uusitalo 1965, 67–68.

are shown to arrive at Niskavuori farm for a visit.[40] Also in Peter von Bagh's documentary series *Oi, kallis Suomenmaa* (*Oh, dear Finland* 1998) on Finnish history, commissioned by the Finnish Broadcasting Company in 1997 for the 80th anniversary of Finnish independence, Niskavuori was framed as a counter-image of European integration. Quotes from the opening sequence of *Aarne Niskavuori* (1954) were inserted into interview footage featuring historians, journalists, and philosophers who discuss the meaning of EU membership for the Finnish farmers.[41] Recurrently Niskavuori films have often been cited as signifying the agrarian past or countryside in general. For example, in 1993, a news programme discussed a government action plan to fight unemployment in rural areas. In its image track, it interwove interviews, graphics, and other journalistic material with scenes from *Aarne Niskavuori*.[42]

As a further history-making move, television has rearranged the Niskavuori films into a dramatic serial, with the serial narrative as the dominant dramatic TV format (Caughie 2000, 205). That the serial form has a major history-effect (cf. Ang 1985, 52; White 1994, 340) was evident in 1992 as the promotional publicity foregrounded it by underlining that "the films will be broadcast in a story-based chronological order". This assertion was also reiterated in most reviews.[43] While the Niskavuori plays had been reorganized into a series on the radio as early as the 1950s, it was not until 1986 that the films were broadcast on TV as a linear narrative, making the long time-span of the story visible and emphasizing the sense of historical continuity.[44] (See Appendix 2.) Previously, the lack of chronology (and the history-effect resulting from linearity) had been brought up in many reviews from the 1960s onwards.[45] While Wuolijoki had often been praised for having truthfully captured "the moment" and the "changes in the atmosphere" of each period, the lack of chronology had been repeatedly lamented:

> "As close as the Niskavuori story may feel to us, the picture it conveys of the development of the Finnish countryside and of the whole society from the 1880s to the post-war era may have remained inaccurate to many (…) No matter how admirably the Finnish film has presented the Niskavuori estate, it has only brought the land-bound fate to the silver screen in a fragmented manner. The fate that joins the generations together and the view of the key

40 TV1 (Koulu-tv) *N.Y.T* "EY, ETA ja Suomi" 5.2.1993.

41 *Oi kallis Suomenmaa* (29.11.1998, TV1 Ykkösdokumentti)

42 *TV Nytt* 20.10.1993.

43 "Viikolta valittua" Vko 25 15.–21.06.1992; YLE/Tiedotus, TV 2; 8.6.1992, 3 (pr-material on Loviisa); *Pieni johdatus elokuvaan* TV 2 18.6.1992; *Demari* 18.6.1992; *Hyvinkään Sanomat* 18.6.1992; *Hbl* 2.7.1992; *TS* 9.7.1992.

44 For framings of *Loviisa* as launching "the series", see *Suomenmaa* 1.8.1986; *Hyvinkään Sanomat* 2.8.1986; *HS* 2.8.1986; *TS* 2.8.1986; *IS* 2.8.1986; *AL* 2.8.1986; *KSML* 2.8.1986; *KU* 2.8.1986; *ESS* 2.8.1986; *Pohjalainen* 2.8.1986; *Kaleva* 2.8.1986. When TV2 produced new Niskavuori TV films in 1987, they were also broadcast in similar. See *AL* 5.12.1987; *KU* 5.12.1987; *SaKa* 6.12.1987; *TS* 6.12.1987.

45 For reviews of the 1960s and 1970s, see *Katso* 43 (25.10.–31.10.)1964; *Katso* 4 (26.1.–1.2.) 1964; *Antenni* 14 (3.–9.4.1972); *Katso* 7/1972; *IS* 1.8.1975; *Katso* 9 (28.2.–6.3.) 1977.

breakpoints of our society that is interlaced within the plays have only rarely been depicted in film."[46]

In this sense, the serial form enabled by television was framed, explicitly or implicitly, as clarifying and "perfecting" the historicity of the Niskavuori films by bringing the historical sense of continuity into the relief. By rearranging the films into a serial "family saga", television brought "personal time into line with historical time" (cf. Samuel 1994, 13).

With reference to contemporary television programming, one promotional article called the summer of 1992 "the summer of nostalgia", suggesting, hence, a discourse of remembrance. The seasonal programming featured, as usual, reruns of old TV series and films, including film series featuring the two most notable Finnish film families of the classical era (the 1930s–1950s), the Suominens and the Niskavuoris, and the rerun of German TV series *Heimat* (1984) focusing on the themes of "lost time, memories, and nostalgia", as well as "change, development, and different ways of recording and remembering history".[47] Furthermore, earlier the same year a new Finnish family drama serial, the *Metsolas* had attracted record-breaking audiences. Cultural critics explained the popularity of the *Metsolas*, the drama series featuring a small farm family in eastern Finland, in psycho-historical terms with reference to the ongoing drastic economic depression and mass unemployment. In Veijo Hietala's (1995, 14–17) analysis, for example, the *Metsolas* was "the great Finnish pastoral of the 1990s" providing a therapeutic environment for "the nation" in "a time of crisis and change". Hence, Hietala interpreted the series as a psychohistorical allegory seeing the Metsolas and their family estate in Leppävaara as "a miniature Finland" where topical themes of crisis and new beginning were staged in an agrarian setting. According to this interpretation, the series provided viewers with a nostalgia trip with a therapeutic agenda: "with the *Metsolas*, the Finns wandered collectively and hand in hand back home – home to the mother". (Ibid.) Hietala (1996, 128–129) associated the *Metsolas* with what he identified as a larger trend in television of "rural nostalgia" which functioned in a similar manner and comprised many 1990s drama series. In this category, he included a variety of TV productions from *Heimat* and *Zweite Heimat* (Germany), *Le Château des oliviers* (France), and *Darling Buds of May* (UK) to *Twin Peaks*, *Northern Exposure* and *Picket Fences* (US).[48] From this perspective (in particular, in relation to the popularity and publicity surrounding the *Metsolas* in the spring of 1992), a discourse of history as roots and origin framed the reruns of the Niskavuori films. Here, the elision between the many objects of nostalgia – the agrarian as "the pastoral", "the golden past", "home", and "the mother" – implied a discourse of history as fantasy and therapy.[49] While in review journalism the Niskavuori films were read as featuring "a basic Häme-quality with

46 *Pellervo* 10/1986, 51–52.
47 *TS* 15.6.1992.
48 Elsewhere Hietala (1997) discusses many of these series as postmodern representations of countryside.
49 For therapeutic interpretations of rural themes, see also Ruohonen 1995, 160.

the scent of rye", this discourse on roots and origin itself was framed as a generic activity: "the fans who loved the Heimat genre will have their souls refreshed".[50]

While many theorists have regarded television as a medium of immediacy, for film historian Pierre Sorlin (1998b, 214), television as a medium is "self-referential and self-representative" and it "does not stop recalling its own past". Re-runs of old TV programmes and feature films represent this citational and reiterative mode of televisual history, and underline the centrality of TV as a site for cultural memory, as the site for the "negotiation through which different stories vie for a place in history" (Sturken 1997, 1). The complexity of the politics of cultural memory in television was illustrated by the 1992 framings of the Niskavuori story. The publicity surrounding the launch of four new radio plays characterized the Niskavuori story as cultural memory of the "older generations", as "the nation's common memory", and as public and institutional commemorative acts whereby the National Broadcasting Company celebrated the 75th anniversary of independence.[51] There have been plenty of commemorative occasions, anniversaries, and jubilees in the national public television network, and both as radio plays, TV movies, and feature films, the Niskavuori story has been recurrently employed for these purposes.[52] Commemorative framings have provided the story with repeated public recognition institutionalizing it as cultural heritage. In addition, the films have been repeatedly positioned as "mnemonic aids" (Sturken 1997, 8) for viewers, the citizens, to relate to the political, social, mental, and cultural public histories articulated in the films. Nevertheless, commemorative activities are not only a "means of generating consensus" or a "weapon of social control", also sites of contest and struggle. (Samuel 1994, 17; Gillis 1994, 5; Nora 1998, 609ff.) In a 1987 commentary on the new TV movies, different aspects of public, private, and cultural memory became evident, as did reflexivity about the object:

> "As we are about to conclude this anniversary of independence, the Niskavuori series comes and passes, as living images, through our consciousness. Niskavuori is Finland, its fundamentally agrarian world of lands and houses, crofters, farm maids, and labourers. It is a sort of Pentinkulma or Jukola. I mean, sort of, at any rate, it is western Finland. (…) Hella Wuolijoki's Niskavuori has become institutionalized and its performances will never come to an end."[53]

50 *Demari* 16.7.1992; *Hbl* 23.7.1992. For 1998 screenings, see *AL* 25.2.1998. On "nostalgic smiling" at the Niskavuori films in *Savon Sanomat* 20.9.1972; in relation to the 1987 TV films, see *AL* 5.12.1987.

51 "Radioteatterin Niskavuori-sarja Ylen Ykkösessä alkaa sunnuntaina 28.6.1992", Lehdille lähetettyä 1.6.–30.6.1992. YLE press release dated 4.6.1992. For framings in terms of commemoration, see *Keski-Uusimaa* 28.6.1992; *HS* 28.6.1992; *AL* 28.6.1992; *KSML* 28.6.1992, *Kotiliesi* 26.6.1992. On the Niskavuori plays as "nation's common memory", see *Teatteri* 1/1988, 12.

52 For example, "70 years of Finnish Independence" (1987, the new TV plays), "UN year of women" (1975, broadcasting of radio plays), "Finnish Theatre 100 years" (1973, broadcasting of radio plays).

53 *Savon Sanomat* 29.12.1987.

Instead of being an "anathema to history", television appears rather as a history- and memory-making machine, which, in Raphael Samuel's (1994, 13) words, is "continually travelling down memory lane and using the past as a backdrop". Samuel argues that television is "an unofficial source of historical knowledge" which "uses anniversaries as the occasion for retrospectives, and obituaries as the excuse for revisiting old celebrities and recycling old film footage". Indeed, during the televisual age, Niskavuori films have become both means and objects of commemoration. In 1986, the centenary of Wuolijoki's birth occasioned screening of all Niskavuori films as did the "60th anniversary of the first Niskavuori film" in 1998. In television, the films have not only been cited as illustrative of the past in various senses, but they have also been framed as "technologies of memory" which embody and produce memories, as "objects through which memories are shared, produced, and given meaning" (Sturken 1997, 9–10).

A heritage experience: Niskavuori *(1984)*

> "There is again a social demand for Niskavuori. In the mid-seventies, people started searching for their roots, looking backwards and valuing traditions."
> Kari Uusitalo in *IL* 9.8.1986.

> "Far from being grounded in a mere 'recovery' of the past which is waiting to be found, and which, when found, will secure our sense of ourselves into eternity, identities are the names we give to the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within, the narratives of the past."
> Stuart Hall 2000, 706.

When released in 1984, *Niskavuori* was, in review journalism, framed as a depiction of 1930s "agrarian Finland" and as symptomatic of the social conflicts of the time. The condemnation of Aarne's and Ilona's romance was read as evidence of the 1930s moral code, and Martta's behaviour and the mobilization of the village establishment to support her as an allegorical representation of the so called Lapua Movement, a far-right group of activists of the 1930s.[54] This framing of *Niskavuori* as a drama embedded in political and social history was also supported by productional publicity, which constructed a mirroring between "now" and "then":

> "When we combine *The Women of Niskavuori* with *The Bread of Niskavuori*, we can clearly see how Finland changed during the 1930s. The agrarian Finland started developing into the industrial, the national Finland into the social, the authoritarian into the democratic. At the present moment, we are probably facing changes as big as that."[55]

54 *TS* 23.12.1984. See also *KU* 22.12.1984, *HS* 22.12.1984.

55 Matti Kassila, "Niskavuori-elokuvan synnystä" ("On the birth of a new Niskavuori film"), press release 2.3.1984. FFA.

With a press release which announced the beginning of the shootings of a new Niskavuori film in March 1984, the production company set out to construct an interpretive framing, which emphasized identity-work and, hence, a notion of history as roots and origin. From the first press releases onwards, the promotional framing of *Niskavuori* (1984) insisted upon two inter-linked reading routes. *Niskavuori* was not only read as a film about "our" past, but also a film that tells "us" about "us" today. Hence, the film was delineated as a site where the past and the present meet the audience, the addressee, the "we" of the press release. This framing was reinforced in subsequent press releases issued by the production company:

> "The Niskavuori film directed by Matti Kassila is a dense story about money, love, power, and passion. It illuminates to us our recent past and our Finnishness as seen and interpreted through 1980s eyes. The characters of the film are Niskavuori people of the 1930s with their ideas and customs, but the Aarnes and Marttas of Niskavuori are nevertheless eternal. Even today, there is a little bit of Aarne, Martta, and Ilona in all of us."[56]

The reading routed in the productional publicity invited audiences to consider the film as a mimetic trace which promised to show what it was like in the 1930s. It also offered the film a mirror image warranting an opportunity for the viewer to see herself in that image, in the characters depicted. Whilst the promotional publicity emphasized similarities between "us" and the characters, it also suggested a difference, distance, and detachment underlining how the members of the Niskavuori family represented "the people of the 1930s with their ideas and customs". Hence, watching *Niskavuori* implied involvement in an ambivalent movement between senses of proximity and distance. Review journalists who, from this perspective, framed Niskavuori as a kind of therapy session proposed an interpretation of the present as in need of assurance:

> "In the present atmosphere of valuelessness and spiritual rootlessness, it is stimulating to see characters that, anyhow, have an understanding of themselves, the world, and their goals."[57]

> "Let the digital Finland now look into its own past, into to the agrarian 'old-fashioned' community where basic values were honoured and passions still valid."[58]

56 "Niskavuori-elokuva – suomalainen sukutarina" ("Niskavuori film – a Finnish family saga"), undated press release. FFA. See even "Uusi Niskavuori kiinnostaa ja viihdyttää nyt elokuvateattereissa — uusin kotimainen vetää nyt kaikenikäisiä katsojia" ("The new Niskavuori arouses interest and entertains viewers in cinemas – the latest Finnish film attracts viewers of all age groups"), press release 5.1.1985. FFA. Later, this formulation was quoted in a National Broadcasting Company press release. See "Viikolta valittua" 30.03.–05.04.98 (TV2).

57 *Filmihullu* 1/1985.

58 *AL* 22.12.1984.

In these framings, the 1930s and 1980s were posited as opposites. The 1930s was defined as agricultural, communal, old-fashioned, and authentic, whereas the 1980s was characterized as valueless, rootless, and empty. This reading framed *Niskavuori* as an image of the past detached from the present but in relation to which there was a nostalgic sense of longing. Ideas of a proper order of things and values that are taken for granted, as well as a sense of authenticity, were offered as objects of nostalgia and as markers of difference. These readings exemplified what Bryan S. Turner (1987, 6–7) terms "the nostalgic paradigm". He defines nostalgia as a mode of apprehension and narration that constructs history not as a process but as a decline, a series of losses. This view of history entails a sense of increased complexity, personal inauthenticity, fragmentation, and moral uncertainty. The nostalgic reading of *Niskavuori*, however, defined the 1930s in ambivalent terms, both as an age of narrow-mindedness (rejected past) and one of authenticity (desirable past).

The question of collective and national identity underwrote the project of *Niskavuori*, in terms of its promotional framing. The "illumination" offered a prize for viewing activity; an engagement with the film involved the recognition of a self through difference (how are we different from the 1930s people?) and the confirmation of a collective identity through continuity (how are we similar?). This framing, therefore, defined "illumination" as a moment of recognition where three elements – "us", "our recent past" and "our Finnishness" – coincide. This "illumination" through cinematic experience was marked to have three temporal dimensions. While it was anchored at the moment of narration and reception ("now" = 1984), it was not only constituted in relation to the linear time of history ("the past" = the 1930s), but also in terms of a mythical timelessness and transhistoricity ("eternal" = always).

> "The central elements of Niskavuori – love, money, individual in the society, family and the relationship to the land – are things that are important to the people of today. Fundamentally speaking, the human being has not changed much since the 1930s."[59]

Hence, when motivating the making of a seventh Niskavuori film (a third adaptation of *The Women of Niskavuori* and a second one of *The Bread of Niskavuori*), the productional publicity not only invited a historical reading (How was Finland in the 1930s? How has it changed?), but also a transhistorical one, even an ontological one (What is Finnishness? What is human?). Press releases marketed the film as containing "the basic elements of life: love, separation, loneliness; money, ownership, power; home, fatherland, and religion". Transhistorical and universal, these themes were described as being alive "perhaps more passionately than ever."[60] In another context, promotional publicity translated this historicality and topicality into a combination of "authentic social description with a melodramatic

59 "Niskavuori on kuvattu – elokuvan ensi-ilta 21. Joulukuuta" ("The shootings of Niskavuori are finished – the film will be realeased on 21st of January"), press release 10.9.1984. FFA.

60 "Niskavuori-suurelokuvan kuvaukset käynnistyivät" ("The shootings of a grand Niskavuori film begin", press release 2.3.1984. FFA.

undertone".[61] Thus, in a generic manner, a family saga interwove personal and historical time (cf. Samuel 1994, 13).

The making of national cinema

Promotional publicity framed *Niskavuori* as identity-work even in another sense, in relation to the "national cinema". Press releases pictured not only 1980s Finns, but also current domestic film production *in crisis*, maintaining that a "disturbance" had occurred in "the continuum" of the Finnish film. To quote Matti Kassila, there was a rupture in the work of professional teams, in themes and traditions, and also in the ways in which Finnish film addressed its audience. Finnish film production was about to lose touch with both its tradition and its audience, and the new Niskavuori adaptation was offered as a film that would bring back the lost audience of domestic film production and re-animate the tradition of national cinema. Hence, *Niskavuori* was marketed as a remedy for this disease; the director's intention was outlined as a wish "to transmit Hella's plays as well as possible to the audience, as large an audience as possible, to the Finns".[62] As a representative of the older generation of film directors in Finland, Matti Kassila's persona offered a bridge backwards in time. By calling Wuolijoki by her first name, Kassila underlined his personal familiarity with the supposedly disappearing Finnish film tradition.

When countering the diagnosed malady of the national cinema, the production company reiterated a rhetoric familiar from the late 1930s and 1940s when both Suomi-Filmi and Suomen Filmiteollisuus (SF) explicitly framed their productions in terms of national cinema. Especially SF presented each film release as an organic unit in the whole of Finnish film aiming to fully grasp the Finnish reality and to address all the needs of the audience. (Koivunen 1995, 12–17, 238–240; Laine 1995, 82–87; Laine 1999, 34–54.) Accordingly, promotional framings of *Niskavuori* invoked the notion of national cinema, characterized it as a neglected field of culture, offered the quality production at hand as a solution and promised to address the whole nation as the audience. Already the first press release (January 1984) was entitled "Niskavuori into a Major Film" and the same rhetoric of "an event" continued in all of the marketing,[63] which implied that the film in the making was not just any film, but a special project, hoping to reconnect Finnish film with its past and its bygone popularity. In this sense, *Niskavuori* was a film about film. When promotional publicity framed it as "national cinema", it framed *Niskavuori* as a pastiche of "a good old domestic film" both in its topic and rhetoric. Marketing slogans also suggested this kind of imitation:[64]

61 *Films in Finland* 1985, 29.

62 Matti Kassila, "Niskavuori-elokuvan synnystä" ("On the birth of the Niskavuori films"), press release 2.3.1984. FFA.

63 "Niskavuoresta suurelokuva" ("Niskavuori into a major film"), press release 12.1.1984. FFA. For slogans like "Grand première! Niskavuori of all times", "Grand double première", "The best interpretation ever!", see advertisements in *HS* 21.12.1984, *HS* 30.12.1984. On the marketing of *Niskavuori*, see *SK* 13 (29.3.) 1985, 62.

64 "Niskavuori-elokuvan iskulause-ehdotuksia" ("Suggested marketing slogans for Niskavuori"), undated document, FFA.

NISKAVUORI – stylish, true and Finnish
NISKAVUORI – solid, strong and Finnish
NISKAVUORI – domestic film at its best
NISKAVUORI – Matti Kassila's tour de force
NISKAVUORI – an interesting and touching Finnish film

The framing of *Niskavuori* as national cinema shares many characteristics with the publicity strategies chosen by the two biggest film production companies in the 1930s and 1940s. Both addressed the whole nation as the intended audience for films. In addition, Matti Kassila made the familiar gesture of motivating his enterprise both with economic and cultural interests, proclaiming a wish to restore the belief in cinema as both an industry and a cultural form. (Cf. Toiviainen 1992, 216–217; Koivunen 1995, 14, 234–235). As a topic, Niskavuori seemed to allow this restoration and, moreover, it signified both cultural value and popularity. Echoing the rhetoric of the 1930s and 1940s, promotional publicity argued for the national value of an entertainment form:

> ”Niskavuori reaches out to our time, even though disguised in entertainment. Portraying Niskavuori means gazing at the 1930s through the 1980s eyes, which is why the interpretation of an old topic has been reformed. In Niskavuori, the attraction of the text lies in the combination of naiveté and intelligence, tradition and enlightenment, ideals, dreams and a sound sense of reality, childishness, and maturity.”[65]

Like many “prestige films” of the 1930s, *Niskavuori* was also marketed as a quality product (cf. Koivunen 1995, Laine 1999, 255). The budget of 4 million marks was publicized in the first press releases. Furthermore, the production company announced the number of extras involved (about 200) to underline the amount of work done by cloth and make-up designers.[66] This framing associated the rhetoric of “event” with the idea of “joint efforts”, yet another reference to a nationalist agenda.

In addition to the rhetoric of national cinema, *Niskavuori* imitated old cinema culture even in other respects as the première was designed to be a big cultural event, involving 600–700 people. According to the plans, the decorations of the cinema theatre were to create an atmosphere of the thirties and “a feeling of a Niskavuori film”. A live trumpet fanfare was to announce the beginning of the screening.[67] As the ultimate proof for the cultural value of the project, the production team hoped to get the President of Finland to attend the première in Bio Bristol as a guest of honour. Had it succeeded, the film would have been framed as a national event similar to *The Unknown Soldier* and a celebrity happening comparable to the premières of the 1930s and 1940s. As the President declined the invitation, however, the opening

65 “Niskavuori-elokuvan synnystä”, press release 2.3.1984. FFA.
66 “Niskavuori-suurelokuvan kuvaukset käynnistyivät”, press release 2.3.1984. FFA; “Niskavuori on kuvattu – elokuvan ensi-ilta 21. joulukuuta”, press release 10.9.1984. FFA.
67 “Ensi-ilta” (“The première”), undated document, FFA.

night remained a cinematic event without the kind of public acknowledgement the producers had hoped for.[68] In many ways, then, *Niskavuori* was framed as a reconstruction of, and a return to, national cinema. From this perspective, the lost object to be restored was not a "past" period or "past" values, but the national cinema of the past.

An important element in the framings of *Niskavuori* as national cinema, i.e., in the identity-work of the promotional publicity, was the use of the pronoun "we" to construct a communality and shared identity amongst the producers, filmmakers and the addressed audience. While framing *Niskavuori* as a narrative about the nation, productional publicity designated an enunciative position for the film, a narrative point of view that purported to include "everybody". This inviting and inclusive address to the audience as belonging to an implicated collective ("we") was a central rhetorical device suggested by the production company in the outlined marketing slogans:

> "We all grow our own Niskavuori in *our* hearts. Niskavuori - - a family saga about Finns"
> "The story of Niskavuori – a story about *us* Finns"
> "Niskavuori still lives in *us*"
> "Niskavuori is *our* cultural heritage"

Also, a direct address in second person singular was proposed:

> "Here *you* are born and here *you* belong! Niskavuori – a film for the Finnish people"
> "Welcome to Niskavuori!"
> "Get to know *your* roots at Niskavuori!"[69]

Plans for promotional publicity coupled this mode of direct address with slogans connecting national identity, geography, and history:

> "Niskavuori – a film for Finns about Finns"
> "Niskavuori – a film about soil, power and love"
> "Niskavuori – a piece of history of the homeland"[70]

These slogans, which were not used as such, but the spirit of which permeated press releases and much of the promotional publicity, evoked a range of discursive fields: family, belonging, homeland, nation, heritage, history, and identity. They designed *Niskavuori* not only as a film, but also as the past of the nation, as its history ("a story about Finns") and as its memory ("in our hearts", "still lives in us", "our heritage"). Furthermore, the film was framed as the gateway to this sense of belonging as watching the film was characterized as "getting to know one's roots". Whether the Finnish people, as Kari Uusitalo suspected in 1986 (see the epigraph above), hungered for tradition and roots or not, it is anyhow evident that, in the mid-1980s, a

68 See *Anna* 2 (8.1.) 1985, 44.
69 "Niskavuori-elokuvan iskulause-ehdotuksia", undated document, FFA. Italics AK.
70 Ibid.

need for tradition and roots was powerfully highlighted both in cinema and elsewhere. For example, in 1985 a book series called *Sukupolvien perintö* (*The Heritage of Generations*) was published. Advertisements described the three volumes as "an introduction to peasant values" which they reiterated in their subtitles: "the roots", "the growth", and "the harvest".[71] The 150th anniversary of the *Kalevala* celebrated in 1985 functioned as a further incentive to "identity-talk". (Cf. Knuuttila 1996.) In this context, the need for "roots" was constructed through the rhetoric of crisis and disturbance, i.e., postulating a crisis in film production and in national identity motivated the need for national cinema, and its portrayal of peasant culture, the "roots".

Whilst the viewers of the 1980s were, in the promotional framing of *Niskavuori*, invited to participate in the never-ending project of nation building, in visual advertising, they were addressed through the family metaphor (Pierre Bourdieu 1990, 19; Silverman 1996, 199–200) and the trope of the family album. Both the poster of the film and newspaper ads reiterated the one and same photograph featuring Loviisa, Aarne and Ilona; a photo which both in its pose and its colouring employed what Marianne Hirsch (1999, xi) terms "the familial gaze". [Fig. 2] With this notion, Hirsch refers to the institutionalized conventions and ideologies of family through which families are seen and recognized. The aesthetics of family photographs resonates with personal histories and evokes private memories. At the same time, they provoke identification easily because they are highly coded, conventional, and predictable. As such, they are also very public, made for others' eyes. (Ibid., xii–xiii; Holland 1991, 2–4.) In the posters, the Niskavuori family portrait was literally "framed" and "placed" against a wall-like background, as if to underline the institutional status of the family photograph. This image, which triggers "an inclusive, affiliative look" (Hirsch 1999, xiii), suggested a relationship of kinship between the viewers and the members of the Niskavuori family. The framings of the film as a meta-narrative about Finnishness, as a story about "our" past, further enhanced this relationship. By connecting the familial/domestic and the national in the format of the family photograph, the promotional publicity addressed the audiences as family members, as members of the Finnish family and nation. In addition, the aesthetics of the family album linked the film to the theme of memory; it invited the viewers of different generations to remember the Niskavuori family, familiar from different media, as if it was any common neighbourhood family. In this way, the public was aligned with the private, the fictive connected with the lived and the experiential. As Anne McClintock (1993, 63) argues, the figure of family suggests a "natural" order of things, a "natural" form of social hierarchy, and, thus, implies "a single genesis narrative for national history".[72]

71 Advertisement in *HS* 12.1.1985.

72 According to Anne McClintock (1993, 63–65), the family metaphor naturalizes nations by providing them with "domestic genealogies". It offers "a 'natural' figure for sanctioning social *hierarchy* within putative organic *unity* of interests" and "a trope for figuring historical *time*".

Fig 2. The aesthetic of family album in Niskavuori *1984 (FFA).*

Museum aesthetics: simulating heritage

> "To write history thus means to *cite* history. It belongs to the concept of citation, however, that the historical object in each case is torn from its context."
>
> Walter Benjamin 1999, 476 [N11,3].[73]

While the promotional publicity (in particular, the press releases signed by Matti Kassila) framed *Niskavuori* as an identity-seeking narrative about roots and origin, the exhibited desire to imitate "old Finnish cinema" suggests another kind of interpretation in terms of citationality, heritage, simulation, and historicism. This framing was articulated more clearly in review journalism and in the visual promotion of the film (publicity-stills, trailer).

Review journalism characterized *Niskavuori* as "a quality film", an "epoch

73 Benjamin writes, here, on historian's work. The quote is preceded by the following: "The events surrounding the historian, and in which he himself takes part, will underlie his presentation in the form of a text written in invisible ink. The history which he lays before the reader comprises, as it were, the citations occurring in this text, and it is only these citations that occur in a manner legible to all."

film", a "museum", and a "nature morte".[74] These terms suggest an emphasis on detail and set design; reviews described the visual style as "imposing" highlighting "carefulness" in background work (choice of milieus and actors), in clothing and decor, displaying "confident, good taste" and "the sovereign commandment of old narrative form".[75] The notion of piety was evoked to describe the film's relationship to both Niskavuori plays and décor, "like in a well-kept museum: all things have their places, in an orderly arrangement".[76] Besides attention to detail, these framings emphasized a "tradition-conscious" and "old-fashioned" narration.[77] These characterizations associated *Niskavuori* with two different discourses of cinema and art in the context of the 1980s. On the one hand, the descriptions linked the film to a larger European trend of heritage cinema that, according to Richard Dyer's (1995, 204) definition, displayed "high production values" and what he terms "a museum aesthetic". In addition to well-known British examples (from *Chariots of Fire* 1981 to *Maurice* 1987 and beyond), this cinematic trend includes French (e.g., *Jean de Florette* 1986), Danish (*Babettes Gæstebud* 1987), Italian (*Nuovo Cinema Paradiso* 1988), Spanish (*Belle Epoque* 1992) and German films (*Rosa Luxemburg* 1986). (Dyer & Vincendeau 1992, 6; Dyer 1995, 204–205.) On the other hand, the emphasis on style-consciousness linked the framing to the ongoing debate within the art world on "postmodernism" defined as appropriation or citing of history and the emergence of pastiche (Rossi 1999, 188, 193; Jameson 1985, 113–117).[78] Neither "heritage" nor "postmodernism" appeared explicitly in the framings of *Niskavuori*, but in my reading, discourses of heritage culture and postmodern aesthetic were clearly articulated in both review journalism and the visual framings of the film.

The visual framings of *Niskavuori* foregrounded citationality. While the poster, discussed above, reiterated the aesthetic of the family album, the publicity-stills used in promotional publicity and cinema window-dressings featured a range of familiar poses, props and gestures from previous adaptations (the two versions of *The Women of Niskavuori* in 1938 and 1958; *Aarne Niskavuori* 1954) and their framings. These included, among others,

74 *SK* 2 (11.1.) 1985; *KSML* 23.12.1984, *AL* 22.12.1984, *KU* 22.12.1984. The notion of museum was reiterated in several reviews in 1992: "it is a museal work" (*Demari* 23.7.1992); "there is a scent of museum in Kassila's direction" (*KU* 23.7.1992), "not quite museum stuff" (*Katso* 30/1992).

75 *HS* 22.12.1984; *KSML* 23.12.1984; *US* 22.12.1984; *KU* 22.12.1984; *TS* 23.12.1984; *AL* 22.12.1984; *Filmihullu* 1/1985.

76 *AL* 22.12.1984; *KSML* 23.12.1984; *US* 22.12.1984.

77 On "traditionality", see *KSML* 23.12.1984; *HS* 22.12.1984; *ESS* 23.12.1984; *AL* 22.12.1984; *Filmihullu* 2/1985; *Löntagaren* 16/1985. On "old-fashioned-ness", see *Lapin Kansa* 28.1.1985. In 1987 and 1992, when broadcast on TV, the film was even then framed as "tradition-conscious". See *SaKa* 20.12.1987; *Länsi-Savo* 20.12.1987; *AL* 20.12.1987; *AL* 23.7.1992.

78 In the context of art scene, the notion of appropriation was employed to critique the primacies of authorship and originality. Yet the politics of appropriation ("borrowing", "citing", "recycling") was contested, also in the Finnish debates. See Rossi 1999, 208ff. For a distinction between appropriation as myth as a "one-way appropriation, an act of power" and bricolage as "a counterpractice", "a strategic practice", see Foster 1985, 168–171, 201–202. For an extensive discussion and re-definition of pastiche as a notion, see Dyer 2001, 77–89.

Loviisa meeting her guests in the courtyard, the village elite drinking coffee at Loviisa's party, portraits of Ilona in her robe, Aarne and Ilona lying cheek to cheek on the bed or dancing among the farm workers, Martta and Aarne in a nightly quarrel, Martta with her children in the scene where Aarne leaves Niskavuori, Aarne holding the rye bread in his hand, a telephonist eavesdropping the village gossip. Along with these stills referring to the intrigue, "generic" Niskavuori-images were also on display, Loviisa sitting with her attributes (shawl, walking stick) or the Niskavuori man (in this case Aarne) riding a horse in the field. Such images had framed all previous Niskavuori films. In addition, the film's trailer assured the viewers that the makers were conscious of tradition; as it referenced the dramatic high points of the film (encounters, fights, departures, expulsions) and reiterated the familiar scenes, it highlighted the spectacular visual reconstruction of the Niskavuori world.[79] Both the trailer and the publicity-stills featured imagery highlighting interior set design, props (e.g., old cars), and scenes evoking memories of "old Finnish cinema", such as haymaking scenes and barn dances. [Fig. 3] Promotional press publicity also underlined the careful work on set designs. For example, promotion articles revealed how the director visited a thousand farms before choosing the Pietilä farm in Ylöjärvi for outdoor scenes. In order to shoot a barn dance or haymaking scene, it was told, the crew was forced to travel between counties. Furthermore, finding cows that could behave outdoors turned out to be a very difficult task. A heritage society helped perform the haymaking in the proper manner and paint the grain to look ripe enough for haymaking. In addition, anecdotes of finding an old-fashioned telephone switchboard or a 1930s Ford were publicized along with the high number of extras and the many shooting locations (Humppila, Helsinki, Östersundom, Hauho, and Ylöjärvi).[80] Even promotional publicity emphasized the amount of hard labour needed to achieve an authentic period look and atmosphere. (Cf. Hill 1999, 83.)

As a kind of "second" frame, a frame within the film, the opening sequence of *Niskavuori* invited a reading in terms of style- and tradition-consciousness as it reiterated signs, scenes, and stylistic devices from several previous Niskavuori films. In fact, contemporary reviews read it as a citation of the "old Finnish cinema" as a whole: "The very first shot of the film, a horizontal field landscape with Tulio-like light summer clouds cues the viewer to exactly the right period and feeling."[81] The sequence opened with a haymaking scene the way *Aarne Niskavuori* (1954) does. *Niskavuori* also borrowed an element from a similar scene in *Loviisa*, i.e., the stylistic device of crosscutting which builds up the erotic tension (and promise) between two characters. A crosscut from Ilona (Satu Silvo), who is walking on the road, to Aarne (Esko Salminen), who is sitting on a horse carrier, reiterated

79 The trailer of *Niskavuori*. FFA.

80 *IS* 4.8.1984; *HS* 1.9.1984. "Niskavuori-suurelokuvan kuvaukset käynnistyivät", press release 2.3.1984. FFA; "Niskavuori on kuvattu – elokuvan ensi-ilta 21. joulukuuta", press release 10.9.1984. FFA.

81 *TS* 23.12.1984. "Tulio-like" refers to the 1930s–1940s melodramas directed by Teuvo Tulio.

Fig. 3. Simulating old Finnish cinema in Niskavuori *1984 (FFA).*

and called forth the famous scene in *Loviisa* where Juhani (Tauno Palo) and Malviina (Kirsti Hurme) encounter each other walking across a rye field. The opening sequence of *Niskavuori* functioned, then, like a thematic and stylistic prologue suggesting a citational reading. After the prologue, a tableau-like scene, the narrative continued with Loviisa's name-day party, a scene familiar from many other Niskavuori films: the two versions of *The Women of Niskavuori* (1938, 1958), *Aarne Niskavuori* (1954), and *Niskavuori Fights* (1957).[82] [Fig. 4]

For reviewers subscribing to the romantic and modernist notions of art as renewal, of course, this emphasized citationality was a problem. From a modernist perspective, citationality and tradition connoted regression and repetition – "reheating" – in place of progress and renewal.[83] For this framing, convention and tradition were not enabling forces but, rather, obstacles to be overcome, and breaking conventions and stylizing the performance were posited as norms.[84] Consequently, *Niskavuori* was criticized as "a safe return

82 For a commentary on the conventionality and repetitiousness of theatre photography, see Helavuori & Räisänen 1990.

83 *IS* 21.12.1984; *KU* 22.12.1984; *KSML* 23.12.1984; *SK* 2/1985.

Fig. 4. The heritage aesthetic in Niskavuori *1984 (FFA).*

to the past", "boundless tradition-optimism" and "yearning for tradition".[85] Furthermore, its release coincided with two other family sagas *The Clan – the Tale of the Frogs* (1984) and *Dirty Story* (1984), both set in the recent past.[86] In some readings, *Niskavuori* was seen as symptomatic of an "artistic crisis" in Finnish cinema; it was interpreted as vying for an established position as national culture by supporting literary, not cinematic, values.[87] This reading has been reiterated, for example, in a 1995 textbook (Honka-Hallila, Laine & Pantti 1995, 204) where "lack of renewal" and "gazing backwards" were named as the leading characteristics of the 1980s domestic film. A cycle of biopics (*Runoilija ja muusa/ The Poet and the Muse* 1978, *Tulipää/ Flame-Top* 1980, *Da Capo* 1985), literary adaptations such as *Suuri illusioni* (*A Grand Illusion* 1985) and historical films such as *Vartioitu kylä 1944* (*The Guarded Village 1944* 1979), *Pedon merkki* (*The Sign of the Beast* 1980), *Angelas krig* (*Angela's War* 1984) and *Tuntematon Sotilas* (*The Unknown Soldier* 1985) were lumped into one category and called the "backward-looking" "nostalgic front" (ibid., 204–208).

84 *KSML* 23.12.1984; *Kaleva* 22.12.1984; *Katso* 1/1985; *KU* 22.12.1984.
85 *KSML* 23.12.1984; *Filmihullu* 2/1985.
86 *AL* 22.12.1984; *Filmihullu* 2/1985, 34; *Still* 1/1985, 24; *Uusi nainen* 2/1985, 62–64.
87 *TA* 24.1.85. The theatricality of *Niskavuori* was criticized in *KSML* 23.12.84.

In many ways, these questions articulated in the framings of *Niskavuori* were similar to British and French debates on period film. In all three countries, discussions on aesthetics, film genre, and history have coincided.[88] In the British context, epoch and costume films (*Chariots of Fire* 1981, *A Passage to India* 1985), Merchant-Ivory -films (*A Room with a View* 1986, *Maurice* 1987) and TV series such as *Brideshead Revisited* (1981) or *The Jewel in the Crown* (1984) were discussed as *heritage film* (Higson 1993; 1996; 2003; Wollen 1991; Monk 1995a, 2002). The notion of *la mode retro*, again, was used widely in 1970s art cinema for cinematic explorations and revisions of the Nazi era: Luchino Visconti's *The Damned* (1969), Bernardo Bertolucci's *The Conformist* (1970), Louis Malle's *Lacombe, Lucien* (1973), Liliana Cavani's *The Night Porter* (1974), Helma Sanders-Brahms' *Germany Pale Mother* (1979), and Rainer Werner Fassbinder's *Lili Marleen* (1980). (Foucault 1996, 122–132; Elsaesser 1989, 253–258; Elsaesser 1996, 133–144; Greene 1999, 9–10, 63–97.) In the 1990s, French and Italian heritage films were also discussed in terms of *nostalgia film* or *filmed nostalgia* (Powrie 1997, 13ff; Sorlin 1996, 160–162).[89] In all of these cases, the films were debated in terms of intentions and effects: Why was there a retreat from the present? What is remembered and how is it represented? What kind of political effects do the films have on the present? While British heritage cinema has been criticized for eschewing the contemporary plights of Thatcherism for "a traditional conservative pastoral Englishness" (Higson 1993, 110, 113), representations of the Third Reich have been contested for reducing Holocaust into "a semiotic phenomenon" with long corridors, marble staircases, SS uniforms, swastikas and black leather belts and boots (Kaes 1989, 22).

In the readings of *Niskavuori* that identified the heritage aesthetic as a problem, the question was not merely of different film tastes, but also of different attitudes towards history. Some critical interpretations termed *Niskavuori*'s depiction of the past "superficial", arguing that, in the film, the past – "the land, the landscape, and the whole rural life of the 1930s" – was reduced to "a decorative set", "a mere background vignette", and "an outsider's imitation".[90] The film was criticized for "lacking connections to the modern society" which is why "it cannot be regarded as an important historical analysis of the breaking points of the agrarian society". As a history of consensus politics, *Niskavuori* was accused of being "blind" to contradictions "beneath the surface". Apart from renewal, then, this framing called for a new, "personal" view of history or, at least, another kind of history.[91]

88 The notion of heritage has been investigated not only as dominant public representations of the past (Bommes & Wright 1982, 264ff), a sign of national decadence (cf. Samuel 1994, 242–273), a field of enterprise mediating between tradition and modernity (Corner & Harvey 1991, 46), and a form of fabrication and an antithesis of history (Lowenthal 1998), but also as a site of popular memory and a form of unofficial historical knowledge (Samuel 1994, 6–8, 25, 205ff).

89 However, the various labels are overlapping. For instance, Tana Wollen (1991) discussed heritage as "nostalgic screen fictions", wheras Amy Sargeant (2002) discusses representations of "pastness" in British "retro films".

90 *US* 22.12.84; *TA* 24.1.1985.

91 *Lapin Kansa* 28.1.1985; *Filmihullu* 2/1985, 34; *KSML* 23.12.1984, *KU* 22.12.1984.

Hence, when critics longed for an epic scale, a grand narrative, they often encountered the intimacy of a period piece. (Cf. Higson 1993, 113.) Heritage cinema has been characterized as a mode of history that avoids irony, social criticism, and personal views on political issues, the very aspects that many framings of *Niskavuori* longed for.

In the critical framings of *Niskavuori*, consciousness of tradition or citationality was not necessarily problematic in itself; instead, the criticism concerned the limits of representation. While the film was characterized as "tradition-conscious", citing many important "Niskavuori-gestures" – – "a suitable amount of fields, patrons, maids, cows bursting to be milked, and the elite of the parish: the apothecary, the vicar, and the telephonist" – not *all* of the important "history-gestures" were made.[92] In several reviews, landscape scenes (nature, Häme, the land) and ethnologic imagery (work) were missed. Therefore, the film reviewers described the film as "claustrophobic". According to one reviewer, the small number of outdoor images in the film produced a feeling of distance, a sense of "recording".[93] This question of disturbed authenticity was also raised in British debates surrounding the heritage film:

> "The audience is invited to understand the plot of the film as though we are *contemporary* with the characters, while at the same time indulging our pleasure in a world which is visually compelling precisely because of its *pastness*." (Craig 1991, 12)

In contrast to the persuasive address of the viewers as "we" within the productional publicity for *Niskavuori*, heritage readings framed the past as an object of museal interest and admiration. In Andrew Higson's analysis, this kind of ambivalence between engagement and distance is characteristic of heritage narration, and it exposes the films to different readings: "For while story situations and character psychologies do cue emotional engagement, the richly detailed and spectacular period *mise-en-scène* also cues the distanced gaze of admiring spectatorship", he argues (Higson 1996, 241, 238). The address of the viewers as "admiring spectators" was also used in the framings of *Niskavuori*, albeit indirectly in discussions of the aesthetic. The narration of *Niskavuori* was compared to still life paintings due to the number of tableau-like scenes and frames. For example, the film both began and ended with shots of the main couple, first apart, then joined, framed by Niskavuori fields, and located in different seasons.[94] Apart from tableaux-effect, the lighting was also discussed in terms of distance. In addition to stylistic devices like long optics and zoom-ins, the lighting – "an 1980s-like", "yellowish sidelight" and "suggestive lighting which covers everything"– implicated the presence of a gazing subject.[95] These readings suggest heritage narration that is typically slow and episodic; instead of dramatic action, it highlights

92 *Still* 1/1985.
93 *TA* 24.1.1985; *Filmihullu* 1/1985; *Filmihullu* 2/1985; *Katso* 1/1985; *Hbl* 22.12.1984; *ESS* 23.12.1984; *IS* 21.12.1984.
94 *Kaleva* 22.12.1984; *AL* 22.12.1984.
95 *Filmihullu* 2/1985; *Still* 1/1985.

characters, the milieu, and the atmosphere. The camera is used in a "pictorial" manner with careful long shots in deep focus that enhance the milieu and the elaborate set design. (Higson 1993, 233–234; Hill 1999, 80–81.) Heritage cinema represents the past as a visual spectacle, an "aesthetic of display" or a "museum aesthetic", to be admired and is offered as an object of nostalgic and melancholic contemplation. (Higson 1993, 118; Dyer 1995, 204; Hill 1999, 81.) This aesthetic produces a sense of detachment and dispossession which is most evident in commentaries on *Niskavuori* as a mere "imitation":

> "Even though Kassila bases his expression on the film style [of the 1940s and 1950s], the question is of mere external imitation, as Kassila has not been able to assume anything of their close-to-soil force to his film."[96]

This emphasis on spectacle, citationality, and distance suggests an affinity between heritage film and the contemporary notion of *pastiche* which Fredric Jameson (1985, 113) named as one of the defining "features and practices" of postmodernism. In contemporary discussions about a cultural change, Jameson defined pastiche as an imitation of styles, "the wearing of a stylistic mask, speech in a dead language", without the satirical impulse characteristic of parody (ibid., 114).[97] Framings of *Niskavuori* articulate similar discourses of eclecticism in terms of style. The film's citational narrative technique was associated not only with advertisements and television, but also with pop art and its aesthetics of bricolage, assembling a variety of signs and styles from realistic narration to advertisements and posters.[98] These readings linked *Niskavuori* to on-going Finnish and international discussions on postmodernism, a concept which entered the domestic art world in 1980, following the Venice Biennale that year. Postmodernism was introduced and debated as "style-ism" (tyylismi), which was the domestic coinage for stylistic pluralism and historicism. (Rossi 1999, 193, 199–207.) For Jameson, the postmodern aesthetic of pastiche posed both an aesthetic and philosophical dilemma. According to his definition, pastiche is, on the one hand, a phenomenon of "a world in which stylistic innovation is no longer possible, all that is left is to imitate dead styles, to speak through the masks and with the voices of the styles in the imaginary museum". In Jamesonian (1985, 115–116) reading (understood here as a contemporary interpretive framework), the "tradition-optimism" of *Niskavuori* is interpreted as "the failure of the new, the imprisonment in the past". On the other hand, it signalled a society in which history, the past, has disappeared as a referent and, instead, has become "a vast collection of images" for touristic gazes (Jameson 1984, 60ff, 66). In his 1980s writings, Jameson exemplified this loss of referent as he discussed a cycle of films which he termed *nostalgia film*, but which he also associated with the French expression *la mode rétro*, i.e., retrospective styling. This broad category featured films "about the past" or specific moments recapturing the atmosphere and stylistic peculiarities

96 *TA* 24.1.1985.
97 For a discussion of the "hostility to pastiche", see Dyer 2001, 77–79,
98 *Katso* 1/1985; *Filmihullu* 2/1985; *Kaleva* 22.12.1984.

of a period (e.g., *American Graffiti*), films which through a figurative use of characteristic objects "reawaken a sense of the past" (e.g., *Star Wars*), films that mix these two modes (e.g., *Raiders of the Lost Ark*) and films which are "set in some indefinable nostalgic past, an eternal [1930s], say, beyond history" (e.g., *Body Heat*). (Jameson 1985, 116–117.) In Jameson's reading, these 1970s and 1980s films were all "an alarming and pathological symptom of a society that has become incapable of dealing with time and history" – instead of the past itself, the representations focused on "pastness", on previous representations or stereotypes about the past. (Ibid., 117–118; cf. Sargeant 2002.) For Jameson, then, postmodernism was about "real history" ("history-as-identity", history as a foundational discourse), about being replaced by the pastiches of the past (heritage representations, "a sense of pastness", or by nostalgic *simulacra*).[99]

Like pastiche for Jameson, the concept of simulacrum meant for Jean Baudrillard (1983, 12) the loss of history, a situation "where the real is no longer what it used to be", where "there is a proliferation of myths of origin and signs of reality; of second-hand truth, objectivity and authenticity". Participating in the 1980s contemporary cultural debate, Baudrillard (1994, 44) also wrote, in an essay originally published in 1981, about history having become a "retro scenario", "nostalgia for a lost referential" for which he identified cinema to be a vehicle. While history had been lost, it shone in cinema, he argued parallel to Jameson, "in a sort of hyperresemblance", as cinema placed "all its technology in the service of reanimating what it itself contributed to liquidating". (Ibid., 45, 48.) In this reading, the real had been lost in the course of increasing mediation and mediatization, a process in which cinema had played a part. Furthermore, he argued, in the accelerated logic of the hyperreal, cinema had become nostalgic of itself, "fascinated by itself as a lost object" (ibid., 47).[100]

Even though the terms "postmodern", "pastiche", or "simulation" were never explicitly articulated in the interpretive framings of *Niskavuori*, in retrospect, it seems that both the promotional publicity and the review journalism, in fact, participated in the same discussion as Baudrillard and Jameson did. Both the productional framings of Niskavuori as identity-work and the criticisms of heritage culture insisted that there *was* History which could be told and on which identities and present actions could be founded. At the same time, visual promotion emphasizing citationality and the review readings of *Niskavuori* in terms of pluralism and historicism, framed the film in terms of pastiche. The promotional publicity which framed *Niskavuori* as good, old "national cinema" was, as if echoing Baudrillardian analysis, nostalgic of its own golden past. The interpretive framings, thus, displayed

99 Interestingly, Richard Dyer and Ginette Vincendeau (1992, 6) have suggested that heritage cinema is less about specific periods than about "the sense of pastness", a key building block for white European identities.

100 In 1988, Aki Kaurismäki's *Ariel* (1988) was introduced, in the press releases, as "dedicated to the memory of Finnish cinema". Wilhelmsson 1995, 92–93.

a range of desires: commemorative, political, aesthetic, nostalgic and melancholic. In the international marketing of this film, however, *Niskavuori* was presented solely in terms of identity-work as *The Tug of Home* (an indicative translation of the Finnish title) was framed as marking "a return to the roots, to the very essence of Finnish film tradition". The notion of history-as-identity was explicit as the film was described as an exploration of what "has produced our modern society".[101] While in Finland the post-modernist aesthetic of simulacrum has most often been associated with Aki Kaurismäki's films of the 1980s or the 1990s retro revival (Wilhelmsson 1995, 90–99; von Bagh 2000, 109), in my view, these reading routes were already constructed in the 1980s and, perhaps surprisingly, also in the framings of *Niskavuori*.

Remembering Heimat: post-war Niskavuori films

> "As it moves between present and past, nostalgia is no longer tied to an origin or a cause. Rather, like desire, it produces its object."
> Elspeth Probyn 1996, 116.

> "History thus returns forever – as film."
> Anton Kaes 1992, 317.

The releases of four Niskavuori films in the 1950s – *Heta Niskavuori* (1954), *Aarne Niskavuori* (1954), *Niskavuori Fights* (1957) and *The Women of Niskavuori* (1958) – coincided with the period of Finnish cinema that has been described in terms of "overproduction" and "the shortage of ideas" (Uusitalo 1989, 21, 25; Honka-Hallila 1995, 28).[102] Furthermore, *The Women of Niskavuori* joined what has been called "a flood of readaptations" (Honka-Hallila 1995, 28), in other words, remakes of mostly pre-war box office and/or critical successes. The remake of the first Niskavuori film was preceded by eight other remakes of 1930s films. These include *Siltalan pehtoori* (*The Steward of Siltala* 1934/1953), *Mieheke* (*Surrogate Husband* 1936/1955), *Anu ja Mikko* (*Anu and Mikko* 1940/1956), *Juha* (*Juha* 1937/1956), *Syntipukki* (*Scapegoat* 1935/1957), *Kuriton sukupolvi* (*An Unruly Generation* 1937/1957), *Vieras mies tuli taloon* (*A Stranger Came Into the House* 1938/1957), and *Asessorin naishuolet* (*Assessor's Trouble With Women* 1937/1958). As *The Women of Niskavuori*, all of these remakes were literary adaptations, as were so many other Finnish films in the 1950s.

Instead of regarding the remakes and literary adaptations as symptoms of artistic decline, general backwardness, or economic miscalculations, I propose that they be seen as a part of a larger interest, within Finnish culture, in the reconstruction of cultural memory and in re-imagining and reclaiming "the past". In the post-war context, the question of representing and remembering

101 *Film in Finland* 1985, 2.

102 In 1952–1958, the annual production of Finnish films varied between 17–29 films. Kohvakka 1995, 73.

the past was painful and difficult; modes of professional history writing were reassessed (Ahtiainen & Tervonen 1996, 126; cf. Ahtiainen & Tervonen 1994, passim) and in literature, the trope of no-man's-land was actualized as an image of being in-between times and places (Viikari 1992, passim). In this context, even the cinematic modes of this re-imagining were many. Traumatic war memories were first taken up by a 1952 film *Ihmiset hämärässä* (*People in the Haze*) and in 1955, they became a major topic with *Lähellä syntiä* (*Close to Sin*) and, in particular, *Tuntematon sotilas* (*The Unknown Soldier*). In the next couple of years, several films addressing the traumatic memories and experiences of war were released: *Yhteinen vaimomme* (*Our Common Wife* 1956), *Ratkaisun päivät* (*Days of Decision* 1956), *Evakko* (*Evacuated* 1956), *Rintamalotta* (*Voluntary Women on the Front* 1956), *Ei enää eilispäivää* (*No More Yesterday* 1956), and *Verta käsissämme* (*Blood on Our Hands* 1958). At the same time, however, there was another cinematic trend, the revival of many pre-war and war-time genres. Since the end of the 1940s, log floating dramas, and comedies, vagabond musical comediesm and military farces were revived as modes of both nostalgia and utopia (see Koivunen & Laine 1993, 136–151; Laine 1994a, 62–83). Rillumarei-films, again, drew upon wartime anti-establishment entertainment, its modes, artists, and numbers.[103] In conclusion, instead of interpreting the post-war interest in the past as "escapist", "nostalgic" or "conservative" or even "backward", I suggest that it be also considered as a phenomenon of desire and imagination.[104]

As viewed within this framework, post-war remakes of pre-war films such as the 1958 version of *The Women of Niskavuori* appear as a form of cinema memory (cf. Kuhn 2002) displaying the logic later described by Baudrillard, cinema culture attached to its past and flaunting it. In addition, first-time adaptations of literary and dramatic works set in the past, such as the three other Niskavuori films, were framed by this discourse of memory and revival. As for these films, there was a strong sense of seriality, dating from the pre-war era. Review journalism framed *Niskavuori Fights* as "the last part of a series", "a fairly typical representative of its series" and "a convincing ending to a monumental series of Niskavuori films".[105] Promotional publicity also associated Niskavuori films with memory:

> "Niskavuori has become so familiar to Finns that it is no more a mere scene for a series of plays and adaptations on film. The members of the Niskavuori family are, in fact, nowadays talked about as if they were real human beings, even though we, at the same time, may reminiscence about which actor played which character and when."[106]

103 About the career of Reino Helismaa – writer, actor, and singer – see von Bagh & Hakasalo 1986, 278.

104 For descriptions of the 1950s dominant cinema culture as "nationalist-conservative line" or backward-orientation, see Malmberg 1997, 113; Heiskanen 1991, 207–216; Hietala 1992, 10.

105 *US* 17.11.1957, *Ylioppilaslehti* 22.11.1957, *Hbl* 17.11.1957, *KU* 17.11.1957. On seriality in the framings of the 1958 film, see *Vaasa* 23.9.1958, *Lahti* 24.9.1958, *Hbl* 21.9.1958, *US* 21.9.1958, *NP* 22.9.1958, *HS* 21.9.1958, *TS* 19.10.1958.

106 *EA* 16/1957.

This framing featured the audience featured as a participant in the process of remaking and adapting the Niskavuori plays. (Cf. Whelehan 1999, 15–16.) The quote implies that remakes and adaptations were not necessarily a problem but a pleasure of its own kind, since they invited the viewers to "read between different texts" and to enjoy the differences (Horton & McDougal 1998, 4, 6). So rather than thinking that remaking or adapting is a sign of degeneration or a compulsive repetition of a myth-like story, I propose seeing it as a wish to re-read and to re-member (cf. Braudy 1998, 328, 332). Instead of thinking about remakes and adaptations as secondary to their originals, they can be seen as signs of "sedimented historical currents", as sites of memory and history in the age of electronic mass media (Lipsitz 1990, 5).[107]

History or memory: *Niskavuori Fights* (1957)

Promotional publicity outlined *Niskavuori Fights* as a commemoration of war efforts and a historical depiction, framing it as a portrayal of women's efforts on the home-front, their hard work to replace the absent men and improve the home-front atmosphere more generally. Quite explicitly, the film was devised as a eulogy to women the way *The Unknown Soldier* had been for men two years earlier. In several publicity-stills, Niskavuori women, especially Ilona and her daughter Lilli, were portrayed in working clothes, piling up hay and labouring with horses in the field.[108] [Fig. 5] Another still, which featured Loviisa, Ilona, and Lilli gazing anxiously off-frame formulated a narrative enigma – women on the home-front following the priest walking on the road and fearing his destination – that the film answered. In addition, the film was outlined as a historical spectacle featuring different milieus and battle scenes. Publicity-stills implicated a historical drama as they displayed elements such as a bomb shelter, a soldiers' funeral, civil guard, and mobilization of farm workers. Visual framings emphasized the soldiers' funeral scene as several publicity-stills referenced it. A publicity-still featuring a member of a civil guard unit giving a salute (a row of rifles with a church tower and the Finnish flag within the frame) was accompanied by a text saying: "There are not enough films documenting the big events of our time of independence. One of these is *Niskavuori Fights*."[109] While the poster and magazine advertisement of the film featured Niskavuori characters (the facial portraits of Loviisa and Ilona, Juhani Mattila driving a horse) and the house, a caption articulated the centrality of the war context: "Men fight on the front, women and the elderly people on the home-front".[110] [Fig. 6]

107 As David Willis (1998, 147) has suggested, remakes flaunt "a necessary fact of any reading" – the "quotation" or "citation" effect.

108 See, for example, *Yhteishyvä* 15.2.1956; *HS* 17.6.1957; *HS* 3.8.1957; *HS* 20.11.1957; *NV* 5–6/1957.

109 *HS* 28.9.1957; *HS* 5.12.1957; *Tänään* 10/1957; publicity-still in *HS* 5.12.1957.

110 *EA* 22/1957, 29. For multi-coloured poster and publicity-stills, consult FFA. In newspaper ads (see *HS* 12.11.1957, 13.11.1957, 14.11.1957), the portrait of sad Loviisa was coupled with haystacks, ear of grain, and the image of the house.

Fig. 5. Niskavuori Fights *1957 (FFA) as a tribute to women's wartime work.*

Review journalism, again, contested this framing of *Niskavuori Fights* as a historical depiction of war efforts. While some framings underlined the reality-effect of the home-front depiction – "the life in Niskavuori during the difficult war years is represented with honesty and liveliness"– and while some reviewers welcomed the "enlargement" of narrative scope beyond Niskavuori family,[111] many framings questioned the status of *Niskavuori Fights* as a historical narrative about the war years. The prologue of the film, which featured documentary footage of Helsinki being bombarded by the Soviet air force, the subsequent fire at the university, as well as staged scenes in bomb shelters, was especially questioned as "loose", "fragmentary", or "mysterious".[112] In other words, according to the review journalism, the documentary footage did not produce the desired history-effect, but instead confused and interrupted the narrative. At issue, however, was not necessarily the footage as such, but the Juhani Mattila (Tauno Palo) character introduced in the prologue. This character generated, in the review journalism, a discussion about history and, at the same time, allowed different articulations of history.

In Wuolijoki's play, Juhani had been outlined as a pacifist and a conscientious objector, but his status was contested as early as 1953 when *What now, Niskavuori* premièred on the stage in Helsinki and Tampere. In 1953 and in 1954 when a radio play adaptation was released, Juhani was

111 *NP* 18.11.1957; *HS* 17.11.1957.

112 The front scenes, again, were criticized of being too long and too much like the ones in *The Unknown Soldier*. *IS* 18.11.1957; *NP* 18.11.1957; *Pyrkijä* 1/1958; *US* 17.11.1957; *EA* 23/1957.

Fig. 6. The soldiers' funeral scene evoked both powerful memories and a sense of history in Niskavuori Fights *1957 (FFA).*

framed both as a communist and a people's democrat, both a conscientious objector and a deserter [käpykaartilainen], or else disavowed as a mysterious figure, leaving the character unmentioned and the history he implicated uninterpreted.[113] In 1957, review journalism reiterated these readings and the conjoining articulations of history. Some framings called attention to a "political tinge", which interfered with "the atmosphere" and promoted a history of the war efforts that excluded the "deserters" and their motifs. Some readings in left-wing newspapers as well as others stated that "political dilution" had taken place, leaving history either unclear ("insinuating but not clarifying") or defective.[114] Some framings rejected what in 1953 had been called "the political bug" as they sought to marginalize a reading of *Niskavuori Fights* as a representation of political history. Others called for "clearer" interpretations and more "substance" attempting to highlight the missing or suggested political history as the key framework for the narrative. These different framings, nevertheless, both located the point of contest in the political history Juhani Mattila's character and the newsreel aesthetic suggested.[115]

113 For left-wing or sympathetic readings, see *VS* 12.2.1953; *VS* 17.2.1953; *NP* 12.2.1953. For readings of Juhani Mattila as a "deserter", see *Etelä-Saimaa* 17.2.1953; *Suomalainen Suomi* 4/1953, *Teatteri* 4/1953. For disavowal, see *AL* 14.2.1953; *HS* 12.2.1953; *US* 13.2.1953, *IS* 12.2.1953; *Teatteri* 5/1953, 6. In framings of the 1954 radio play, Juhani Mattila was seen as an anti-bourgeois, politically committed character in the left-wing *Vapaa Sana* (*VS* 10.2.1954) whereas many liberal or social democrat dailies (*Hbl* 3.3.1954; *Ssd* 4.3.1954; *HS* 4.3.1954) disavowed his political context.

114 On "political tinge", see *Pyrkijä* 1/1958. For comments on "political dilution" and "insinuations", see *NP* 18.11.1957; *US* 17.11.1957; *EA* 23/1957; *IS* 18.11.1957.

115 *VS* 12.2.1953; *Ylioppilaslehti* 22.11.1957. The comparison with newsreels was made in *IS* 18.11.1957; Hannula 1958, 29.

Alongside conflicting readings of *Niskavuori Fights* as history, a different discourse of the past was also articulated in the review journalism, a reading of the film as a site of remembrance, a memory album. Instead of the plot, this framing foregrounded visual and auditive elements of narration as mnemonic aids triggering remembrance and transporting the viewers to both common and personal memories of war. According to the reviews, the film constructed an "atmosphere" which would "touch" and "call forth" memories for "a Finnish viewer".[116] Viewing *Niskavuori Fights* was compared to "glancing at a memory album" as the narration of the film featured scenes epitomizing the cultural memory of the war years: "recollections from Mrs Ilona's work, soldiers' funerals, drinking substitute coffee, and chatting follow each other like pages in a book".[117]

By 1957, the Niskavuori story itself had also become an object of commemoration and nostalgic memory. Promotional publicity articulated a sense of loss as the adaptation of Wuolijoki's last play gathered the Niskavuori characters on the silver screen "for the last time".[118] Theatre and radio premières of *What now, Niskavuori?* in 1953 and 1954 were been framed very strongly as "the end of history". With the last Niskavuori play, it was suggested, "an era has come to an end" and "with the matron and Niskavuori the whole pre-war era gets buried".[119] Many framings described the "goodbye" as "elegiac" and "tearful" calling forth "personally moving memories in viewers and listeners".[120] In *Niskavuori Fights*, the visual rhetoric also emphasized remembrance as publicity-stills referenced the two flashbacks included in the film. The flashbacks, enhancing the sense of ending, referred to the time of *Loviisa*, i.e., to the "beginning" of the Niskavuori family saga, featuring Loviisa and Juhani dancing at the tsar's ball (an incident referred to in the dialogue of the 1946 film) and a re-staged version of Loviisa's encounter with Malviina. Although criticized for contradicting viewers' conception of Loviisa, these flashbacks also highlighted the film's own memory discourse,[121] as did the visual props of photographs visible in many publicity-stills of the films. In a still featuring Ilona and Juhani Mattila, the past was present via a photograph of Aarne in between them.[122] Ilona was portrayed crying and the old woman habitus of Loviisa Niskavuori central in all visual framing (stills, ads, and poster) differed from that of previous

116 *KU* 17.11.1957; *EA* 23/1957; *IS* 18.11.1957; *Ssd* 18.11.1957.
117 *Ssd* 18.11.1957.
118 *Tänään* 10/1957; *EA* 16/1957, 6–7.
119 *VS* 17.2.1953; *HS* 12.2.1953; *Etelä-Saimaa* 17.2.1953; *Hbl* 3.3.1954; *Ssd* 4.3.1954; *Kauppalehti* 24.2.1954; *VS* 4.3.1954.
120 *Etelä-Saimaa* 17.2.1953; *IS* 12.2.1953; *Suomalainen Suomi* 4/1953.
121 See, for example, *EA* 23/1957. See also Chapter 3.
122 Published in *US* 17.11.1957. In the narration of *Niskavuori Fights*, the camera panned family photographs lined up on the chest of drawers in Loviisa's chamber, but this motif was even more visibly employed in the 1958 version of *The Women of Niskavuori*. Two publicity-stills portraying groups of women – Loviisa, Martta, Anna-Leena, and Ilona – sitting and talking showcased living rooms with both framed photographs and photo albums. In 1958, Ilona was shown studying the history of Niskavuori family, literally browsing a photo album.

films.[123] A still also portrayed Loviisa as having just passed away on her rocking chair (see Chapter 3).

Most reviewers, independent of their attitude to Juhani Mattila's story and its political potential, articulated the framing of *Niskavuori Fights* in terms of remembrance and affective impact. Although they explicitly disagreed about the proper representation of history, they commonly emphasized the film's role as a memory text. The film seemed to allow a collective return to wartime memories. Some framings outlined remembrance as a practice "outside" politics or as a trope of "national cinema":

> "Social 'battle' and the portrayal of the period have not been foregrounded, even though one has to concede that something authentic and whole of the sad wartime atmosphere has, anyhow, been captured in the film (for example, the soldiers' funeral), something which inexorably touches a Finnish viewer. (…) In addition to the interesting Niskavuori family history, it features a bit of that near history whose atmosphere we have all experienced, an aspect which makes one forgive many defects and be touched."[124]

This interpretive framing separated the social history of conflicts from wartime memories and outlined memory as a non-contradictory, disarming discourse of "forgiveness" and "concession". This reading, then, proposed a clear distinction between history and memory. While it implicated a nation divided in terms of its interpretations of history, it simultaneously suggested – and performed – a nation united in memory, a collective that could, with the help of the film as a mnemonic aid, retrieve and relive what had been a collective experience during war now in the present. Another review not only distinguished the discourse of memory from history, but also identified it as a realm of desire and tension. Namely, the review asserted the narration that *Niskavuori Fights* created:

> "[V]ery impressive atmospheres which certainly call forth genuinely melancholic memories among those who saw the unanimity which characterized our country during the last war, since the film portrays it without pathos and with subtlety, just as many saw it, or would like to see it."[125]

While this reading, too, implicated a collective audience of national cinema and an idea of cinema as a question of cultural identity and an occasion for memory work, it emphasized tension. It articulated a distinction between the past "as many saw it" and the past as many "would like to see it" implying, thus, that memory involved desire, imagination, hope, and visions: "many

123 The sense of time was implied in stills featuring Loviisa's recollections (her dancing as a young wife with her husband, encounter with Malviina) and in stills coupling her with a map of the Niskavuori farm dating from the 19th century. In a still featuring the telephonist Sandra visiting Loviisa for coffee, there is a map of the Niskavuori farm hung up on a wall. It includes an inscription in Swedish indicating the long history of the farm.

124 *HS* 17.11.1957.

125 *KU* 17.11.1957. The notion of pathos was evoked in *HS* 17.11.1957; *Ssd* 18.11.1957; *Ylioppilaslehti* 22.11.1957.

people, it is hoped, will see seeds of a new age and new winds in [*Niskavuori Fights*]" and "old events could be discussed in a new way".[126] In this manner, then, this review simultaneously acknowledged the importance and political potential of memory *and* outlined memory as a dubious practice which might distort or "reprogramme" history (cf. Foucault 1996, 123).

Discussions concerning the soundtrack of *Niskavuori Fights* also articulated this ambivalence about memory. The soundtrack featured an array of well-known melodies including a funeral hymn ("Sun haltuus rakas isäni"/To your hands my dear Lord), a nostalgic lied ("Oi muistatko vielä sen virren"/Oh, do you still remember the hymn?), patriotic songs about the land and landscape ("Oi, kallis Suomenmaa"/Oh, dear Finland, "Kotimaani ompi Suomi"/My homeland is Finland, "Mä oksalla ylimmällä"/Upon the highest bough), melancholic folk songs ("Läksin minä kesäyönä käymään"/ One Summer Night), and solemn serenades ("Sua tervehdin"/I greet you). The abundance of melodies was identified as a major element which called forth memories and created "atmosphere": "the songs are beautiful and immediately call forth memories and associations and raise a lump in the throat of every listener". At the same time, however, one reviewer stated, "Such a lavish use of patriotic, religious and folk songs is in no way a positive effect".[127] Many reviews defined the use of emotional songs as excessive. They described the music as "boring and painfully sentimental", "excessive sentimental eulogy" [tunnehymistys], "great pathos", and "bad taste".[128] Hence, while reviews appreciated, on the one hand, the affective impact as an invitation to remembrance, on the other hand they condemned and criticized it for the *sentimentality* which Suzanne Clark (1991, 1–41) argues is the definitional other of modernism. In Clark's analysis, the sentimental is rejected as non-transgressive, non-resistant and non-progressive, i.e., as feminine, romantic, and popular (ibid., 4, 19), which certainly accounts for some of the critical assessments of *Niskavuori Fights* as well. In *Helsingin Sanomat*, a reviewer's critical comment on the soundtrack aroused a small controversy. Whereas the composer Heikki Aaltoila defended himself against accusations of sentimentality by referring to the manuscript's clear instructions, a reader's letter indicated that the dispute about the music could not be reduced to a question of different tastes. "A mother" blamed the reviewer for insensitivity towards those Finns who lost family members in the war and for whom the melodies were not a matter of taste.[129] From this perspective, the reviewers' assessment could be read not as mere regulation of taste. Instead, it read as a regulation of memory and of the interest in the past. Thus, the "sentimental" was the marker of a limit between acceptable and excessive remembering.

126 *KU* 17.11.1957.

127 *IS* 18.11.1957.

128 See, for example, *HS* 17.11.1957, *Ylioppilaslehti* 22.11.1957; *EA* 23/1957.

129 See *HS* 17.11.1954, *HS* 24.11.1957; "Eräs äiti" ("A mother") and Paula Talaskivi's reply to her in *HS* 5.12.1957. In his reply, the composer Heikki Aaltoila *(HS* 20.11.1957) maintained that the use of familiar religious and folk songs was a feature of the manuscript and thus derived from Juha Nevalainen and Edvin Laine.

Overall, the review journalism framed *Niskavuori Fights* in terms of tension in a double sense. On the one hand, the film was read as a dispute between two histories, the one acknowledging, the other downplaying the history of wartime opposition. Review journalism played an important role here whether it brought up the repressed or marginalized history or not. On the other hand, the film was framed in terms of a tension between history and memory, between a narrative account of the home-front and an atmosphere of remembrance with its indeterminate referents. The realm of memory appeared to enable a collective experience, but as the discussion about the soundtrack showed, memory was also a site of struggle. While inviting remembrance and producing a collective experience was seen as positive quality of national cinema, remembrance also appeared as a field in which excessive or the wrong kind of remembrance (the sentimental) threatened to take over.

Blut und Boden: *Aarne Niskavuori* (1954)

> "Though the countryside emptied, it still held a Niskavuori power. The fundamental thought of at least the first generation of urban-dwellers embraced a desire to return to the rural hearth, the original cradle of Finnishness. (…) The great theme evidenced by the cinema, in a unique manner of which it was perhaps unaware, was the urbanization of a nation dominated by the countryside, this process, and all of its complex psychological consequences. The romantic logger films or the never-ending Niskavuori family drama express this theme in different ways."
> von Bagh 2000, 55–56.

In the promotional framing of *Aarne Niskavuori*, a publicity-still featuring Loviisa Niskavuori (Elsa Turakainen) and President Kyösti Kallio (Vilho Siivola) sitting and discussing in the Parliament house circulated widely.[130] [Fig. 7] Attached to it, is the promotional publicity featured a photograph of Hella Wuolijoki's hand-written addition to the manuscript, "the very last lines she wrote by hand" before her death, at the request of the director Edvin Laine. Kyösti Kallio was the archetypal peasant politician, the Prime Minister of four governments during 1922–1937 and the President of Finland in 1937–1940. As the promotional publicity underlined, the dialogue of the film reiterated an authentic speech Kallio had given before the Second World War emphasizing the importance of land ownership and agricultural self-sufficiency.[131] *Aarne Niskavuori* was characterized as a depiction of rural and peasant life or as a peasant drama. Echoing the marketing of *Heta Niskavuori* and *Niskavuori Fights*, newspaper ads also represented it using a single visual element, the ear of rye, which was hence offered as a metonymic condensation of the Niskavuori story and a representative image of its narrative world.[132] Review journalism also read it as a film promoting a peasant life style, "a eulogy to the spirit of the land", and as a counterbalance

130 *HS* 21.3.1954; *TKS* 25.3.1954; *MK* 24.3.1954.

131 *Karjalan Maa* 28.4.1954/*Lalli/Etelä-Saimaa* 27.4.1954, *MK* 27.3.1954

132 For promotional publicity as "peasant drama", see ads and articles in *EA* 23/1957; *HS* 21.3.1954; *HS* 23.4.1954; *TKS* 25.3.1954; *MK* 24.3.1954; *KSML* 22.3.1954; *Hämeen*

Fig. 7. Imagining the nation in Aarne Niskavuori *1954 (FFA) as Loviisa Niskavuori meets President Kyösti Kallio (Vilho Siivola).*

to an ongoing rural depopulation.[133] At the same time, review journalism framed *Aarne Niskavuori* as "Finnish by every meter, in a simple, impressing, and natural manner" outlining the film as "national cinema" in its address.[134] The thematic focus of the film on "the basic issues" – "Love. Hatred. Food. Money. Land." – would, it was suggested, speak to "each and every one" in the heterogeneous national audience, typified, in a reviewer's imagination, by "a chief of governmental office", "a farmer", "a trendy adolescent in Töölö", and "a herder from Pielisjärvi".[135] In this framing, *Aarne Niskavuori* was a film about on-going urbanization and modernization. It presented the countryside as "the original cradle of Finnishness" (see von Bagh above) and as political necessity, thus adhering to what Sakari Toiviainen (1992, 205) has described as an ideological constraint in post-war Finland. However,

Kansa 30.3.1954. For ads in newspapers, see *HS* 23.4.1954; *HS* 25.4.1954. Also *Niskavuori Fights* (1957) and *Heta Niskavuori* (1952) were advertised with the same symbol: see ads in *HS* 21.12.1952; *HS* 22.12.1952; *HS* 23.12.1952; *HS* 24.12.1952; *HS* 12.11.1957; *HS* 22.11.1957;

133 For characterizations as "peasant drama" or "depiction of peasant life", see, *Kauppalehti* 27.3.1954; *Mikkelin Sanomat* 3.4.1954; *Itä-Savo* 18.4.1954, *IS* 29.3.1954, *AL* 1.4.1954, *Lalli/Etelä-Saimaa* 27.4.1954, *Karjalan Maa* 28.4.1954. For framings as "eulogy", see *MK* 27.3.1954; *Itä-Savo* 18.4.1954; *NP* 30.3.1954; *Etelä-Saimaa* 27.4.1954; *Lalli* 27.4.1954; *Karjalan maa* 28.4.1954. On rural depopulation, see *TKS* 28.3.1954; *Mikkelin Sanomat* 3.4.1954; *MK* 27.3.1954.

134 *AL* 1.4.1954; *EA* 8/1954; *HS* 28.3.1954; *US* 28.3.1954; *Kaleva* 27.3.1954: *NV* kevät 1954.

135 *IS* 29.3.1954.

whether and in what sense, the film promoted "a desire to return to the rural hearth" is, in my view, less certain.

Like review journalism the publicity-still representing an encounter between Loviisa and Kallio also performed a series of elisions between "peasant" and "Finnish", "peasant" and "historical", implying that the terms where interchangeable. On the one hand, the publicity-still suggested a relationship of intimacy and trust between the Niskavuori family and the state. Their discussion rephrased the problems of family as problems of the whole nation and state and, conversely, singled the Niskavuori family out as a representative Finnish family. On the other hand, in the 1950s context, the publicity-still framed *Aarne Niskavuori* as a historical film, as a film about the 1930s. Eino Salmelainen, the director of the first Niskavuori play, suggested a similar reading in his memoirs, published in 1954, as he framed *The Women of Niskavuori* as a "memorial" and a "monument" to the peasant heritage:

> "It was not until the first Niskavuori play that such a central factor as the Finnish peasant and the peasant milieu were brought to the stage and represented as the enlightened and valuable part of society we, nowadays, generally admit them to be. Only then did we realize what an enormous factor, a firm foundation, peasant culture was in our young country. In one blow, the author changed the hierarchy of social factors, gaining people's approval for this classification and arousing an unparalleled enthusiasm."[136]

For Salmelainen, hence, "peasant culture" ranked with history as the identity narrative of the nation, and national identity was focalized in peasant culture. In his analysis, Salmelainen echoed not only the inter-war idealization of the peasantry (see Chapter 3), but also the contemporary post-war enthusiasm for the "home-region movement" [kotiseutuliike][137], an emergence of local associations committed to promoting the traditions and values of old peasant culture. Citing Zachris Topelius's *Our Country* (*Vårt Land* 1875) in their rules, these associations attempted to restore, after the lost war, an emotional attachment to the "home-region" as a ground for identity. (Räsänen 1989, 153–156.) The movement defined the "sense of home-region" [kotiseututunne] as a sense of belonging to "the soil, nature, the people, and culture of the home-region". It also characterized this concept as a sense of temporality, as the movement argued that it provided freedom from "the momentary" and opened up a "longer time-frame which includes the past, the present, and the future" (Aaltonen 1951, 218). The framings of *Loviisa* had already been associated with this new, post-war "home-region movement", framed not only as "a portrayal of peasant life", but also as "cultural history", suggesting

136 Salmelainen 1954, 232.

137 Suomen Kotiseutuliitto ("The Finnish Association for Local Culture") was founded in 1949. By 1959, it comprised 138 local societies. The first wave of "Heimat movement" had taken place 1894–1920, but at that time it was not a broad popular movement but explicitly associated with Fennomanian, nationalist agenda and its aim at popular enlightenment. On the early phase, see Räsänen 1989, 147–151.

a link between the two.[138] While *Loviisa* was hailed as "a peasant film", there were also simultaneous efforts to create "peasant literature", and following the Swedish example, competitions were organized to encourage novel writing.[139]

The desire to re-imagine "home-region" as a foundation for identity was by no means a Finnish speciality in the post-war context. As the Niskavuori films, including *Heta Niskavuori* [140], were framed as peasant films, "countryside films" (*landsbygdsfilmer*) flourished in Sweden, "genial films" (*hyggefilm*) in Denmark and *Heimatfilm* both in Germany, DDR, and Austria. (Qvist 1986; Söderbergh Widding 1998, 18; Höfig 1973; Rentschler 1984, 51–55; Steiner 1987; Blunk 1999, 206–209.) Mainstream British films manifested "a blithe resistance" to modernization, and English films, in particular, represented landscape as a "safe" place, a "conservative and nostalgic site for the opposition to modernity" (Geraghty 2000, 36, 53). In French cinema, "return to the land" was also a major topic during the post-war reconstruction period (Sorlin 1998a). Thus, the Finnish concern for Heimat was by no means a sign of idiosyncrasy or cultural inwardness.[141] Instead, there was, after the Second World War, all over in Europe a broad interest in the idea of "Heimat", the German word which literally means "homeland", but as a cultural concept connotes even more widely both a place and a sense of belonging, both home and hearth, both a physical space and a mindscape. (Höfig 1973, 3–17; Greverus 1979, 27–55; Fehrenbach 1995, 151–152; Rentschler 1996, 74; Rippey, Sundell & Townley 1996, 138–144.) Hence, Heimat is a trope at the heart of the national imagination and the formation of imaginary communities, the practices of constructing nations as subjects with their own temporality and spatiality.[142] Heimat signifies literal as well as imaginary geographies, history as well as memory, authorized cultural heritage as well as popular imagination. In other words, it is a discourse "about place, belonging, and identity" (Applegate 1992, 4). In promotional

138 *Ssd* 29.12.1946, *Ylioppilaslehti* 13.2.47, *ÅU* 10.1.1947, *SaKa* 31.12.1946, *US* 29.12.1946, *VS* 30.12.1946, *NP* 30.12.1946. Already the theatre première was interpreted as featuring "genuine peasant feeling" in *IS* 14.11.1940. See also *Valvoja-Aika* 1940, 384–385. On "cultural history", see *Suomalainen Suomi* 1/1947, 50–51.

139 See, for example, "Talonpoikaisromaanikilpailun voittaja on nainen" ("The winner of the peasant novel competition is a woman", *Eeva* 5/1946, 7–22; "Talonpoikaisromaanin taso" ("The quality of the peasant novel"), *Kotiseutu* 2/1947; Veikko Anttila, "Talonpoikaisromaanin liepeillä" ("On the peasant novel"), *Kotiseutu* 2/1954, 66–69. See also Qvist 1986, 98–99.

140 For framings of *Heta Niskavuori* as such, see *EA* 2/1953; *KSML* 31.12.1952; *Ylioppilaslehti* 9.1.1953; *HS* 4.1.1953.

141 Claims of uniqueness are put forward by Uusitalo 1989, 20; Hietala 1992, 9. In 1956, *Elokuvateatteri–Kinolehti* (7/1956, 17) published an article on German film. In this article, Yrjö Rannikko reported that so-called *Heimatfilme* or "home-region films" were highly popular among German audiences. In 1953, *Kinolehti* (4/1953) cited an Austrian poll according to which a fifth of the film audience preferred "peasant and Heimat films" as their favourite genre. As for post-war discussions on Finnish cinema, a demand for "realism" often implied depiction of rural life. See, for instance, *Suomen Kuvalehti* 33/18.8.1945; *EA* 6/1945, 125; *EA* 15/1957, 3.

142 The concept of national imaginary is used in Walsh 1996. The phrase "imaginary community", on the other hand, derives from Benedict Anderson 1991.

framings of Niskavuori, this discourse was not only articulated in the publicity-still featuring Loviisa Niskavuori and "Kyösti Kallio", but also in another still which was also widely reproduced in promotional publicity, a picture of Aarne Niskavuori holding a loaf of rye-bread in his hand.[143] The latter still epitomized the two narrative tropes central to both *Aarne Niskavuori* and many post-war cinemas in Europe, the notion of heritage rooted in rural culture and the trope of homecoming, returning to home. (Qvist 1986, 136–167; Rentschler 1996, 74ff.)

Considering that many framings of the Niskavuori films, especially the readings of *Loviisa*, articulated a sense of "Finnishness" or a "Finnish feeling" was articulated, one might argue that the Heimat discourse "about place, belonging and identity" enjoyed very broad acceptance among reviewers.[144] However, the trope of Heimat also had broad appeal in the following decade. This finding is surprising as many recent studies on Finnish review journalism and cinema culture have emphasized that the 1950s was characterized by a series of deep antagonisms and struggles between generations and tastes, old and new, traditional and modern, conservative and radical, as well as between nationalism and internationalism. (See Malmberg 1997, 113; Pantti 1998, 34–35, 44–50; Kivimäki 1998, 15, 64ff; Kivimäki 1999a, 87–90.) In the early 1950s, Finnish film culture experienced an unforeseen polarization in terms of taste called forth by the cycle of "rillumarei films", musical comedies featuring anti-authoritarian and carnivalesque ethos which were framed as outright "trash" (see Haakana 1996, passim; Kivimäki 1998, 82–88). These debates often cited *Aarne Niskavuori* and especially *Heta Niskavuori* as counter-examples of rillumarei films, as "one of the better films" and, thus, "good" national cinema – even in the views of "new", "modern", "radical" and "international" film critics in liberal or left-wing papers.[145] Although left-wing dailies, reviewing *Aarne Niskavuori*, performed a corrective reading by pointing out Hella Wuolijoki's "original intentions" instead of those attached to the film in "right-wing editorials", they nevertheless praised the story about "the house", its depiction of nature, folkloric elements, and music.[146] While these elements were deemed unacceptable for many other films of the era and precisely associated Niskavuori films with both Swedish countryside films and German Heimat films, in the rhetoric of "fighting criticism" they could be framed as "reality" especially if complemented with the corrective reading.[147]

143 The publicity-still was published, for example, in *HS* 25.4.1954; AL 1.4.1954; *US* 28.3.1954; *Hbl* 28.3.1954.

144 In framings of *Loviisa*, the cultural value was usually attributed to the film being "Finnish", see *Kansan Lehti* 28.12.1946, *VS* 30.12.1946, *IS* 28.12.1946, *HS* 29.12.1946, *ÅU* 10.1.47, *Ylioppilaslehti* 13.2.1947, *TKS* 31.12.1946, *Ssd* 29.12.1946. For *Heta Niskavuori*, see, for example, *IS* 30.12.1952; *AL* 6.1.1953; *EA* 2/1953. As examples of "national cinema", Niskavuori films were singled out in *Ylioppilaslehti* 7.4.1949; *EA* 1/1955; *EA* 6/1945.

145 *US* 28.3.1954, *Kaleva* 27.3.1954; *HS* 18.4.1954. See also the review by Jörn Donner of *Hei, rillumarei!* in *VS* 11.4.1954. On Niskavuori films as counter-images of "rillumarei films", see Kivimäki 1998, 86–87; Peltonen 1996a, 12, passim; Haakana 1996, 54; Manninen 1996, 101.

146 *VS* 4.4.1954; *TKS* 28.3.1954. On the importance of the folklore for cinema as common sense, see Landy 1996, 19.

Review journalism also framed the Niskavuori films as "Finnish" by excluding references to foreign counterparts. Only one review of *Aarne Niskavuori* drew parallels to other cinemas:

> "[A]part from the people's democracies and some Swedish peasant films hardly any other country can exhibit a film series which so seriously deals with the country motif and conjoining questions."[148]

However, when *Aarne Niskavuori* was exhibited at the 1954 Berlin Film Festival as *Brot vom Eigenen Land* German newspapers compared it with Heimat films. In fact, the German press suspected that the Finnish Ministry of Agriculture had sponsored the film because there was so much "Blut und Boden" and "rye-bread idealism" in the film.[149] In terms of its interpretive framings, Niskavuori films indeed bore many similarities to the genre of Heimat film, which has sometimes been claimed as unique to Germany (Elsaesser 1999, 133). Like Heimat films, Niskavuori films were also framed in relation to regionalism, folkloric traditions, country landscapes, and agrarian roots (Fehrenbach 1995, 152; Elsaesser 1999, 133–134; Bergfelder 2000, 81–82). Yet, even though the German readings were publicized in the Finnish press, the Finnish public reception of the Niskavuori films did not acknowledge the intertextual framework they evoked. In fact, one could ask whether the absence of references to German Heimat film in reviews was a conscious move of to create identity, i.e., an attempt to re-imagine the Finnish Heimat without the 1930s and 1940s association with, precisely, "Blut und Boden" -ideology and its Nazi connotations. (Cf. Kaes 1989, 15; Rentschler 1996, 86; Bergfelder 2000, 81.) Finnish viewers mention, however, Niskavuori films and Veit Harlan's Heimat films from the Nazi era (*Immensee*, *Die Goldene Stadt*) side by side as all-time favourites in their memories of cinema.[150]

This intertextual framework of "Heimat" and "Blut und Boden" devised Niskavuori films as identity narratives; as often in later interpretations, they were read as the idealization and mythologization of the countryside, as a

147 For example, for Jörn Donner and Martti Savo (1953, 16–17) *Heta Niskavuori* was a positive example of a film, which really deals with rural life. In their pamphlet on the Finnish film culture, they mentioned Niskavuori films on the whole as positive examples of national cinema. (Also in Donner 1990, 48 [orig. 1956]; Ibid., 61 [orig. 1961]). Among Finnish films, *Niskavuori Fights* was ranked number two by critics (*Studio 1958*, 18). In 1958, this yearbook of film also published the first essay on Niskavuori films offering ´"nationality" as the explanation of the success (Hannula 1958, 23).

148 *NP* 30.3.1954.

149 *Filmblätter* 25.6.1954; *Film-Echo* 27.6.1954; *Der Abend* and *Der Tagesspiel*, undated clips in FFA.

150 See the large oral tradition material [muistitietoaineisto] collected and archived by The National Board of Antiquities (Museovirasto) in 1996. The material had been collected with questionnaires on the topic of both cinema and television history 6 600 A4-pages by 1500 informants. For remembrances of Veit Harlan -films among the first 100 responses, see MV: 41/1; MV: 41/10; MV: 41/13; MV: 41/21; MV: 41/23; MV: 41/36; MV: 41/60; MV: 41/69; MV: 41/70; MV: 41/76; MV: 41/84; MV: 41/88; MV: 41/92, MV: 41/95. For mentioning of Niskavuori films, see MV: 41/3; MV: 41/9; MV: 41/75, MV: 41/76; MV: 41/88.

commitment to the agrarian values and as an expression of optimism about the agrarian future (Uusitalo 1978, 60; Hietala 1992, 12; Tani 1995, 120.) Furthermore, Risto Hannula in his 1958 essay on Niskavuori films framed the whole film series as "a genuine, realistic depiction of countryside" "(Hannula 1958, 31) underlining the seriousness and sincerity of the representation. From this perspective, the subject and narration of Finnish cinema was firmly focalized in and attached to the Niskavuori farm (Salmi 1999a, 89; cf. Tani 1995, 120). If, however, the interpretive framings of the post-war Niskavuori films are related to contemporary articulations of "Heimat feeling" and other forms of visual culture, even other kinds of reading routes become visible.

Picturing the homeland: *Loviisa* (1946) and *Aarne Niskavuori* (1954)

> "At some point, every other spectator will be moved to tears, many because of the wistfully sweet moments in the Finnish summer, many because of the discussion between Kallio and the old matron of Niskavuori (remembering the perspective and the reality background of the words and knowing that they were among the last lines written by the author who had recently passed away) and others because they felt close to the hardships experienced by the old matron."[151]

This reading attributed the affective impact of *Aarne Niskavuori* to cinematic imagery (summer scenes), to the memory of the late 1930s atmosphere and the persona of Kyösti Kallio, to the recent death of Hella Wuolijoki as well as to the spectatorial engagement in the narrative. Most often, however, the Niskavuori films (*Loviisa*, *Heta Niskavuori*, and *Aarne Niskavuori*) were read as affectively forceful, because of their depiction of landscape. As for *Loviisa*, almost every review mentioned Eino Heino's photography as the source for a conjunction of landscape and feeling; "his camerawork touches your mind".[152] The landscape imagery provided the argument for framing *Loviisa* as "typical, pure Finnish cinema" or as "national in the best sense of the word".[153] The readings of *Heta Niskavuori* also highlighted the cinematography and *mise-en-scéne*; they were seen to depict "Finnish countryside", which is "close to all of us" so that "it really lives" and so that "people naturally belong to it" and "move really in their own world".[154] The same reading also comprised *Aarne Niskavuori* whose landscape imagery was framed as extraordinary, not "a mere description of countryside". Reviewers suggested that "Niskavuori soil, land and the house

151 *HS* 28.3.1954.
152 *HS* 29.12.1946. See also *Kansan Lehti* 28.12.1946; *VS* 30.12.1946; *IS* 28.12.1946; *ÅU* 10.1.1947; *Ylioppilaslehti* 13.2.1947; *TKS* 31.12.1946; *Ssd* 29.12.1946.
153 *HS* 29.12.1946, *NP* 30.12.1946.
154 *Uusi Aura* 29.12.1952; *AL* 6.1.1953.

[were] the main characters of the film".[155] All of these framings associated the "national sentiment", the "feeling Finnish" (cf. Dyer 1994), with the landscape photography; they felt that it filled the spectator's mind "with a kind of peaceful and serene atmosphere; one has seen something worth seeing, something close and dear to us, a Finnish national film, thoroughly our own and familiar to us".[156]

The notion of Heimat as an image was taken up also in the "home-region movement" and described, in a festival speech, as a product of mental faculties [sielunkykyjä]:

> "In us, mental faculties create an image of the home-region which we have not for a long time seen with our eyes. The most important of them is the attachment of the heart, love, but the most efficient ones are remembrance and imagination. Love makes us remember, but an image is created by remembrance, and where memory ends, imagination takes over." (Rapola 1953, 180).

At the same time, though, the speech started from an anecdote about emigrant Finns who during their visits to Finland always use film cameras to record the image of the homeland. Furthermore, the speech cited Zachris Topelius' collections of landscape pictures and his poems describing scenery, paintings by Magnus von Wright, Akseli Gallen-Kallela and Albert Edelfelt, literary descriptions of Elias Lönnrot as well as the ethnographic accounts of folklore and poems. What the post-war Heimat movement, hence, emphasized was not only or primarily a "realistic" recording or indexical fidelity, but also the importance and the affective charge of Heimat as felt, remembered and, indeed, imagined.[157]

However, the national sentiment attributed to the landscape imagery of the Niskavuori films was a complex affect. It included, certainly, the idealization of countryside as the locus of Finnishness and even "a desire to return to the rural hearth". The centrality of the countryside imagery could, however, also be read in terms of genre memory; from this perspective, the "Finnish feeling" was an effect of familiarity – constructing a *particular* kind of landscape, coded, sedimented, and reiterated as "national", a landscape "close and dear to us" "thoroughly our own and familiar to us". The power of tourism, travel, and visual art in generating "the national sentiment" had been emphasized in cultural nationalism since the 19th century (Eskola 1997, 56), and the imagery of the Niskavuori films can be read in relation to this rich intertextual framework.[158] Furthermore, in the post-war context, the borders

155 *EA* 8/1954. On the quality of the landscape imagery, see also *Hbl* 28.3.1954, *Karjalan Maa/Lalli/Etelä-Saimaa* 27.3.1954, *Itä-Savo* 18.4.1954, *TKS* 28.3.1954. Cf. discussions on landscape as an actor in Swedish and Norwegian cinema of 1910s and 1920s, see Florin 1997, 81–84; Myrstad 1996, 208–214.

156 *EA* 8/1954.

157 According to Landy (1996, 1–2), cinema as popular history relies on "affective strategies" in order to invoke a sense of "shared experience". As common sense and popular history, cinema operates with "proverbs, prophecies, truisms, and the celebration of repetition" (ibid., 19).

158 Cf. Bo Florin's (1997, 108–12, 191–193) discussion on paintings as the intertextual framework of "tableaux aesthetic" in Swedish films such as *Synnove Solbakken* (1919).

of the Finnish nation-state were once again renegotiated and half-a-million Finns had lost their home-region. In this acute situation, the interest in Heimat (local societies, peasant literature, films, and landscape photography) can be read as a need for readjusting the national imaginary.

In terms of their visual framings, *Loviisa*, *Heta Niskavuori,* and *Aarne Niskavuori* associated, indeed, with a number of the post-war books representing Finland through photographs. *Suomi kuvina. Finland i ord och bild* (*Finland in Pictures*, Suova 1944), *Kaunis Häme. Det ljuva Tavastland* (*The Beautiful Häme*, Poutvaara 1947), *Suomalaisia maisemia. Finska landskap. Finnish Scenes* (Sandberg 1947), *Suomen kuva* (*The Image of Finland*, Aho 1948), *Suomea linnun silmin* (*Finland from a bird's-eye perspective*, Pajari & Lehmus 1948), *Maamme Suomi. Finland i ord och bild* (*Our country Finland*, Mäkinen 1949), *Suomi värikuvina* (*Finland in colour pictures*, Blomberg 1952), and *Suomi Finland* (Poutvaara 1952) not only featured landscape photography from different regions and seasons, but also ethnological imagery of rural work, as well as pictures of buildings and monuments. During the war years, landscape views had been out of circulation for security reasons, but soon after the war, the shortage of printing paper notwithstanding, a number of books were published. (Eskola 1997, 76, 80–82.) There are many overlaps between the promotional publicity of the Niskavuori films and the photographic rhetoric of these books.

As interpretive framings underlined, both Niskavuori films and the picture books imagined Heimat in terms of particular elements of the landscape. Both the trailer of *Loviisa* and the publicity-stills circulating in cinemas featured landscape shots of grain fields in Häme, a cloudy skyline, and lakes which echoed the ones at the beginning of *Finland in Pictures* (1944); a series of lake imagery, emphasizing the trope of panorama, a lake scene with pine trees in the foreground, and a hilly ridge had since the mid-19th century become a metonymic image of Finland employed in poetry, painting, photography, and film (Eskola 1997, 39–41; 76–77). [159] Furthermore, *Finland in Pictures* featured a two-page spread where the words of the Finnish national anthem are printed on a lake and forest panorama showing Lusikkaniemi point, much of the same scenery that was represented, through aerial photography, in the opening sequence of *Aarne Niskavuori*.[160]

Alongside the landscape imagery, and very importantly, Heimat was imagined in terms of work. Images of rural work linked Niskavuori films to the aesthetic of picture books and haymaking was a favourite topic of the publicity-stills for all Niskavuori films. It was featured in stills that promoted *Loviisa*, *Heta Niskavuori*, and *Aarne Niskavuori* and in the trailer for *Loviisa*.

159 On the panorama, "a bird's-eye perspective" as the subject position consolidated in the early 19th century landscape painting, see Jukka Ervamaa 1972,19, cit. in Palin 1999, 19. On the literary trope, see Laitinen 1984, 32–34. In my 1928 edition (32nd) of Zachris Topelius's *Our country* (*Vårt Land* 1875), the section entitled "Fatherland" includes a photo of what according to Taneli Eskola became the iconic Finnish landscape, Lusikkaniemi and Aulanko.

160 The opening sequence was mentioned as "setting the basic tone for the film" in *IS* 29.3.1954.

One review underlined the importance of this scene; "Already the first scenes take us into a typical Finnish landscape, a hot summer day during the haymaking, and throughout the film regional nature is interwoven, not as a decorative background, but as an element in action that explains the people and what they do."[161] In *Finland in Pictures* and *Kaunis Häme*, pictures of haymaking were included. Both *Loviisa*, *Heta Niskavuori*, and *Aarne Niskavuori* all included montage sequences displaying agricultural work, and these were often mentioned as important ingredients in the films. They were seen as contributing both to a cinematic narration (no dialogue) and to a realistic depiction of work. *Loviisa* was framed as "a sympathetic animation of everyday life in the countryside, of the work done in a farmhouse" and as "a beautiful and lively interpretation of the Finnish man in Finnish nature". *Heta Niskavuori* was characterized as "imbued with a Finnish settler, a peasant spirit expanding its living; "film commemorating real country life and its everyday tasks".[162] The publicity-stills from fields and forests (often portraying a man with a horse) routed a reading of the Niskavuori films as ethnological representations of work. In *Finland in Pictures*, a section entitled "the main source of living" featured photos of men working in agriculture: clearing a forest, ploughing a field, or driving a tractor, often with a horse. This imagery had been established as typical of peasant culture in the 1943 book *Isien työ/The Work of Fathers* by Kustaa Vilkuna and Eino Mäkinen, and was cited in publicity-stills from Niskavuori films featuring Juhani Niskavuori turning a stone, Akusti clearing the forest, Aarne Niskavuori riding a horse, Juhani Mattila ploughing and Aarne Niskavuori driving a harvester-thresher. [Fig. 33, 37] As for women's work, one of the most often cited publicity-stills of *Loviisa* featured Emma Väänänen in the field sheaving (see Chapter 3), and it portrayed her against the skyline framed in a manner similar to that of picture in *Finland in Pictures*. [Fig. 14, 18]

As a further common feature in visual rhetoric, both Niskavuori films and the picture books included imagery of peasant architecture and material culture, in other words, imagining Heimat in terms of places, buildings, and interiors. Whereas *Finland in Pictures* presented images of mansions and big farm houses, the posters of the Niskavuori films centred regularly on a picture of the Niskavuori house.[163] [Fig. 8] In this convention, the posters reiterated the establishing shots of the Niskavuori house that opened the films. The publicity-stills of *Loviisa*, furthermore, included interior scenes that echoed the pictures in *Finland in Pictures* introducing readers to peasant architecture. A reviewer emphasized this element of the film's narration: "Thanks to pungent criticism in the past years, the authenticity of peasant milieus has become a standard feature of the Finnish film. The photography by Eino Heino and the background music by a Finnish composer, George de Godzinsky match well the village landscape and the farmhouse interiors

161 *NP* 30.12.1946. The same claim about the significant role of the landscape was made by *Hbl* 29.12.1946 and *US* 29.12.1946.

162 *Suomalainen Suomi* 1/1947, 50–51; *Ssd* 29.12.1946; *EA* 2/1953. See also *Uusi Aura* 29.12.1952; *HS* 4.1.1953.

163 Especially the poster of *Aarne Niskavuori*, but also that of *Niskavuori Fights*.

Fig. 8. The Niskavuori estate takes a central position in the poster for Aarne Niskavuori *1954 (FFA).*

where *Loviisa* is set."[164] In publicity-stills, the characters and the stars, of course, were equipped with objects of peasant culture. In *Loviisa*, Loviisa, Juhani, Kustaava, Malviina, and Martti were portrayed with a pail as the sign of the narrative world. Even the poster of the film featured Juhani with a pail. Publicity-stills framing *Heta Niskavuori* displayed nets and other fishing equipment, and in a studio portrait of Heta, placing a handle of a hoe in her lap created the peasant-effect. [Fig. 9]

Lastly, both Niskavuori films and the picture books imagined Heimat in terms of regions. While the picture books catalogued the whole country, Niskavuori films located Heimat in Häme. This mode of representation emphasizing regions dated back to the 19th century and the early phases of Finnish nation-building.[165] In the Finnish national imagination, the authorized locus of the nation has travelled from the west coast to the eastern border to the inland lake district since the beginning of the 19th century. In this process of imagining and re-imagining, the visual arts and national politics have interacted. (Klinge 1975; Ilmonen 1979; Pöykkö 1984; Eskola 1997; Palin 1999.) In his 19th century poetry, J.L. Runeberg located the nation in the inland, while at the turn of the 20th century the gazes were directed towards Karelia, the eastern part of Finland. After the Second World War, however, when Karelia was lost to the Soviet Union, the heartlands became interesting again. (Pöykkö 1984, 8–14; Häyrynen 1994.) This could account for the success of Matti Poutvaara's Häme-photography in the late 1940s; his book

164 *Suomalainen Suomi* 1/1947, 50–51.

165 See 19th century books featuring first graphics and drawings, then photographs (P.A. Kruskopf's *Finska vuer* 1837; Zachris Topelius's *Finland framställdt I teckningar* 1845–1952 and *Vårt land/Maamme kirja* 1875–1876; I.K. Inha's *Suomi kuvissa* 1896), as well a number of inter-war mass produced books (Jonasson 1929; *Maakuntiemme kauneus. Suomen Kuvalehden maakuntavalokuvauskilpailussa palkitut* 1933; Sandberg 1939).

Fig. 9. Advertisement for Heta Niskavuori *(EA 24/1952) with a peasant-effect.*

Kaunis Häme (Beautiful Tavastia, 1948) sold almost 40 000 copies and his *Suomi-Finland* made a sales record, selling 219,000 copies. (Eskola 1997, 80.)

As for Finnish cinema, Heimat was, until the 1960s, most often placed in Häme and Uusimaa (Salmi 1999b, 134). The location of Finland in these regions took place invisibly and without special mention (Honka-Hallila 1992, 29; cf. Hietala 1991b). For instance, *Loviisa*, *Heta Niskavuori*, and *Aarne Niskavuori* were all framed simultaneously as both "national" and regional, displaying a special "Häme-quality". Reviewers called the films "Häme-products" portraying the people, landscape, buildings, music, events,

or spirit typical of Häme.[166] Many framings defined Häme as a feeling; in *The Women of Niskavuori* (1958) and *Niskavuori Fights*, music or set design was called "Häme-ish, Finnish, and Niskavuoristic", scenes in the films were framed as representing an "authentic Niskavuori power" or following "the spirit and atmosphere of the Niskavuori series".[167] In some cases, Häme seemed to be a question of degree. For instance, as for the 1958 version of *The Women of Niskavuori*, the use of colours provoked a discussion of the qualities of landscape imagery. In some framings, the film was read as authentic in its detailed portrayal of a farm in Häme. In others, the film was seen as containing too few descriptive scenes, i.e., images of Niskavuori as a farm with its tasks and workers.[168] Readings of *Aarne Niskavuori*, again, interpreted the slow pace of narration as "Häme-like". The film was described as "overwhelming" the spectator "with its Häme-bound epic character that unfolds slowly and unhurriedly".[169] Images of nature portraying forest in winter or nocturnal scenes were described as beautiful and impressive or "feeling like Häme".[170]

Readings focused on authenticity also suggested that Häme was a feeling: "Niskavuori plays are, as we know, powerful depictions of life in a Häme farmhouse, of the fates of its inhabitants and of the time. They are authentic; there is nothing artificial in them, not too much of anything."[171] Extra-cinematic information was also used to locate the Heimat; for example, the landscapes of *Heta Niskavuori* were praised, but the farm houses were deemed un-Häme-like, as they were shot in Espoo.[172] In this manner, then, while Niskavuori films were seen as creating Häme as Heimat, a distance was suggested. For example, both *Niskavuori Fights* and *The Women of Niskavuori* were criticized for lacking an authentic Häme dialect.[173] Instead of a sense of belonging, this discrepancy was said to result in a disturbing feeling: "as if the everyday-life of Niskavuori was observed through an urban person's eyes".[174]

166 *Kansan Lehti* 28.12.1946; *TKS* 31.12.1946; *VS* 30.12.1946; *IS* 28.12.1946; *NP* 30.12.1946; *HS* 29.12.1946; *Hbl* 29.12.1946; *US* 29.12.1946; *ÅU* 10.1.1947; *Ssd* 29.12.1946; *HS* 4.1.1953; *Karjalan Maa* 28.4.1954; *Lalli/Etelä-Saimaa* 27.4.1954; *AL* 1.4.1954; *EA* 8/1954; *Hbl* 28.3.1954. See also the 1938 framings of *The Women in Niskavuori* in *US* 17.1.1938; *Savo* 18.1.1938; *Uusi Aura* 19.1.1938; *TS* 18.1.1938; *Kansan Lehti* 19.1.1938; *Hbl* 17.1.1938.

167 *IS* 23.9.1958 ("musiikki – kuulosti – hämäläis-suomalaiselta ja niskavuoriselta"); *NP* 22.9.1958; *HS* 21.9.1958. As for *Niskavuori Fights* the set design was described as "coloured with pure, authentic Niskavuori-spirit". See *PS* 18.11.1957.

168 *Uusi Aura* 19.10.1958; *SaKa* 21.9.1958. *MK* 21.9.1958 wrote that the film lacked description of "the power of the soil".

169 *AL* 1.4.1954; *Kansan Kuvalehti* 8/1954; *Ssd* 28.3.1954.

170 *TS* 19.10.1958; *SaKa* 21.9.1958; *EA* 19/1958. On Häme-feeling in *Heta Niskavuori*, see *HS* 4.1.1953.

171 *VS* (film review of *Loviisa*) 30.12.1946.

172 *US* 4.1.1953.

173 *PS* 18.11.1957; *SaKa* 21.9.1958; *TS* 19.10.1958.

174 *HS* 17.11.1957.

Heimat as history and memory

> "The sense of history, at any given point of time, is quite as much a matter of history as what happened in it (…) the two are indivisible"
>
> Raphael Samuel 1994, 15.

In terms of visual framing, the post-war Niskavuori films were associated with the concurrent Finnish and more largely European interest in Heimat as a trope. While the Niskavuori films have later been interpreted as expressions of nostalgic and backward desire, "a desire to return to the rural hearth", contemporary framings suggested an affective impact – a sense of belonging, a Heimat feeling – that was far more complex. For example, *Aarne Niskavuori* was framed in terms of an identity narrative and, again, the rhetoric of the rupture was employed to articulate a need for roots. In such a framing, Heimat was defined as a *place*. Where this place was, was however not self-evident. For example, when *Aarne Niskavuori* was exhibited in France under the title *Le Pain de la Passion*, the film was associated not with the reconstruction of the Finnish nation or even Finnish landscape, but with "Swedish eroticism" and films such as *Hon dansade en sommar* (*One Summer of Happiness*, Arne Mattson 1951). A similar dis-locating reading was also performed in the German context, despite the strong presence of the Heimat discourse.[175] These interpretations were publicized in Finnish newspapers and supported by publicity-stills underlining the passionate romance between Martta (Hillevi Lagerstam) and Steward (Åke Lindman). They suggested that imagery identified as "Finnish" and "Häme-like" (landscape photography, folkloric dances, and melodies) was not merely that, but allowed other readings.

Whether the trope of Heimat connoted "the past as a foreign country" (Lowenthal 1985) is equally unclear. As Doreen Massey (1992, 11–13) argues, the notion of place should not automatically be identified with stasis and nostalgia as narratives of increasing modernization often do when prioritizing space as a concept for social networks and movement. "That place called home was never an unmediated experience", she argued criticizing the nostalgic paradigm (ibid., 8; cf. Turner 1987). In his discussion about the 1950s Finnish cinema, Matti Peltonen (1996a, 12) warns against automatically reading the trope of agrarian culture as nostalgia or backwardness; in terms of policy decisions, employment situation and mentality, he maintains that agrarian culture was very much a future perspective for many Finns.[176] Similarly, re-readings of German Heimat film have questioned previous interpretations, which framed Heimat as an anti-modern trope, an image of nostalgia or as sheer escapism. Instead, it has been suggested, Heimat films should be read as sites of negotiation, as tropes of movement (Rippey, Sundell, Townley 1996, 138ff; von Moltke 2000, 11–12). As a

175 On this reading, see *Der Tagesspiel* undated clip in FFA; *Cinémonde* 9/1954; *Cinémonde* 17.12.1954. *Cinémonde* 9/1954 featured a publicity-still framing Martta (Hillevi Lagerstam) and Steward (Åke Lindman) on a hay load. For Finnish reports from publicity abroad, see *IS* 2.7.1954; *Hbl* 27.6.1954; *HS* 29.9.1954.

176 In this respect, Niskavuori films not only mobilized "present pasts", but also "present futures" (Huyssen 2000, 21).

discourse in German culture, Heimat has not only functioned as a metaphoric representation of the nation (Confino 1997, 188), but also as a mediating concept between the locality and the nation, which is suggestive of a more pluralistic and heterogeneous nationalism (Applegate 1990, 6). One should also note that the Finnish post-war "home-region movement" was not in any simple way hostile to modernization but, instead, it was grounded in a modern sense of national culture being re-focalized because of industrial society, and it attempted to re-articulate agrarian traditions in this time of change (Aaltonen 1954, 180–181).

Besides being framed as a place in the post-war Finnish context, Heimat was simultaneously conceptualized as an *affect*, as a feeling. Both a sense of melancholia over the "distance" and a sense of deep pleasure were present in the framings of Niskavuori films, as Heimat was re-imagined in images and sounds and available for visiting. Through their association with the "Finland in Pictures" aesthetic, Niskavuori films suggested another kind of homecoming, one allowed by *a touristic gaze* (Urry 1990, 2–3). To use an expression of 1990s media culture, the visual framing of post-war Niskavuori films reconstructed the past as a "place" in the sense of what today is known as *theme park*. The cinema-goers of the 1950s were, in other words, invited to see recognizable landscapes (panoramas, lakes, forests, fields), coded sceneries (seasonal changes, nocturnal lake scenes, ripen grain fields, cloudy summer skies), ethnological imagery of peasant work (men and horse in various tasks), accommodation (tableaux images of interiors, buildings, farm yards), and objects (tools, pails) as well as folkloric imagery of round games and the accompanying melodies. In the reviewers' framings, all of this provided both the museal pleasure of "the already known" (Bennett 1993, 73) and the touristic pleasure of experiencing all the images and sounds, all the signs of Heimat in a large scale. Watching Niskavuori, it was implied, felt like visiting a home-region museum [kotiseutumuseo]. It enabled the viewer to endorse the "sense out of the ordinary", as well as the familiar elements collected, spectacularized, and objectified for the touristic gaze of the cinema-goer (cf. Urry 1990, 3).

In the cinematic framework, then, Niskavuori was not only framed as an identity-narrative, a place *to be in*. It also became an object for the "mobilized, virtual gaze" (Friedberg 1993, 2), and thus a place *to go to*. The publicity-stills also suggested other pleasures of a distanced gaze, the possibility of looking at "the common people" as separate from oneself – else-where and else-when. Publicity-stills framing *Aarne Niskavuori* singled the farm hands and maids out as "types" or "characters" – "Nieminen" and "Nieminen's wife" – representing an anonymous group, in the same way the elderly female telephonists always were in adaptations of *The Women of Niskavuori*. As for *Loviisa*, the dairymaid Malviina (Kirsti Hurme) was portrayed for erotic gazes, as was Steward (Åke Lindman) in *Aarne Niskavuori* (see Chapter 5). This distanced and objectifying performance of "the common people" reiterated the old conventions of "folk plays", the effect of which was a distinction between "them" (objects of the gaze) and "us" (the spectators). (Cf. Peltonen 1996a, 16.)

Furthermore, in the context of cinema, the trope of Heimat was open for different investments and imaginings, including the utopian ones that Ernst Bloch suggested in his sense of the concept. For Bloch, Heimat did not signify backwardness, but the potentially utopian non-synchronous ("Ungleichzeitigkeit"), the "not-yet". As such a concept in the German context, Heimat has been mobilized for both left-wing and feminist imaginings as an alternative trope for "fatherland" (Hermand & Steakley 1996, x; Geisler 1985, 29; Ecker 1997, 7–31). Even in the post-war Finnish context, Heimat was widely accepted in spite of the struggles otherwise fought in cinema culture. The Heimat trope proved to be re-signifiable and re-interpretable for the purposes of national cinema, political agendas, and counter-readings. For instance, "fighting film criticism" (Savo 1955; cf. Kivimäki 1998, 341–342) prioritized "realism", i.e., "truthful" depiction of "real" issues in "authentic" milieus, and appropriated Niskavuori films for this discourse. In this manner, Heimat was associated with a corrective reading that mobilized extra-cinematic information about the persona of Hella Wuolijoki and utilized her political "intentions" as an alternative reading route. Furthermore, 1950s framings also suggested that even the "already-known", the doxa or that which "seems to go without saying" (Bennett 1993, 73) could, in fact, become "not-yet", non-synchronous in a positive sense in the context of a cinematic theme park. In a review of *Aarne Niskavuori*, this possibility of re-signification was suggested when the abundant use of patriotic songs, folk songs and play songs was framed as "courageous". In this film, the familiar melodies were said to stick in one's head "in a strange way" and to sustain "completely new atmospheres".[177]

Overall, the framings of post-war Niskavuori films emphasized cultural memory as an ambivalent process of negotiation. The spectator implicated in the reviews was prone to the pleasures of recognition, comparison, and assessment of the appropriation of familiar signs. At the same time, this spectator constantly had to negotiate the assembly of signs and their meanings, correcting them in terms of authenticity, taste, or political connotations, if necessary. From this perspective, the trope of Heimat was a particular kind of "past-present alignment" (Bennett 1993, 73) and as such, a particular discourse of history and memory. In his study on inter-war Finnish non-fiction films, Joachim Mickwitz (1995, 288–289) discusses landscape as a "substitute" for national history, which the newly independent state lacked. Because the history of Finland was part that of either Sweden or Russia, he argues, there was no political history that could have been used as a national symbol. Therefore, culture-based nationalism acquired great weight, and the landscape, the people, and their customs were the key symbols in national imagination. Hence, the post-war interest in Heimat can be seen as a continuation of a tradition, which the Second World War in no way interrupted. However, I think it would be reductive to regard the appeal of the Heimat trope as lack of history. Merely the fact that the trope has been recurrently popular in many European countries, I think, calls Mickwitz's

177 *HS* 28.3.1954.

hypothesis into question. Instead, I propose that the investments in Heimat be regarded as forms of history and memory – relating not only to the historicity of generic conventions or to the general interest in remembrance, but also to contemporary discourses of history that were undergoing a change. While Finnish historians had eagerly participated in nation building during the inter-war period, during the post-war era a paradigm shift took place. The interpretive and visionary role of historical research was downplayed, and positivist and empiricist methods were held up as the unquestionable ideal for a new generation of history-writers. At the same time, there was an attempt to exclude all but professional historians from history writing (Ahtiainen & Tervonen 1996, 126; cf. Ahtiainen & Tervonen 1994, passim). Instead of viewing the Heimat discourse as substitute history, in this context, I propose that it be viewed as a particular kind of historicity, one not based on linear narrativity, but on citationality. In this respect, the notions of "Heimat" and "Heritage" overlap.

I suggest the citationality evident in the framings of the Niskavuori films be seen as a cinematic strategy for addressing and responding to the post-war "crisis of history" (Niemi 1995, 37). In literature, a new, modernist and psychologist trend cultivated an idea of "no-man's-land" as the main mode of experience (Viikari 1992, 32–34). While there were other trends, even realist ones that attempted at new historical interpretations (Karkama 1994, 210–211), the representation of history and the conception of history had fundamentally changed (Ihonen 1992, 242–244; Niemi 1995, 37–41; cf. Suolahti 1948). There was an attempt at clearing space and removing traces of the old in both modernist literature and home-design; the iconoclasm in home-design condemned framed photographs and prints, as well as rugs on the wall (Kuusamo 1992, 170).[178] In cinema culture and in the framings of the Niskavuori films, again, the main mode of experience was neither psychologism nor realism but, rather, historicism and bricolage. The narration operated by citing and re-appropriating the familiar, the ritualistic and the clichéd, landscape imagery, folkloric motifs, folk songs, ethnographic motifs, and even historical narratives. (Cf. Landy 1996, 1–9.) While *Loviisa* and *Heta Niskavuori* both covered a long time span by referencing the key moments in the history of nation-building, neither of them were framed primarily as "historical narratives" (Salmi 1999a, 204–205). Instead, both of them, like *Aarne Niskavuori* or *Niskavuori Fights*, were framed more in terms of an affective impact, Heimat-feeling, which was attributed to the citational aesthetic. This mode of historicity promoting touristic, museal, ethnological, and folkloristic gazes was very different from the contemporary literary discourses as well as from contemporary professional history, and it cannot be reduced to identity-work in any simple sense.

178 In his analysis of the rhetoric of modernist design, Harri Kalha (1997, esp. 249–253) reveals the gendered logic of modernism, i.e., the definition of a masculine purity as art defined against a feminine decoration and an emphasis on everyday life.

In the beginning there was… history

> "Erst nachdem die H[eimat] als Naturzustand verlorengegangen ist, wird sie artikuliert."
> Willi Höfig 1973, 10.

> "There are *lieux de mémoire*, sites of memory, because there are no longer *milieux de mémoire*, real environments of memory."
> Pierre Nora 1989, 7.

At the turn of millennium, Niskavuori continues to be framed both as foundational history narrative and heritage tourism. In 2000, Hämeen heimoliitto ("Häme Tribe Union") announced a competition "in search of the Niskavuori of our times", suggesting that Niskavuori still has relevance as a trope for conjoining the regional with the national and the present with the past.[179] In 1998, Niskavuori featured in another kind of framework as an article in *Helsingin Sanomat* presented "a group of energetic- and efficient-looking women and slowly-speaking men in felt hats, as if sprung directly from a Finnish folk play". They were representatives of tourist enterprises in Hauho, a small municipality near Hämeenlinna in southern Finland, participating in the annual travel fair. They had assumed "the female and male roles of famous Niskavuori personalities in order to capture the glances of fair visitors and to make good business deals".[180] Besides drawing attention to the regional tourist industry, they were also promoting "the Niskavuori week", celebrated annually since 1994. Highly popular amateur productions of the Niskavuori plays in "authentic settings" have been staged since 1990. Thus far, 65 000 people have seen them. Since 1994, these performances have been accompanied by a week of Niskavuori events: seminars and exhibitions, Niskavuori fairs, visits to Vuolijoki estate, barn dances, row boat trips to shooting locations, and sporting events with titles referring to Niskavuori plots (e.g., "Sandra's Round").[181] Moreover, the visitors have had an opportunity to buy Niskavuori rye bread. [Fig. 10] All of these activities take place annually in the landscape where Hella Wuolijoki spent time after having married Sulo Wuolijoki, the son of the Vuolijoki household in

179 For ads, see *TS* 23.2.2000; *HS* 23.2.2000. "Häme tribal union" (founded in 1925) was celebrating its 75th anniversary and "Häme Jubilee year" in 2000. See <http://www.htk.fi/publich/heimoliitto/page4.htm> (23.2.2000). In recent years, many commentators have framed Reko Lundán's popular family dramas in the KOM theatre as "a Niskavuori play of the internet age". See *HS* 12.3.2001.

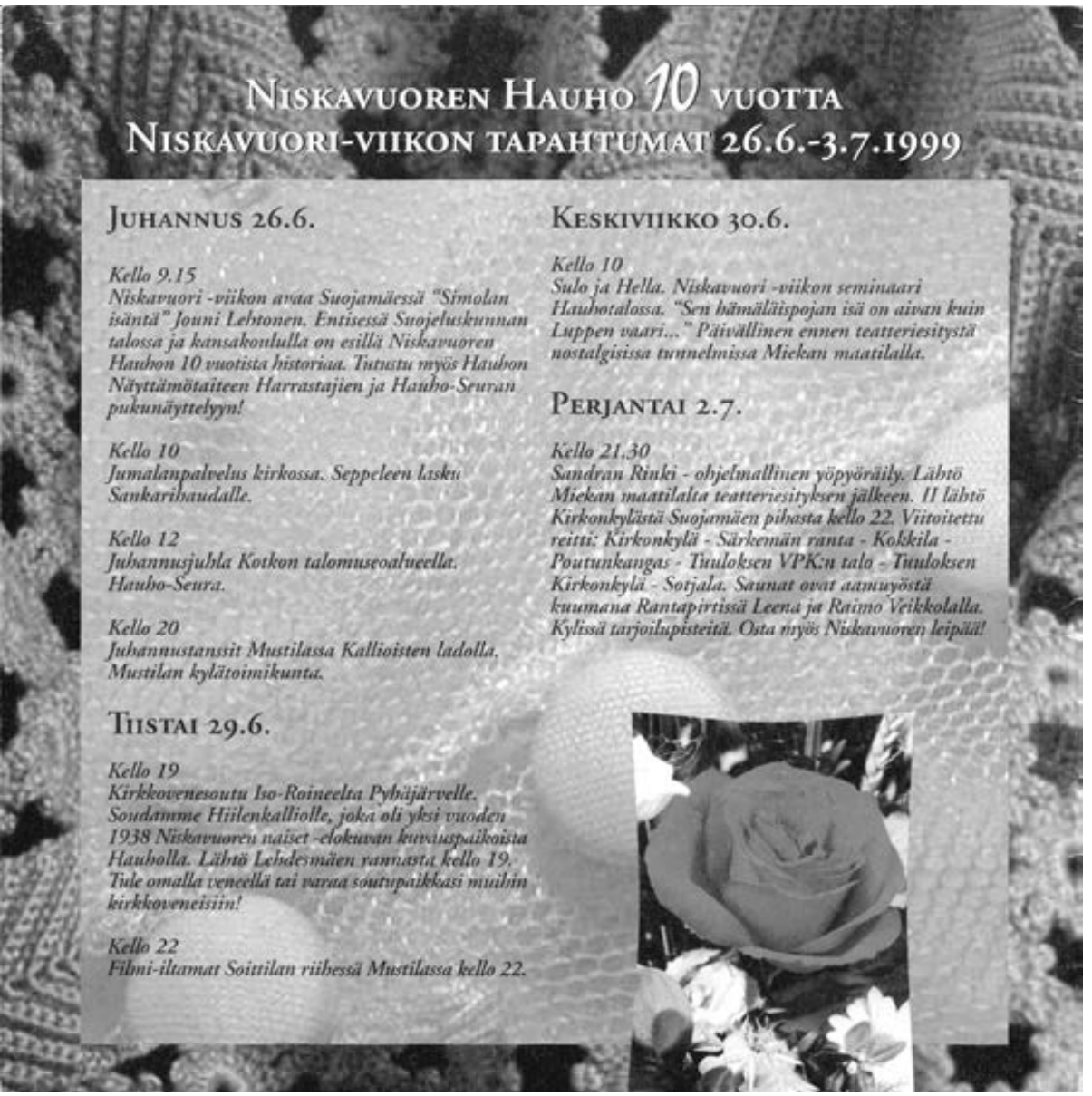
180 *HS* 14.1.1998.

181 On the popularity see *Teatteri* 6/1992, 23–24. On the happening, see brochure for the "10th Niskavuori at Hauho" event in 1999: "Tule Niskavuoren Hauholle Hämeeseen!" ("Come to Niskavuori in Hauho in Häme!"), as well the programme leaflets for Niskavuori plays: *What now, Niskavuori* 1990; *The Young Matron of Niskavuori* 1991; *The Women of Niskavuori* 1992 *Niskavuoren Heta* 1994. In 1997, Hauho started a five-year project to stage all five Niskavuori plays "in the chronological order", see *ESS* 7.6.1997. The idea of producing Niskavuori plays in Hauho was first formulated in 1980, in 1984 Niskavuori films were screened "to measure the enthusiasm" and in 1990, the first Niskavuori play was staged. For an account of history, see Maritta Viitanen's preface to the programme leaflet of *Heta Niskavuori*, 3–4 (Hauho commune, Cultural Bureau).

Fig. 10. Come visit the virtual Niskavuori! Heritage tourism in Hauho.

Hauho. Not only Niskavuori plays, but also *Hulda Juurakko* (1937) and *Herr Puntila und sein Knecht Matti* (co-authored with Bertolt Brecht) have been linked to the Hauho landscape. While the Vuolijoki mansion has not been available for tourist purposes, the courtyard of the near Miekka farm, ten kilometres away, has been staged as an "authentic" milieu for the summer theatre performances.[182] The newspaper article reported that, the different forms of tourist business and the fictitious world coincided successfully:

182 For information on and presentation of the Miekka farm as a virtual Niskavuori farm, see < http://www.miekka.net/ > (5.3.2003). On staged authenticity in tourism, see MacCannell 1973, cit. Urry 1990, 9.



"The representatives of Hauho feel the Niskavuori nostalgia in the air, the agrarian romanticism smell of hay and they plan their programme production and marketing accordingly. The fact that the summer season in many Hauho cottage villages will soon be sold out is a clear sign of the increasing popularity of rural life."[183]

183 *HS* 14.1.1998. In the same article in *Helsingin Sanomat*, even another delegation of "felt hats" was mentioned: a group marketing the touristic attractions of Lapland by impersonating gold-diggers. The clothing they wore was borrowed from a film currently in production, *Lapin kullan kimallus* (*Gold Fever in Lapland*, 1999) and, hence, linked tourism to both cinema and the gold rush to Lapland in the late 1860s.

The municipality of Hauho has, hence, commodified the Niskavuori story in terms of "heritage culture" which merges fictitious worlds and real locations into a simulacrum of the past – turning Niskavuori into a heritage trail, a theme park, and outdoor museums. (Cf. Lowenthal 1995; Urry 1990, 104–134; Corner & Harvey 1991, 34–35; Knuuttila 1994, 131–133.) In this manner, the Niskavuori story has become a vehicle for time travel. As a cultural tourism project funded by the European Social Fund (2001–2003) and as a self-proclaimed "Niskavuori-land", Hauho has re-created the past as a place to be visited.[184] As the studies on heritage culture have shown, during the 20th century, tourist attractions have been increasingly built around localism, i.e., interest and investment in the local and the particular, embedded life stories, local memories, and the idea of Heimat (Robins 1991, 34, 42). In the case of Niskavuori tourism, localism merges with nationalism. The governor of the Häme region illustrated this tendency with his speech inaugurating the second Niskavuori week in 1991:

> "It is through Hella Wuolijoki's Niskavuori series that the rural landscape of Hauho with its people has in the most spectacular way been etched in the minds of Finns. In spite of the pressure of global fashions, a continuing interest in deeply national cultural phenomena such as Niskavuori strengthens faith in our basic Finnish roots even in Europe under integration."[185]

In this chapter, I have shown that this coincidence of fiction and cultural policy, tourism and politics, localism and nationalism (all in the name of history and memory) is not a novelty of the 1990s. The touristic gaze was articulated already in post-war framings of the Niskavuori films in conjunction with the readings of the films in terms of remembrance, history, landscape, folklore, and ethnology. While Niskavuori has been constantly framed as a foundational identity narrative, representing our "agrarian past" for "us", history as roots, as some of the 1980s and 1950s framings have suggested, it has simultaneously been framed as an imaginative place to be visited, to be enjoyed "as spectacle". Indeed, looking at 1930s discourses of cinema, peasantry, and history suggests that this ambivalence characterized the intertextual frameworks and interpretive framings of the very first Niskavuori film, *The Women of Niskavuori* (1938). Even if the post-war and especially the 1980s framings of the Niskavuori story have often postulated "the 1930s" as the mental locus of Niskavuori, as the time Niskavuori in terms of its ideas either indexically or symptomatically conveys, it is evident that as early as 1938 the peasant culture had also become the object of both historical consciousness and a touristic, museal gaze.

184 "Niskavuoren Hauho" ("Hauho of Niskavuori") –project is presented at <http://www.hauho.fi/niskavuori-hanke/>. For the ESR project description, see <http://esrlomake.mol.fi/esrtiepa/kuvaus_S70231.html >. The Web-Hella (Nettihella), a presentation of Hella Wuolijoki and her connection to Hauho, can be viewed at < http://www.hauho.fi/nettihella/ >. (5.3.2003). For media coverage of "the commodification of Wuolijoki's heritage", see *HS* 1.7.2001.

185 Risto Tainio, "Maaherran tervehdys" ("Opening words") in a programme leaflet on *The Young Matron of Niskavuori* (Hauhon kulttuurilautakunta 1991, TeaM: käsiohjelmat).

At the end of the 1930s, peasant culture was both monumentalized and musealized, and, interestingly enough, cinema was articulated as a vehicle for both purposes. While the first play and its cinematic adaptation were framed as "modern" depictions of the traditional or as depictions of conflicts between tradition and modernity (see Chapter 3), the second Niskavuori play (*The Bread of Niskavuori)*, when staged in the beginning of 1939 all around Finland, was framed as a powerful depiction of "the spirit of the land" and of "return to the land".[186] In both cases, peasant culture was being framed as a *lieu de mémoire*, to use the notion introduced by Pierre Nora in the title for a collaborative history project on the memory places of French national identity.[187] Although the project outlined a notion of memory as a dynamic area of public and collective contest, it posited, as its foundation, a fundamental rupture and discontinuity in the history of memory, the loss of "spontaneous", "true" and "living" memory and the introduction of "voluntary and deliberate" "artificial" memory in the wake of modernization. (Nora 1989, 12–14; Carrier 2000, 52–53.) Nora, hence, mourned the disappearance of what he termed "history-memory" and the introduction of an archival "prosthesis-memory" and "duty-memory" emphasizing distance (Nora 1989, 7–9, 16). In this ambivalent model, cultural products and other *lieux de mémoire* are seen as signifying both the loss of the "true memory" that once existed, a memory grounded in lived history, and the compulsive circulation of prostheses.[188]

In the context of the 1930s cultural debates, the interpretation of *The Women of Niskavuori* as a drama about modernization – about the juxtaposition between peasant culture as tradition and the urban world as modernity – associated with the contemporary public interest for preserving and musealizing the peasant culture. To paraphrase Nora, as the *milieu de mémoire* was understood to be disappearing or having disappeared, there was an outspoken public interest in creating *lieux de mémoire* as prosthesis. The most visible signs of this interest were the launching of Talonpoikaiskulttuurisäätiö (Foundation for Peasant Culture) in 1938 and the founding of Oy Kansatieteellinen Filmi (The Ethnographic Film, Ltd.) in 1936. The former was established to promote and preserve peasant culture and the latter was founded "both to immortalize and animate the old conditions doomed to disappear" (Ranta-Knuuttila 1988, 50; Pälsi 1939, 5; Vallisaari 1984, 62–64). Sociologist Esko Aaltonen, etnographer Sakari Pälsi, filmmaker-photographer Eino Mäkinen, and ethnologist Kustaa Vilkuna were the front figures for both projects (Vallisaari 1984, 45–53; Ranta-Knuuttila 1988). In the background,

186 *Nykypäivä* 1.2.1939; *HS* 19.1.1939; *Valvoja-Aika* 2/1939, 103; *Nya Argus* 16.2.1939; *Naamio* 4/1939; *Kansan Lehti* 31.3.1939.

187 What attempted to be a symbolic encyclopaedia of the nation – geographical places, historical figures, monuments and buildings, literary works and objects of art, emblems, commemorations, and symbols – was published as seven volumes in 1984–1992. Critics of Nora's project have argued that the notions of "the nation" and "the national" were problematically taken at the face value. Even the series' definition of the scope of public memory can be contested. See e.g., Peltonen 1999, 101–102.

188 On prosthetic memory, see Burgoyne 1997; Radstone 2000.

there was an upsurge in ethnological and folkloristic research during the inter-war period. Moreover, many of those involved in the movements had contributed to a major new historical work, "The Cultural History of Finland" (*Suomen Kulttuurihistoria* 1933–1936). Within this framework, cinema was framed as a tool of history.

Sakari Pälsi, for instance, articulated the notion of cinema as a *lieu de mémoire*. In his book "The Heritage of Generations" (*Sukupolvien perintö*), Pälsi (1937, 118–154) emphasized the importance of photography and cinematography for cultural memory, for collecting, preserving, and animating the heritage (understood here as peasant culture which is both publicly authorized and privately experienced and remembered). In 1936, Eino Mäkinen underlined the potential of cinema to preserve the *milieux de mémoire* which "still" were there: "[I]n many regions in Finland, there is still the old folk culture; its customs and work methods and different sources of livelihood have been preserved as very natural and authentic". Mäkinen argued that the significance of "the cinematic perpetuation of these things which [were] very important for the history of the Finnish people".[189]

This discourse on cinema and photography as superior archives and animators was also evident in the review journalism's framings of *The Women of Niskavuori* (1938). Most reviewers compared the film to its theatrical predecessor, and considered its possibilities to enliven the milieu by describing it in detail, with moving images, the strongest gift of cinema.[190] Indeed, the landscape and the milieu – the possibilities to bring the peasant world and its atmosphere to life – were seen as *the* cinematic difference.[191] The images of the film were perceived as very powerful, and reviews highlighted the "beautiful" and "authentic" scenes from Häme shown in the film or wrote about "the effective language of landscapes and beauties of nature".[192] Shots of the house, its immediate surroundings, and people were framed as depictions of agrarian everyday life. These images were believed to "warm the hearts of all Finns".[193]

While *The Women of Niskavuori* has often been interpreted, in the television age, as an image of the social conflicts of its own time, the presence of a discourse of history as loss in public discussions during the inter-war era what has gone unnoticed. Indeed, the monumentalization and musealization of peasant culture can be seen as an impulse rooted in the 1930s Finnish debates on cultural crisis. The debates echoed wider European tones of cultural pessimism and discussed modernization was discussed not only as "rootlessness", but also as an erosion of historical consciousness. (Mikkeli 1996; 1997; see Chapters 3 and 5.) For instance, the theologian Eino Sormunen expressed a concern for the loss of history as a symptom of the cultural decline in 1936. As if anticipating Jamesonian and Baudrillardian

189 For a report from his lecture ("Film and the people"), see *Kinolehti* 10/1936, 298.
190 *IS* 17.1.1938, *Hämeen Kansa* 18.1.1938, *ESS* 20.1.1938.
191 *HS* 17.1.1938, *Hbl* 17.1.1938.
192 *Hämeen Kansa* 18.1.1938, *US* 17.1.1938, *TS* 18.1.1938, *Uusi Aura* 19.1.1938, *ÅU* 19.1.1938.
193 *Uusi Aura* 19.1.1938.

tones of the 1980s, he wrote: "The human being of our times is primitive; he lives without history, without a past, towards which to express gratitude." (Sormunen 1936, 34.) He identified, among others, cinema and other forms of popular culture as contributors to this "primitivism", (ibid., 47–68). Somewhat paradoxically, then, the activists of preservation of peasant culture put their faith in cinema, one of the vehicles of modernity and a contributor to the rural depopulation so often criticized.[194] (Koivunen 1995, 204–209; Laine 1999, 361–362.)

In the context of theatre, Pirkko Koski (2000, 110) suggests that a nostalgic address could account for the popularity of *The Women of Niskavuori* among urban audiences. To quote Koski, "the normative rural community represented certainty and solid stability in the face of formless and changing urban community". For recently urbanized Finns, Niskavuori was "a landmark comparable to street names connoting geography and history: part of the new life, but at the same time old acquaintance". Hence, she suggests that for urban audiences, the play had a therapeutic value; in her reading, *The Women of Niskavuori* functioned as a mediator between rural and urban, offering a sense of continuity to the lives of first-generation urban dwellers. This interpretation may certainly account for the popularity of the 1938 film version as well. Cinematic depictions of rural culture have been thought to function therapeutically not only in the 1940s and 1950s (Hietala 1992; von Bagh 2000), but also during and since the "Great Migration" in the 1960s and 1970s (Mäkelä 1986; Tani 1995). Representations of agrarian culture have repeatedly been framed as a "remedy" or "consolation" in a time of change and rupture.

However, within the cinema culture of the 1930s, there was no unified discourse on peasant culture as a nostalgic object. A distanced, scientific, museal, and touristic gaze was articulated in a number of non-fiction films, which boomed during the inter-war period, and these films transposed the 19th century landscape painting tradition. (Mickwitz 1995, 142–149; 192–196.) The ethnographic discourse was very visible in fiction film projects such as *On the Roinila Farm* (*Roinilan talossa* 1935), *The Osthrobotnians* (*Pohjalaisia* 1936), and *Seven Brothers* (*Seitsemän veljestä* 1939) (see Laine 1999, 220–249). In all of these projects, emphasis on authenticity coincided with one on spectacularity; the authentic milieus were presented as the result of enormous efforts invested in set and cloth design or as a touristic journey to "modern countryside".[195] An editorial in *Elokuva-aitta* offered a similar detached framing for rural dramas, and in 1936, it called for "films with the spirit for the land" to address the rural population. While the editorial assumed that "our culture is still very young" and the intelligentsia "not very far from the fields", it spoke about the rural population both in terms of the 19th century nationalism – "simple", "unmediated", "standstill" and with a

194 See also a comment on this in *SF-Uutiset* 5/1939, 7: "The dailies often mention cinema as a contributor to the phenomenon of rural depopulation."

195 See, for example, writings on *Pohjalaisia/The Osthrobothnians* ("Aito ympäristökin on suuri tekijä", *Kinolehti* 11/1936) and *Roinilan talossa/On the Roinila farm* ("Kävimme Roinilan talossa", *EA* 17/1935, 306–307).

"genuine feeling for nature" – and in terms of a touristic attraction for the urban population. This editorial stressed the need not for a film about "us", the implied national subject, but one about "them", "the Finnish peasant and his relationship to the land". The call was both for a monumentalizing eulogy á la *The Earth* by Alexander Dovzhenko (*Zemlya* 1930) and a Sillanpää-like spirituality, communion through land. Furthermore, the closing lines of the editorial suggested a representation of the authentic peasant who was, in fact, already lost because of the modernization of the countryside.[196]

From this perspective, then, the distinction between "rural film" and "peasant melodrama" proposed by Tytti Soila, Astrid Söderbergh Widding, and Gunnar Iversen (1998, 240–241) in *Nordic National Cinema* appears very questionable. In their reading, they characterized Finnish films as "peasant melodrama" or as "a heavier genre" promoting "peasant community and its lasting values", whereas Swedish "rural films" are described as looking back "nostalgically on the good old days", harking back to "closeness between people and an affinity with one's origins to nature". In my understanding, Niskavuori films have never solely been a question of identity-work. Instead, I have attempted to show how the framings of both pre-war *and* post-war Niskavuori films have been characterized by the "modern sort of pleasure" which Mark B. Sandberg (1995, 349) attributes to Scandinavian folk museums which, in their representational strategies, combined identification and distance. Sandberg associates the folk museum and the "narrativization of sight" they promoted with the 19th century forms of spectacle-oriented entertainment and the narrative techniques of early cinema. In their display of rural culture, he argues, folk museums both performed reality-effects and visual attractions; they featured both "the living" and "the stuffed", a sense of both proximity and distance. (Ibid., passim) Related to the history of ethnographic, museal, and touristic gaze, Niskavuori films, as rural films or peasant melodramas, have not simply been understood as monumental identity-narratives providing "us" with "roots". Neither have they merely been framed as objects of nostalgic or melancholic contemplation, but also as a modern form of entertainment, as sites of imagination and mobility that allow "the momentary suspension of a subjectivity rooted in time and place" (ibid., 349). As a figuration of the cultural screen, then, the archive does not imply one history or one memory, but a variety of past-present alignments. In my reading, history, Heimat and heritage do not signify successive phases, but concurrent and complex modes of identification and detachment, idealization, and repudiation (cf. Silverman 1996).

196 *EA* 15–16/1936, 285, 303. In 1929, *Aitta* (5/1929, 14–16) published a parodical writing on "how to write a first-class folk tale", i.e., about "the way to literary honour". The writing by "Pyhä Olavi" catalogued all elements necessary for a narrative to pass as a proper description of agrarian life.

The Monument-Woman: Matron, Mother, Matriarch, and Monster

"[T]he strongly remembered past will always be inscribed in our present, from feeding our unconscious actions. At the same time, the strongly remembered past may turn into mythic memory. It is not immune to ossification, and may become a stumbling block to the needs of the present rather than an opening in the continuum of history."
Andreas Huyssen 1993, 250.

"The author has, in the matron of Niskavuori, personified some kind of a national ideal figure who, as a stiff-necked defender of her homestead and traditions, represents nationally timeless and sustaining values."
Elokuva-aitta 12/1958, 17

"The Niskavuori matron has become a concept."
Savon Sanomat 20.9.1972

Descriptions of "the Finnish woman" often evoke "Niskavuori" in the manner of shorthand. In some contexts, the women characters of Niskavuori figure as positive and empowering images, as good fantasies and as names women give to themselves. For instance, a female MP opened her Mother's Day speech by addressing both her audience and herself as the "Niskavuori women of today". Likewise, a feminist folklorist brought up the matrons of Niskavuori as examples of how "agrarian foremothers" still influence the lives of Finnish women, their body image, and taste in clothing.[1] In other contexts, however, the women of Niskavuori have appeared in a more ambivalent light. For one Minister of Education delineating visions of information society, the character Heta Niskavuori represented a typical "Finnish woman" of the past in need of new social and educational skills. Likewise, a sociologist who wrote about father-son relationships and the fragility of masculine identity mentioned "Heta Niskavuori" as a counterexample characterizing the life of a "Finnish woman" as a given, secure trajectory.[2] When a journalist of a trendy city tabloid described a female presidential candidate (Tarja Halonen) as "an Ur-woman á la Niskavuori", it is difficult to say which exact connotations

1 Apo 1998, 88; Hurskainen 2000; Apo 1999, 18.
2 Heinonen in *Koskinen* 13/1998; Hoikkala 1997, 123.

he wanted to call upon. Yet, the emphasis on strength, power, and authority was evident, as it was in characterizations of a female party leader (Anneli Jäätteenmäki), a speaker of the parliament (Riitta Uosukainen), or a former First Lady (Sylvi Kekkonen).[3] But in other contexts, Niskavuori matrons have stood out as sheer monster figures. For example, when asked to describe herself, a female singer responded by lamenting how it is "typical that a woman is either classified as a horrifying Niskavuori-matron or as a brainless beauty queen and that there is nothing in between the two"[4]. A business magazine also questioned the image of the Niskavuori women as exemplary when discussing female leadership: "women in Niskavuori castrate a man with their sheer gazes".[5]

In the 1980s and 1990s, scholarly readings framed the old matron of Niskavuori as a representative of history, peasant culture, nationality, and a specific gender formation. Loviisa Niskavuori was read as a positive construction of Finnishness, as a generic image of "the noble (pious, diligent, persistent, law-abiding) peasant" or "a monument of the Finnish peasant woman".[6] In these framings, the agrarian and the national overlap in the character of matron. At the same time, as one of the Niskavuori women or Hella Wuolijoki's female characters, Loviisa was framed as a kind of 20th century feminist icon, a generic image of the independent woman. Wuolijoki's protagonists have been read both as "a positive model of women who exert power without acknowledging the pressures of patriarchy"[7] and as women who have no need for consciousness-raising but who "consciously governed their own life independent of men".[8] The framings of the 1987 TV movies characterized Loviisa as a "strong woman" who has "potential to meet the upcoming difficulties. She learns that life is about endurance as she upholds the life in which she believes."[9] However different they are, all of these readings of Loviisa are informed by what Andreas Huyssen (1996) has called the "desire for the monumental": the seduction of origins, the sense of eternity and permanence, and the experience of greatness. Many framings cited the matron of Niskavuori cited as an *exemplary* figure, witnessing, symbolizing, and representing something positive from the past, or implying that something is desirable and possible even today. The connection between *idealization* and *identification* is at stake with this figure of the cultural screen (Silverman 1996, 2). Following Friedrich Nietzsche (1983, 70), the idealizing framings

3 *City* 22/1999; *Vasabladet* 21.6.2000; *Vasabladet* 20.10.1999; *Demari* 4.8.2000. In *Teatteri* 7/2002, Reko Lundán and Juha Lehtola flirted with the idea that MP Tanja Karpela, now the Minister of Culture and one of the celebrity politicians of today, would be a great box office hit as the young matron of Niskavuori. (Lehtola & Lundán 2002).

4 Arja Saijonmaa in *HS/NYT* 10.3.2000.

5 *Talouselämä* (2.12.2001, <http://www.talouselama.fi/doc.te?d_id=8962>). This feature describes Louhi, the matron of North in the *Kalevala*, as "unpleasant and power-hungry".

6 Apo 1998, 88; Niemi 1980, 179.

7 Mäkinen 1996, 27

8 Koski 1998.

9 *Anna* 1.12.1987.

of Loviisa can be termed *monumental history* as they represent the past "as worthy of imitation, as imitable and possible for a second time".[10]

Indeed, the notion of monument has, since the public reception of the first Niskavuori play in 1936, persistently circulated in the interpretive framings of the Niskavuori plays and films. The word *monument* derives from Latin *monumentum*, which refers to that which reminds, reminisces, and urges (*monere* = to remind, to reminisce, to urge). The recurrent use of the word refers to architecture or sculpture, statues or memorials erected to commemorate a dead person or a past event, but the etymology of monument comprises even the meaning of significance and importance concerning, for instance, literary works.[11] As the Latin root implies, the notion of monument has a dual temporality, reaching both backwards (to reminisce) and forwards (to remind, to urge) in time. Hence, it can be understood as a particular kind of representation. As it stands for something or somebody (as a representative, a constructed historical trace), it also comprises a temporal dimension between the past, present, and future, openly flaunting its performative function to urge, to bring about. Furthermore, it claims significance, publicly acknowledged importance as its justification. Although a monument might not represent hegemonic values or ideas, it nevertheless signals public recognition. As Andreas Huyssen (1993, 249) has argued, along with the museum and the memorial, the monument with its adjacent "beliefs and values, rituals and institutions" is a public site where negotiations of "a society's memory" take place. Hence, notion of monument with its connotations of sculpture or pieces of architecture *appears* to signify stability and immobility, it always opens up the dialectic of remembering and forgetting and, therefore, a force field of interests, conflicts, and negotiations. Similarly, in the words of Robert Musil (cit. Young 1989, 71), though monuments are erected "to be seen" and "to attract attention", "there is nothing in this world as invisible as a monument". A monument, some argue, becomes invisible as its meaning is fixed and its exterior polished and finished. In my reading, this process is precisely what has happened to the fictive character of Loviisa Niskavuori who is cited as a self-explanatory example and referred to as a stable point of meaning – without any acknowledgement of, let alone reflexivity over, the discrepancies between the different reiterations.

The interpretive framings of the Niskavuori films have cited the notion of monument in productional publicity, public reception, and commentary, to capture the essence of the Niskavuori fictions and, in particular, the affective force of the Niskavuori matron. Not only have interpretive framings often

10 On the mode of monumental history, see Nietzsche 1983, 67–72; White 1973, 349–351; Foucault 1977, 160–161. In cinema studies, Marcia Landy has discussed and applied the Nietzschean modes of history (1996, 17–18, 111–112).

11 Although a broader term as such, the word *monument* often appears as a synonym for *muistomerkki* (literally: memorial sign) in Finnish use. As for the etymological roots and routes of monument in Finnish, see Koukkunen 1990, 357–358. In 1936, Lauri Viljanen (1936b, 340), among others, used the adjective "monumental" (in Finnish: "monumentaalinen") to characterize affective impact and fictitious characters in his essay on Eugene O'Neill.

employed the notion of monument, they have also produced monumentalizing effects through their choice of attributes and adjectives as well as through narrative strategies aiming at tribute and commemoration and operating with "monumentalistic conceptions of the past" (Nietzsche 1983, 69). As for the Niskavuori films and plays, the notion of the monumental has accrued a plethora of meanings since the 1930s. Ambivalence has not only characterized the referent of the notion. In some cases, it has referred to fictive personae, most often to Loviisa, but even to Heta, in terms of their ideological stances, psychological features, ethical attitudes, and physical appearances. In other cases, it has been used to designate the plays or the films as "classic" works of importance. Sometimes the notion has referred to the values and ideologies located in the plays and films by different readings, at other times it has been used to describe Hella Wuolijoki as an author and public persona.[12] In addition, the very notion of monument itself appears ambivalent. Instead of being a purely idealizing construct, it has been inhabited by different, both convergent and conflicting interests.

In what follows, I examine the ways the notion of the monument has operated as a *gender performative* (Butler 1990a, 140, 136), as a "cultural fiction" producing a particular "effect of gender" and claiming a truth about gender as "an internal core or substance".[13] I focus on the repetitive uses of the notion of the monument in the interpretive framings of Loviisa Niskavuori that, I argue, have articulated a figure of the cultural screen I term *the monument-woman* or, alternatively, *a matron-mother*. Hence, I do not argue that Loviisa *ought to* be read as an image of "Finnish womanhood" expressing the core of cultural and social gender. Instead, I intend to scrutinize the very discourses that have framed Loviisa as such an image, to deconstruct and denaturalize those readings and to reveal their intricate meaning-making operations. Rather than discussing Finnish women, I offer this chapter as a genealogical analysis of the figuration of "the Finnish woman" – an excavation of the making of the cultural screen.[14]

Again, my interest lies in the question of cultural force. Where do the notion of the monument-woman and the figure of Loviisa Niskavuori "as a concept" (as named in the epigraph) draw their affective power and effectiveness from, I ask. Because an utterance, according to Jacques Derrida (1988, 18) and Judith Butler (1993, 2, 225) re-reading Austin, gains its force and its

12 The idea of the monument has been invoked as a quality in different senses. In the first critical essay on Niskavuori films, Risto Hannula (1958, 29–31) argued that the two directors of Niskavuori films adopted qualitatively different "styles"; while Valentin Vaala was characterised as painterly or picturesque, Edvin Laine was described as sculptural or statuesque – and, hence, linked to the "monumental". On the cover of *Filmihullu* 7–8/1979, again, Niskavuori films and *The Unknown Soldier* were termed "national monuments" referring to their popularity and cultural significance.

13 The monument has been discussed as one "allegory of the female form" by Marina Warner in her *Monuments and Maidens* (1985). See Warner 1985, 3ff. She discusses *Liberty,* as does Bathrick (1990, 94–99) in her analysis of the 19th century "female colossus".

14 Cf. James E. Young's (1989, 71) description of his critical task: "to crack the eidetic veneer [of the monument], to loosen meaning, to make visible the activity of memory in monuments."

"binding power" through its "citational legacy", by invoking conventions and reiterating sets of norms, the analytic emphasis of this chapter is on the productivity of reiterations. In the following, I examine a variety of different contexts – discursive fields (modernity, nation, Christianity, agriculture, gender, family, and motherhood) and intertextual frameworks (literature, literary criticism, folklore, women's associations, popular psychology, films, and star images) – to which the Niskavuori films and plays have been linked either via the notion of monument/ality or citations of "the matron of Niskavuori" as an intertextual framework in itself.

By studying the citational legacy and the different interpretive frameworks invoked, I argue that the "concept" of "the Niskavuori matron" as a monument has, from the beginning, been inherently a dissonant construct, inhabited by conflicting interests and desires – and, hence, by no means is a mere figure of monumental history. I start by discussing the 1930s framings of Loviisa Niskavuori as "monumental". I argue that the interpretive framings of *The Women of Niskavuori* (1938) as well as its narration were informed by the public reception of the 1936 theatre production. In the 1930s, monumentality was conceived as an ensemble of ideological, ethical, and psychological dimensions, displayed on and located in a bodily performance. I highlight how the notion was constructed as a tension between an ideological commitment and a psychological construct, between ideological positions and emotions. In this sense, I argue, the notion of the monument delineated Loviisa as a *modern* character in an ambiguous manner. She was not only an image of tradition and a memorial to the past, but also a monument to modernity.

In the second and third sections, I examine how the notion of the monument-woman acquires further ambivalence in the post-war context in conjunction with the simultaneous idealization of "the Finnish Woman", a mother and a worker (a feminist-nationalist reading) and with the rejection of a monstrous matriarch (a left-wing reading, a psychologizing reading). Rather than assuming the Second World War as a radical break or rupture in this discourse (cf. Kuusipalo 1989; Satka 1993; Satka 1994; Nätkin 1997), I show how that readings existed even at the end of the 1930s. The second section continues to investigate the currency invested in the image of the peasant woman, this time, however, in relation to the feminist discourse of the matron-mother. I focus on the dual meanings of monument as both exemplary and commemorative, as a discourse oriented both towards the future and towards the past. While the end of the reconstruction period saw the publication of several feminist-nationalist self-representations – a literary genre that continued to flourish at the end of the millennium – I argue that the first Niskavuori film was already associated with a form of "power feminism" (Kuusipalo 1999, 71) through the intertextual framework of the *Kalevala*. Here, I also discuss the differences in the two different post-war performances of the old matron by Emma Väänänen (*Loviisa*, *The Women of Niskavuori* 1958) and Elsa Turakainen (*Aarne Niskavuori*, *Niskavuori Fights*).

The third section examines three different intertextual frameworks for the Niskavuori films of the 1950s: a widely publicized left-wing re-reading of

the Niskavuori matrons in 1954 as negative images of capitalism, the rise of psychological and psychiatric discourses of gender and family in the 1950s, and the occurrence of possessive, destructive mother figures in 1950s Finnish film. I discuss Heta Niskavuori as the negative of Loviisa and, moreover, I focus on reading strategies that negotiated the image of Loviisa in relation to the authorship of Hella Wuolijoki. In the final section, I look at 1980s and 1990s readings of the Niskavuori films and how the characterizations of the 1930s–1950s have been re-circulated and re-integrated into a reading of the Niskavuori films as Finnish versions of *Dynasty* and *Dallas*, two popular melodramatic TV serials of the 1980s. In relation to Hollywood prime-time melodrama, contemporary literature, and gender politics, I argue that the image of the old matron was once more re-routed. Besides a matron and a mother, she was now re-framed as a "post-feminist" "woman of substance", a power-woman comparable to both Italian *mafiosi* and Alexis Carrington.

A modern monument to tradition: The Women of Niskavuori *(1938)*

> "… And so, with the help of God, let Loviisa, the old matron of Niskavuori, remain a monument to our noble time, a monument in the face of future generations!"[15]

With these words, the local parson concludes his speech to Loviisa Niskavuori in the birthday dinner scene of *The Women of Niskavuori* (1938) as he urges the other guests sitting at a long table to join in cheering. This scene – repeated even in the 1958 version – marks the presence of an interpretive framing *within* the diegetic world. [Fig. 11] Namely, the parson's speech and his formulations do not originate in the play staged two years earlier. Instead, they draw from the public reception of the play. In the reviews of the 1936 theatre production, the notion was reiterated to the extent that it had become a dominant manner of reading the performances of the character of Loviisa Niskavuori, the old matron.[16] In the dialogue of both the play and the film, Loviisa identifies herself as a *model*, a *pillar* with high visibility when, in a confrontation, she tells her son Aarne: "We have been placed here on view,

15 Here, for the sake of showing repetition, I choose to translate the Finnish word "muistomerkki" as "monument".

16 *Ssd* 1.4.1936, *IS* 76/1936, *Ilkka* 26.5.1936, *Nya Argus* 9/1936; *Naamio* 7–8/1936, 119; *Naamio* 8/1936, 116; *Naamio* 6/1936, 90; *Kansan Lehti* 19.10.1936, *AL* 19.10.1936, *Tampereen Sanomat* 20.10.1936, *Kajaani* 3.10.1936, *Aamu* 2/1937/Laitinen. Of the actors who performed Loviisa in 1936, Elsa Rantalainen in the Helsinki Folk Theatre and Lyyli Erjakka in Tampereen Työväen Teatteri (the Tampere Workers' Theatre) acquired the characterization as monumental. As for Elsa Rantalainen, the notion of monumental has even been used to describe her other performances or her quality as an actress more generally (her "star persona" or "star image"). See *Naamio* 5/1937, 73; Veltheim & Koski 1988, 69. In the theatre reviews of *The Bread of Niskavuori* (1939), the term "monumental" was frequently linked to Loviisa. See *HS* 19.1.1939; *Nya Argus* 16.2.1939; *TS* 18.3.1939; *SaKa* 16.3.1939; *Lahti* 18.3.1939; *Lalli* 25.3.1939.

Fig. 11. Monumentalizing the matron in The Women of Niskavuori *1938 (FFA).*

and we will remain pillars in our own manner." The notion of monumentality has been, ever since, an especially persistent reading in the context of theatre.[17] In this section, I look at the 1930s interpretive framings to examine how the character of the old matron was seen as monumental (what was monumental about her?) and in what sense (what was she a monument to?).

The power and persistence of tradition

In 1936, reviewers used the words *monument* and *monumental* to refer both to the peasant culture itself and the play as its representation. The play was perceived as "a monument in honour of the old estates in Häme" and as a depiction of "the rugged, almost monumental way of life in the peasant culture".[18] The programme leaflet of the first production in Kansanteatteri (the Helsinki Folk Theatre) framed the play as an encounter between three women:

> "The old matron of Niskavuori mansion, a representative of the old peasant culture, Mrs. Niskavuori, a daughter of a sawmill owner and a representative of

17 As for characterizations of Loviisa as monumental in review journalism in the 1940s and 1950s, see *HS* 14.11.1940, *SvP* 14.11.1940, *KU* 8.11.1973, *AL* 14.2.1953, *HS* 12.2.1953, *VS* 17.2.1953, *HS* 3.12.1957, *KU* 2.12.1957, *US* 2.12.1957, *AL* 8.2.1958. As for commentary and criticism, see Olsoni 1942, 478; Salmelainen 1954, 232; Aro 1977, 82; Niemi 1980, 179; Niemi 1988, 94.

18 *HS* 1.4.1936, *Ssd* 21.10.1936; *Naamio* 7–8/1936, 119.

> the upstart world, and an educated young woman from Helsinki, a professor's daughter and a representative of the new culture and the modern youth."[19]

This reading of the play as a drama of ideas framed the female characters as products of different backgrounds and, therefore, as bearers of different, competing values. Consequently, evaluations of the play valorized the characters as embodiments of values and worldviews. The play that, in 1936, was produced in theatres all around Finland was, thus, framed as a "battle between women and a battle over ideas"[20]:

> "In the play, there is a clash between, on the one hand, a deep-rooted [juureva] rural tradition that sucks its strength from the respect for the fields, work, and money as factors that build and sustain the family, and, on the other hand, a modern need for personal freedom and a demand to fully satisfy the individual desire for happiness [onnenpyyde]."[21]

This framing saw Loviisa ("tradition") and Ilona ("modern") as the main characters embodying the dramatic conflict, while it marginalized Martta, the third woman ("upstart world"). According to a related, but distinct reading, Loviisa was not only seen as a representative of a lifestyle, but also as a sign of an ideological position, as an image of timeless conservatism and commitment to "the order and the traditions":

> "The conservatism of the estate was embodied by the old matron who – equipped with tenacity and stubbornness, her age notwithstanding – guards over the order and the traditions. As for her, there is no such power in the world that could undermine the firm ground on which the estate is built."[22]

> "The wealth and the unwavering force of Niskavuori is represented by the old matron, a monumental figure, who is accustomed to giving up her small demands for individual happiness and who with her whole being symbolizes the continuity of generations, the impersonal power of ownership and rulership."[23]

These readings of *The Women of Niskavuori* (1936) linked and termed lifestyle (peasant culture), ideology (conservatism), and ethical stance (the sacrifice of "individual demands") "monumental" in a manner similar to that of the ongoing debate concerning the "cultural crisis". In this debate, peasant culture enjoyed special status. Both Oswald Spengler in his influential *Der Untergang des Abendlandes* (1923) and Finnish theologians Yrjö J. E. Alanen (1933) and Eino Sormunen (1936, 1938) posited the peasant as the guarantor of civilization. In the 1930s cultural debates, peasant lifestyle was,

19 Helsinki Folk Theatre in Koitto 1935–1936, programme 1935, p. 26 TEAK.
20 *AL* 19.10.1936. After the opening night, on the 1st of April, six reviews were published in newspapers: *US*, *Ssd*, *HS*, *IS*, *SvP*, *Hbl*.
21 *Suomalainen Suomi* 3/1936, 159–160.
22 *SvP* 1.4.1936.
23 *IS* 76/1936.

with its "deep-rootedness"[24], seen as a counter-image of and an antidote to modernization: to "superficialization", to the emergence of a "culture without a soul", and to other dangers of modern "rootless" life and secularized culture (Sormunen 1936, 93ff; Sormunen 1938, 123ff; Alhosaari 1987, 113–119). The prevalence of "family novels" (*Familienroman*), grand narratives of family generations, often set in agrarian milieus, in the 1930s been seen as a symptom of the same attitude (Juutila 1984, 120–122; Nagy 1986, 27–28; Sevänen 1994, 187–188). Strength, persistence, and resilience were virtues ascribed to the peasant lifestyle both in folklore and in contemporary literature. In the 1930s and 1940s, a series of novels featuring matrons of Yrjänä, Portaankorva, Äyriälä, Kauriala and Mäkivaara as well as most submissions to the first novel competition organized by WSOY in 1938 celebrated those virtues (Saarenheimo 1986, 157ff).[25] Alanen understood "the human being who cultivates the land" as "the Ur-type for the civilized person":

> "Civilization has its origin in the countryside, and there emerge those basic powers that uphold the cultural life and activity, the creative power that rejoices in developing something new, and a respect for the work by previous generations and for those who did that work, a respect specially directed at the cultivated land as a sacred inheritance." (Alanen 1933, 15.)

Like Spengler, Alanen argued that the "educational aspect" of agriculture lay in its stabilizing effect. In his words, it produced a state of constancy, rooting a person to a certain landscape that became both dear and holy for him. Indeed, the assumed subject of this account was male, which was evident in Alanen's definition of civilization in relation to culture-as-land. In writing that a civilization "rises like a plant from its mother-like landscape" [nousee esiin kasvimaisesti äitimaisemastaan] Alanen subscribed to the 19th century gendering of the notions of *Zivilisation* and *Kultur* which designated the former as the male sphere of creativity against the female sphere of reproduction. (Cf. Häggman 1994.) Alanen illustrated his argument with a reference to a literary character, Uutela, in a novel by Johannes Linnankoski. Alanen named Uutela, an elderly peasant from Häme, "a most noble representative of the peasant culture". In this reading, Uutela embodied *piety*, the respect for the work of previous generations, which was named as the distinctive quality of a civilized human being in comparison with "Huns, Vandals, Tartars, Mongols,

24 The Finnish noun *juurevuus* (literally "deep-rooted" or "earth-bound"; figurally "foundational"), often ascribed to the matron of Niskavuori, comes close to German *Bodenständigkeit*, which is associated also with *Blut und Boden* propaganda. See O'Sickey 1997, 206.

25 Family novels featuring land-owning peasants, looking for peasant roots and modernization were authored by, for instance, Unto Seppänen, Arvi Kivimaa, Viljo Kojo, Pentti Haanpää, Heikki Toppila, and Mika Waltari. As for the European context, the first three to four decades featured a number of well-known "family novels": Thomas Mann/The Buddenbrooks, Roger Martin du Gard/Thibault, Maxim Gorky/Artamonov, and John Galsworthy/The Forsytes. See Nagy 1986, 11. With "matron-literature", I refer to the 1930s and 1940s novels by Artturi Leinonen, Väinö Kataja, Elvi Mela, Hilja Haahti, and Hilja Valkeapää which identified a matron with a particular house in their titles.

and Bolsheviks". All of the latter groups lacked, in Alanen's account, "an attitude towards human work and life that furthers and respects the culture". In this manner, Alanen (1933, 15–17) equated modernization (as urbanization, industrialization, secularization) with ethnic and political groups which, for him, represented, violent, threatening, and destructive tendencies. As their common denominator, he termed rootlessness, a situation where there is nothing sacred that would call forth the piety, and identified it as the cause of cultural crisis.

In the review journalism of 1936 and in the readings of the 1938 film, the notions of roots and rootedness used to describe the old matron, as her character was often likened to a *tree*. Reviewers described her as "a spiritual oak" [henkinen tammi], as "a solid [luja] character hardened by her experiences and firmly rooted in soil", or as "solid and unyielding like an old pine tree" [jäyhä ja taittumaton kuin vanha honka].[26] In these metaphorical – or better, metonymical – framings, Loviisa was indeed imagined as "a plant" rising "from its mother-like landscape" and, hence, as civilization. At the same time, though, the old matron was also characterized as foundation and, thus, as culture-as-land. In 1936, reviewers framed Loviisa as "a solid foundation" [fast grund] and "the bedrock of morality" [moraalin pohjakallio], comparing her to a massive boulder [kuusikyynäräinen kivenjärkäle].[27] While solidity connoted toughness, endurance, and persistence, all of these being words often cited to portray Loviisa,[28] metaphors of stone also invoked notions of sculptural monumentality, for instance, in the expression "as if carved in granite" [kuin graniittiin hakattu]. Both theatre and film reviewers often evoked granite, a distinctive feature of the Finnish bedrock, as a positive quality of Loviisa, as they compared her to "sturdy, coarse granite" or described her as showing "granitic vigour".[29]

The interpretive framings of both the 1936 theatre productions and the 1938 film cited the notion of monumentality to capture an effect of social rank and power. The figure of Loviisa was read as an image of the "peasant gentry" [talonpoikaishienosto], a "hereditary peasant aristocracy" [nedärvd bondearistokrati], and various expressions with royal or mythical connotations were coined: the "queen of the parish" [sockendrottning] and the "empress of the estate" [rustholliruhtinatar]. She was even described as "rather titan-like" [ylen titaanimainen].[30] In 1936, reviewers often framed

26 *Naisten ääni* 9/1936; *Aamu* 2/1937, *Suomen Pienviljelijä* 27.1.1938.

27 For metaphors of foundation, see *SvP* 1.4.1936; *Kainuun Sanomat* 13.10.1936; *TS* 24.10.1936.

28 For characterizations as tough, unyielding and persistent, see *IS* 76/1936; *AL* 19.10.1936; *Uusi Aura* 25.10.1936; *Suomalainen Suomi* 3/1936; 159–160; *AS* 1.9.1936; *Kainuun Sanomat* 13.10.1936; *Ssd* 21.10.1936; *Naamio* 6/1936, 9 []0; *Naamio* 2/1937; 28; *Sosialisti* 18.1.1938; *US* 27.1.1938; *Savon Sanomat* 18.1.1938; *Savo* 18.1.1938.

29 *Ssd* 1.4.1936; *AL* 19.10.1936 ["jykevää karkearakenteista graniittia"]; *Savon Sanomat* 18.1.1938 ["graniittisen tarmokas ja järkkymätön"]. For decriptions of Loviisa as a "rock rising above the water", "hardened into a stone", and "hard as rock" [kivikova], see *Naisten ääni* 9/1936; *Uusi Aura* 25.10.1936; *Kajaani* 3.10.1936.

30 *Suomalainen Suomi* 3/1936, 159–160; *Hbl* 17.1.1938; *Naamio* 7–8/1936; 119**;** *Uusi Aura* 25.10.1936; *AS* 17.1.1938.

Loviisa as a "handsome ruler-woman" [jyhkeä hallitsijanainen], the "true ruler of Niskavuori" [Niskavuoren oikea hallitsija], or "a strong and sturdy regent-type" [voimakas, jykevä valtiatartyyppi] who has "a ruler's hand" [hallitsijan käsi].[31] However, some readings contested this dimension of the monument because, in their view, the performance of Olga Tainio resulted in "too upper class" a matron, too much of a gentlewoman. These framings questioned neither the authority nor the power of the matron, but her social rank.[32]

The discourse of authority also was visible in the visual interpretive framings of the 1938 film. The publicity-stills performed the effect of authority through framings and props. For instance, three publicity-stills also circulated in advertising, portrayed Loviisa in a low-angle framing. First, a medium shot framed her at a window positioning her as an invigilator of the farm life and, hence, a figure of control. Second, a long shot portrayed her outside the Niskavuori house, grouped together with her workforce. While this image, too, implied the power to oversee, to monitor the ongoing farm work, it framed Loviisa primarily as a peasant matron wearing an apron and a scarf covering her head. Third, a medium close-up portrayed her sitting in Ilona's room, wearing a fur coat and leaning on her walking stick as if it were not only a sign of old age but also a scepter, a royal symbol. [Fig. 13] While this still was used in some advertisements, another frame (not in low-angle) from the same scene, a long shot still framing Loviisa together with the rest of the nightly inspection team in Ilona's flat, was even more widely circulated in the publicity surrounding the film.[33] Advertisements and promotional publicity also used the image of Loviisa as a peasant woman. For instance, one of the posters displayed a drawing of a serious-looking old woman against a farmhouse.[34]

As for the rest of the publicity-stills, the image of the old matron as an authority was constructed in several different manners. In a long shot from the birthday party scene, she was framed sitting at the end of the dinner table, in the patron's position. Her position of authority was indirectly constructed through her hierarchical relationship to the dinner guests who represented the village elite. [Fig. 11] She was also framed as the patron and identified as the ruler of the house when framed, in a long shot of the house, as she welcomed her guests on the front step. The stills imply not only authority, but also harshness as they frame her quarrelling with her son or closing the door of the house behind the expelled romantic couple, Aarne and Ilona. In another still, a medium shot frame portrayed her studying the Bible, and through this image anchored her rhetoric of duty and tradition in Christian terms. This framing, together with portraits of her either standing or sitting with the walking stick or sitting on a rocking chair with a knitted shawl over her shoulders, became the generic iconography of the old matron reiterated in many subsequent Niskavuori films.

31 *IS* 76/1936; *US* 1.4.1936; *Uusi Aura* 25.10.1936; *Ssd* 21.10.1936.
32 *Ssd* 18.1.1938; *Kansan Lehti* 19.1.1938; *Kansan Työ* 26.1.1938.
33 *SFUA* 1/1938; *Ssd* 12.1.1938; *Savon Sanomat* 18.1.1938.
34 *SFUA* 8/1937; *SFUA* 2/1938; *Hämeen Kansa* 18.1.1938 (review). The posters of *The Women of Niskavuori* in FFA (SEA) or TUL (TYK): Pienpainatteet: Julisteet.

The secret warmth underneath

Thus far, I have shown that the effect of persistence, the monument-effect, was a complex construct. It consisted of the way of life, authority, and social rank; it was both an ideological and ethical position. As a metaphor, the monumental peasant woman was well-embedded in 1930s cultural debates, but at the same time, the figure articulated tensions. On the one hand, Loviisa was both an image of peasantry and gentry, suggesting both a slippage and an articulation of the class difference. On the other hand, the notions of culture and civilization implied a slippage and an articulation of gender difference. The readings of monumentality as an emotional effect of the old matron's mental disposition and the perceived tension in her personality underlined the ambivalence inherent in the notion of the monument-woman. Many reviews of the 1936 performances cited the notion of strength, along with expressions such as "the spirit of Häme":

> "In her strength and her moral greatness, the old matron of Niskavuori, who must fight for the honour of her house and her family until the bitter end, rises above everyone else. (…) Elsa Rantalainen's confident and monumental old matron, an immemorial metaphor of mental strength and of sense of duty".[35]

This reading was accompanied by an understanding of the old matron's personality as two-levelled, as the interpretive framings performed a construction of a distinction between the exterior appearance and the inner self:

> "Her interpretation had all the strength and authority it should have. The chilly gaze subdued her environment and along with the force of her voice impelled everyone to immediate obedience. And underneath all this harshness, there were glimpses of humane warmth, for instance, in the marvellous scenes with Ilona. In them, two different attitudes to life were juxtaposed, and simultaneously there was something of a secret agreement, a concealed sympathy between the two women, both conscious of their own as well as the other's different female sovereignty."[36]

Indeed, as many readings of the 1936 theatre productions idealized descriptions of "the moral greatness" and "mental strength" or characterizations of monumentality in terms of lifestyle or ideological position, this idea was accompanied by the postulation of tenderness, an understanding *heart* and a secret *warmth* underneath.[37] [Fig. 13] Many framings of the 1938 film

35 *Aamu* 2/1937 (Laitinen). On Häme spirit, see *US* 1.4.1936. For a discussion of the issue of strength from the perspective of weakness, see Chapter 4.

36 *SvP* 1.4.1936.

37 For descriptions of "secret warmth underneath", see *AL* 19.10.1936; *Uusi Aura* 25.10.1936; *Aamu* 2/1937; *Kajaani* 3.10.1936. For mentions of tenderness, see *IS* 76/1936; *Naisten ääni* 9/1936. For emphasis on the heart, see *Naamio* 2/1936, 29; *Suomalainen Suomi* 3/1936, 159–160; *Kansan Lehti* 19.10.1936; *Tampereen Sanomat* 20.10.1936; *Kajaani* 3.10.1936.

highlighted a similar tension between interior feelings and exterior signs. In both the productional publicity and the public reception of the film, Loviisa was framed as "an old-fashioned, enduring woman who seem[ed] stiff from the outside but who [had] a sensitive and understanding heart".[38] To quote an advertisemen in *Kinolehti*:

> "In Olga Tainio, we encounter, alive in front of us, the old, stern [tuima] matron of Niskavuori for whom the success, honour, and reputation of Niskavuori means everything; she disapproves of and reproaches her son's actions, but she *understands* him; she understands her son's great love and his burning desire for freedom."[39]

Hence, paradoxically, while the old matron's monumentality was frequently attributed to her unflinching commitment to propriety, a quality and attitude often referred to in terms of "moral integrity" [sisäinen ryhti][40], the secret warmth underneath, the understanding of those who do not succumb to the same ideals, termed a "humane" quality and the source of emotional impact.[41] Interestingly, then, both the reading of the play or film as a "drama of ideas" and its framing as a psychological drama adopted a *modern* attitude, in Tuija Pulkkinen's (1996, 45–46) sense of the term. She has argued that the modern, as a mode of thought or cultural attitude, involves a search for a "foundation" or a "basic core". In accordance with this modern epistemology of revelation, the two (in this sense) modern readings of the monumentality of Niskavuori articulated a valorizing opposition between foundation and facade, between depth and surface. The diametrically opposed understanding of the hierarchy – or, understood otherwise, the co-existence of two disparate sets of criteria, one for ideological evaluation and another for deeming an emotional impact – was paradoxical.[42]

The above quote from 1936 indicates that "monumental" did not only refer to historical, ideological, moral, or psychological dimensions of the character. It was also used, quite literally, to refer to a bodily presence, to the physical appearance of the actress on the stage:

> "The old matron of Niskavuori is in many respects a remarkable woman, and in the play she is clearly the dominant character. Her persona arouses the greatest interest; her movements and her whole being are monumental; she delivers her lines as if she were an oracle."[43]

38 *Sosialisti* 18.1.1938.
39 *Kinolehti* 12/1937, 425–427.
40 *Lahti* 22.1.1938; *US* 17.1.1938. The Finnish "ryhti", literally "posture", might also be translated as morality or moral backbone, as the expression associates with the German notion of *Sittlichkeit* to be discussed below.
41 See, for instance, *SvP* 1.4.1936; *Ssd* 1.4.1936; *Naamio* 7–8/1936, 116; *Uusi Aura* 25.10.1936; *Ssd* 21.10.1936; *Hbl* 17.1.1938.
42 Cf., for instance, *US* 17.1.1938 and *Sosialisti* 18.1.1938. In some framings, the figure of the old matron was particularly praised for being coherent (*Uusi Aura* 19.1.1938; *HS* 17.1.1938), whereas some deemed the image incoherent (*US* 27.1.1938).
43 *Ilkka* 26.5.1936. See also *SvP* 1.4.1936; *Hbl* 1.4.1936; *Ssd* 21.10.1936.

> "The old matron played by Elsa Rantalainen is, on our stage, a completely new characterization of a countrywoman full of inner dignity and unyielding morality [taipumaton ryhti]. As a stately [jyhkeä] female monarch, she exudes a calm wisdom of life and a beautifully sketched, arid tenderness, which makes the old woman the most central character of the play."[44]

The interpretive framings of the first Niskavuori film also underscored the centrality of the bodily performance to the monument-effect, as Olga Tainio's performance was, for instance, framed with the following description:

> "There was a touch of earthy gray patina in Olga Tainio's old matron of Niskavuori. In her manner and voice, she expressed hereditary peasant aristocracy and dignity. She played this queen of the parish in a monumentally and understated, yet expressive manner. When it was time to defend the gold and the traditions of the estate against alien intruders, her face wrinkled and her pupils contracted and sharpened as if she were an old rat. With ice-cold, naked honesty, she interpreted old age and its disillusioned cruelty. However, underneath all the harshness, one could almost sense the burn marks left by tears and stifled sighs. It was the silent and proud suffering of a long life which made the old matron of Niskavuori so humane and moving that one realized that even her enemies simply had to like her."[45]

This quote links a number of elements. It starts with a sculpture-like description of Loviisa as "coated with patina". Then, it moves to metaphors of power and the old age as the source of authority and ends, finally, with a hint of the history of the character. Hence, monumentality is framed as an effect of social rank and power (the metaphors of aristocracy and monarchy), moral virtue (defence), the structure of personality (the dynamic between surface and depth), and emotional history ("marks left by tears") – and read in terms of bodily gestures and postures. In this reading, "monumentality" is understood as a complex construct that is anyhow grounded in the body. The public reception of the 1938 film emphasized this centrality of bodily performance, an idea already suggested in the film's promotional publicity, which had framed *The Women of Niskavuori* as "a song of praise for the peasant wives of Häme".[46] The advertisements emphasized "the wise, experienced eyes, the strong will, and the authoritative posture of the old matron of Niskavuori"; Olga Tainio's "face, mimicry, movements, and tones of voice made a strong impact on the spectator and has a wonderful, enchanting effect on her".[47] In some reviews, however, the centrality of bodily performance was emphasized by negation as, in comparison with the theatre actors in the 1936 stage productions, Olga Tainio's performance was in some readings seen as *not* authoritarian, imposing, strong, dominant, forceful – or monumental – *enough*.[48] The reviewers lamented the relative

44 *IS* 76/1936.
45 *Hbl* 17.1.1938.
46 *Ssd* 18.1.1938; *SvP* 18.1.1938; *AL* 17.1.1938; *TS* 18.1.1938; *EA* 3/1938.
47 *Kinolehti* 8/1937; *Kinolehti* 12/1937, 425–427. See also *Kinolehti* 5/1937, 148–149.
48 *US* 17.1.1938; *IS* 17.1.1938; *Ssd* 18.1.1938; *AL* 17.1.1938; *Hämeen Sanomat* 18.1.1938; *Kansan Lehti* 19.1.1938; *Etelä-Suomi* 18.1.1938; *Lahti* 22.1.1938; *Varsinais-Suomi* 19.1.1938.

lack of monumentality for at least two different reasons. For some, the performance lacked mental strength ("disillusioned cruelty"), for others contradiction ("so humane and moving"). [Fig. 12]

In my reading, many reviewers in both 1936 and 1938 performed a *melodramatic* interpretation of the old matron as they articulated and emphasized a tension between surface and depth, appearance and inner self – between condemnation and understanding. As such a tragic-melodramatic monument, Loviisa embodied "a long battle of self-denial" [pitkä kieltäymystaistelu].[49] The "burn marks left by tears and suffocated sighs" in Olga Tainio's performance were, thus, read as signs of what Christine Gledhill (1987, 17) has termed "the dignified endurance of fate" in her discussion of the key characteristics of melodramatic narration. In this manner, contemporary critics read the film in terms of *pathos*, or to paraphrase Thomas Elsaesser's (1987, 66–67) notion pertaining to melodramatic mode, as "non-communication or silence made eloquent". The persuasiveness of the old matron as a monument, in other words, cannot be reduced to any one explanation. As for the 1938 film, it was the secret warmth underneath, the understanding heart that provided a counter-force for framings of Loviisa as "titan-like", as "unscrupulous and authoritarian" character, as a "monumental" "piece of granite" who "governs" her "empire" "with her strong will".[50] In the visual narration of the film, the opening and closing sequences of the film, which both feature a heap of *stones*, also articulate the ambivalent melodramatic quality of the monument. While in the credit sequence the stones start rolling and set the tone for the film, implying that the foundation of life is shattered, the concluding montage sequence ends with the heap of stones intact. The ending, however, emphasizes tensions and contradictions.[51] Accompanied by dramatically orchestrated music, it opens with an image of river rushing in torrents. This image is superimposed by two further image-layers, a close-up of Loviisa, looking disheartened and gazing downwards, and a text quote from the Bible, the Song of Solomon, cited in the film even before:

> "Many waters cannot quench love, neither can floods drown it. If a man offered for love all the wealth of his house, it would be utterly scorned." (Song of Solomon, 8: 7)

While this quote and the shot of Loviisa are still-images, other shots emphasize movement and the force of nature, river rushing in torrents and weather changes. The close-up of Loviisa fades away as she is seen raising her gaze and as the montage sequence introduces shots depicting the agrarian life cycle, a man and a horse ploughing and mowing a field as well as

49 *TS* 24.10.1936.

50 *AS* 17.1.1938; *SvP* 18.1.1938; *Hbl* 17.1.1938; *Savon Sanomat* 18.1.1938.

51 The aesthetic devices of superimposition and montage were employed even in some promotional publicity; an image accompanying a promotional article (*AS* 15.1.1938) was structured around superimposed images of the Niskavuori house and the old matron. On both sides of her face, there were images of the romantic couple. The image was even included in one of the posters, see FFA/SEA; TUB/TYK: Pienpainatteet: Julisteet.

Fig. 12. The matron as a melodramatic monument with "the burn marks left by tears and stifled sighs" in The Women of Niskavuori *1938 (FFA).*

cutting hay. A close-up of Loviisa re-emerges, this time a low-angle frame, accompanied, first, by the Bible quote and water rushing in torrents and, second, by a haymaking scene. The landscape scenery fades away and a cut re-introduces the heap of stones, as if on a hill, lit from behind. As the shot with the Bible quote fades away, a superimposition identifies Loviisa with the heap of stones. In the final frame, the heap of stones is framed intact. In this manner, the final montage sequence performed yet another "hardening" of Loviisa from a downward gaze to a monumental framing and identification with the stones. This ending suggested the same duality of hardness (stone-likeness) and softness, the sense of duty and "suffocated sighs" highlighted in the public reception of the film. In addition, a publicity-still widely circulated in promotional publicity and review journalism framed Loviisa in a medium close-up, in low-key lighting, gazing downwards – appearing not as a "solemn" character enjoying her "victory", but more like a sad, disheartened old woman.[52]

52 *EA* 24/1937, 522; *Kinolehti* 12/1937, 435; *HS* 17.1.1938, *Ssd* 18.1.1938. On Olga Tainio's performance of Loviisa as "solemn", see *HS* 17.1.1938.

Fig. 13. Underlining the tension between interior feelings and exterior signs in The Women of Niskavuori *1938 (FFA).*

Monumental, memorial, museal – modern

In 1938, besides being characterized as monumental – a monument to a lifestyle, ideology, ethics, and psychology – the old matron was also framed as a "museal" figure. Olga Tainio's performance as a "Häme matron" was read as "so whole and plausible that it should be moved as such to the National Museum".[53] The interpretive framings of the first Niskavuori play and the film, then, associated the image of the old matron with each of the three modern sites of cultural memory, the monument, the memorial, and the museum, as outlined by Andreas Huyssen (1993, 249). While many scholars have suggested definitions to distinguish between the monument and the memorial, I would argue that the two notions intertwine in the image of Loviisa.[54] I do, however, agree with Marita Sturken who argues with Arthur Danto that there are "distinctions in intent between them":

> "We erect monuments so that we shall always remember, and build memorials so that we shall never forget. (…) Monuments commemorate the memorable and embody the myths of beginnings. Memorials ritualize remembrance and

53 *Suomen Pienviljelijä* 27.1.1938.

54 Art historians have, for the sake of categorization, seen monuments as a specific subgroup within the larger category of memorials (*Denkmal*, *minnesmärke*) (Berggren 1991, 19).

> mark the reality of ends. (…) The memorial is a special precinct, extruded from life, a segregated enclave where we honor the dead. With monuments, we honor ourselves." (Arthur Danto 1985 cited in Sturken 1997, 47.)

Sturken (1997, 47–48) goes on to argue that monuments generally signify victories, whereas memorials refer to sacrificed lives; mythical and symbolic representations, monuments are often anonymous, whereas memorials are pedagogical projects and emphasize specificity.

Eino Salmelainen, director of the first public performance of a Niskavuori play, has proposed interpreting the Niskavuori play as a monument in Danto's sense. He foregrounded a reading of the Niskavuori saga as an enthusiastic monument to peasant culture, as an act of acknowledgement of its value in "our" everyday and, hence, as an act of valorizing "our" lifestyle:

> "It was not until the first Niskavuori play that such a central factor as the Finnish peasant and the peasant milieu were brought on the stage and represented as the enlightened and valuable part of society we nowadays generally admit them to be. Only then did we realize what an enormous factor, a firm foundation, peasant culture was in our young country. In one blow, the author changed the hierarchy of social factors, gaining the people's approval for this new classification and arousing an unparalleled enthusiasm. Herein lay the charm of her plays and the decisive reason for their popular success. The Finnish theatre has gained something, and above all, it has gained more of that which is most ours."[55]

This reading, presented by one of the auteurs of Niskavuori within an autobiographical context, framed the Niskavuori saga as a tribute to the peasant heritage, simultaneously posited as the explanation of both the cultural significance and the popular success of the plays. Matti Aro (1977, 82), for instance, has articulated a similar reading in his overview of Finnish theatre history. He framed the first theatre production of *The Women of Niskavuori* in terms of "authenticity" and national specificity:

> "The people [of Niskavuori] seemed to grow naturally out of their own soil, and the milieu was made authentic with exceptional care; the mores, the relationships, all the details were convincing. This production managed to capture the traditional dignity of Finnish peasant culture, the solemnity that is one of the essential features of Finnish expression. The unrestrained strength and monumentality of the characters had something very Finnish about it."[56]

The quote exemplifies a reading in which the distinction between the monument and the memorial is blurred; it both implies a temporal distance ("the traditional dignity") and highlights a present relevance for "us". But neither Salmelainen's nor Aro's solemn formulations pay attention to the fact that the 1930s was a time when peasant culture was not only posited as the economic and ideological foundation of the new, independent nation, but also both monumentalized and musealized. In fact, as Olavi Paavolainen

55 Salmelainen 1954, 232.
56 Aro 1977, 82.

(1938, 323) suggested in the late 1930s, it was a question of a wider, European phenomenon. "The world is obsessed with erecting monuments", he wrote in his analysis of the Third Reich in *Risti ja hakaristi* (*Cross and Swastika*, 1938) reiterating the late 19th century critique of historicism by Friedrich Nietzsche (1983) and anticipating the late 20th century notions of *statuomanie* (Maurice Agulhon in Lerner 1993, 178) and *museummania* (Huyssen 1995, 14) as symptoms of history-making. Indeed, all the three terms mentioned by Huyssen and the two analysed by Arthur Danto and Marita Sturken were very topical during the inter-war period. In the Finnish art world, memorials and monuments characterized the 1920s and 1930s. A range of memorials and monuments were erected to mourn the Civil War and celebrate the new independence. The revelation of every commemorative monument was a notable public event, and some have argued that the Finnish art world proceeded from one monument to another during that period. (Reitala 1975, 11; Kormano 2000; Lindgren 200, 169ff) In addition, a cycle of historical melodramas (*Jääkärin morsian/A Yager's Bride* 1938, *Aktivistit/The Activists* 1939, *Helmikuun manifesti/The February Manifesto* 1939, *Isoviha/The Great Northern War* 1939) aspired to "monumental proportions" (Hakosalo 1995, 361–363).[57] Furthermore, the inter-war period saw a proliferation of museums and interest for folk culture (Matti Räsänen 1989, 12; Riitta Räsänen 1989, 151–153), and in the Finnish context, *folk* culture was understood as *peasant* culture.[58] The launch of Talonpoikaiskulttuurisäätiö (the Foundation for Peasant Culture) in 1938 further illustrates this preoccupation with peasant culture to promote the research on and preservation of the "old" peasant culture and to inspire a "living attachment" to this tradition in the youth as well as to boost a formation of a "new" peasant culture.[59]

Within this framework, neither the notion of the monument nor the signifier "peasant" was a stable one. It was no wonder then that in 1936, the setting of *The Women of Niskavuori* in a peasant milieu was characterized as surprising at a time when "folk plays had become the stuff of museum"[60]. From this perspective, however, this film was *not* regarded as *traditional* because of its setting. Instead, it was framed as *modern* because of its approach in which

57 As Heini Hakosalo (1995, 361) has remarked, Paavolainen formulated a remarkable insight about his own time, but neglected to mention that monuments were not only built of stone, metal and wood, but also on celluloid film. In her account, Hakosalo (1995, 361–363) argues that these films were monumental in three senses. First, they were made with a desire to "influence, appeal, (…) and justify" and consequently, there is a discourse of sublime in the films. Second, the films appealed to viewers as members of a community and, in this process (by citing national symbols, through allegorical narration), influence upon the meanings of the membership. Third, the effect of the films lies in their "exterior greatness and visual spectacle".

58 According to Risto Alapuro (1994, 71), the notion of the *folk* (people) is, in Finland, "closely linked to the freeholding peasants" and thus, laden with the Fennomanian legacy from the 19th century. In Sweden, the notion of the *folk* was appropriated by the Social Democratic ideology (as in the reigning metaphor of the society as *folkhem*, "people's home"), whereas in Finland, the notion of *folk* preserved for a long time a more overtly peasant character.

59 As for the statutes of the foundation, see Ranta-Knuuttila 1988, 50.

60 *IS* 76/1936.

"the modern times" entered into and forcefully confronted "the old traditional peasant culture".[61] Hence, in the contemporary framing, the Niskavuori play was *not* only read as an idealizing representation of, or tribute to, peasant culture and its adjacent values and political interests. It was also framed as focalized *within* modernity, relating to peasant lifestyle as "the old traditional peasant culture" and hence as a subject of memorial. The genealogy of the monument reveals the instability and permeability of both peasant culture and the old matron as cultural signs. The old matron was read, on the one hand, as an ideological position, embodying the 1930s "discursive locus of national identity" and as "a Finnish-speaking, landowning peasant" (Alanen 1995, 43ff; Alapuro 1973, 26). As an image combining the key elements of the contemporary bourgeois ideology – religiosity, nationalism, patriotism, agrarian spirit – she represented what has been called "the civic religion of the state" and a repressive praxis (Sevänen 1994, 111, 116; Sevänen 1998, 310–311). In this framing, the monumentality of Loviisa was attributed to her idealized, educational representation of hegemonic values. On the other hand, as a woman and a mother, the figure of the old matron did not easily fit into the hierarchical, gendered model of civilization and culture. In addition, I have shown how monumentality was a heterogeneous construction comprising different elements, dimensions, and evaluative criteria. Underlining the rhetorical force of the character, a 1937 review termed Loviisa "a *classic* character".[62] In my reading, this expression also signalled the iterability and the citational legacy of the image of the Niskavuori matron. I propose that the genealogy of the notion of the monument clarifies the ambivalent relationship of *The Women of Niskavuori* and the old matron as its distinctive sign of the ongoing cultural debates. The image of the old matron was less a static position of ideological or moral stance than an articulation joining the different aspects together.

The monumental "Finnish woman"

> "The legacy of great personalities belongs to the dearest of a nation's spiritual treasury: from their heroic or holy deeds the new generations draw strength to bear new trials and tribulations. Especially in unquiet and desolate times – such times as a beaten country is forced to bear – their strengthening example is indispensably valuable."
> (von Frenckell-Thesleff in Kaari 1947, 7.)

In this section, I move on to examine the meanings of monumentality in post-war interpretive framings of the Niskavuori films. As I investigate the readings of *Loviisa* (1946), *Aarne Niskavuori* (1954) and *Niskavuori Fights* (1957) and *The Women of Niskavuori* (1958), I argue that the post-war framings of Loviisa as a monument reiterated elements and expressions familiar from

61 Ibid. In "The Cultural History of Finland", Lauri Kuusanmäki (*Suomen Kulttuurihistoria* 1936, 96) argued that while the peasant countryside ad earlier remained immobile, it was now "as if rushing forwards in its development".

62 *Aamu* 2/1937.

the 1930s framings. They included the simultaneous construction of Loviisa as a monument and a memorial while emphasizing, in a different sense, the discursive fields of nation building and motherhood.[63] Linking the image of the peasant woman as well as the issues of nation building and motherhood to the pre-war readings of power and melodramatic emotion, the post-war interpretive framings overlap with a current intertextual framework, a "genre" of feminist-nationalist literature introducing "the Finnish woman". Thus, the framings drew on the discursive fields of feminism, nationalism, and history making.[64] This "genre", which many feminists still endorse, emerged in the late 19th century and flourished during the late 1940s and early 1950s roughly at the same time as the proliferation of landscape photography books introducing "Suomi–Finland" (see Chapter 2). Here, I use the notion of genre reluctantly and within quotation marks to highlight the incoherence of the body of literature (e.g., ethnographic stories, statistical information, historical charts, short stories, essays, and scholarly articles) included in this category and to underline the different contexts of the publications.[65] Nevertheless, I want to point out that various women's associations, feminist activists, and proponents of gender equality have repeatedly represented "the Finnish woman" in a monumental light.[66] They have often appropriated national

63 For different constructions of motherhood in wartime Finnish cinema, see Koivunen 1995, chapter 3.

64 The relationship between women's activism and nation-building processes in the late 19th and early 20th century have been extensively analysed by Irma Sulkunen (1987, 1990), Anne Ollila (1993), Juha Ala (1999, 111ff), and Juha Siltala (1999, 189–254, 551–688). For analyses on the close relationship between feminism and nationalism in Finland, see Kuusipalo 1993; Marakowitz 1993; Rantalaiho 1997; Lempiäinen 2000; Lempiäinen 2001; Markkola 2002. Accoding to both Gisela Kaplan (1997) and Aura Korppi-Tommola (1990, 53–54), the alliance between nationalism and feminism has proven "successful". For a critique of this discourse, see Koivunen 1998.

65 With the term "feminist-nationalist genre of self-representation", I refer to books and booklets aiming to capture a representative image of "the Finnish Woman". The books and booklets I have studied include *Kuvauksia kansannaisen elämästä maalla* (*Portraits of Peasant Women's Lives in the Countryside* 1890), *Status of Women in Finland in 1935* (1936), *Rakastava sydän* (*The Loving Heart*, Kaari 1947), *The Finnish Woman* (Voipio-Juvas & Ruohtula 1949), *Woman of Finland* (1954), *Suomalaisia vaikuttajanaisia* (*Influential Finnish Women*, Pohjanpalo et al 1977); *Työtä ja tuloksia. Suomalaisia vaikuttajanaisia* (*Work and Results. Influential Finnish Women*, Pohjanpalo et al 1980); *Entäs nyt, emäntä. Naisen asema maataloudessa* (*What now, matron. Women's position in agrarian culture* Sinkkonen, Ollikainen & Ryynänen 1983); *The Lady With the Bow. The Story of Finnish Women* (Manninen & Setälä 1990); *Women in Finland* (Manninen 1993); *Karjalan tyttäret* (*Daughters of Karelia*, Räty-Hämäläinen 1998); *Suomalaisia vaikuttajanaisia: kohti vuotta 2000* (*Influential Finnish Women: towards the year 2000*, Sievänen-Allén & Belinki 1998); *Women in Finland* (Apo et al 1999); "Women's status in Finland" (Manninen 1999): *Finnish Woman. The Road to Equality* (2001); Seppälä 1999; Pitkänen 2002; *Women in Finland: An Overview* 29.2.2002.

66 When discussing Maria Jotuni's novels in 1965, Eila Pennanen (1965, 103–105) noticed how female authors with "feminist consciousness" often ascribe "a mythical greatness" to women figures as "maintaining forces". Citing a short story by Karen Blixen, Pennanen compares Jotuni's female characters, Lea (*Huojuva talo*/*The Tottering House*), Kirsti (*Klaus, Louhikon herra*/*Klaus, the Lord of Louhikko*), and Anna (*Jouluyö korvessa*/*Christmas eve in a woodland*) to *caryatides*, female figures supporting an entablature. See also Pentti Paavolainen's (1992, 214) discussion of Niskavuori fictions as epitomizing one of the "basic narratives" in Finnish theatre, "the myth about a great woman, a woman who grows strong".

narratives and the mode of monumental history for woman-centred and feminist uses in order to establish a historical female subject and to claim her as an active agent.[67] Since the 1930s, this historical and very specific form of "power feminism" or woman-centred feminism (cf. Kuusipalo 1999, 71) has formed an important intertextual framework for the image of Loviisa Niskavuori as "monumental" since the 1930s.[68] Both the readings of the old matron as a monument and the "feminist-nationalist genre of self-representation" articulated gender as a mythological and historical construct by citing folklore, socio-economic, and political history as its "explanations". In these accounts, they combined the historical development of the nation and "the Finnish woman" as a process of "becoming a monument", as a sequence of dreaming, disappointment, hardening, glorification, and the authority of the old age. All of these narrative elements were very much in circulation as early as the pre-war years when the feminist activism around the *Kalevala* provided an intertextual framework for the Niskavuori fictions of the 1930s, but in the post-war years, this narrative was established as a generic account of the making of "the Finnish woman".

This process in which femininities are renegotiated in relation to constructions of national identity did not characterize Finnish cinema alone in the post-war era. Rather, as the recent anthology *Heroines Without Heroes: Reconstructing Female and National Identities in European Cinema 1945-51* (Sieglohr 2000a) indicates, it was a cross-European phenomenon. While British, French, German, Italian, or Spanish cinema, as discussed in this book, feature no images of peasant matrons, the female stars this book focuses on have one common feature: "the resourcefulness and independence" of female heroines and the fact that women "are usually more decisive than the male characters". They were, as suggested in the title of the book, "heroines without heroes". (Sieglohr 2000b, 4.) In this sense, the construction of the monument-woman in the framings of the Niskavuori films can be seen as part of a larger phenomenon.

The making of the monument: becoming-a-woman in *Loviisa* (1946)

One of the publicity-stills framing *Loviisa* (1946) portrayed the young Niskavuori matron in a long shot participating in the haymaking on a summer day. [Fig. 14] In this still, Loviisa was pictured as a determined young peasant woman, working hard, standing upright, and gazing off the frame. The monumental effect of the still owed much to the low-angle framing, which

67 In Finland, agency, rather than oppression or domination, has been a central focus for women's studies, even more so than in the other Nordic countries (Anttonen 1997, 169). A key concept in this orientation has been that of "social motherhood", articulated at the turn of the century (Sulkunen 1987, 101–111; Nätkin 1997, 34–43; Helén 1997, 144–154) and an integral part of the agenda's of both middle-class women and rural women (Jallinoja 1983, 64, 68; Sulkunen 1987, 162–168; Ollila 1993, 132–136) as well as working-class women (Sulkunen 1989, 111–130).

68 Here, the notion of power feminism, a concept coined in the 1990s by critiques of "victim feminism" (for example, by Naomi Wolf), is used in an anachronistic sense to point to a persistent genealogy.

Fig. 14. The monumental peasant woman in Loviisa *1946 (FFA).*

depicted the young woman against the sky, as an extraordinary individual who indeed rises above everybody else and sees far, beyond the horizon. In relation to 1930s public readings of the matrons of Niskavuori, this still re-positioned Loviisa as a heroic image of courage and persistence and, hence, associated her with the lives and fates of all matrons, as the interpretive framings suggested. Even a number of other stills portrayed her as a peasant woman – binding a sheaf of corn, standing with a pail under her arms (on her way to milk the cows), or sitting at a loom – and she was accompanied by these props in some film posters and advertisements as well.[69] In review journalism, Emma Väänänen's performance as a young peasant woman was framed as an image of "the Finnish woman", both in terms of appearance and characteristics.[70]

69 One of the three posters features an image of her with a sheaf, an attribute that also accompanied the "ideal" female protagonist in posters for *Oi, kallis Suomenmaa* (*Oh, dear Finland* 1940). See also a promotional feature article on this film in *SF-Uutiset* 8/1940 with a telling title, "A film about how things should be" [Elokuva siitä, miten pitäisi olla].

70 She was awarded a Jussi prize for her performance, as she was in 1959, having played Loviisa in the colour version of *The Women of Niskavuori*.

> "As for appearance, it is as if this film was made for Emma Väänänen, as we can hardly imagine a female face more Finnish than hers."[71]

> "[I]t seems as if the role was self-evidently hers (…) As for her appearance, she corresponds perfectly to a young peasant woman of Häme. She is blond, full of life and exudes a fresh vitality. It is as if she were an essential part of this nature and those buildings that represent old peasant culture."[72]

In this manner, then, the interpretive framing of *Loviisa* reiterated not only the pre-war conception of peasantry as the discursive locus of nationality but also the emphasis on bodily performance. Emma Väänänen's plain, undecorated, and blond look was called "Finnish". Here, too, as in the context of 1930s cultural debates, the peasant was identified and equated both with national ideals and an idealized generic human being, displaying the virtues of strength and persistence:

> "Loviisa has fully enchanted the audience. Plenty is said of her as the Finnish female type. Indeed, that is what she is, but, one would like to say, she is also much more. She is not merely Finnish but, from a universal perspective, she is a beautiful personality, a human child, who because of her inner strength, unyielding nature, and purity of soul is capable of keeping life together even when everything around her tends to fall apart."[73]

While the public reception of the first theatre productions of *The Young Matron in Niskavuori* in 1940 had cited the notion of the monumental in descriptions of Loviisa Niskavuori, the interpretive framings of the 1946 film and Emma Väänänen's performance did *not* explicitly cite the notion of the monument.[74] By reiterating familiar qualities, however, the public reception of the film, as the above quote demonstrates, constructed Loviisa as a monumental narrative image, an embodiment of "inner strength, unyielding nature, and purity of soul". These qualities were also listed among the attributes of monumentality in 1938. In the post-war context, they gained new relevance and popularity, articulated as a narrative of a young woman's "inner growth" and "maturation", "inner fight" and "glorification". These terms had also been used in 1940 framings of the play.[75] The terms suggested a narrative of becoming a monument and acquiring the qualities of a monument. The theatre reviews outlined Loviisa's "development" as a process of gaining and exercising authority:

71 *Ssd* 29.12.1946.
72 *US* 29.12.1946.
73 *EA* 3/1947, 53.
74 *SvP* 14.11.1940; *HS* 14.11.1940. In 1958, Emma Väänänen's performance was described as both "sovereign" and "monumental". See, for instance, *Vaasa* 23.9.1958; *Lahti* 24.9.1958; *US* 21.9.1958; *Hbl* 21.9.1958; *EA* 19/1958; *KSML* 6.10.1958; *Ylioppilaslehti* 26.9.1958; *Uusi Aura* 19.10.1958.
75 *Suomalainen Suomi* 1/1947, 50; *IS* 28.12.1946; *US* 29.12.1946; *NP* 30.12.1946; *Ssd* 29.12.1946; *ÅU* 10.1.1947. The reception of the 1940 production in the National Theatre (Helsinki) had used metaphors of "growth" (*IS* 14.11.1940, HS 14.11.1940) and "inner growth" or "spiritual struggle" (*Ssd* 14.11.1940), as well as that of "maturation" (*US* 14.11.1940; HS 14.11.1940).

”[F]rom a Loviisa who is timid and humbly bears her burden, she grows into a matron of the estate with the iron grip of a ruler, a wise woman who carries the traditions forward.”[76]

“[S]he starts as a quiet, simple country woman and ends up becoming a hardened, strong-willed matron of a large estate via the lessons life taught her.”[77]

In my reading, these short descriptions not only reiterate the characteristics of the 1938 old matron, but they also outline a narrative of becoming a woman, how the young Loviisa learns to perform what could be termed *the gender of matron* (cf. Rossi 1998, 9) in a manner appropriate to her class.[78] In other words, then, the narrative of Loviisa’s “development” implicitly accounted for her gender, describing her assumption of a proper gendered position (cf. Butler 1993, 99). In the light of the interpretive framings, the “growth” only had to do with female characters, as Juhani’s development was never made an issue:

“The film about the young Loviisa, who (…) from being a young matron of timid and loving glances, transforms into a strong-willed, almost hard woman, has become intensely vivid, concentrated, and strong [en intensivt levande, koncentrerad och stark sak].”[79]

“Towards the end of the film, she gains (…) moral integrity [sisäinen ryhti] and spiritual strength. The spectator truly believes that she is capable of running the house even on her own.”[80]

“Growth” was, hence, about becoming strong-willed and toughened, two qualities coded as positive and worthy. The two accounts of “growth”, becoming-a-monument and becoming-a-woman, offered different yet overlapping explanations for the process, which was characterized as a description of “how the land, the farm, and the family with its eternal, necessary demands change a weak-willed young woman into a persistent, determined, and firmly rooted personality”.[81] Along with this “organic” explanation, which implied that the assumption of matronhood was almost a “natural” consequence brought about by the force of tradition (“eternal, necessary demands”), there was an economic and historical account according

76 *HS* 14.11.1940.
77 *Ssd* 14.11.1940.
78 A photo essay with publicity-stills concluded: “In one night, Loviisa has grown older, she has toughened and fully matured into a woman.” See *EA* 23/1946, 384–385. In her study on Martta Wendelin’s popular imagery, Tuula Karjalainen (1993, 81–91) discusses matronhood as an “ideal Finnish woman”.
79 *ÅU* 10.1.1947. Although writing about “the individual”, one reviewer even included Juhani in the discourse of “growth”: “The victory is by no means an easy one, but in this struggle, the individual is forced to act for the benefit of the collective and at the cost of one’s own gentler feelings and another weak individual.” See *TKS* 31.12.1946.
80 *AL* 28.12.1946. “Loviisa’s transformation from a timid, lovesick girl into a tough and stern Niskavuori matron took place perhaps a bit too suddenly” (*Appell* 3.1.1947).
81 Olsoni 1942, 479.

Fig. 15. Not yet a matron, demure, and full of expectation. Loviisa *1946 (FFA).*

to which monumentality and matronhood as a gender position resulted from necessity, out of an "unavoidable" encounter with "the realities of life":

> "The blond Loviisa who arrives at Niskavuori, demure as young maidens are and full of expectation, is to harden – through a painful confrontation with the realities of life – into a determined and upright [rakryggad] fulfilment of duties, and is played in a pure and devoted manner by Emma Väänänen."[82]

The "realities of life" included an encounter with the rigid roles and hierarchy within a farm household, as the film was seen as manifesting "the obvious love for the traditional style whereby the old family estates – at the heart of Finland and the hard-working pace of life – have been managed ignoring all private, personal matters of heart and such"[83]. In this framing, monumentality was understood as an effect of struggle, accommodation, and sacrifice.

Furthermore, this narrative of necessity involved an anti-romantic discourse. [Fig. 15] Romance and the "timid and loving glances" were designated as characteristic of young women (or Niskavuori men, see Chapter 4), as romantic dreams, which "by force of circumstances" must give way to "the realities of life":

> "[A] romantic and loving woman becomes, by force of circumstances, a tough and cold, determined matron who assumes power over the house and the men. This development is interpreted by Emma Väänänen artlessly, impressively, and in an interiorized and lively manner."[84]

82 *Hbl* 29.12.1946.
83 *HS* 29.12.1946.
84 *Kansan lehti* 28.12.1946.

The promotional publicity and visual framing of the film articulated this narrative of "growth" in a publicity-still portraying Loviisa frontally, in a medium close-up, gazing upwards as if in prayer, and clenching in her hands an apple, a royal symbol of authority, which the dying old matron has just dropped on the floor. The publicity-still referred to a climactic scene in the film in which Loviisa returns to the Niskavuori family after her short escape and manifests loyalty to Niskavuori as she does not reveal to her father the truth about her marriage. Instead, as the old matron dies, Loviisa "grows" in stature as she instantly assumes the position of the matron of the house. In this scene, condensed in the publicity-still, Loviisa's "maturation" was a process of freeing herself of romantic notions and accepting her position as one earned by her father's wealth. The publicity-still singled out as the key moment where Loviisa exclaims: "And I will not cry!" It is a moment of "inner growth" as well as one of reward. Along with this "inner growth", Loviisa's social rank changes. After the old matron passes away, she becomes the matron of the farm as if it were a prize for her sacrifice of emotion for the good of the family. By joining a tormented, anxious look on Loviisa's face and the effect of the back lighting, a halo, the publicity-still articulates a combination of pain and sanctity, the beauty of suffering that was also thematized in the review journalism. [Fig. 16]

In my reading, the still manifested what Peter Brooks (1995) has characterized as "the melodramatic imagination", the mode of modernity in which individual everyday lives are invested with significance and justification. (Ibid., 14–15, 21; Gledhill 1987, 29.) The close-up still of Loviisa highlighted the tragic yet necessary "long battle of self-denial" (cf. Brooks 1995, 17), which the making of the monument-woman involved. This melodramatic method, to quote Ien Ang's (1985, 73) analysis, "produces an enlargement of the tragic structure of feeling: the close-ups emphasize the fact that the character ultimately does not have control of her or his own life". In this manner, then, the monument-woman is positioned not only as the one with power, but also as someone "mighty brought low", "helpless and unfriended", and therefore, morally elevated (cf. Vicinus 1981, 127, 132). Indeed, involving "contradictions rather than reconciliation", the monument-woman was fundamentally constructed in melodramatic terms (cf. Mulvey 1987, 79).

Along with explanations of the "organic" or "necessary" "maturation", the "growth" was also conceived in religious terms as growing through sacrifice or "trials".[85] Furthermore, the biblical intertextual framework was invoked through the notion of "glorification":

> "What is best [in Emma Väänänen] is that she grows and develops with the role. We see her first as a maiden, and her demure and pure being reflects a timid love for the handsome young master of Niskavuori. Then she matures; she gains strength, vigour, and authority. Emma Väänänen expresses this inner fight and glorification [kirkastuminen] in a beautiful, touching manner."[86]

85 *Suomalainen Suomi* 1/1947, 50. Cf. a 1940 description of the play as a story of "how the character of Loviisa is tried, how it is formed, and how it hardens" (*SvP* 14.11.1940).

86 *US* 29.12.1946.

Fig. 16. The making of the monument-woman in Loviisa *1946 (FFA).*

The term "glorification" related *Loviisa* to a film, *The Glorified Heart* (*Kirkastettu sydän* 1943), released three years earlier, in which Emma Väänänen played the main character, Lea Helpi, a priest's wife and a mother of nine children, who loses her husband in the war. According to a poll in 1946, two months before the opening of *Loviisa*, this film was the most popular Finnish film being screened that year.[87] *The Glorified Heart* was released on the Christmas Day in 1943, as an outspoken tribute to the "mothers of Finland, the Finnish Woman, the waiting and loyal comrade of our soldiers".[88] Elsewhere (Koivunen 1995, 78–92) I have investigated this film in relation to wartime women's journals, literature, visual imagery, and religious rhetoric, arguing that the film constructed the wartime woman as a "heroic mother", articulating motherhood in religious and national terms as asexual, heroic, and suffering – indeed, as a monument of sacrifice.[89] *The*

87 *HS* 11.10.1946: "Mikä tämän vuoden suosituin elokuva?". A similar rhetoric on motherhood was articulated in publicity surrounding the annual "Week of Homes" organised by Väestöliitto (Population and Family Welfare Federation) at the end of October 1946. A group of housewives invited to Helsinki was rewarded with white roses and reported bearing "aristocratic marks of work and noble mind on their faces" (*HS* 30.10.1946).

88 *Kinolehti* 7–8/1943.

Glorified Heart was a box office hit and widely praised in contemporary review journalism as a "valuable tribute" to "those mothers, who losing their beloved family members have made a heavy and irreplaceable sacrifice for the freedom of our country, but who, even in their grave sorrow, bear their burden in a sublime manner and with the nobleness peculiar to a Finnish mother".[90] In my reading, I focused on the process of glorification, which as narrativized in the film and other contemporary discourses, involved giving up individual, "earthly", and bodily desires and submitting to, or internalising, the higher goals of community, nation and, by implication, humanity. In addition, glorification as a biblical metaphor referred to a process in which loss and grief become a blessing – or necessity becomes a virtue.

Loviisa connected to *The Glorified Heart* not only through the notion of glorification or through Emma Väänänen's performance, but also in its visual rhetoric.[91] Both films punctuate the moment of glorification with close-ups of Loviisa and Lea Helpi respectively, clenching their hands in prayer, gazing upwards, with their fair hair backlit and glowing as a halo. While Loviisa, in the scene discussed above, takes the position as the matron, literally occupying the old matron's seat, the rocking chair, and deciding that she will not cry, Lea Helpi prays for forgiveness for having forgotten and forsaken her children while crying out in pain at the loss of her husband. Both films were advertised with publicity-stills highlighting this dramatic turning point and moment of glorification. [Fig. 17] In *Loviisa*, the same posture is repeated in the closing scene when Loviisa prays for love – hence, representing "glorification" as an everlasting project in need of continuous maintenance.

Although idealized as monumental, the intepretive framings suggested that the sacrifice of personal feelings and romantic dreams for the sake of duty or out of necessity did not take place harmoniously, but left its traces and even scars. In some accounts, "the growth" was outlined more as a vendetta than a "glorification" as the young matron of Niskavuori was described as "an ugly and rich peasant's daughter who has been married into the Niskavuori family and who works hard and feels inferior to the obstinate and stubborn [styvnackad och styvsint] farmer family":

> "She finds herself betrayed and humiliated by her husband, little by little, she takes both her own and Niskavuori's fate into her hands and becomes the decision-making authority on the farm – at heart deeply disappointed and bitter. In the closing scene, prays to feel alive."[92]

89 One telling is that, in 1941 when the Mother's Day was introduced as a part of population propaganda, appropriate programme suggestions were distributed via a leaflet "The Second Sunday in May" (*Toukokuun toinen sunnuntai* 1941). Its opening number was a priest's talk on "Suffering Love". On the mother cult during the Second World War in Finland, see Satka 1993, 58–62; Nätkin 1997, 84–88.

90 *Sosialisti* 23.12.1943.

91 *The Glorified Heart* was based on a novel by Martta Haatanen, whose other book *Kaunis karu maa* (*The beautiful, barren land* 1943) was framed in Niskavuori terms. It was described as a portrait of a "monumental" widowed matron Henriika Saajo – "a hardened and barren character", "a power woman brought up by her sufferings". See *Suomalainen Suomi* 9/1943, 513–514; *Valvoja* 2/1944, 72–73.

92 *SvP* 14.11.1940.

"The growth" was framed as an alternative or substitute, something which replaces individual happiness but, does not provide any fulfilment. Bitterness is left and, indeed, in other accounts, "growth" was conceived as "repression" resulting in a tension between the outer and inner self, between surface and depth:

> "Her very outward appearance expressed a young, strong, hard-working matron of the house, and beneath the calm, controlled surface, one could feel the turmoil of conflicts and agonies. She spoke with her whole appearance, standing as sprouted from the floors of the Niskavuori estate, to the place which is hers and her children's and which she defended."[93]

Here, as in the interpretive framings of the 1938 film and the first theatre production of *The Young Matron of Niskavuori*, monumentality was outlined as melodramatic, as an affect rooted in profound contradiction and incommensurability (cf. Mulvey 1987, 79):

> "[Emma Väänänen's] Loviisa expresses, in a moving manner, all the repressed pain, the humble yet proud femininity which is characteristic of the young matron of Tervapää."[94]

> "When she notices that another woman has won the patron's love, the warmth in her freezes away. The husband no longer means a thing to her; the honour and prosperity of the estate are everything. In the great showdown with the patron, Emma Väänänen afforded her commanding tone with a hard and unbending force, elevating the scene into a grandness unparalleled thus far in Finnish cinema."[95]

As in 1938, this framing postulated the "secret warmth underneath", a locus of everything sublimated, glorified, transformed, and repressed in "organic" or "necessary" growth:

> "[L]ater, when she moves with apparent calmness, with candour, and a gaze hardened with determination, she is not the wolf that she bitterly claims to have become. A small movement of her hand and a delicate, soulful flicker in her eyes reveals that, in the heart of the young woman, there is no anger or bitterness, but a deep sorrow. However, a daughter of harsh forest like her cannot be defeated. She has her child and she has the land. They need her and she is not going to forsake them."[96]

The interpretive framings of *Loviisa*, then, suggested that the monument was a highly ambivalent construct. What had been described in 1938 readings as "the marks of tears" and "suffocated sighs" was now given a history. Now, they were represented as the traces and scars of the process of becoming-

93 *Valvoja-Aika* 1940, 385. The tension between "outer calm" and "inner turmoil" was articulated also in *Hbl* 14.11.1940; *SvP* 14.11.1940.
94 *Suomalainen Suomi* 1/1947, 50.
95 *NP* 30.12.1946.
96 *EA* 3/1947, 53.

Fig. 17. The moment of glorification in The Glorified Heart *1943 (FFA).*

a-monument, becoming-a-matron. They were designated as evidence of disappointment, anger, and bitterness, and as evidence of sorrow, soulfulness, and "femininity". Indeed, the melodrama of the monument comprised this tension and suggested incommensurability between the matron qualities and the "feminine" virtues that the 1947 book *The Loving Heart* called softness and heartiness. (Valentin in Kaari 1947, 66–67; cf. Häggman 1994, 187.) Both this book and *Loviisa* monumentalized an ambivalent construction of the monument-woman. In the narrative image of Loviisa, as constructed in the interpretive framings, the monumental was defined as "becoming monumental" both in the sense of becoming strong and hard and in the sense of suppression. In this manner, the monumental "Finnish woman" of the Niskavuori film was postulated a "loving heart"; beneath the hard surface (performing the matron), there were traces of the young romantic woman, "sweet femininity and radiant tenderness" (performing the woman).[97] In a retrospective reading, Emma Väänänen's performance of Loviisa has been

97 *EA* 3/1947, 53. "Her performance contained a lot of what was beautiful and rightly perceived in itself, but at times the result was, in my opinion, too sugary, and one often saw artificial tones of voice, postures, and glances." *HS* 29.12.1946.

described as a combination of "the warmth and persistence of the Finnish woman, settling for one's fate achieved through a struggle".[98]

The "Finnish woman": peasant, national, and feminist

I have argued that the interpretive framings of *Loviisa* posited monumentality as an aspiration (a desirable quality) and achievement (obtained through denial, sacrifice, or repression). Hence, the narrative of becoming a monument involved adversity, as the construction of the matron-woman associated both with the late 1940s and early 1950s representations of "The Finnish Woman", her "aspirations, adversity and achievements"[99], and the citational legacy of "the hard-working peasant woman". The latter image has often been reiterated in feminist and/or women's activism since the 19th century. In 1890, The Finnish Women's Association (Suomen Naisyhdistys) published *Portraits of Peasant Women's Lives in the Countryside*, and during the first half of the 20th century, the importance of women's work was the political argument the different associations of agrarian women (Martha Association, Agricultural Women) used to gain visibility and political power.[100] In the post-war Finland, again, the discourse of peasant culture gained a distinct, political momentum as the resettlement of 480 000 inhabitants from the areas ceded to the Soviet Union was organized through the Land Acquisition Act (1945). With execution of this act, an execution of a large number of new small farms was established.[101] In this context, the images of the matron-woman had also special relevance. Besides Loviisa Niskavuori, a series of "spin-offs" emerged in films such as *The Sixth Command* (*Kuudes käsky* 1947), *The Matron of Sillankorva* (*Sillankorvan emäntä* 1953) or *The Ruler of Riihala* (*Riihalan valtias* 1956) as well as matrons in contemporary plays such as *Katri Karapää* (*Karapään Katri* 1946).[102]

98 *Kinolehti* 5.11.1965.

99 Description of the book *The Loving Heart*. The same year, a chapter on "The Position of Woman" by Miina Sillanpää was included in *The Finland Year Book 1947*.

100 Ollila 1994, 346–348. For an analysis of the "peasant woman" as a "woman of people" and of a projection of educational discourses in the Martha Association, see Ollila 1993, 10, 30–33. As an example of a later "monumentalization" of matronhood, see Ryynänen 1983, 15ff.

101 Hence, while there was a proliferation of peasant films and literature both in Finland and in Sweden, the contexts were significantly different. Cf. Qvist 1986, 66–77.

102 In a play by Eino Salminen in the Tampere Theatre, the Niskavuori saga is invoked as an intertextual framework, not only through the narrative and the setting of the play (a Häme farmhouse), but through the "star image" of Elsa Rantalainen who, here, played Katri. *HS* 7.11.1946. On comparisons of Loviisa and Heta with other cinematic matrons of Heikkilä, Vormisto, Yrjänä and Ylitalo (*Taistelu Heikkilän talosta*/*The Fight over the Heikkilä Farm* 1936; *Miehen tie*/*A Man's Way* 1940; *Yrjänän emännän synti*/*The Sin of the Mistress of Yrjänä* 1943; *Intohimon vallassa*/*Possessed by Passion* 1947), see *Suomalainen Suomi* 1/1947, 51; and also *TS* 29.12.1952.

As a cultural image, the matron signified both authority and labour.[103] Several feminist scholars have argued that the war years involved changes in the lives of Finnish women, giving them more self-confidence and empowering them as citizens (Kuusipalo 1989, 42–44; Satka 1993; Satka 1994, 92; Nätkin 1997, 109–110). At the same time, the war years re-actualized the 19th century image of the industrious peasant woman. Both in folklore and in literary works such as *Seven Brothers* (1870), a novel by Aleksis Kivi, the rural woman is compared to a *horse* (Apo 1995b, 52).[104] Within a historical account of the history of the nation, the "feminist-nationalist genre of self-representation" monumentalized the image of the industrious peasant woman:

> "The barren northland has not pampered its sons or daughters. The latter have always had to toil beside their menfolk to wrest a living from the soil. Finland's geopolitical position is such that nearly every generation has been obliged to wage war, and Finland has often been a battlefield. While the men fought, the women tilled the soil, brought up the children, and fostered culture. Moreover, after the devastation of war, both men and women have worked shoulder to shoulder to rebuild. In this hard school the Finnish woman has learned to be independent and capable of taking the initiative; and in many things the Finnish man has been in the habit of regarding her as an equal." (Voipio-Juvas & Ruohtula 1949, 7–8.)

In this account, the contemporary moment of reconstruction and its demands were included as an episode in a larger historical narrative, a repetitive series of adversity to be fought and won. This narrative monumentalized the agrarian woman as an exemplary "Finnish woman". Through her efforts and achievements, it was implied, *all* Finnish women were rewarded with "equality":

> "The Finnish people have throughout their existence, over 500 years, fought 100 years of wars. As the men have gone to the warfront, women have taken their empty places to serve society. In this manner, they have shown that they are capable of taking the man's position and earn the same political rights as he does. Accordingly, the right to vote was, in the end, just a natural consequence of the tasks history had demanded of women." (Kaari 1947, 81.)

In the accounts of two post-war books, *Rakastava sydän* (*The Loving Heart*, Kaari 1947) and *The Finnish Woman* (1949), political and economic history served as the immediate frameworks of gendering: in a "barren northland" women had to – "necessarily" and "by force of circumstances" – assume the

103 According to many feminist analyses, the contemporary "Finnish gender system" with its emphasis on "equality" is based on it agrarian legacy, i.e., hard work, "a strong work ethic", "harmonious collaboration" of men and women, See Haavio-Mannila 1968, 28; Sulkunen 1990, 52; Julkunen 1993, 285–287; Julkunen 1994, 182–183; Rantalaiho 1994, 16–19; Rantalaiho 1997, 21–22; Markkola 1997, 154–156; Markkola 2002, 75–90. The image of the "hard-working Finnish woman" circulates in public discourses on gender and "gender equality". See, for example, Päivi Setälä's foreword to Manninen & Setälä 1990 as well as Kaari Utrio's interview in Pitkänen 2002, 14–17.

104 See Rantanen 1998, 211ff on the Topelian description of Finnish Matti – and metaphorically the peasantry – as a horse.

position of "the deputy master of the house" of which Loviisa Niskavuori has been called the prototypical representation. (Cf. Apo 1993, 137; Apo 1995, 398; Apo 1999, 18). Indeed, in the narration of the film, Juhani's brother calls Loviisa precisely "the deputy master of the house" and, in this manner, confirms Loviisa's transformed status at the end of the film. It was, however, in the context of war efforts that monumentalization re-emerged as a productional framing of *Niskavuori Fights* in 1957:

> "Men are fighting on the front, women and elderly people on the home-front. The deeply moving and tragic, even if partly humorous, fates of this fight are portrayed in *Niskavuori Fights* in which the old matron rises as a monumental figure."[105]

The promotional publicity framed the film as a commemorative act, a monument to women's wartime work and "in particular" to the peasant woman:

> "In *The Unknown Soldier* the Finnish man has been rewarded with a monument to the wars he has waged, but the Finnish woman, the peasant woman in particular, has not yet received any equivalent memorial although, during the fatal years of the country, her work was an equally heroic achievement."[106]

In this rhetoric, the war efforts were associated with the legacy of the peasant woman. Furthermore, post-war representations of the "Finnish woman" mythologized the contemporary women's workload and their "equal" relationships with men (cf. Barthes 1972) by tracing them to "ancient" folklore, which it presented as a starting point for a grand narrative of "Finnish gender":

> "This idea [of equality] might easily be considered of late origin – an idealized twentieth century view – but the evidence for it is to be found in ancient Finnish folk poetry as well as in the general social development throughout the entire historical era. It is on this basis, the man and the woman working side by side, that modern society in Finland has been built." (Voipio-Juvas & Ruohtula 1949, 7–8.)

As the image of the matron overlapped with that of the housewife in feminist-nationalist discourse, the amount of hard work and self-sacrifice were major arguments, as was the historical trajectory implicit in the concept of matron[107]:

> "Considerable moral courage, love and self-sacrifice have also been demanded of the modern Finnish woman in her efforts to rebuild her home and family life on a normal plane after the havoc wrought by the war." (Voipio-Juvas & Ruohtula 1949, 108–109.)

105 *EA* 22/1957, 29.

106 *Yhteishyvä* 15.2.1956. See also *HS* 17.6.1957 and *Nuori Voima* 5 & 6/1957, 10. Furthermore, the film itself was read as a tribute to the old matron (see *Ssd* 18.11.1957).

107 Matronhood was a position within the economic unity formed by family, marriage, and work. See Ollila 1994, 341–343.

> "The Finnish housewife has always been industrious and her working day long – longer than that of any other member of the household." (Ibid., 103.)

In the representations of "the Finnish woman", folklore of the *Kalevala* has been frequently invoked as an argument for and as evidence of women's authority.[108] In this manner, post-war "power feminism" appropriated folklore imagery and the force of history invested in its citational legacy for contemporary purposes. In other words, woman-centred feminists used folklore and history as elements of the grammar of nation building in their claims on "the masculine world" (Voipio-Juvas & Ruohtula 1949, 18):

> "Women have long held a place of importance in the cultural life of Finland. The immemorial folk poems of the Finnish people – at least the lyrical ones – were largely sung by women; and the ancient lore of the race recognized woman as a mighty matriarchal figure, whose advice even the greatest hero solemnly sought in times of trouble. Indeed, in Louhi, one of the central characters of our national epic the *Kalevala*, she assumes tremendous proportions. She is the powerful Mistress of the North, a sorceress, and the leader of warlike expeditions beside whom the Master of the North is a puny figure. Woman as a mother, the heart of the family, and then as a cultural factor, is among the realistic concepts of ancient Finnish folk culture still alive." (Ibid., 64–65.)

The link between Loviisa Niskavuori and the figure of Louhi was not, however, a post-war novelty. Already in the theatre reception of the 1930s, the *Kalevala* and the figure of Louhi were invoked as an intertextual framework for the image of Loviisa – and as a source of monumentalization.[109] Then, the comparison of Loviisa to Louhi connected *The Women of Niskavuori* to a contemporary public debate. In 1935, the year of the *Kalevala* Jubilee Celebration, the centennial of the publication of the national epic, novelist Elsa Heporauta had launched a project to commemorate the women of the *Kalevala* – and, by implication, "all Finnish women" – with a statue in Helsinki.[110] A women's association, the Kalevala Women's Association, was established for the purpose and the founding meeting was unanimous on all but one issue. Initially, there was a disagreement about the most important female character in the *Kalevala*: Was it the mother of Lemminkäinen who embodied sacrifice, the Maid of North as the model for the Maid of Finland, the national symbol, or – as Elsa Heporauta suggested – was it Louhi, the mighty matron of Pohjola (Northland) who fought against Väinämöinen? (Mäkelä 1984,

108 Kaari Utrio 's history of Finnish women is titled "The Daughters of Kaleva" (*Kalevan tyttäret*, 1986).

109 *Naamio* 2/1937, 28.

110 As an example of the discussion launched, see Haavio 1937a. As Liisa Lindgren (2000, 134–152) has reminded, Suomalainen Naisliitto (Finnish Women's Union) planned a monument to the playwright Minna Canth since 1909. In the end, three statues were commissioned to honour this "feminist icon" in Kuopio, Tampere, and Jyväskylä (1937, 1951, and 1962), but never in Helsinki.
I owe many thanks to Tutta Palin for alerting me to this analogy!

16–17.) Louhi was a contested figure in the *Kalevala*, and according to many interpretations, the character was overwhelmingly negative. Since the 1920s, however, new readings of Louhi had emerged, and Elsa Heporauta, as the first president of the Kalevala Women's Association, proposed a new, woman-centred understanding. (Vakimo 1999, 67–68.)[111] In the discussions about the monument, power won over motherliness and youth as Louhi gained the most support – she should be the image of "the Finnish woman". This manner, then, a discourse of "power feminism" figured already in the 1930s and it associated explicitly with monumentality as a mode.[112] At the end of the 1930s, the Kalevala Women's Association commissioned a sculpture of Louhi from Eemil Halonen who was known for his folklore and Kalevalaic motifs and in 1946, a bronze statue welcomed guests in the restaurant "Kestikartano" run by the Kalevala Women's Association.[113] In the view of Heporauta and the Union, Louhi should be represented not as an old woman with a grumpy face as Halonen's first sketches suggested but as a young and grand matron. They saw Louhi as an exemplary combination of motherhood, housewifery, leadership, and creativity – a foremother and an example of the energetic and independent woman. (Vakimo 1999, 67–68.)

In the post-war literary representations of the Finnish Woman, the theme of the monument was evoked in relation to "the *Kalevala* woman" who framed as both an orator and a *housewife* and in relation to exemplary, historical women like Minna Canth (Kaari 1947, 18; Voipio-Juvas & Ruohtula 1949, 10, 32). In this manner, then, the mythological and the historical merged and were appropriated for the purposes of a woman-centred *identity politics* (cf. Fuss 1989, 97–102) during the reconstruction period and within its gender politics.[114] When framing the matron of Pohjola as the foremother of all contemporary housewives, the female activists performed both an *inclusive* and a *normative* monumentalizing gesture. They combined the discourse of power and the shared aims of identity politics with housewifery, rooted in the 19th century middle-class ideology, but accepted as ideal womanhood in all women's organizations by the end of the 1930s (Sulkunen 1989, 114–116, 130–138).[115] Hence, the uses of the *Kalevala* for performing gender were strategic, aiming to stabilize a desirable female identity, the matron-mother. As the two-part name indicates, however, the promoted identity was structured around a tension. On the one hand, the "independence and

111 For a discussion of the post-war debate concerning the interpretations of the *Kalevala* and its origin, Eastern or Western, historic, or mythic interpretive framework, see Turunen 1999, 212ff. The debate dated back to the inter-war period and feminist discussion was part of this re-evaluation. In *Suomi, Pohjolan etuvartio/Finland. The Outpost of the North* (1937), published by the National Union of Students of Finland, a chapter on "The Kalevala. The National Epos of Finland" by Martti Haavio (1937b) had a central place.

112 The Kalevala Women's Association launched the monument project by starting with both ideological work and fund-raising; the latter was mainly done by manufacturing and selling a collection of so-called Kalevala jewellery.

113 See Tuulia, "Kalevalan naiset – me itse", *Kotiliesi* 4/1947, 69–71.

114 For an example of a later appropriation of the notion of monument for the uses of identity politics, see Räty-Hämäläinen 1998.

115 On the notion of housewifery in Finnish women's movement see, see Ollila 1993, 56–62 and passim.

energy" of the Finnish housewife, her "influence far beyond her home", were underlined and framed as a legacy of Louhi:

> "Our national epic, the *Kalevala*, already features the active and impressive figure of a woman, the Mistress of *Pohjola* (the North) whose influence extends far beyond her home." (Voipio-Juvas & Ruohtula 1949, 102.)

On the other hand, however, "the Finnish" woman was portrayed in terms of marriage and family, as "a good housewife and mother", linking her to another legacy – the rival figure from the 1930s monument discussions, the mother of Lemminkäinen:

> "The Finnish woman is by nature modest and restrained, and does not easily betray her feelings. Under her apparently peace-loving shell, however, a powerful emotional life is concealed. Finnish motherly love, such as it is presented, for instance, by Lemminkäinen's mother in the *Kalevala*, is strong and compelling." (Voipio-Juvas & Ruohtula 1949, 108.)

Hence, while the Kalevala Women's Association had decided to monumentalize Louhi as the image of "the Finnish woman", the uses of the *Kalevala* coupled the matron-qualities of Louhi with the maternal qualities of Lemminkäinen's mother which coincided with 19th century middle-class feminine ideals (Häggman 1994, 182–187).[116] This combination and the associated tensions were similar to the melodramatic discourse of monumentality constructed in the interpretive framings of both *The Women of Niskavuori* and *Loviisa*. It also coincided with Hella Wuolijoki's authorial discourse on Loviisa. In many public statements, prefaces to plays and interviews, she framed the character as monumental because of her persistence and determination:

> "The courage of the old matron involves settling for what there is and trying to hold the environment and the life of her children together, and to bear the burdensome, lonely fate of the Niskavuori women wordlessly, voicelessly. It takes courage and greatness to stick to the old. At the same time, however, it is these very qualities that allow her to understand the magnitude of the new age, and acknowledge that her life has been outlined for her and that her task is to sustain life, as one cannot be larger than one's destiny." [117]

The author emphasized the commemorative function of the character:

> "As a person of the modern age, when describing Loviisa Niskavuori, I have saluted all that is good, great, and valuable in the old vanishing age. I have paid homage to old matrons, to our mothers."[118]

116 The image of the matron-mother combined two ideal types of women articulated at the turn of the century, the unmarried, working, and politically active woman and the married housewife. Cf. Jallinoja 1983, 68.

117 An undated and untitled manuscript which opens with Wuolijoki's phrase "Puhua omasta kappaleestaan on vähän kolkkoa." ("It feels somewhat weird to talk about one's own play.") KA: HWK: B: 15 (i) "Kirjoitelmia omista teoksista, esipuheita".

118 Wuolijoki 1947b.

In her public statements, Hella Wuolijoki presented Loviisa Niskavuori as a character with roots in real life. She related Loviisa to a number of "interesting, educated, and dignified elderly women" who, in her framing, not only had "wisdom and dignity, but also heartiness" and who, furthermore, were interested in both politics and culture. In particular, she named her mother-in-law, the matron of Vuolijoki, as the model for Loviisa. Her "genuineness" and her attachment to the land were the qualities that distinguished the matron of Vuolijoki from the female members of the urban upper class and intelligentsia.[119]

Whilst both the framings of Loviisa Niskavuori and the identity politics of "the Finnish woman" monumentalized the peasant woman, it differed from the concurrent monumentalization that took place in mainstream ethnological representations of the post-war era. Published amidst war efforts, Kustaa Vilkuna's and Eino Mäkinen's book *The Work of Fathers* (*Isien työ*, 1943) was a tribute to peasant toil and skills, both in photographic representations and ethnological detail. Women's work, however, was not monumentalized until the second edition published in 1953. In Vilkuna's words, the Finnish matron "was not plagued by complexes as she masters her work and she also knows it." (Vilkuna & Mäkinen 1953, 249–250.)[120] Vilkuna's characterization reiterated a Topelian image of "the Finnish woman" as humble, enduring, diligent, toughened, and unchanging. (Cf. Peltonen 1996c, 177.) Unlike Vilkuna's monument, the ones constructed in both the framings of the Niskavuori films and in the feminist literature were indeed "plagued by complexes" and far from static figures. As a cultural image, hence, the peasant matron entwined with both intertextual frameworks and their divergent citational legacies. They both invoked the discursive fields of nationalism and the gendered grammar of the 19th century Fennomanian ideology.

The public reception of the 1936 play framed Loviisa as an image of "the maintaining and constructive feminine force".[121] This characterization reiterated the common logic of European nationalisms according to which the position of woman in the grammar of nation is that of a mother, caretaker, and educator. (Mosse 1985, 10–11; Yuval-Davis & Anthias 1989, 7. Cf. Häggman 1994,172–176.) The reading also cited the 19th century bourgeois discourse of womanhood, as the intelligentsia both in Finland and elsewhere in Western Europe debated female citizenship as an issue linked to questions of family, marriage, and state, the dominant discourses positioned women as guardians of traditions, family, and moral order. In this grammar, women were conceived as beings morally superior to men. Not only Zachris Topelius and Johan Vilhelm Snellman but also Axel Adolph Laurell, Johan Ludwig Runeberg, Elias Lönnrot, F. Collan, and Wilhelm Bolin presented these views (Häggman 1994, 176). For Snellman, because of their role within the

119 Ibid.

120 In the life stories of Finns, an ethics of endurance has emerged as a major structuring element for generations born during the first three decades of this century. For an emphasis on struggle and work figures in the life stories of both men and women, see Strandell 1984, 225, 231, 234; Roos 1987, 53–54, 57, 71.

121 *Naamio* 6/1936, 90.

families, women were the upholders of *Sittlichkeit* (Finnish "siveellisyys"; Swedish "sedlighet"), i.e., a series of virtues including love for one's neighbour, obedience to the law, sense of duty, fear of God, and patriotism.[122] As mothers and educators, women were positioned as responsible for the *Sittlichkeit* of the family; they were seen as the moral backbone of society.[123] By the outbreak of the Second World War, women's organizations from the right and the left embraced this discourse of womanhood modified into the notion of "social motherhood". Furthermore, this discourse still operated in the identity politics of post-war woman-centred activism.[124] It was also articulated in the 1930s readings of Loviisa Niskavuori as an embodiment of duty, showing both "moral integrity" and "posture" [sisäinen ryhti]:

> "The play is kept alive by the spirit that the old matron of Niskavuori incarnates. It is the spirit of Häme (...): the unconditional fulfilment of the duty, the respect for the past, a spirit serving the sacredness of the land cultivated by the forefathers."[125]

In this framing, cultural conservatism, nationalism, and the aforementioned 19th century discourse of womanhood coincided in readings of Loviisa as a representation of "a sense of duty that passes from one generation to another and that is directed at what is surely and earnestly regarded as worthy of preservation".[126] As such, the image of Loviisa appeared as a monument to "Snellmanian" womanhood, but it also came into contact with the ideals of the middle-class women's movements that partly re-circulated, partly re-defined 19th century discourses on womanhood.[127]

In conclusion, the citational legacies of the image of the peasant matron were ambivalent. While Loviisa was framed in relation to the diverse idealizing and monumentalizing discourses both in 1938 and in 1946, the invoked citational legacies invested her image – and the notion of monument – with contradictions. In addition to the melodramatic tensions between surface and depth, between appearance and inner feelings, the interpretive

122 In my understanding, the notion of moral integrity [sisäinen ryhti] often ascribed to the Niskavuori matrons equals the notion of "Sittlichkeit". For a discussion of "Sittlichkeit" in Snellman's thinking, see Karkama 1985, 26–27.

123 For analyses of Snellmanian views on women and family, see Pulkkinen 1993, 68; Karkama 1985, 82–85, 103–104; Ollila 1990, 32–34; Häggman 1994, 180–181; Helén 1997, 137–144. For an example of contemporary readings, see an essay by Heikki Lehmusto, "J.V. Snellman on women's patriotism". Lehmusto 1938, 70–73.

124 "Social motherhood" (Sulkunen 1987) aligns with "maternalism" as a woman-centred political strategy (Nätkin 1997). For a reading of the ways in which the two notions have interacted and overlapped to construct a hegemonic narrative of "the Finnish woman", see Koivunen 1998, 73–82.

125 *US* 1.4.1936. Cf. *Tampereen Sanomat* 20.10.1936.

126 *Aamu* 2/1937, *Turunmaa* 25.10.1936.

127 Hella Wuolijoki was, in fact, interested in Snellman as a figure and in his writings, and she even planned a play on Snellman that was, however, not finished before her death in 1953. Jukka Ammondt (1980, 47–49) discusses Wuolijoki's interest in Snellman, but he does not refer to Snellman's view on women. On the ethics of duty in the ideology of the Martha Association, see Ollila 1993, 50–51, 60–61.

framings articulated a pull between matronhood and femininity, as well as between matronhood and motherhood.[128]

The intertextual framework of the feminist self-representational literature highlights that the articulations were not incidental, but pertinent to the contemporary discourses of womanhood, both in the inter-war and post-war context. An article in a post-war women's magazine, when discussing the qualities of an ideal matron, articulated a similar contradiction, the juxtaposition of both biblical and Kalevalaic figures:

> "If you, like Martha, are in danger of forgetting the inner values, learn from the spiritual Mary and teach her your energetic activity. If you, as Louhi, master the big picture, ask the mother of Lemminkäinen to show you how to learn to feel the power of sacrificial love."[129]

This "advice" given in *Kotiliesi* ("The Hearth"), the women's magazine committed to the cause of homes, suggests that post-war identity politics involved constantly negotiating a series of juxtapositions between outer and inner values, between spirituality and energetic activity, between "mastering the big picture" and maternal sacrificial love. The manner in which *The Loving Heart* characterized Minna Canth pointed out a further tension:

> "In her unparalleled fighting spirit and stamina, her fellow Finns see how "the Finnish guts" (sisu) is reflected at its best; and in her sacrificing love for humanity and her eternal maternal mercy, the highest form of femininity is expressed." (Greta von Frenckell-Thesleff in Kaari 1947, 7.)

This formulation conceived nationality and femininity as separate qualities. While the "fighting spirit and stamina" were characterized as "Finnish", "sacrificing love" and "maternal mercy" were seen as "the highest form of femininity". Thus, "Finnish woman" was outlined as a contradictory identity. In this intertextual framework, Loviisa Niskavuori was interpreted as a national monument whose femininity was postulated as "the secret warmth underneath" or, as the title of the 1947 book suggests, as "the loving heart". While Emma Väänänen's performance associated *Loviisa* with *The Glorified Heart* and its emphasis on maternal sacrifice, the narration of the film did not foreground this intertextual connection. *The Glorified Heart* highlighted the mother-child-relationship in recurrent framings of Lea Helpi with her children in same shots. *Loviisa*, rather, showed the main character with her child only twice and in passing. As in the representation of "the Finnish woman", the visual emphasis was on discourses of matronhood. The ending of the film highlighted this priority. While *The Glorified Heart* closed with a framing of Lea Helpi embracing her daughter in their shared longing and

128 According to Kai Häggman (1994, 138–139), in the 18th and 19th centuries, the church defined womanhood first, in terms of marriage (as wife), second, in terms of estate (as matron) and only third, in terms of motherhood (as mother). In the middle class ideals of the late 19th century, however, matronhood was marginalized as motherhood was introduced as the moral backbone of family and society. Ibid., 185.

129 Alice Jeansson, "Ihanne-emäntä, Martta vai Maria?", *Kotiliesi* 20/1938, 788–789.

sorrow, *Loviisa* ended with a long shot of Loviisa standing alone on the front step and leaning with her hand on the wall of the house.

Mother Earth: Aarne Niskavuori *(1954)*

When *The Bread of Niskavuori* was first performed in the Helsinki Folk Theatre in 1938, the character of Loviisa Niskavuori was read as "a monumental embodiment of maternal instinct and ownership instinct in an outright romantic spirit of soil".[130] As discussed in Chapter 2, both this play and the 1954 film *Aarne Niskavuori* were read in terms of Heimat fictions, as tributes to "the spirit of the land".[131] In 1954, "the soil of Niskavuori, the land of Niskavuori, and the house of Niskavuori" were singled out as the protagonists of the film, all of them embodied by the old matron, the "wise, old Ur-mother who is fighting for the happiness of her brood".[132] Reviewers praised the film for its "Finnishness" (see Chapter 2) and saw the character of the old mother as making the strongest emotional impact, moving the viewers to tears, and touching the heart.[133] In all of the film's posters and advertisements, Loviisa was positioned either as the centrepiece (the horizontally shaped poster) or as a stately figure hovering above all other elements (Ilona and Aarne, the Niskavuori house). The composition of the posters emphasized the special status of the old matron who in a suite of album-style publicity-stills was portrayed smiling as a grand figure.[134] The narration of the film articulated with emphasis this sovereignty of the "Ur-mother" at the beginning of the film in a prologue-like sequence, which framed the whole narration and its intertextual frameworks discussed in this section. In the prologue, the narration opened with the voice-over of the old matron introducing the diegetic world of Niskavuori:

> "There lies the land which is waiting for its patron. The land from which you are all born. I would like to gather you all back home to the bosom of the land, to a safe place away from the roar of cannons and the horrors of war."

With these words, the old matron's voice-over commented upon the image track, a pan sweeping over the Häme landscape and finally cutting to the Niskavuori house. The image track continued from the preceding credit sequence in which the Häme provincial song performed by a choir and a male vocalist accompanied the pan. The lyrics of this song implied a son of the region looking back on his homeland.[135] (Cf. Chapter 2.) The non-

130 *HS* 19.1.1939.

131 *Valvoja-Aika* 2/1939, 103; *Nya Argus* 4/16.2.1939, 53; *Nykypäivä* 1.2.1939; *Itä-Savo* 18.4.1954; *Etelä-Saimaa* 27.4.1954; *Lalli* 27.3.1954; *Karjalan maa* 28.4.1954.

132 *IS* 29.3.1954; *EA* 8/1954.

133 *HS* 28.3.1954; *MK* 27.3.1954.

134 For poster, see collections of FFA/TUL; for advertisements, see *Kinoielhti* 2/1954 and *EA* 7/1954.

135 Cf. in the Soviet context, "The Song of the Motherland" (Vasily Lebedev-Kumach and Isaac Dunaevsky 1935) which was written for a film *Circus*, but its popularity was so immense

diegetic music continued as a backdrop to the voice-over that positioned the old matron of Niskavuori as "Ur-mother", a mother of the nation addressing all the viewers in a distinctive Häme dialect; addressing them as her children she would want to gather into to her lap, to Häme, the metaphorical Finnish landscape. Invoked twice later in the film, the centrality of this prologue is heightened. First, there is a kitchen scene in which Loviisa enjoys an evening cup of tea with Ilona's mother, who talks about a mother's relationship to her children and grandchildren. At her suggestion that they give up trying to influence their children, Loviisa replies:

> "Every evening, when you stand alone by the gates of Niskavuori and listen through the mist to the distant voices of one's children, you want to step over waters and lands, gather them all back from the world into your apron and drop them at your feet".

A close-up of Loviisa looking sad, as if talking to herself, ends the scene and dissolves into a high angle shot of Loviisa sitting in a nightgown, staring into space, not being able to sleep. The following shot, meanwhile, frames Aarne looking out the bedroom window, lost in his thoughts. This identification of the mother and the son reiterated the beginning of the film for the second time, this time the "I" of the Häme provincial song harking back to his homeland and the voice-over of Loviisa longing for her children to come back. At the same time, both the voice-over sequence and the statement in the kitchen scene performed a monumentalizing move, as the two scenes connected the image of the matron-woman to maternal national symbols and to Western representations of motherhood in terms of maternal cult.

As an intertextual framework the opening voice-over sequence invoked a maternal personification of Finland from the mid-nineteenth century, Mother Finland. Zachris Topelius and R. W. Ekman articulated this idea in story and drawing respectively published in the children's magazine *Eos*. In a didactic piece "Finland is great!", Topelius charted the geographical dimensions of the country and stressed its largeness. Along the same lines, he included a story of Mother Finland, who gathers her children around her, spreads her hands over them, and blesses them. She expresses her love for the children and urges them to love God first and her second. The accompanying drawing presented Mother Finland as a disproportionately tall figure in relation to the surrounding children, dressed in an ancient folklore dress. The background included fragments of different landscapes and recognizable buildings used to represent the whole of the country. (Reitala 1983, 41–43.) Although the maternal personification of Finland was only a phase, as the Maid of Finland being the more familiar representative figure, Mother Finland did return in the 20th century as a motif in war memorials.[136] Reiterating the

> that it became the broadcast signal for Radio Moscow in the 1930s. The lyrics imply a male subject: "If an enemy should wish to crush us/we shall set our faces stern and hard/ Like our bride, we love our homeland dearly/And over our tender mother we stand to guard." See van Geldern & Stites 1995, 271–272.

idea of the nation as a mother who embraces the citizens as her children, Loviisa's introductory voice-over not only invoked domestic symbolic representations, but also a transnational imagery of nationalism, a series of nations personified as mothers (Mother Sweden, Mother Russia, Mother Ireland, and Mother India). As a rule in national imaginaries, the maternal figure suggests common mythic origins, and she is pictured as eternal, patient, and essential, like the land, the soil, and the Heimat to which the image of the mother is metonymically linked.[137] In the post-war cinematic context, a similar discourse of womanhood, which linked motherhood to nation, was evident both in Swedish countryside films and German Heimat films (Koch 1997, 205; Qvist 1986, 196–202).

In this framework, Loviisa appeared not only as an image of the female citizen, the matron working "shoulder to shoulder" with her husband, but also as a metaphor for the nation-space. In her discussion of German Heimat films, Gertrud Koch (1997, 204–208) has proposed that the genre reveals the different manners in which the female body is incorporated into political iconography as "a naturalized sign of origin and belonging". Koch suggests that in Heimat films, landscape and the female body are to some extent interchangeable as vehicles of meanings. She might as well have been talking about *Aarne Niskavuori*, as she notes how Heimat films often begin with a bird's eye panorama view. In *Aarne Niskavuori*, this aesthetic convention is coupled with a maternal voice-over. Koch relates this "political iconography" to the grammars of 19th century nationalisms which identified womanhood (*Weiblichkeit*) with the nation, whose internal integrity it should guarantee, and associated men with the *state* for which they waged wars. In this manner, the political iconography has served and reproduced the binary gender structure. The figure of the Mother plays a central role in this model "as the generative and integrative centre" of the nation. This "monumentalization of motherhood" is, in Koch's reading, an effect of industrialization, the disappearance of extended agrarian families, and a concurrent de-biologization (*Entbiologisierung*) of women. In her view, the monument has a double meaning. On the one hand, the monument-woman symbolizes prosperity. On the other hand, she is "a sign of the past, of a naturalistic realm which she both marks as bygone and upholds as a regressive goal". In this manner, the monument-woman both signifies (and glorifies) familiarity in the public sphere and, at the same time, serves as a symbol of a pre-modern state structure. (Ibid., 205.) Following Gertrud Koch's reading, the much-publicized scene in which Loviisa Niskavuori

136 Topelius gave up the mother figure in the 1870s and pictured Finland as a young maid. Mourning mothers still appeared in war memorials in the 1960s. See Reitala 1983, 58–59; 148–152. Liisa Lindgren (2000, 207–208) compares these "grave" mother figures in war memorials to Loviisa Niskavuori, a contemporary fictitious character.

137 On the influence of Moder Svea (Mother Sweden) on symbols of Finnishness, see Reitala 1983, 14–15ff. On representations and meanings of Mother Russia during the war years, see Stites 1992, 100, 111–112. On readings of Mother India, see Shetty 1995, 50ff. On Mother Ireland, see Lyons 1996, 113ff.

encounters the former president Kyösti Kallio in the Parliament House acquires another meaning.[138] It reads not only as an encounter between two proponents of agrarian values, but also as a meeting of nation and state, or *Oikos* (house in the sense of family) and *polis* (the polity of free citizens) in Koch's (ibid.) terms. In this light, the narrative image of Loviisa appears as an ambiguous national monument, symbolizing both the hegemonic values of a modern nation (the agrarian spirit, rootedness) and its anti-modern prehistory (an agrarian household and the non-independent Finnish nation).[139]

The introductory voice-over sequence and its repetition later on in *Aarne Niskavuori* also invoked the intertextual framework of maternal imagery and a mythological dimension. While the narrative trajectory of the film does not address the war, the introductory voice-over, although not included in the 1938 play by Wuolijoki, also makes explicit reference to war and, hence, cites the biblical motifs of Pietà and Mater Dolorosa, the mourning mother.[140] In the opening sequence, Loviisa speaks in the first person, establishing an intimate relationship with the viewers and addressing them as "you", her children. But in the kitchen scene, Loviisa speaks in the passive, implicitly giving voice to "any" mother. Combined with her words, the introductory scene invokes a "strange temporality" of "another history" and "another time" associated with representations of motherhood and the abundance of images suggesting a trans-historical quality.

In my reading, Loviisa's two monologue-like utterances in *Aarne Niskavuori* introduced new elements to the public interpretive framings of Loviisa Niskavuori. They both underlined maternal love and presented her, momentarily, more as a mother than a matron. In relation to the Kalevala Women's Association's debates on the appropriate symbol of "the Finnish woman", one could say that these scenes primarily associated the narrative image of Loviisa not with Louhi, but with Lemminkäinen's Mother. In fact, the narrative trajectory of *Aarne Niskavuori* climaxes in the scene in which Loviisa arrives in Helsinki and hands a loaf of rye bread to her son, the prodigal son[141], whom she tries to persuade back to Niskavuori, to save from the urban life in which he, according to the dialogue, suffers from "the loss of land". A publicity-still from this scene, a loaf of rye-bread re-connecting the mother and the son, was widely circulated in the promotional publicity of this film.[142] [Fig. 39] Again, Loviisa was framed first as a mother and then as a matron. In the dialogue of this scene, Loviisa and Aarne talk about grain quality and other practicalities, but the emotional intensity of the encounter derives from Loviisa's introductory monologue in which she expresses her longing to have the children back around her. It also refers back to the

138 For example, *HS* 21.3.1954; *TKS* 25.3.1954; *MK* 24.3.1954; *KSML* 22.3.1954.

139 Cf. Rita Felski's (1995, 49ff) analysis of "the Archaic Mother" as a prominent image within anti-modern thinking.

140 For a discussion of wartime images of suffering mothers, see Koivunen 1995, 85–92. The mourning, recovering nation was also represented by a mother figure in post-war Germany. See Denman 1997, 189–199.

141 Cf. Luis Trenker's Heimat film with this title: *Der verlorene Sohn* (*The Prodigal Son*) from 1934. Rentschler 1996, 74ff.

142 See, for example, *HS* 21.3.1954; *Hbl* 28.3.1954; *AL* 1.4.1954; *Rovaniemi* 4.4.1954, *US* 28.3.1954.

closing scene of *The Women of Niskavuori* in which Loviisa watches Aarne and Ilona leave Niskavuori. Elsa Turakainen's performance invoked another intertextual framework that linked Loviisa to motherhood. Since the war years, Turakainen was best known as the mother of the Suominen family in a series of five family comedies released in 1941–1945.[143] In these films, she had embodied the virtues of middle-class motherhood: while a servant took care of household tasks, she was a loving mother and wife, the spiritual centre and moral backbone of the home. Playing Aino Suominen, Elsa Turakainen was framed as the exemplary mother of an exemplary family, an atmosphere the advertising of the film wished for each Finnish child. (Koivunen 1995, 58–65.)

Although the star images of both Emma Väänänen and Elsa Turakainen were associated with maternal nurture, this quality remained a mere undercurrent in the narrative image of Loviisa Niskavuori. Apart from the rare instances in *Aarne Niskavuori*, motherhood was not articulated as an important framing of Loviisa – not even in the aftermath of the war when womanhood was extensively identified with motherhood and when heroic sacrifice was also monumentalized as a maternal quality (Nätkin 1997, 150–153).[144] While the "feminist-nationalist genre of self-representation" represented "the Finnish woman" in terms of maternal citizenship, stressing her virtues as an educator and transmitter of "national heritage" (Helminen in Kaari 1947, 173), both the representations of "the Finnish woman" and the Niskavuori films foregrounded citizenship in terms of matronhood. (Cf. Anttonen 1994, 211–212.) In the Niskavuori films, I argue, the images of Loviisa as a peasant matron mobilized a monumental temporality comparable to that of motherhood. For instance, the publicity-still framing young Loviisa standing with a sheaf of grain against the sky and gazing afar reiterated and connected to a number of different contexts. In terms of composition and the positioning of the woman figure, it cited two popular magazine covers designed by Martta Wendelin. The 1925 cover of the popular women's magazine *Kotiliesi* framed a young woman in a medium close-up with a sheaf of grain, and a 1941 issue of *Oma Koti* showed a female figure mowing a field (Karjalainen 1993, 53, 125). The framing of Loviisa also connected to the aesthetics of *Finland in Pictures* (1944) and other picture books whose theme was Finland. *Finland in Pictures* reiterated the motif of a young woman with a sheaf of grain, displaying her in a sharp low-angle. Here the female figure, however, did not gaze off the frame but met the eyes of the viewer. [Fig. 18] In the 1930s–1950s, images of peasant women working were also featured in ethnological books such as the afore-mentioned Kustaa Vilkuna's

143 *Suomisen perhe/The Suominen Family* 1940, *Suomisen Ollin tempaus* 1942, *Suomisen taiteilijat* 1943, *Suomisen Olli rakastuu* (1944) and *Suomisen Olli yllättää* (1945). A sixth and last film on the Suominen family was released in 1959: *Taas tapaamme Suomisen perheen*.

144 In 1954, a booklet presenting mothers' survival stories was published under the title "Resourceful Mother" (*Neuvokas äiti. Todellisuuspohjaisia kuvauksia suurten vaikeuksien läpi selviytyneistä äideistä*. Kotikasvatusyhdistys, Helsinki. 1954).

Fig. 18. Post-war Niskavuori films echoed the contemporary imagery of books representing Finland through photographs such as Suomi kuvina – Finland i ord och bild *(Finland in Pictures).*

and Eino Mäkinen's *Isien työ* (*The Work of Fathers*, 1953), providing the image of Loviisa with yet another intertextual framework.

But the image of the peasant woman was by no means specific to the Finnish national imagination. The iterability and rhetorical force of the image was confirmed both in the 1930s and in the 1950s. In 1938, the first Niskavuori play was successfully exported to Nazi Germany and performed in Hamburg Staatstheater. [145] In Finland, Olavi Paavolainen (1938, 298–302) wrote about the key image in Fascist propaganda, a healthy, happily smiling peasant mother. The same image had currency in the Soviet Union and in the socialist realistic aesthetics of both the 1930s and 1950s, and in 1958, seven hundred dubbed copies of *Loviisa* were distributed in the

145 It was staged also in several other Central European countries: Estonia, Latvia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Croatia, and Slovenia. See Koski 2000, 113.

country.[146] This short excursion into the reiterations of the peasant woman suggests symbolic force in many different contexts ranging from National Socialism to socialist realism and from ethnography to tourism. At the same time, however, the excursion underlines the instability of the image, the differences produced by the many reiterations.

The citational legacy of Loviisa as a monument-woman may seem a coherent and logical counterpart of the nation's history and development as the representations of "the Finnish woman" narrated it, but in the spirit of Homi Bhabha, I have tried to emphasize the internal tensions and "non-synchronic passages" which characterized the post-war monument-woman. Homi K. Bhabha (1994, 153, 245) discusses a question of tension between the "pedagogical" and the "performative" involving the constitution of identity through "progress, historicism, modernization, homogeneous empty time, the narcissism of organic culture" and the loss of identity in the signifying process of cultural identification, "the iterative signs that mark the non-synchronic *passages* of time in the archives of the 'new'". In my understanding, Bhabha's argument focuses on what is contradictory and potentially unfamiliar in seemingly familiar national narratives. In performing gender and nation, Niskavuori films and their interpretive framings connected, intentionally or unintentionally, to a number of divergent contexts. Here, I do *not* posit that the image of Loviisa was necessarily perceived as contradictory. Instead, I have shown how that which has (also retrospectively) been understood as a self-explanatory, hegemonic image of "the strong woman" or "monument" was an effect of a continuous re-articulation of and negotiation between disjunctive elements – and, hence, open to different uses and readings.

In the 1950s, for instance, the readings of Loviisa in the films and in their interpretive framings as Mother Finland or Mother Earth coincided with her delineation as an ageing and, later, dying monument-woman. The posters and advertisements for *Aarne Niskavuori* portrayed Loviisa not only as a figure "rising beyond everyone else", a phrase recurrently cited in the framings of the Niskavuori films and plays to enhance the monumentality of the old matron, but also as someone smiling broadly and confidently.[147] This portraiture differed considerably from the serious, sad, or severe faces of Loviisa in the 1938 and 1946 framings. In addition, review journalism characterizations of Elsa Turakainen's Loviisa ascribed her attributes of power and authority coupled with a sense of humour and a variety of "soft" qualities. She was read as "an especially beautiful, spirited, and powerful

146 *Suomen Kansallisfilmografia 3*, 580. See also *KU* 6.6.1958; *Pohjolan Sanomat* 4.6.1958. According to Richard Stites (1992, 72–83), Soviet culture underwent a folklorization in 1936 and onwards. As a consequence, in the female imagery, stout matrons with many children started to outnumber the slim, heroic proletarian women of revolutionary imagery. In the 1950s, peasant imagery was prominent in popular culture (ibid., 143–144). On the place of the peasant woman in Soviet iconography, see Waters 1991, 240–241. Of all Niskavuori films, *Aarne Niskavuori* was associated with socialist realism in *NP* 30.3.1954.

147 For posters, see FFA/TUL; for advertisements, see *Kinolehti-Elokuvateatteri* 2/1954, *EA* 7/1954.

Finnish peasant woman with a sense of humour, a grand, "a racially pure" [rotupuhdas] representative of true soil-nobility [multa-aateli]", displaying "a sense of depth, humane warmth, and justice". Besides a monument, a "centre around which everything rotates", reviewers framed her as "warm and good, safe and with a sense of humour and even political foresight".[148] The year before, reviewers had praised Elsa Turakainen's performance as dying Loviisa in the first theatre production of the last Niskavuori play, *What now, Niskavuori?* (1953) for underlining moral integrity [moraalinen ryhti] and "the radiant wisdom which understands people and life". Similarly, reviewers of *Aarne Niskavuori* read Loviisa as a "firm, wise, solid, and deeply humane old woman".[149]

Paradoxically, then, both explicit monumentality (as in the 1936 and 1938 framings) and softness ascribed to old age seemed to go hand in hand. In 1957, a publicity-still of *Niskavuori Fights* portrayed old Loviisa in a medium shot, lying in bed and being greeted with flowers by a young girl. In this framing, Loviisa appeared, for the first time, as a grandmother and promotional publicity confirmed this "grannification" of the monument. A newspaper printed the still with the following text:

> "The women of Niskavuori at their best. Young Lilli (Leila Väyrynen) has woken up as the first one to congratulate her grandmother and the old matron (Elsa Turakainen), known for her toughness, melts into a broad smile."[150]

In *Niskavuori Fights,* Elsa Turakainen's performance, both in terms of her star image and the visual framings of the film, as Loviisa associated with a 1954-box office hit *Opri* (1954), an adaptation of Kyllikki Mäntylä's successful play, featuring the entrance of a Karelian refugee woman into an old people's home. As Akviliina, Turakainen played a grumpy, bitter old woman who, however, mellows by the end of the film. Besides similarities in the narrative trajectories, there was a visual connection between the films on the level of details, as in both roles, Elsa Turakainen wore a similar knitted cap.

By the time Loviisa was framed as a softening grandmother, the Niskavuori films were increasingly read in terms of memory and memorial, a phenomenon that followed the death of Loviisa in the last Niskavuori play, *What Now, Niskavuori*? (1953), and the subsequent death of Hella Wuolijoki (see Chapter 2). When the last Niskavuori play was first performed, some reviewers framed the image of Loviisa as a symbol of a vanishing time:

> "It may be only a matter of time before the earth-bound [juureva] women characters portrayed in Vuolijoki's plays become things of the past."[151]

148 *EA* 8/1954, 9; *Etelä-Suomi* 6.4.1954; *Ssd* 28.3.1954. The figure of Loviisa was ascribed monumentality in *AL* 1.4.1954, and her "peasant authority" (*Hbl* 28.3.1954) was described as a quality of "peasant gentry" in *HS* 28.3.1954.

149 *Suomalainen Suomi* 4/1953, 230 (theatre review of *What now, Niskavuori?)*; *MK* 27.3.1954.

150 *HS* 17.11.1957.

151 *Suomalainen Suomi* 4/1953, 229–230.

For other reviewers, the character appeared as "a memorial stone of old feudalism", and she was associated with both a "grey block of stone" and with the "lucidity and greyness of death".[152] In this manner, 1950s readings of Loviisa re-articulated the ambivalence between the matron-as-monument and the matron-as-memorial which was already visible in the 1930s framings. A sentimental discourse emerged as a framing when, for instance, *Niskavuori Fights* was read as "a beautifully serene and sincere image" or as "a heartfelt and well-meaning tribute to the old matron, who fights for the house and the land, and to Ilona, who has learned the art of submission".[153] In the poster for the 1957 film, Loviisa was, once again, the central figure. This time, however, she was present not as a monumental ruler-woman, but as an old woman, not as a cheerfully coloured figure as in the poster for *Aarne Niskavuori*, but as a monochrome drawing, sketched as if literally fading away.

The 1958 film version of *The Women of Niskavuori* was also framed with a similar sense of a time about to be lost. While the matron of Niskavuori was read as personifying "some kind of national ideal figure that, as a stiff-necked defender of her homestead and traditions, represents nationally timeless and sustaining values", the "monumental fighter figure" was said to intermingle with the "tragic, desperate battle for those forms of life without which *she* cannot live".[154] The productional framing of Emma Väänänen's performance as the old matron cited the familiar attributes of strength and authority when describing Loviisa as "the resilient, stern old matron of Niskavuori who understands life and who with an iron grip governs the family estate wavering in the storm of life".[155] The familiar qualities of monumentality and inner integrity were reiterated echoing the framings of Loviisa in 1936 and 1938, as reviewers described her as "carved in granite, the Finnish bedrock".[156] Again, as in 1938, the performance of the old matron was framed as double-levelled:

> "As she summarizes her life in Niskavuori with some sentences in few words and a low voice, her gaze says more than any words could. It is as if there was a halo glowing around her white head."[157]

Many readings, however, saw the performance as falling too much on the side of the soft, on that of old age. The narrative of *The Women of* Niskavuori, as it was understood, demanded conflict and juxtaposition. Therefore, like Olga Tainio's performance in 1938, Emma Väänänen's acting, in some readings, was thought to *lack* in monumentality:

152 *HS* 14.11.1953.
153 *IS* 18.11.1957; *Ssd* 18.11.1957.
154 *EA* 12/1958, 17.
155 "Niskavuoren naiset saapuu pian värielokuvana", undated press release (FFA). The "iron grip" metaphor was invoked also in *ESS* 23.9.1958, the metaphors of governing and ruling, in *HS* 21.9.1958; *TS* 19.10.1958
156 *Kaleva* 22.9.1958; *Lahti* 24.9.1958; *Uusi Aura* 19.10.1958.
157 *EA* 19/1958. See also *IS* 23.9.1958.

> "[Emma Väänänen's Loviisa] did not have any of that boulder-like quality of a power woman we have grown to expect of the old matron of Niskavuori."
>
> "The old matron, a boulder of a monument [pulterimonumentti], lacks inner Ur-kraft, that overwhelming dignity which one has to admire even if with a tinge of acrimony."[158]

Some reviewers characterized Loviisa as "a wise, calm, middle-aged matron, 'of good, mediocre quality', nothing more special than that".[159] These quotes indicated a constant negotiation between power and understanding that characterized many of the 1950s Niskavuori readings. On the one hand, age and authority were linked with each other, as the position of the old matron was one of power and authority. On the other hand, authority was not easily coupled with other notions of old age, granny-like mellowness or closeness to death.

Matriarch and monster: deconstructing the monument in the 1950s

> "Once, after a performance of *The Women of Niskavuori*, a friend of 'the old matron' asked me what Loviisa was like as a young woman, how such a 'creature' had developed."[160]
>
> Hella Wuolijoki 1941.

When charting the readings of Loviisa over the decades, it may seem that the image of Loviisa, the monument-woman, has become increasingly complex over time. In some sense, this impression is true, as the citational legacy grows heavier and the web of intertextual relations tighter with time. In this section, I focus on the challenging and contesting framings of Loviisa that increased in the 1950s. First, the tension between "the pedagogical" and "the performative", in Bhabha's sense a coherent narrative and its disturbances, was explicitly articulated in the 1950s theatrical context as Niskavuori dramas were subjected to "new" interpretations. Second, in the context of post-war cinema, family discourse, and gender politics, the image of the matron and the monument-woman acquired meanings that countered and contested the ones proposed by folkloric, ethnological, or feminist-nationalist narratives. However, in retrospective analysis, the image of Loviisa and the interpretive framings of the Niskavuori fictions were far from stable as early as in the 1930s. Rather, from the beginning, the very qualities of Loviisa that have been cited as monumental – persistence, resilience, moral strength, inner integrity, and sovereign authority – have also been read as negative or potentially threatening features. The framings of Loviisa as a monument

158 *Satakunnan Työ* 23.9.1958; *SaKa* 21.9.1958. Cf. *KSML* 6.10.1958.
159 *SaKa* 21.9.1958.
160 See "Juhani Tervapää's" preface in the programme leaflet for *The Young Matron of Niskavuori*, The National Theatre/Suomen Kansallisteatteri 27.3.1941. TeaM: käsiohjelmat.

have always been haunted by the readings of her as a matriarch, as a phallic mother, as a monster, or, to quote Hella Wuolijoki's phrase in the epigraph above, as "a creature" (olio).

Cornerstone of the propertied class

In the summer of 1954, when *Aarne Niskavuori* was about to be released, the Niskavuori saga was summarized as "a massive, conservative cornerstone of the propertied class". A promotional article "Niskavuori lives!" framed the plays and films, which during the past spring had not only been circulated in cinemas and theatres, but also as a series of radio dramas, as paradoxical heritage:

> "It is almost like a play of fate that as an artist, Hella Vuolijoki, who had assumed an extreme left-wing political ideology, has left behind, as her most acclaimed legacy, such a massive, conservative cornerstone of the propertied class within the figure of the old matron. And, besides her, the rest of the stately Niskavuori women who fight almost beyond their strength for private property and for maintenance of the undivided land within the family."[161]

Later the same year, director Urpo Lauri and the ensemble of the Finnish Workers' Theatre (Suomen Työväenteatteri, Helsinki) contested this legacy as they marketed their upcoming version of *The Women of Niskavuori* as a myth-breaking production aiming at shattering, in particular, the status of the old matron. Both this project and Lauri's other Niskavuori directions were framed as attempts to break free from "conventional interpretations of Niskavuori" and foreground "a fresh wind which blows into the mouldy atmosphere of Niskavuori".[162] In public, the director himself argued that *The Women of Niskavuori* was "not originally intended" to be an idealized figure. Only in later stages, he claimed, had Loviisa become the grand symbol of Häme as which she was now known.[163] The project headed by Lauri was framed as "a new truth" with a list of seven theses:

- The concept of "Niskavuorism" [niskavuorelaisuus] is not progressive either in terms of ways of viewing life or the world.
- The play *The Women of Niskavuori* is a protest to "Niskavuorisms".
- As a human being, Loviisa Niskavuori is not qualified for the position of pillar saint she has been elected by our theatre. She is not even born in Häme.
- Is Loviisa at all a Niskavuori person? She has been married into the family from Viitasaari…
- Ilona Ahlgren, on the other hand, comes from Sääksmäki.

161 *EA* 6/1954.

162 Earlier the same year, Urpo Lauri had directed *The Women of Niskavuori* for the Kemi Theatre. See *VS* 15.3.1954; *Ssd* 17.3.1954.

163 *AL* 31.10.1954. In addition, the 1938 framings revealed a similar, yet unspecified reading: "Olga Tainio's old matron is not the kind of Niskavuori figure which the author intended" (*Kansan Työ* 26.1.1938).

– Is not *The Women of Niskavuori* a tragedy of Niskavuori men?
– "Isn't there anybody who would like to protest?" is the original name of the play, but if I could re-baptize it, I would like to call it "Down with Niskavuori!"[164]

Some reviewers defended Lauri's theses with references to Eino Salmelainen's (1954, 223–225) memoirs, published earlier the same year, and to Salmelainen's account of his key role in enhancing the importance of the old matron and downplaying the role of Ilona. This context articulated a left-wing framing. It re-signified both Loviisa and the first Niskavuori play as products of censorship. In the 1930s atmosphere, critics stated that it had not been possible to present the "true" qualities of the old matron as a negative character, "a 'fossil' of Niskavuorism", and "a representative of conservatism and the power of money".[165] Now, in the readings of reviewers, the myth-breaking project aimed at framing the old matron as a "disagreeable" "spider", a "bitter" "power-seeking" "matriarch", focused on money and property and wearing rags as a sign of stinginess.[166] While reviewers discussed the aims of Urpo Lauri's direction with various degrees of sympathy and rejection, they nevertheless continued unanimously to highlight the affective impact of the old matron, the monumental qualities (persistence, wisdom, understanding, experience) of the character that touched even those protesting her prioritizing money and property over "freedom".[167]

In the 1930s, the interpretive framings of the Niskavuori plays and films in the left-wing press emphasized the conflict between the old and the new, but the framings of the old matron did not distinguish themselves from the rest of the readings.[168] Loviisa's identification with the house and the farm was framed in ambiguous terms, however, not along political party lines. When read as an "incarnation of the Häme-peasant pride in ownership", she was also framed as a negative expression of the power of money. Some reviewers saw Loviisa as a character manifesting "an impersonal power of ownership and rule" and functioning as a "defender of family pride, honour, property, and domesticity".[169] Where some readings found moral principles and a sense of duty, others detected insensitivity, coldness, and promotion of material values. Thus, an interpretive framework contrary to that provided by the cultural conservatives in the 1930s debates existed:

164 *VS* 31.10.1954.
165 *VS* 27.11.1954.
166 *AL* 31.10.1954; *Ssd* 27.11.1954; *US* 1.12.1954; *HS* 27.11.1954; *VS* 27.11.1954; *Hbl* 27.11.1954; *IS* 27.11.1954. While this explicit challenge and the subsequent discussion took place in the context of theatre, it gained a lot of publicity and involved journalists writing both theatre and film reviews, at least, Hans Kutter (Hbl) and Paula Talaskivi (IS). For a Czech reading of Loviisa as a "female tyrant", see Pecharová 2000.
167 See, for instance, *IS* 27.11.1954; *HS* 27.11.1954; *Ssd* 27.11.1954.
168 See, for instance, *Ssd* 1.4.1936; *Kansan Lehti* 19.10.1936; *Sosialisti* 24.10.1936; *Sosialisti* 18.1.1938; *Ssd* 18.1.1938; *Kansan Lehti* 19.1.1938.
169 *HS* 1.4.1936; *IS* 76/1936; *Sosialisti* 24.10.1936.

> "After all, the old matron Loviisa, against whom the individual demands of the youth take up the cudgels, personifies no ethical greatness. Her sense of duty exudes materialism and her faith is bound to the land. Her brilliantly sketched character stares at the viewer with eyes that do not make one feel warm (...)."[170]

In the 1954 theatre context, this reading was reiterated and re-articulated in relation to new intertextual frameworks. Namely, the myth-breaking ensemble of The Finnish Workers' Theatre compared Loviisa to Madame Dulska, the protagonist of the Polish writer Gabriela Zapolska's play *Mrs. Dulska's Morality* (*Moralnosc pani Dulskiej*) from 1907. Furthermore, the ensemble compared Loviisa to Vassa Zheleznova, the protagonist of Maksim Gorky's novel from 1910, which Bertolt Brecht adapted for the stage as *Die Mutter* (1932). Both Madame Dulska and Vassa Zheleznova were images of excessively possessive mothers with fixation on property.[171] The two plays have been staged in Finland several times. In 1954, Zapolska's "critically realist" play was performed by the Finnish Workers' Theatre and by the Radio Theatre, with Rauni Luoma (Heta Niskavuori in the 1952 film) as Madame.[172] *Mrs. Dulska's Morality* was interpreted as a critique of bourgeois facades, and Madame Dulska was seen as a woman who was "moral on the outside, but low-minded". She would accept any immorality as long as it did not leave the walls of her home. Hence, whilst many framings monumentalized Loviisa as having a loving heart under the necessarily tough appearance, Madame Dulska was read as an image that articulated the double-levelled nature in a different manner.[173] Some readings rebutted this critical intertextual framework by stating that instead of "painting her as a demon or reducing her to a Finnish "Mrs. Dulska", the performance, in fact, brought new dimensions to the character of old the matron.[174]

While some readings rejected Lauri's ensemble's approach as socialist realism, others praised it as an attempt to "de-romanticize", "de-idealize" the image of Loviisa, and clear away "an unnecessary glory of saintliness" surrounding "the grey head of the old matron" and re-establish Hella Wuoli-

170 *Turunmaa* 25.10.1936.

171 *VS* 14.11.1954. "Loviisa is a Finnish Madame Dulshka" is Ritva Arvelo cited to exclamate, whereas Urpo Lauri compares her to Vassa Zheleznova. Brecht's *Die Mutter* was staged in the Finnish Workers' Theatre in 1948–1949. As for authorial framings, Wuolijoki (1945) discusses Gorky in her memoirs, and her discussion is cited, for instance, in the Jyväskylä Municipal Theatre's brochure for Gorky's play. Gorky's play *Vassa Zheleznova* was performed in three theatres in the 1970s: in the Helsinki City Theatre and in the Joensuu and Jyväskylä City Theatres. Source: Statistics by Finnish Theatre Information Centre 25.5.1999. I owe many thanks to Raija Ojala who helped pursue this intertextual thread on the basis of a vague reference.

172 In the 1940s, *Mrs. Dulska's Morality* was staged in Kotka and Kuusankoski; in the 1930s in Pori, Jyväskylä, and Varkaus. In the mid-1950s, it was staged in Radio Theatre, in the Finnish Workers' Theatre and in the Joensuu City Theatre. Source: Statistics by Finnish Theatre Information Centre 25.5.1999.

173 *HS* 24.3.1954; *VS* 24.3.1954. In Czeslaw Milosz's (1969, 359) discussion, the play is compared to G.B. Shaw's *Mrs. Warren's Profession*.

174 *IS* 27.11.1954.

joki as a radical, non-conservative author.[175] Along with or instead of leftist criticism, these latter framings often suggested realist and psychological reading routes. The intertextual references to play's of Gorky, Brecht, and Zapolska indicated that the peasant matron figure was re-articulated as a *bourgeois mother* who instead of a "loving heart" had "eyes that do not make one feel warm". She was not read as an admirable embodiment of tradition and agrarian culture, but as a power-seeking woman with a cold heart.

Masculine women, pathological "(s)mothers"

> "In these films, a kind of national stamina has been put forward; they have become something of a eulogy to the Finnish peasant farm which in its genuinely Finnish tone has touched and fascinated. (…) The force of the acting lies in the portrayals of the strong Niskavuori women, a kind of matriarchy which often figures in Finnish literature and film, and in the close and authentic description (...) of Finnish rural life."[176]

While the 1930s framings had pictured Loviisa as "cold" and "governing", in the 1950s, her image was re-framed as that of a *matriarch*. The above quote from a 1958 review of *The Women of Niskavuori* used the term in a descriptive and fairly neutral manner – as if stating a fact – in a reading, which characterized Niskavuori films as "national" "peasant dramas". The term "matriarchal" entered the interpretive framings of the Niskavuori story in the 1953 theatre reviews of *What now, Niskavuori?*.[177] The following year, both radio plays and Urpo Lauri's myth-breaking production reiterated the term:

> "*The Women of Niskavuori* presents Loviisa as an already wise woman, a patriarchal representative of her family and house."[178]

> "(…) even in her new shape, as an unpleasant figure, [the old matron] feels so genuinely real; and precisely as such she truly makes an impact! She is a selfish, bitter matriarch of the family, lusting for power, wise with money, and possessing a freeholder's pride [talollisylpeä]."[179]

These framings associated matriarch as a term with patriarchality (status of the father), masculinity (and, implicitly, cross-gender qualities) as well as the negative characteristics of greed, selfishness, and bitterness. Implicitly, then, the idea of the hard-working monument-woman as the "deputy master", a source of pride in the 1930s and in the 1940s, was re-articulated as a negative reading of the *masculine woman*.[180] When publishing a feature

175 *US* 1.12.1954; *IS* 27.11.1954; *Hbl* 27.11.1954; *HS* 27.11.1954.
176 *Hbl* 21.9.1958. See also *Kaleva* 22.9.1958.
177 *Hbl* 19.2.1953; *VS* 12.2.1953.
178 *Kauppalehti* 24.2.1954. See also *VS* 12.2.1953. For a framing of Loviisa as "rising to a patriarchal greatness", see *Kaleva* 21.3.1939 (theatre review of *The Bread of Niskavuori*).
179 *VS* 27.11.1954.
180 For a reading of masculine women in Finnish advertising, see Rossi 2003, 58ff. As Jan Löfström (1999, 183) underlines, hard work was only coded "masculine" in bourgeois and upper class notions of gender.

article on "Finnish matrons who occupy the position of the patron" in 1938, *Kotiliesi* articulated a reading of the monument-woman as an ideal Topelian man.[181] As Mikko Lehtonen (1995, 100–101) argues in his analysis of the construction of Finnish masculinity, the idealized Finnish man has, since the 19th century, been characterized as God-fearing and, among other things, diligent, enduring, hardened, strong, patient, sacrificing, vigorous, peaceful, brave, fit for war, tough, persistent, and loyal.[182] (Cf. Löfström 1999, 160–161.) While Lehtonen emphasizes how masculinity is essentially about the transcendence of femininity, many of the qualities he lists are the same ones with which reviewers have described Loviisa Niskavuori since the 1930s. In the context of Niskavuori fictions, thus, a woman embodies the ideal qualities of "Finnish masculinity". Instead of being expressions of maleness, these qualities also passed as ideal characteristics of a "Finnish woman". Furthermore, the characterizations of Loviisa also overlap with the qualities of "the ideal of masculinity" as listed by George L. Mosse in *The Image of Man. The Creation of Modern Masculinity* (1996). For Mosse (1996, 3–4), "manliness" is integral to "the self-definition of modern society" and "the ideals and functioning of a normative society". While Mosse's analysis of masculinity is problematic in many senses, it is striking how he examines the formation of "ideal masculinity" in descriptions familiar from reviewers' characterizations of Loviisa: "power", "will power", "self-restraint", "self-control", "noble simplicity and quiet grandeur", "strength", "restraint", "disciplined", "industrious", "persevering" and so forth (ibid., 4, 29, 45).[183] As a monumentalized matron-mother, Loviisa embodied a form of "female masculinity" and, thus, complicated any assumption of "gender conformity". (Cf. Halberstam 1998, 1–2, 45–50; Rossi 1993, 58ff.) As Judith Halberstam (1998, 3) argues, masculinity does not necessitate maleness and, indeed, "[t]he shapes and forms of modern masculinity are best showcased within female masculinity." At the same time, however, masculinity is something to be regulated as a quantity; it is not to be had too much of, and certainly not if you are a woman. (Lehtonen 1995, 108; cf. Ollila 2000; Rossi 2003, 63.)

In the 1920s and 1930s, as Ritva Hapuli (1995, 167ff) argues, cultural critics debated the instability of gender as they perceived masculinity as "under threat". They identified the "emmasculate women" – i.e., tomboys, garçonnes, flappers, and female gentlemen featured in the pages of cultural

181 Cf. "Finnish matrons who occupy the position of patron" in *Kotiliesi* 22/1938, 892. For a scholarly reading of Loviisa as "the prototypical spare-patron-matron" [varaisäntäemäntä], see Apo 1995, 398. As for post-war popular discourses on gender, *Kotiliesi* (17/1954, 588–589) published an article featuring marital counselling by Dr. Asser Stenbäck (a priest and a psychiatrist!) who described not only matrons, but also "intellectual" and women who work outside their homes as "masculine". While Stenbäck did not condemn these women, he concluded that "masculine women" might smother their husbands' development.

182 Cf. characterizations of Loviisa as the ideal, "noble (pious, diligent, persistent, and law-abiding) peasant" in Apo 1998, 88.

183 For critiques of Mosse's transhistorical and essentializing approach, see Dudink 1998, 421–425; Allen 2002, 194–195. For a critique of equating masculinity with maleness and of excluding female masculinity from his study of masculinity and nation, see Halberstam 1998, 48–49. Judith Halberstam (1998, 3) argues that

Fig. 19. The matron as a matriarchal monster in The Women of Niskavuori *1958 (FFA).*

magazines – as the main reason for the "effeminization" of men.[184] In 1936, *Eeva*, the "magazine for the modern woman" launched that year, discussed the question of working mothers under a rubric that underlined the instability of gender: "Society becomes more feminine, women become more masculine".[185] In the inter-war era, the "masculinization of women" was perceived as a major threat to the institution of marriage (Ahlman 1934, 306; Hapuli 1995, 160–167). The legacy of the monument-woman as a masculine woman accentuates the ambivalence of the figuration. While the figure of the Niskavuori matron was, in the 1930s, often read as an embodiment of stability and tradition, it associated with a legacy that, instead, connoted instability and subversion in terms of gender discourse. Both before and after the Second World War, the qualities Mikko Lehtonen (1995) identifies as "masculine" in the matron served as the *raison d'être* for her significance and power. Simultaneously, the very same qualities propelled discussions of the matron as a "smother". [Fig. 19]

In the mid-1950s, the term "matriarch" associated with a pathologizing discourse on motherhood, which was also suggested in the readings of Loviisa as a Finnish Madame Dulska. In the post-war era, both in Finland and elsewhere in the Western world, sexuality and marriage became objects of an increasing public interest. "Home" and "family" also became understood as objects of professional expertise. (Löfström 1994, 181–188; Satka 1995,

184 Malten 1926; af Hällström, Raoul 1929a & 1929b. For a discussion of the feminized male as a "provocative emblem of the contemporary crisis of values and the much proclaimed decadence of modern life", see Felski 1995, 91–97.

185 *Eeva* 8/1936, 5: M.S. "Yhteiskunta naisistuu – naiset miehistyvät".

144–148; Helén 1997, 261ff.) In these definitional processes, some forms of motherhood were pathologized especially in psychiatric and psychoanalytic discourses as well as in discussions of the working mothers (Walker 1993, 1, 9–10; Nätkin 1997, 160).[186] The 1955 translation of *Modern Woman: The Lost Sex* (1947), for instance, proposed a typology of the dangerous patterns of mothering. In this book, sociologist Ferdinand Lundberg and psychoanalyst Marynia Farnham characterized a series of positions: the rejecting mother, the overprotective mother, the dominating mother, the over-attached mother, and the feminine mother (Lundberg & Farnham 1955, 373–392; cf. Walker 1993, 9–10). The "dominating mother" was described in one word, power. "She has a need to govern everything and everybody", they wrote and explained this as a neurosis resulting from a damaging relationship to one's mother. A "dominating mother" was the kind of a mother who had a husband and children for the wrong reason, to fulfil her need to govern. In fact, they argued, she has a secret wish: "a very strong, but skilfully hidden desire to be a man, so that she could be part of that satisfaction which is only available to men." (Lundberg & Farnham 1955, 382.)[187]

The emergence of the pathologizing discourse on motherhood coincides with images of what Nina C. Leibman (1995, 208–209) has named *(s)mothers* or what E. Ann Kaplan (1992, 107ff, 159) has termed *phallic mothers*, i.e., possessive, controlling mothers, in wartime or post-Second World War cinema. Kaplan's examples include *Now Voyager* (1942), *Rebecca* (1940), *Little Foxes* (1941), *The Snake Pit* (1948), *Secret Beyond the Door* (1948), *Psycho* (1960), *The Birds* (1963) and *Marnie* (1964).[188] In Finnish cinema, the image of the possessive, controlling (s)mother recurred in the post-war era. While framings of the Niskavuori films never explicitly invoked these images as intertextual frameworks, the readings of films such as *The Sixth Command* (*Kuudes käsky* 1947), *Play for Me, Helena!* (*Soita minulle, Helena!* 1948), *The Matron of Sillankorva* (*Sillankorvan emäntä* 1953), and *The Ruler of Riihala* (*Riihalan valtias* 1956) adopted Niskavuori films and the Niskavuori

186 "The big problem of the modern woman" was the title of a 1959 debate book (Suova 1959) which discussed the question of the working mother. In 1957, "the big question of today" was formulated as: "What does it mean to be a man and what does it mean to be a woman in a modern, changing society?" (*HS* 10.11.1957, a review of the Finnish translation of Margaret Mead's *Male and Female*, 1950.) The same year, Alva Myrdal's and Viola Klein's *Woman's two roles* was discussed on the pages of *Kotiliesi* (3/1957, 145–147, 188, 190). See also a feature discussing a poll on the joys and worries of "the modern woman" (*Kotiliesi* 8/1957, 482–483.)

187 Juha Siltala (1996a) has proposed a psychohistorical reading following Klaus Theweleit's influential volumes on male fantasies. Siltala's reading of the anxiety characteristic of Finnish masculinity implies an overpresence of a smothering mother and the simultaneous absence of the father. For a critical reading of Siltala's argument, see Jokinen 1996, 179–181.

188 On possessive mothers and the concurrent "filial hysteria", see Kaplan 1992; Fischer 1993; Walker 1993. For a discussion of the psychoanalytical implications of the term phallic woman, see Creed 1993, 156–157. She quotes Jean Laplanche and J.B. Pontalis who have defined the phallic as containing allegedly masculine character traits, for instance, authoritarianism. In Finland, the fields of medicine and psychology became interested in psychoanalysis starting in the mid-fifties. In 1954, the first Finnish translation of Sigmund Freud was published. See Ihanus 1988, 156.

matrons as a point of reference.[189] However, I suggest that via these readings and characterizations of Loviisa as a matriarch, the figure of the Niskavuori matron was associated with the pathologizing discourse in the 1950s.

Two melodramas and problem films of the late 1940s, *The Sixth Command* (1947) and *Play for Me, Helena* (1948) as well as a period film from 1954 *The Bridal Garland* (*Morsiusseppele* 1954), all featured mothers who were excessively possessive of their sons. Some readings suggested "a mother complex".[190] The mother-matron figure of *The Sixth Command* was interpreted with reference to Niskavuori fictions because the "tough" and "stern" old matron of Lenteelä (Siiri Angerkoski) was described as possessing "inner strength".[191] *Play for Me, Helena* (1948), rather, was tied to the Niskavuori plays of the 1930s via Elsa Rantalainen, the actress who here played the matron of Rannanpiha, but who had also been the celebrated first player of the old matron. The film was based on the first volume of a series of novels by Aino Räsänen, featuring Helena, her family, and the Junkkeri farm. These novels were highly popular in the post-war era. In their juxtaposition of property and individuality and foregrounding of the tension between mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law, they have later been compared to Niskavuori dramas (Wahlforss 1989, 278). The four first of Aino Räsänen's 12 novels were adapted for screen in 1948–1957, and in terms of narrative conflicts (generational conflicts) and themes (urban vs. rural), these films had many similarities to Niskavuori films. After the first film, however, the Helena films did not feature a matron-figure comparable to Loviisa Niskavuori. This character was played by Helena Kara and Irma Seikkula as well as Emma Väänänen (in *Goodbye, Helena*/*Näkemiin, Helena* 1955), who performed the role of Loviisa in the 1946 film. As a mother figure, the character resembled the mother of the Suominen family, a moral and emotional centre of the family. (Koivunen 1992c, 110–116.)

The two new cinematic matron figures of the 1950s included the matrons of Sillankorva and Riihala which reviewers explicitly associated with Niskavuori matrons. The matron of Sillankorva, for instance, was characterized as a "selfish, hard natured and hearted, and with soul for land – an obvious doppelganger of Heta Niskavuori".[192] *The Matron of Sillankorva* was also framed as "a watered-down edition of the well-known rural matron motif

189 While the English title for *Sillankorvan emäntä* follows the Swedish title, *Mother or Woman* (*Mor eller Kvinna*) articulating an important aspect of the 1950s theme, I have chosen to use my own translation to emphasise the repetitive effect of matronhood.

190 *HS* 14.1.1947. *Morsiusseppele* (The Bridal Garland 1954) featured Kerstin Nylander as the possessive mother of Allan Smith (Jussi Jurkka) who dismisses Alli, the country girl, as a potential daughter-in-law.

191 *Ssd* 19.1.1947; *Kansan Lehti* 14.1.1947. The film was also compared to *Loviisa* to highlight its problems and weaker quality (*Hbl* 19.1.1947).

192 *SaKa* 8.9.1953; *US* 6.9.1953; *HS* 6.9.1953. The comparison was also motivated by the fact that the actress Helena Futtari was known for her performances as Heta Niskavuori. For a reference to Niskavuori films, see *Hbl* 6.9.1953. These comparisons have been reiterated in the TV age. See *Katso* 11/1969, 32; *Katso* 37/1977, 20; *TS* 3.8.1994 and *IS* 27.7.1994.

of Tervapää" suggesting that Loviisa Niskavuori was an insurmountable matron figure in the contemporary imagination, indeed, a dominant fiction.[193] Even the visual framings of both *The Matron of Sillankorva* and *The Ruler of Riihala* reiterated "Niskavuori conventions" by juxtaposing a menacing mother figure and a young romantic couple.[194] [Fig. 20–21, cf. Fig. 8] The publicity-stills portrayed, both matrons of Sillankorva and Riihala looking stern in medium shots or medium close-ups as well as in confrontational scenes giving them a position of authority. As for the framings of *The Ruler of Riihala*, the association with Niskavuori imagery lay close at hand as both the poster and the advertisements featured Emma Väänänen gazing off the frame, standing against a landscape, and holding on to a tree or portrayed as an overwhelming and over-powering figure shadowing everyone else, both her husband and the young, romantic couple.[195]

In the 1950s context, the composition was used in visual framings since the 1930s gained new significance as the interpretive framings of *The Ruler of Riihala* featured the emergence of psychological language, which presented the authoritarian matron figure in terms of illness or pathology. Review journalism framed the matron of Riihala played by Emma Väänänen as "a curiously maniac version of Niskavuori matron"[196]:

> "Family stories focusing on inheritance and the house have been addressed many times. Here the question is not only of a romantic history of young love, but the emphasis is on the mental illnesses of the matron-ruler of Riihala connected with lust for property, family pride, and loveless cohabitation."[197]

In this psychologizing framing, *The Ruler of Riihala* was interpreted as "a study of emotionlessness". The mother-matron figure was characterized as an "energetic and tyrannical woman", afflicted with "pathological lust for power and pride": [198]

> "The story about a mother, who has frozen to ice during a long, unhappy marriage and who, in the end, is destroyed in anger, is by no means implausible".[199]

193 *TKS* 6.9.1953.

194 *Kinolehti* 5/1953; *EA* 1/1956; *Elokuvateatteri-Kinolehti* 7/1955; *Elokuvateatteri-Kinolehti* 6/1955. Also, a Pekka and Pätkä comedy ("Pete and Runt") from 1955, *The New Adventures of Pete and Runt* (*Kiinni on ja pysyy*) used a similar positioning, although this framing juxtaposed Justiina, Pete Woodhead's wife, with Pete and Runt, the male buddies.

195 For the poster, see FFA/TUL, for the publicity-stills, see FFA.

196 *Ylioppilaslehti* 27.1.1956. For explicit references to Niskavuori films, see also *HS* 22.1.1956; *EA* 3/1956. As for a reference via the notion of "spirit of the land", see *IS* 25.1.1956. For later readings which connect the film with Niskavuori dramas, see *ESS* 22.6.1984; *Katso* 25/1984.

197 *US* 22.1.1956.

198 *Hbl* 22.1.1956; *Ylioppilaslehti* 27.1.1956; *US* 22.1.1956. The notion of pathology was cited also in *TKS* 22.1.1956.

199 *NP* 23.1.1956. Cf. *TKS* 22.1.1956.

Fig. 20. Pathologizing matronhood in The Ruler of Riihala *1956 (FFA).*

A Suomi-Filmi brochure marketed *The Ruler of Riihala* to an English-speaking audience as *The Farmer's Wife*:

> "Riihala Farm was going to the dogs at the time its present owner got married. His wife proved, however, to be a hard worker who possessed an unbending will. She denied herself rest and every tender emotion in order to save the farm from ruin. By the dint of her ceaseless labour she managed to make the farm a going concern again. Now, with her only son grown up, Riihala could

Fig. 21. The poster for The Matron of Sillankorva *1953 (FFA) reiterated the recognizable Niskavuori setting: the estate, a romantic couple, and a stern matron.*

boast of being one of the most prosperous farms in the vicinity – even though the proprietor himself spent too much of his time horse-trading at fairs and getting drunk. All too often the farmer's wife was left alone to manage things; it had made her bitter, religious, intolerant and unloving."[200]

200 "Suomi-Filmi presents: The Farmer's Wife (Riihalan valtias)", a brochure at FFA.

In this manner, then, the 1950s psychologizing framework articulated a reading of the monumental matron-mother in terms of a social problem narrative. She was diagnosed as a product of her psychological experiences.[201] *The Ruler of Riihala* also associated with the image of pathologized motherhood in the contemporary Hollywood film in another sense; it solved the problem of "the dysfunctional family", the combination of a possessive and repressive mother and weak-willed father, by punishing the matron with complete destruction: humiliation, social condemnation, madness, and death (cf. Leibman 1995, 215–217). In the climactic closing sequence, the matron of Riihala and her husband burn to death with their house and the new generation is free to have a fresh start for their own life. In this manner, *The Ruler of Riihala* and Emma Väänänen's performance in it provided Niskavuori films with a dramatic intertext. Yet the framings of the Niskavuori films emphasized continuity and persistence, while this film's narrative trajectory concluded in a violent rupture, a catastrophe.

Power-figures and she-devils: Louhi, Loviisa, and *Heta Niskavuori* (1952)

Although the 1930s framings lacked the pathologizing discourse, some readings did suggest a similar interpretation. These readings included ones that presented Loviisa as a survivor as well as framings of her as a melodramatic monument, as a sign of what was called "the gloomy Niskavuori doctrine of self-control".[202] The 1936 readings of the play characterizd Loviisa as a person "hardened in the harsh school of life". She was viewed an old woman who had undergone "a long battle of self-denial", who was "accustomed to renouncing her own small and personal demands for happiness" and who "symbolize[d] the continuity of generations, the impersonal power of possession and authority with her whole being".[203] Hence, the Loviisa character was read in a manner very similar to 1956 framings of *The Ruler of Riihala*:

> "The widowed old matron represents the traditionally strong, sturdy mistress type who owns half of the estate. A shattered marriage and harsh life experience have hardened her into a cold and calculating ruler character for whom maintaining the external honour of the house and the economic or other power position of the family is the first priority even at the cost of the personal happiness of her family members."[204]

Although, as early as the 1930s, Loviisa was idolized and idealized as a monument to peasant womanhood, Snellmanian-Topelian or Fennomanian middle-class femininity, cherishing the traditions, and prioritizing the duty

201 "Lack of love" was cited as the cause of the matron's illness in *IS* 25.1.1956; *US* 22.1.1956; *HS* 22.1.1956.
202 *TS* 24.101.1936.
203 *Naamio* 2/1937, 28; *TS* 24.10.1936; *IS* 76/1936.
204 *Uusi Aura* 25.10.1936.

over pleasure, these qualities were presented as ambiguous. They crowned her as a Woman, but simultaneously threatened to make her unfeminine: matriarchal, patriarchal, or phallic, to use the terminology of the 1950s. Firstly, middle-class domestic culture assumed women to function primarily as the emotional centres of the family and creators of the spirit of the home. Biological as well as social motherhood did not include "ruling" and "dominating", characteristics both frequently attributed to Loviisa. As this kind of monumental ruler-woman, she was, for instance, compared to Major's Wife at Ekeby, "the most powerful woman in Värmland", familiar from Selma Lagerlöf's novel *Gösta Berling's saga* (1891, Finnish trans. 1912).[205] Secondly, the "masculinization of women" was perceived as a threat to the institution of marriage (Ahlman 1934, 306; Hapuli 1995, 160–167). Third, though the notion of the matriarch was not cited in the 1930s framings of Loviisa, the term circulated in contemporary anthropological and ethnological contexts. As Finnish anthropologist Edward Westermarck in *The Future of Marriage in Western Civilization* (1935) argued against J.J. Bachofen's and others' views of the matriarchal origins of civilizations, Finnish ethnologist Sakari Pälsi concluded his book *Sukupolvien perintö* (*The Heritage of Generations*, 1937) with a chapter entitled "Mother-power and matron-power" ("Äitivaltaa ja emäntävaltaa").[206]

Pälsi's (1937) concluding chapter represents a gender discourse coincident to that of Snellmanian-Topelian middle-class femininity. In addition, by interconnecting cultural images, folkloric past, and gender equality, it also anticipates contemporary feminist discourses (as discussed above). The chapter opens with a story about a family with nine sons and focuses on the mother's attempt to keep them in check, resorting to physical violence if necessary. Pälsi compares the incident to Aleksis Kivi's *Nummisuutarit* (*The Heath Cobblers* 1864) and the character Martta, who governs the men in her family with a rod. He even discusses the representation of romance in both Kivi's works and folklore poems.[207] Pälsi (ibid., 176) concludes the chapter by discussing the manner in which folk poetry praises "female power": "unnaturally tender mothers, extravagantly hospitable mothers-in-law, duchesses capable of politics and even warfare". According to him, these women are "fully equal to men as power figures [voimaihmisiä], who with their knowledge and skills govern people, natural, powers and even the supreme god". Like the post-war representations of "the Finnish woman", Pälsi associates "the Kalevalaic female power" with gender equality:

> "Kalevalaic female power may well echo a primitive mother right, a matriarchy. On the other hand, it can be explained as equality between genders developed under harsh living conditions. Naturally, it also has to do with the self-confidence and sense of responsibility that has resulted from the maintenance of ancient extended families. Sometimes these qualities may have

205 *Naamio* 6/1936, 90. About Selma Lagerlöf's character see Forsås-Scott 1997, 56–57.
206 Westermarck's views were summarised by Olsoni 1936, 504–512.
207 For a discussion of this theme, see Apo 1995b.

turned into an overt lust for power, but usually they remained in the form of maternal sacrifice." (Pälsi 1937, 176–177.)[208]

In this manner, Pälsi adopted a discourse very similar to post-war representations of "the Finnish woman". However, the ending of the quote suggests an underlying gendered agenda: a negotiation between "overt lust for power", the authority coded as masculine, and "the maternal sacrifice". This negotiation, of course, was parallel to the portrayals of Loviisa as both strong and suffering, both hard and understanding. The interpretive framework of ethnology and folklore proposed associating Loviisa with the figure of "Louhi, mistress of Northland/the gap-toothed hag of the North" (The *Kalevala* 7: 169–170). Both were read as "ruler-women" and attributed with "female sovereignty", a "governing hand", and a "commanding" and "unyielding" character. In the 1930s, Loviisa was also explicitly compared to Louhi.[209] While the references to the Kalevala-women – via direct references, the monument project of the Kalevala Women's Association, or indirect association – added a mythological dimension to the image of Loviisa, they also framed her power in ambivalent terms. As an iterable cultural image, Louhi connoted both female capacity and female capability as well as a negative form of womanhood since "the Northland women" in the *Kalevala* functioned as "the perfidious enemy whom the national fore*fathers* defeat to bring peace and prosperity" (Sawin 1993, 179). As an image of a woman who was both of this world and of the other world, both a matron and a demon, she qualified as a monstrous figure (Tarkka 1995; cf. Creed 1993, 102). In the 1990s context of feminist studies, the same qualities have been re-signified for gender politics. As Louhi is "the ruler of her family and her household, the educator of her children, the consolator of weeping males, and a seer whose words put her people into sleep, and a woman who can manifest her power by turning into a bird of prey when necessary", she has been interpreted as a transgressor of her own gender. Because Louhi "is diligent, but not humble, balancing, but not stubborn, fierce and courageous, but she sly and cunning", feminist scholars have concluded, "Louhi-likeness is hardly femininity" (Nenola & Timonen 1990, 7).[210]

In the context of the post-war gender politics, Louhi stood out not as an admirable monument, an exemplary "Finnish woman", but as a *monster*. Louhi was invoked as an intertextual reference both in the readings of Loviisa

208 In a 1939 volume analyzing the history of social organization, J. Lukkarinen (1939, 30) argued that the patriarchal family system was a sign of civilization's developed state, whereas matriarchal family form belonged to more primitive societies.

209 The explicit reference was made in *Naamio* 2/1937, 28. For the characterizations, see *IS* 76/1936; *SvP* 1.4.1936; *Ssd* 21.10.1936; *Hbl* 1.4.1936. For a reading of Loviisa in relation to Louhi, see Niemi 1988. Especially when interpreted in relation to Louhi, Loviisa links to "the myth of the Woman Warrior", the European legacy of visual representations of "fighting and powerful women" Linda Nochlin (1999, 35ff) has studied.

210 Published in 1990, *Louhen sanat* (*The Words of Louhi*) is the first feminist anthology on Finnish folklore studies. In the late 1990s, the pro-European Union female lobby recalled Louhi's feminist legacy and entitled their paper "Pohjan Akka" ("The Hag of the North"). In addition, "Women of Finland – An overview" by the Council of Equality (1995) opened with a reference to Louhi.

and in the framings of *Heta Niskavuori* (the play 1950, the film 1952), as Heta's "hardness, heartlessness, and greediness" were conceived to exceed those of Louhi".[211] Like Emma Väänänen, Rauni Luoma was among the most prominent female actors in 1950s Finnish theatre and film. By the middle of the decade, her repertoire included the roles of Ilona (in the 1930s), Loviisa (radio 1954), Heta (in theatre 1950, in film 1952, in radio 1955), and Madame Dulska (radio 1954). Overall, readings of Heta reiterated the framings of Loviisa in many respects. The reviews of the stage performances and the 1952 film cited the notion of the monumentality and described Rauni Luoma's performance of Heta as "grand, voluptuous, vigorous (roima), and stately, looking so that one believes that she both rules and does the work herself if necessary".[212] As such, Heta was read as a "beautiful" image of "an unabated woman" and as a "peasant woman imbued with the spirit of the land".[213] Publicity-stills also suggested this reading, as they portrayed Heta in postures signifying determination. For example, a close-up also published on the cover of *Elokuva-aitta* emphasized her dark eyes as she gazed straight at the viewer. In several medium shots, she posed with her hands crossed over her chest emphasizing her posture, her sturdy body, and her command of the space she occupied. In several publicity-stills, she was positioned to highlight her physical height. Significant, however, is her consequent portrayal without a smile on her face.[214] [Fig. 22]

More persistently than Loviisa, Heta was framed as an icon of "the propertied class". 1950 theatre reviews interpreted her to embody a heightened "pride in ownership" and a "lust for property", and hence, an "aggressive peasant consciousness of class" and its characteristic conservatism.[215] Heta was not read only in terms of class and social positioning, but she was also framed in psychological terms, as a personality who refuses to regret, to be humble, or to forgive. Both theatre and film reviews described her character in terms of "pride", "selfishness", "hardness", "coldness", and "harshness".[216] Heta was seen as "a haughty woman" so "unreal" that she was compared to witches and devils in fairytales.[217] Readings of *Loviisa* (1946) had already associated this meanness with her as the young Heta (Hilkka Helinä) was framed as a "disobliging shrew" with a "gifted mind".[218] 1950s review journalism explicitly compared the image of Heta to other Niskavuori women, and in relation to them, characterized Heta as "completely bound to the

211 *Uusi Aika* 12.10.1955, radio review of *Heta Niskavuori.*

212 *HS* 4.1.1953. Luoma received a Jussi prize for her role and in an annual *Elokuva-aitta* poll, she received most votes for the best female role in a Finnish film. *EA* 4/1954, 6. For readings as monumental, see *VS* 19.11.1950, *SaKa* 18.9.1952 (about the play); *AL* 6.1.1953 (about the film).

213 *MK* 11.1.1953; *Uusi Aika* 12.10.1955 (radio review of *Heta Niskavuori*).

214 Notably only one of two stills prerserved in the Finnish Film Archive portrayed her with a wry smile, but none of them circulated in the press.

215 *VS* 19.11.1950; *Ssd* 22.11.1950.

216 *Ssd* 22.11.1950; *VS* 19.11.1950; *US* 29.11.1950; *Vaasa* 29.9.1956 (theatre reviews); *EA* 2/1953, *VS* 28.12.1952; *TS* 29.12.1952; *Hbl* 28.12.1952.

217 *US* 29.11.1950; *Ssd* 22.11.1950; *Uusi Aura* 29.12.1952.

218 *AL* 28.12.1946; *Appell* 3.1.1947.

Fig. 22. The cover of Elokuva-aitta *(19/1952) represented Heta as a dauntless peasant woman without a smile on her face.*

material and the earthly", and thus, completely lacking "the wise ability to adjust herself, which is what makes the old female characters of Tervapää so pleasant and so grand".[219] In this manner, then, Heta was framed as the negative of Loviisa, as her definitional other (cf. Sedgwick 1992, 241).

At the same time, the image of Heta was also interpreted as a site of negotiation and border making. The reading-route recalled framings of Loviisa as the reviewers postulated "the loving heart" under the "hard" surface. This reading described Heta as "a proud woman but not hardened into a stone". She was interpreted as "not a callous monster but a living and plausible being with special qualities". Apart from being a monster, she was also understood as showing compassion and a sense of humour.[220]

Following the release of *Heta Niskavuori* in 1952, even film magazine readers participated in discussions of Heta's character. In a letter to the

219 *Vaasa* 29.9.1956 Cf. *TS* 29.12.1952.

220 *Ssd* 23.9.1952; *AL* 6.1.1953; *Ssd* 22.11.1950; *SaKa* 18.9.1952; *HS* 4.1.1953; *IS* 30.12.1952. This negotiation between "good" and "bad" qualities has characterized even later readings; as for the 1980s theatre reviews, see *ESS* 27.12.1987 (comparison between TV play and a theatre production of *Heta Niskavuori*).

editor of *Elokuva-aitta*, a reader called "Everyman" opposed to the readings of Heta as a monster, pointing out that Heta "did suffer herself as well". In *Kotiliesi*, a reader underlined that Heta was, in fact, a perfect wife for Akusti, motivating him moving up the social ladder.[221] Furthermore, the *Kotiliesi* reader opposed the framings of Heta as a bad mother. Publicity-stills, too, suggested such an interpretation as they connected Heta's children to the maid Siipirikko, "The Broken-winged" (Mirjam Novero), who served as a positive other of Heta (see Chapter 5). The publicity-still that staged Heta's children with Siipirikko referred to a scene in the film in which children refer to Siipirikko as their "real" mother and to the ending of the film in which they denounce Heta twice. Also in this respect, the image of Heta was framed as a negative of Loviisa, although both characters were read in relation to similar questions and themes. While also Heta was framed as the monument-woman, the negatively coded aspects in her image were heightened and sharpened.

From doubling to splitting: postulating authorial intentions

Since the 1930s, the Niskavuori matrons have been framed not only in relation to discourses of nationality and femininity or with reference to the various intertextual frameworks. Ever since the first performance of the first Niskavuori play, readings have been articulated in relation to perceived or desired realities and, importantly, also in relation to Hella Wuolijoki and her assumed or alleged intentions. Whilst much of what has been discussed above has focused on *doubling* as an inclusive reading strategy, both the left-wing framings discussed above and the right-wing readings of the 1930s performed, instead, gestures of *splitting* and *removing*. Instead of adding new dimensions to the monument-woman, they peeled off layers and placed desirable and undesirable features in a hierarchy.

Despite their differences in starting points and aspirations, the left-wing and right-wing readings of the 1930s and 1950s shared similar interpretive strategies. Both aimed at distinguishing between "the real" and "the false", either with reference to perceived reality or to authorial intentions. These readings resulted in dualisms between nationalism and bolshevism, real and distorted, original and distorted. They removed the unwanted or abjected part of the binarism. This reading strategy produced unholy alliances, as for instance, both liberal critics (e.g., Lauri Viljanen) and cultural conservatives (e.g., K.S. Laurila) sliced off feminist discourses as "old-fashioned".[222] A constant movement from fiction to the intentions of the writer and back united the left- and right-wing reading strategies. These readings were characterized by a repeated negotiation of the authorship and removing either the influence of Wuolijoki or that of film directors.

As an example of this reading strategy for which ambiguity equalled "two-facedness", "dishonesty", and "infiltration", one must mentioned a 1938 book

221 *EA* 10/1953, 3; *Kotiliesi* 8/1953, 290.
222 *US* 17.1.1938; *HS* 18.1.1937; *AS* 1.9.1936; Laurila 1938, 162–163.

called *The Battle over Art and Morals* (*Taistelu taiteesta ja siveellisyydestä*) by professor in aesthetics K. S. Laurila. In this book, he discussed the morality (Sittlichkeit) of *The Women of Niskavuori* (as drama) and framed Loviisa as a "cynical" character, manifesting views on marriage, which, in his view, were "neither plausible nor acceptable in an honest, honourable farm-wife". Hence, he performed a reading in which he split Loviisa into two personae concluding that the old matron, when talking about the extra-marital affairs of the Niskavuori men and their mediocrity, did not "express her genuine thoughts" and did not "speak with her own mouth, but with a greater mouth than hers, namely with the author's mouth, parroting her opinions and ways of thinking". In this manner, Laurila attempted to remove any ambivalent elements from Loviisa's character by re-naming them as ideological views of Hella Wuolijoki and to foreground the features he celebrated as positive and ideal as the "true" Loviisa:

> "Despite it all, the matron of Niskavuori is an honest and sane peasant woman with moral backbone and healthy instincts; she is deep-rooted [juureva], concise, and solid, and withstands all storms calmly like a huge pine-tree standing on a high heath. She talks about certain delicate and serious matters in a manner harsher and more unreserved than is the habit of honourable Finnish farm-wives of her spiritual standard. It is, however, not her fault. She must say what the author has ordered her to speak."[223]

In his reading, Laurila cited what were common attributes of Loviisa at the time, but in his reading, the features were grouped and hierarchized. The features he idealized derived from the conception of the old peasant lifestyle as harmonious and imposing, an idea cherished for decades by, for instance, the folklore researches in Finland. (Apo 1984, 8.) In his discussion on the Hella Wuolijoki plays, Laurila (1938, 165–166) accused her of "demoralizing agitation" and of "infiltrating" the plays with a "bad and cheap socialist" morality. Laurila resented the presence of questionable elements in the play, but especially that these elements made the potentially ideal character of Loviisa Niskavuori an ambivalent one. A right-wing framing in 1936 had already depicted this "messiness" as problematic:

> "Among the 'natives' in the play, the old matron of Niskavuori rises higher than anyone else. In many ways, she truthfully represents the values that have guided the lives of Häme people and their cultivation of the land. This accuracy proves that the author has *seen* people from Häme, although she has not learnt to *know* them. Because of this superficial knowledge, the old matron is at the same time depicted as a serious, devout Christian person who sleeps with the Bible under her pillow, as a quiet, forgiving, and self-sacrificing woman, and on the other hand, as a harpy whose husband in desperation drinks himself to death, as mild and understanding even in the face of the new ideal of life, but merciless and hard towards her subjects. In short, the image of the old matron, on more careful consideration, is to be judged as a muddle coated with festive patina!"[224]

223 Laurila 1938, 161–162.
224 *AS* 1.9.1936.

This reading also identifies what was "Finnish" in the play and removes the "inconsistencies" of the character with a reference to Wuolijoki's authorship. However, it offers her alleged lack of knowledge of Häme, rather than her ideology, as a cause. As a result, those features of Loviisa that were judged as improper for a national ideal or a monument were traced back either to professional incompetence or to the foreign descent of the female author. Here, authorship was used in the performative practice of reading in a similar manner to that of the left-wing readings of the 1950s films, when, for instance, the "love for land" emphasized in *Aarne Niskavuori* was sliced away as deriving not from Wuolijoki, but "rather, from the agrarian editorials of right-wing papers".[225] As for the interpretive framings of *The Niskavuori Fights*, not only left-wing press but also many other papers portrayed the film as disrespecting the intentions of the author. Reviewers frequently cited the notion of "watering-down" to imply that a removal of left-wing criticism had taken place in the film production.[226] This reading strategy had also been employed in 1938 when the right-wing press framed *The Women of Niskavuori* as a successful "Finnish film" precisely because, as it was read, the adaptation had sliced off or at least watered down the "political propagation" of the original play.[227] In relation to these negotiations, doublings, and splittings, the myth-breaking reading of Urpo Lauri in 1954 with reference to Wuolijoki's "original" intentions was, perhaps, not so original, but rather, a further reiteration of an interpretive move.

In the 1950s, left-wing and psychologizing discourses provided contexts within which the image of the Niskavuori matron read not only as an ambivalent, but also as a contested image, even a demonized and pathologized figure.[228] Rather than proposing new readings of Loviisa, these frameworks enabled re-articulations of previous readings from the 1930s and 1940s. All along, Loviisa was framed both in terms of reality and politics, nation and family, class and gender, matronhood and motherhood. These framings highlighted the contradictory constitution of the monument-woman as a gender performative and a figure of the cultural screen.

A rye dynasty: matron or mafioso?

> "[Popular heroes and heroines] are lodged in the memory bank of our culture. Functioning as focal points of cultural reference, they condense and connect, serve as shorthand expressions for, a number of deeply implanted cultural and ideological concerns."
> Tony Bennett & Janet Woollacott (1987, 14)

The framings of Loviisa in *Niskavuori* (1984), the latest Niskavuori film, reiterated many of the 1930s–1950s readings. Once again, the readings cited

225 *TKS* 28.3.1954.

226 *NP* 18.11.1957; *IS* 18.11.1957; *Ssd* 18.11.1957; *Hbl* 17.11.1957; *KU* 17.11.1957; *US* 17.11.1957.

227 *AS* 17.1.1938; *Uusi Aura* 19.1.1938.

228 On gender, motherhood, and monstrosity in cinema, see Creed 1993; Brauerhoch 1996.

the virtues of the peasant matron, Loviisa, as a "rooted" woman "radiating strength, will and understanding", embodying "an almost biblical morality". She was named "a majestic Finnish pine tree", "a realistic and elegant pillar of society", and a woman "internalizing the essence of Niskavuori in her own noble sanctity". She was framed as a combination of "resilience" and "sensitivity", that is, of the qualities of matron and mother.[229] The launch of a rye-bread brand, called "The Bread of Niskavuori" (by a Finnish bakery) in the 1980s illustrates the currency of this figure on the cultural screen. The bread remained in production until the early 1990s. Later, it was taken up again in 1995–1996 for a year and a half. The product logo featured a drawing of a peasant woman in a traditional costume binding a sheaf of grain.[230] In 1980s, many readings of the Niskavuori films highlighted the ethics of duty and a sense of eternity very similar to the "homogenous", "empty" time of nation discussed by Benedict Anderson (1991, 24; Benjamin 1969, 261):

> "A responsibility taken has to be borne and the good and the honour of the estate have to be always foregrounded. So it has always been and so it will always be."[231]

In review journalism, Matti Kassila's remake, *Niskavuori* (1984), brought up comments on "a sense of eternity". Narratives of tradition, repetition, and necessity coalesced in the readings of Loviisa as "a metaphor of continuity, as grand as the stone cowshed in Niskavuori. She is a link in the chain of Niskavuori and she repeats the fate of her mother-in-law."[232] The film's promotional publicity invited such reading, as it echoed the press releases and conferences by the director Matti Kassila, and framed the film in terms of history, geography, and mythology. The old matron was seen as a representative of "the birth of Finland, the national Finland and its continuity" – as somebody who "derives her force from the national upswing of Finland, from the decades around the turn of the century". At the same time, she was characterized as Mother Earth, as Mother Finland, and as Lemminkäinen's Mother who, in an allegorical manner, fetches her son from Tuonela, the Hades of the *Kalevala*.[233] In all of these interpretive framings, Loviisa, as the monument-woman she was delineated, came to embody a mythological time exceeding and traversing the cursive, chronological time. Hence, both the

229 *AL* 22.12.1984; TS 23.12.1984; *Hbl* 22.12.1984; KSML 23.12.1984; *Katso* 1/1985, 88.

230 For the *Oululainen* advertisement, see the back cover of *Hella Wuolijoki. Näyttely Teatterimuseossa 6.6.–14.9.1986.* Information concerning the production period (1985–1992, 1995–1996) received from Ulla-Maija Raatikainen/Oululainen, fall 2000. In 1970s–1980s framings of TV screenings of Niskavuori films, the image of Loviisa was read as a representative of "the Finnish peasant woman with all her good and bad sides" (*Hyvinkään Sanomat* 24.1.1981) and as a symbol of the fate of the peasant culture (*Savon Sanomat* 20.9.1972). In 1983, a book charting "the position of women in agriculture" was entitled by paraphrasing the name of the last Niskavuori play: "What now, matron" (*Entäs nyt, emäntä*; Sinkkonen, Ollikainen, Ryynänen 1983)

231 *Katso* 4/1981 (review). In the 1970s, Loviisa was framed as a therapeutic image for rural women "giving them faith in their lot" (*Maaseudun Tulevaisuus* 15.8.1978).

232 *Me Naiset* 20.3.1984, 4–5; *Me Naiset* 18.12.1984, 71. See also *Savon Sanomat* 6.2.1985.

233 *Asiakas-Orava* 4/1984, 3; *Iltalehti* 8.9.1984.

1970s–1980s readings of the Niskavuori saga as a portrait of nation's history and the post-war feminist-nationalist and maternalist framings interpreted the Loviisa character in terms of monumental and repetitive time. The historical narrative of the nation positioned her as the sign of atemporality, of both the continuous and the repetitive:

> "The Niskavuori series features (…) the apotheosis and break-down of the Finnish rural life. We follow the historical time of transition, the urban impact on the consciousness, a human being's withdrawal from his biological roots and his longing to return back to the bosom of the Mother Earth."[234]

While the productional framings associated Loviisa with Lemminkäinen's Mother and with the maternal metaphors of nation and nature, the review journalism connected her with matronhood by citing the term "matriarch" and presenting Loviisa as an "autocrat" in her "empire".[235] In the mid-1980s, citing the notion of matriarch or those of "the strong woman" or "supermother" meant associating the reading with an ongoing, polarized public debate on gender politics and gender equality.[236] In 1984, Kaari Utrio's book on women's history, *The Daughters of Eve* (*Eevan tyttäret*, Utrio 1984) received a great deal of publicity, and the popular media debated gender issues widely. (See also Chapter 4.) Most of the feminist issues, however, were articulated within a gynocentric framework, the long tradition of woman-centred power feminism, which conceived of women not as victims, but as agents of their lives, as subjects of their history and "women of will".[237]

While Loviisa, in this context, was termed "a grand Finnish matriarch", implying her indexicality and, hence, realism in this respect, she was also re-articulated in relation to non-Finnish popular imagery – and, once, more as a masculine woman. Loviisa was herself parallelled with Don Corleone, the leading Mafioso played by Marlon Brando in Francis Ford Coppola's *Godfather* films (1972, 1974).[238] At the same time, the film *Niskavuori*, was associated with the popular Hollywood prime time melodramas of the time, as it was framed as "a kind of Finnish *Dallas* and *Dynasty* where events and conflicts follow each other at a brisk pace".[239] (See Chapter 5.) The

234 Varjola 1979, 21.

235 *AL* 22.12.1984; *Hbl* 22.12.1984; *US* 22.12.1984; *KU* 22.12.1984; *HS* 22.12.1984. See also *Uusi Nainen* 2/1985, 63.

236 The notion of the "superwoman" was used as early as 1954, in an editorial of *Kotiliesi* (3/1954) which asked whether a woman has to be a "super-human", a "superwoman" since she has to master so many tasks. In the 1970s and 1980s, Finnish literature featured several "strong women" and matriarchal family heads, both in Eeva Joenpelto's Lohja-series (1974–1980) and in Orvokki Autio's Ostrobothnia-trilogy (1980–1986). See Enwald 1989, 674; Huhtala 1989, 601.

237 For a lucid discussion of the 1980s gynocentric turn in feminist thinking, especially in relation to social policy, see Anttonen 1997, 110ff. The notion of the strong woman was cited, for instance, in *IS* 4.8.1984, *Asiakas-Orava* 4/1984, 3; the notion of the supermom in *Uusi Nainen* 2/1985, 63. In 1986, the female Niskavuori characters were framed as "women of will" in *Pellervo* 10/1986, 53–54.

238 A 2001 column on *The Sopranos* reiterated this reading, comparing Livia Soprano (Nancy Marchand), who attempts to have her son murdered, to Heta Niskavuori. *TS* 27.10.2001.

239 *HS* 22.12.1984; *Suomen Kuvalehti* 2/1985, 72.

association of Loviisa with Don Corleone reiterated both the 1930s reading about the old matron as a "ruler woman" and "matron-patron" and the 1950s image of the matriarch-patriarch. As "Donna Niskavuori", Loviisa was framed as a power figure that "governs, manipulates, and patronizes, accepts and rejects people, and acts behind their back on their behalf".[240] Hence, she operated and manoeuvred as a Mafioso running her "Häme dynasty"[241]. This reading suggested a different ideological emphasis, as *Niskavuori* was read as "not a monumental eulogy to work and land". In this film, reviewers argued that the farm and work were described as secondary to the questions of money and power.

> "Even in its current form, the narrative is a eulogy to the resourcefulness and the moral rectitude of the old matron, although the spirit of the land and the national feeling now are in a more marginal position. In a magnificent manner, Rauni Luoma plays this role of the grand master of the domestic politics of the Finnish families."[242]

New in this framing was the metaphoric image of the Niskavuori family as a field of *politics* and *business*. Besides "a grand Finnish matriarch", Loviisa was framed as "a modern, top management professional and elegant woman".[243] Once again, reviewers delineated Loviisa as a multi-layered character. However, this framing emphasized not only the tension between matron and mother, but also that between the matron-matriarch and a politician, a manager, a businesswoman.[244] In this manner, the construction of the monument-woman, the image of the matron-mother, was re-iterable and re-signifiable in the mid-1980s media context where "substantial women" – wealthy, powerful and bitchy women from Margaret Thatcher to Alexis Carrington and career women in soap operas – abounded (Marshment 1988, 27ff; Geraghty 1991, 135–140).[245] These female characters aroused both admiration (they were active, autonomous, powerful) and abjection (aggressive, authoritarian, indulging in material possessions), and this duplicity was a major source of their and of Loviisa Niskavuori's rhetorical force. (Kreutzner & Seiter 1991, 168–170.) In contrast to Alexis Carrington's fantastic business operations in *Dynasty*, however, Loviisa Niskavuori was

240 *HS* 22.12.1984. See also *Forssan Lehti* 3.2.1985. In 1977, a framing of a theatre performance pictured Loviisa as "almost inhuman player of power games" who "in an age when others agree to play full-time with their grandchildren" runs the house and maintains the family property, and "bruises those close to her, contuses and scratches if her goals so require." *Karjalainen* 27.2.1977.

241 *Suomen Kuvalehti* 2/1985, 72.

242 *HS* 1.9.1984.

243 *HS* 22.12.1984. In Finnish literature, Eeva Joenpelto's Lohja-series (1974–1980) depicted a merchant family with a possessive mother-in-law: Joenpelto's 1982 novel, *Elämän rouva, rouva Glad* (1982) featured a main character in whom femininity was coupled with a masculine attitude to life. See Huhtala1989, 601.

244 In 1939, in reviews of the play *The Bread of Niskavuori*, the old matron was termed "realipoliitikko", "a realistic politician". *US* 19.1.1939.

245 For critical discussion on the discourse of "post-feminism" and its appropriations in the popular culture, see Modleski 1991, 3–22; Walters 1995, 116–142.

framed as "a grand master of domestic politics" who dealt in the family property and the fates of family members. As such, her manoeuvrings remained within the sphere of the family and the farm, but like in *Dynasty* or *Dallas*, the sphere of family in Niskavuori films was no haven of comfort or place of safety.[246] As in the post-war context, also in the 1980s the combination of motherhood and power ambivalent. The issue was raised in the framings of *Niskavuori* which focused on the representation of rural life, reading the film in a mimetic mode and asking, "What is the message of the Niskavuori women to the rural women of today?":

> "Loviisa Niskavuori is a personification of the Niskavuoristic rootedness [juurevuus]. In a sense, she is sexless, more a matron than a woman. She governs her house, servants, and family in the manner of an autocrat. In her view of life, the end justifies the means and people are mere instruments."[247]

This reading presented Loviisa both as an admirable and disturbing figure. A symbol of stability and continuity, she was all the same deemed an unrealistic role model for "the rural women of today". Power, the fuel of "substantial women" and the dangerous object of desire for 1950s mothers, was interpreted to make Loviisa "sexless" and "more a matron than a woman". In this manner then, the 1980s featured readings that both celebrated and questioned the power of the matron, the matriarch, and the Mafioso.

The *Niskavuori* poster portrayed Loviisa Niskavuori in a family photo, seated in the centre with her walking stick, with the romantic couple literally framing her on both sides. The format of the family photo distinguished the 1984 poster from the 1930s–1950s visual framings of the Niskavuori films. In the 1930s–1950s, the posters usually featured either a medium shot of Loviisa (*Niskavuori Fights*) or juxtaposed her image with a romantic couple (Aarne & Ilona, Juhani & Malviina) *and* the Niskavuori house. The 1984 poster, however, did not feature any apparent tensions, nor were the house or its surrounding landscape included. Furthermore, the family was portrayed in festive clothing, not as a peasant family of the 1930s. From this perspective, the poster framed Loviisa *less* as a matron and *more* as a mother, although the family in the photo was severely truncated, or suggested a family structure not consistent with the narrative world. The poster portrayed Loviisa with Aarne and Ilona, excluding Martta and Loviisa's grandchildren, not to mention her grown children living in Hämeenlinna and Helsinki. In relation to the extended family of the Niskavuori farm and the narrative trajectory of the film, the poster stands out as an image not portraying a family or functioning as a prompt for family memories, but as an image of the outcome of the film. The frame centres on Loviisa, who even symbolically occupies the centre position, as result of successfully manoeuvring Aarne and Ilona in and Martta

246 On the family as "the very site of economic struggle and moral corruption", see Feuer 1984, 16. In British daytime soap operas, the image of the family was quite the contrary; see Geraghty 1991, 74–83. For a notion of the "dynastic marriage" as an economic partnership in Westerns, see Wexman 1993, 75–89.

247 *Savon Sanomat* 6.2.1985.

out of Niskavuori. Read like this, the poster did not invite interpretations of Loviisa in terms of Mother Finland or Mother Nature. Indeed, it framed her much more as a dynastic chief, a Mafioso, if you like.[248] Ten years later, the associative linking of Niskavuori with the business world continued. Two popular TV serials featuring family businesses and power intrigues, *Puhtaat valkeat lakanat* (*Clean White Sheets* MTV3) and *Tuliportaat* (*Stairs of Fire* TV1), were both framed with references to Niskavuori saga and, especially in the latter case, the figure of the matron as the head of the family.[249] Some also deemed the mother figure of *Metsolat* (The Metsolas, YLE TV2, 1993–1996), Annikki Metsola, a descendant of Loviisa Niskavuori (Ruoho 2001, 140.)

As a Mafioso and businesswoman, the image of Loviisa came closer to the framings of Heta as they were articulated in the 1950s. The 1980s readings of Heta, nevertheless, emphasized the negative and not idealized (cf. Silverman 1996) characteristics more clearly than ever before. Already in the 1970s, when *Heta Niskavuori* was staged in the National Theatre (Helsinki), Heta was termed "a female tyrant" and "a woman despot from Häme".[250] With regard to the TV plays produced in 1987, the reviewers' characterizations were equally harsh and colourful in tone. They described Heta as "the most malicious and evil woman in Finland", "an unparalleled bitch" [riivinrauta], "hard as a rock", and "a horrible hag" [kauhea akka].[251] Interestingly, as such a contradictory figure, Heta was very popular and during the 1980s many theatres (Tampere, Lahti, Kotka, and Imatra) had the play in their repertoire, including the television theatre for Channel 2. Why was *Heta Niskavuori*, then, such a popular play in Finnish theatres in the 1980s, reviewers asked:

> "Heta is that daughter of Niskavuori family with whom nobody could get along. She is hungry for money and a hard woman, who insults and nags at her good husband and despises her children. She is the one who fights with Loviisa over the position of the young matron and the one who is so in need of man that she even flirts with farm hands."[252]

While the figure of Heta, in the context of cinema and television, was linked to the dynastic power women, in the context of theatre, she was read symptomatically as an image of the welfare-seeking modern human being trying to keep up with the Joneses. In a theatre brochure, a theatre director suggested such a reading:

248 Cf. Gertrud Koch (1997, 206) who has associated *Dallas* and *Dynasty* with their conceptions of family and power as closely related to the Heimat film.

249 See *HS* 3.6.1997; promotional feature on *Tuliportaat* at <http://www.yle.fi/tv1/tuli.html> (27.5.1999) and a homepage at <http://www.yle.fi/kotikatsomo/nyt.html> (11.8.1999).

250 *Etelä-Saimaa* 27.1.1974.

251 *US* 6.12.1987; *IS* 12.12.1987; *Katso* 50/1987, 57; *Katso* 52–53/1988, 90. In 2002, *Kodin Kuvalehti* (21.11.2002) discussed power relations within marriage and invoked an image of "bossy women" as Heta Niskavuoris Anno 2002.

252 *Uusi nainen* 1/1988, 27. See also *Teatteri* 1/1988, 12–13.

> "The value of the modern human being is weighed in money, production, and consumption. Money has created the social pressures that incur stress. Stress may afflict primarily the middle class, but it also effects other social strata. Heta is a stressed human being of our time (…) who ceaselessly strives for goals without any ability to live the day".[253]

The alignment of Heta with business values and the capitalist ethos has continued from the 1980s into the 1990s as she has been compared to "hard business women and female politicians" or, more recently, to a greedy businessman [optiosalkkupomo], a CEO of the virtual capitalist era "for whom people are instruments to her own aggrandizement and power".[254] At the same time, she has been framed as an embodiment of "the basic Finnish characteristics": "greed for work, love for the land and bitterness and envy that accumulate".[255]

While the image of Loviisa in the 1980s televisual context emphasized her matriarchal qualities, a new psychologizing reading of Heta emerged in the context of theatre. The Lahti City Theatre brochure for *Heta Niskavuori* framed the play with a large number of quotes on "moral philosophy", i.e., good and evil, by Simone Weil, William Blake, Olavi Siippainen, Friedrich Nietzsche, Stanislav Jerzy Lec, and Erich Fromm. Furthermore, the brochure included extracts on love by Nietzsche, Mika Waltari, F.M. Dostojevski, Barbro Lennér Axelsson, Henry Parland, Maria Jotuni, and Antti Eskola. Quoting the Swedish psychologist Barbro Lennér Axelsson whose book on love was translated to Finnish in 1980, review journalism introduced a reading of Heta as psychically ill, "a cruelly wounded person who is emotionally locked and believes herself not to be worthy of love".[256] The production of Hämeenlinna City Theatre in 1984 visually suggested a similar framing, and the brochure of *Heta Niskavuori* consists of a series of photographs of Heta, portrayed as a solitary figure in empty spaces. Extreme close-ups and shots from non-conventional angles frame the Heta character as forlorn and isolated. The cover-image, furthermore, displays Heta as a doubled character as she poses in front of a mirror.[257] This doubling, which is so characteristic of the figure of the monument-woman, was reiterated even in 2001, when theatre reviews framed Heta as "a Finnish she-devil", a bitter and unscrupulous woman who leads "a pitiful, cold, and hard life".[258] It is precisely the hardness, coldness, and strength attributed to Heta (and Loviisa!) which makes her so "melodramatically interesting"[259].

253 Brochure for *Heta Niskavuori* in the Tampere Workers' Theatre 1987. (TeaM: Käsiohjelmat).
254 *AL* 17.9.1987; *Uusi nainen* 1/1988, 27–28; *Teatteri* 1/1988, 12–13; *IS* 2.12.1987; *AL* 3.3.1998.
255 *AL* 13.12.1987.
256 *Uusi nainen* 1/1988, 28. Brochure for *Heta Niskavuori* in Lahti City Theatre 1987 (TeaM: Käsiohjelmat).
257 Brochure for *Heta Niskavuori* in Hämeenlinna City Theatre 1984-1985. (TeaM: Käsiohjelmat).
258 *Pohjalainen* 19.2.2001; *Ilkka* 19.2.2001 (theatre review of *Heta Niskavuori*).
259 *Teatteri* 6/1998, 20.

Parodic reiterations: *Pohjavuorelaisia* (1972)

While this image of the Niskavuori matron as a matriarch-patriarch has become an intertext for many subsequent Finnish family series on TV (Ruoho 2001, 128ff), it has also been subject to parody.[260] The character of Justiina (Siiri Angerkoski) in the 1950s Pekka & Pätkä (Pete and Buddy) films is a well-known image of a household monster, the battle-axe, who appears to be more Pekka's mother than as his wife. Her key attributes include a plump (i.e. non-eroticized) body, a stern face, a wooden rolling pin (as her weapon), a pose with arms crossed across her chest, and a comic walking style. [Fig. 23]. Matti Peltonen (1996a, 15) has, further, suggested that Siiri Angerkoski's performance as "Mimmi" in *Rovaniemen markkinat* (*The Market of Rovaniemi,* 1951) be seen as a "grotesque parody of a matriarch who arbitrarily governs a big farm and who is willing to sacrifice not only herself but also her own children for the sake of the house". Mimmi's character is close to Justiina's partly because of the actor's performance. Furthermore, her nagging voice, which the male protagonists try to escape, is manipulated into unrecognizable, high-pitched noise.

In 1972, the same year that a TV magazine[261] asked well-known film actresses whether the "images of women delivered by Finnish films correspond to the reality" and several interviewees mentioned Niskavuori women or Heta Niskavuori as examples of true or plausible images of women, a TV programme reiterated the image of the Niskavuori matron in a parody of two well-known literary texts, the Niskavuori saga and *Pohjalaisia* (*Osthrobothnians* by Artturi Järviluoma, 1914) as well as the conventions of folk plays and old Finnish cinema. While the TV programme itself, *Pohjavuorelaisia* (TV 1 26.8.1972)[262] has been destroyed, Kari Kyrönseppä's (under the pseudonym of "Erkki Tolkku") manuscript reveals something of the parodic narration:

> "[O]n the other side of the road, there is the Niskavuori farm, bordered by Niska-River, Niska-Field, Niska-Swamp and Niska-Railroad. Heta is busy working in the courtyard and in the fields, Old Heta is sitting on a rocking chair on the porch and Old Old Heta is having a rest in her chamber. In other respects, Niskavuori is deserted, as the children, now serving the nation as cabinet members, as governors and as chairmen of the Finnish Bank, only rarely visit their parents. Thus, the only ones Heta can command are her husband Akusti and the farmhand Paavo from Saarijärvi who work both day and night. There is so much patriotism here that the Niskavuori fields will not be packaged even if all of Finland choked in grain. In the end, the story reveals that the neighbours share more than a border, the politician Heikki Hanka turns out to be Heta's illegitimate son."[263]

260 According to Pirkko Koski (2000, 111), *The Women of Niskavuori* was subjected to parody in so-called "revue operettas" as early as in the 1930s. In 1938, a sketch called "Selänpään siskot" ("The Selänpää Sisters") unfolded in the familiar set design for the play, in the Niskavuori drawing room.

261 "Nainen kotimaisessa elokuvassa", *Katso* 26/1972, 4-9.

262 *Pohja*laisia + Niska*vuori* = Pohjavuorelaisia, "Northmountain-dwellers".

263 "Sketsiteatteri esittää: Pohjavuorelaisia", unpublished manuscript by Kari Kyrönseppä.

Fig. 23. Justiina (Siiri Angerkoski) is the proverbial Finnish battle-axe, familiar from Pekka & Pätkä (Pete and Runt) films.

The parodic narration merged, in the image of the matron of Niskavuori, the position of Loviisa (and Juhani's mother before her) and the qualities of Heta as mean, harsh, and mischievous. In addition, it re-framed the Häme-bound matron of Niskavuori as Ostrobothnian. It mixed two Western Finnish ethnicities and localities of Finnishness and referenced, thus, depictions of Finnishness, especially Topelius's *Our Country*, familiar from the 19th century. Furthermore, the fictions of Häme (*Niskavuori*) and Ostrobothnia (*Pohjalaiset*) were spiced with elements from the *Kalevala* (the rivalry of two families) and from another "national epic" by Johan Ludvig Runeberg, *Vänrikki Stoolin tarinat* (the figure of Paavo Saarijärvi, often cited as the exemplary Finnish man). The parodic re-framing of these narratives and images turned them into comedy, an exaggeration *ad absurdum* of many recognizable features. The character of the Niskavuori matron and the metonymic reading that links the Niskavuori story to the political history of Finland were both subjected to this narrative re-framing. To begin with, the character of the matron was *tripled* (Heta, Old Heta, Old Old Heta),

Fig. 24. The visual attributes of the old matron include a rocking chair, a knitted shawl, and a stick, as portrayed in a publicity-still for Aarne Niskavuori *1954 (FFA).*

flaunting the notion of a never-ending story. In addition, her command of her children, emphasized in earlier framings, expanded to gain nothing less than an international and global dimension:

> "Harshly, she advises her children in the parliament, the government, the European Community, and the United Nations to set things straight, for more land is needed for cultivation, even if all of Finland drowned in corn."[264]

Moreover, according to the manuscript, Heta's ambitions in managing the farm and defending Niskavuori reached a new scale. She not only wanted to build a dam and a power plant to prevent fish from using Niska-River as a public space, but she also wanted to turn the river to underline the centrality of the Niskavuori farm. Moreover, she prohibited her workers from speaking Eastern dialects of Finnish.

The publicity photos of *Pohjavuorelaiset* show that the parodic approach comprised more than the narrative: even its visual imagery reiterated the iconography of Niskavuori. The photos stress, once more, the visual attributes of the old matron: a rocking chair, a knitted shawl, and a stick. [Fig. 24] The

264 *Katso* 35 (21.–27.8.1972), 25.

Fig. 25. Teija Sopanen parodying the monumental matron-mother in Pohjavuorelaisia *(1972).*

visual juxtaposition of the old matron and an Ilona-like younger woman similar to a generic publicity-still for each production of *The Women of Niskavuori* was also recycled for parodic use. [Fig. 25][265]

Despite parodic and ironic citations – subcultural and oppositional representations are, as Kaja Silverman (1996, 179) underlines, part of the cultural screen – historical and mythological readings continue to co-exist with references to soap operas and TV melodramas. In 1998, a promotional feature combined all three frameworks by first referring to the readings of the Niskavuori drama "as social and cultural historical documents" and second by describing the series as "the Finnish *Dallas*, a tale of money, sex, and power". Again, the mythological dimension was ascribed to the character of the old matron: when "the old matron, played by Elsa Turakainen or Emma Väänänen, opened her mouth, the whole earth trembled". This framing also termed Hella Wuolijoki, her plays, the female characters, and, by implication, the films "monumental". This reading also traced the monumentality back to the mythological: "The swish of the wings of history which can be sensed in the plays will never overpower the voice of the matron which roars like thunder."[266]

265 In 1987, "Elma and Toini", a play by two women actors (Eeva-Maija Haukinen & Anna-Leena Mäki-Penttilä), was identified as a parody of Niskavuori, as it featured a daughter of big Häme farm who, when drunk, started to talk about the "spirit of the land". See Järvi 1987, 9. In 1998, a letter by "Hilja, 26 years" to Kirsti (the postmodern version of the agony aunt in *Helsingin Sanomat*) asked for advice on how to become "a matron of a big farm or mansion". In her reply, "Kirsti" gave instructions familiar from Niskavuori and other rural fictions, referring even explicitly to the Niskavuori plays. See *HS* 13.9.1998.

266 *Treffi* 5.2.1998.

Seductions of the monument

In this chapter, I have argued that the notion of the monument-woman as it has been articulated in readings of Loviisa and Heta Niskavuori has derived its force, its efficacy, and its seductive power, from a variety of contexts, in myriad repetitions, citations, and reiterations. By examining the performative work of gender in the interpretive framings and intertextual frameworks of the Niskavuori films, I have argued that the image of the monument-woman has been highly ambiguous and contested from the framings of the first Niskavuori production onwards. Furthermore, I have examined the characterization of Loviisa Niskavuori as "a stiff-necked defender" of traditions and "nationally timeless and sustaining values" (see the second epigraph of this chapter). Rather than exemplifying a typical reading or capturing a truth about an image whose history is loaded with tensions and conflicts, the epigraph, in my analysis, exemplifies the performative function of all framings. All performative acts of reading foreground some discursive fields, intertextual frameworks, and dialogic connections, but undermine and marginalize others. The monument-woman has not only been a vehicle for creating monumental history in a Nietzschean sense, but the image has also been appropriated for the needs of antiquarian and critical history. The image of Loviisa has been integrated both into the feminist constructions of female genealogy (antiquarian history) and left-wing critique of capitalism (critical history). (Nietzsche 1983, 72–76.) The rhetorical force of the image of the Niskavuori matron is, precisely, in its re-signifiability, its availability for different "uses".

When excavating the intepretive framings, I have traced the doubling movements and the acts of layering which have added to the citational legacy of the image of Loviisa. I have suggested that, in the context of the 1950s, there was a pathologizing discourse of motherhood that, although it was linked with Loviisa only via readings of the Niskavuori spin-offs, informed her image through association and via intertextual frameworks. At the same time, the intepretive framings have not only been inclusive, inviting identifications, but also exclusive and calling for repudiation. (Cf. Silverman 1996, 2; see Chapter 5.) On the one hand, the feminist-nationalist discourse has capitalized on ambiguity and outlined the monument-woman as all-inclusive; "the Finnish woman" was interpreted as equal and different, authoritarian and equal, persistent and feminine, matron and mother, Louhi and Lemminkäinen's mother. On the other hand, the 1950s left-wing readings of Loviisa and the 1930s right-wing framings adopted an interpretive strategy that I have termed splitting and doubling. I have shown how both the acts of doubling (both–and) and splitting (either–or) are integral features in the citational legacy of the monument-woman figure. As articulated in interpretive framings, these debates featuring both desires and fears structure this legacy and associate it with agrarian (the matron), middle-class (the mother), and working class (the worker) notions of gender, historical (chronology) and mythological (folkloric) narratives, right-wing nationalism (resilience of tradition), and left-wing criticism (the understanding heart). As a subject position, the monument-woman comprises many differences *within* itself, as

difference is constantly produced, re-produced, and re-articulated *within* the image of the matron-mother. These differences have reverberated beyond its two components, the matron and the mother. (Cf. Bell 1999, 5.)

For feminist purposes, the citational legacy of the Niskavuori matron offers both pleasures and problematic associations. Images and myths invoked in the readings of Loviisa continue to provide enjoyment, both seductive narratives of authority and melodramatic identifications with "the complexity of the task of being a woman" (Ang 1990, 86–87).[267] Recent English-language books about "the Finnish woman" demonstrate the force of these affects as they open with manifestations of "strength", either emphasizing women's work or "the strong women who have gone before us, our inspiring examples" (Manninen & Setälä 1990; Lipponen & Setälä 1999, 7). Many late 20th century feminist writing articulate pleasures in a female genealogy and a historicity of "the Finnish woman" similar to those expressed in 1940s and 1950s feminist-nationalist literature:

> "Rural mothers and grandmothers have bequeathed contemporary Finnish woman, as their immaterial legacy, a number of models of action and thought. These become visible when one explores Finnish women's attitudes to work, men, motherhood, and nature." (Apo 1999, 23.)

Such pleasure in "monumentality" can be traced in many interpretive framings surrounding dramatic, cinematic, televisual, and literary texts.[268] For example, in the 1970s, *Elämänmeno* (*The Course of Life*) mobilized this pleasure both as a celebrated "realist" novel by Pirkko Saisio (1975) and as a three-part TV film by Åke Lindman (1978). Reviewers' characterizations of Eila, the working-class female protagonist of the novel and the film, were haunted by framings of Loviisa and the matron-figure, and these readings of Eila reiterated the notions of strength and monument as well as the narratives of growth-through-submission and the "secret warmth beneath":

> "Pirkko Saisio gives Eila an almost monumental, laconic bearing. She is hot-tempered, wiry, hard working, demanding, and more willing to punish than show compassion. Behind the hardness, however, one detects the fragility of a disappointed human being."[269]

> "As a portrait of a woman, Eila is somehow so familiar and so ordinary that she becomes a true monument. The girl which she is in the beginning of the film has been effected by the war; she has lost her husband. But in a child-like manner, she has trust in human beings and a better future. She gets hurt again when Reino, an eccentric man she falls in love with, runs away. Eila experiences the nightmares of being a single mother at work, in her everyday

267 Cf. Pentti Paavolainen's (1992, 214–216) derogatory characterization of Finnish women's theatre attendance as playing within a dollhouse: "through game and a fictitious reality they attempt to deal with menaces that threaten the community ".

268 For example, Eeva Joenpelto's Lohja-series (1974–1980) and Orvokki Autio's Ostrobothnia-trilogy (1980–1986) and their TV productions (e.g. *Leaving Home/Pesärikko*, Timo Bergholm 2000); *Kaivo* (Pekka Lehto 1990) and *Hardly a Butterfly* (*Liian paksu perhoseksi,* Heidi Köngäs 1998).

269 *HBL* 16.11.1975 (review of the novel).

environment, and at home. (…) With age, she grows more mature – although she, at the same time, becomes more submissive."[270]

The melodramatic heroine, familiar from the 1940s framings of the young matron in theatre and cinema, also emerged in 2002 when notions of realism and ideality (cf. Silverman 1996) once again merged in a theatre review describing the Niskavuori matron in terms of "the Finnish woman":

"The growth of Loviisa from a young bride to a sturdy matron of Niskavuori is both a mentally and objectively recognizable and shocking image of the survival of the Finnish woman: lonely, sad, and gloomy. She takes responsibility no matter where her husband takes himself."[271]

Though I acknowledge the empowering potential of this "monumentalizing" discourse of exemplary foremothers and female genealogies as well as the seductiveness of the narrative of authority, I have highlighted their inherent contradictions and ambivalences, how they operate through exclusions and power moves. (Cf. Ollila 2000; Markkola 2002.) As a figure of the cultural screen – a public fantasy, indeed – the monument-woman, "the Finnish woman", invites not only idealization and identification, but also for repudiation, abhorrence, fear, and ridicule.

270 *US* 1.11.1978(review of the TV film).
271 *HS* 27.2.2002.

The Man-in-Crisis: From the Weak Man to the Subject of History

"In Niskavuori, women are iron, men are wood."
IS 2.12.1987

"[C]rises in masculinity are neither unprecedented nor exceptional."
Abigail Solomon-Godeau 1997, 21.

The television screen features three men wearing similar striped, coarse linen shirts, old-fashioned trousers with braces, and thick woollen socks. In the mid-1990s, all the men share a hairstyle reminiscent of revivalist religious movements. In a series of cabaret-style performances, broadcast on the national TV network, recorded on a CD and performed on a tour, three Tampere-based musicians and actors (Pate Mustajärvi, Ilpo Hakala, and Jukka Leisti) coined *aarne* as a noun referring to the generic Finnish man, any Finnish man. In their shows, *Aarnes from Niskavuori Go Russia*, *Stockholm*, *Cosmopolitan*, *Kalevala*, and *Business Trip*, the performers rely on the familiarity and currency of the figure of Aarne Niskavuori. The shows feature musical and comic numbers on topical Finnish issues, from politics to celebrity gossip, and build on intertextual references to anything from *Seven Brothers* to the Village People, from Nils Holgerson to mafia fictions, and from Cossacks to cowboys. Some narrative elements nevertheless remain constant from show to show. For example, the "aarnes" always lack individuality, appearing as an all-male group; they fear women and depend on their mother, who is present as a god-like voice-over in the performances. The "aarnes" set out on journeys, but they always return home.[1] In this representation of "aarnes", a number of cultural images of men and masculinity coincide, making visible the ongoing *cultural* construction of gender, even in a parodic form. In addition, the "aarnes" highlight the continued relevance and force of Niskavuori imagery for figuring gender.

While the previous chapter traced the genealogies of the monument-woman and revealed it as a powerful and contradictory image which articulates an

1 Four episodes of Aarnes Go (Stockholm, Kalevala, Cosmopolitan, Russia) were broadcast on Channel 2 in 1996. In addition, *Aarnes Go Russia* had been screened even two years earlier.

ambiguity between idealization and repudiation on the cultural screen, this chapter focuses on the figure of *the man-in-crisis* that has circulated equally widely circulated in framings of Niskavuori fictions. Unlike the monument-woman, the figure of the man-in-crisis posits gender as a problem from the outset, as both *troubled* and *troubling*. Specifically, the persistence and appeal of this narrative image interest me. As the emergence of the "aarnes" in the 1990s illustrates, "a Niskavuorean man" is not only an object of irony and ridicule, but also one of affection and broad cultural resonance. In this chapter, I examine the affective force of this gender figuration by tracing and making making visible the different citational legacies of "Niskavuorean men". Close-reading both promotional publicity and review journalism, I continue to excavate intertextual frameworks, tracking repetitions and dissonances in order to pursue the range of meanings that the figure of the "the man-in-crisis", i.e., the *weak man*, has accrued and the narratives and political desires it has mobilized.

Why all this critical attention on a "crisis" of masculinity? Judith Kegan Gardiner poses this highly appropriate question in her introduction to *Masculinity Studies & Feminist Theory: New Directions* (2002, 1). According to Gardiner, the turn of the millennium has seen a "heightened rhetoric of an impending crisis" concerning masculinity (ibid., 6–11). What she terms the "crisis view of masculinity" certainly characterizes many studies on film and cultural history.[2] For instance, Lynne Kirby (1988) argues that contemporary accounts of early film spectatorship described a hysterical male viewer, depicting "masculinity in disarray". Gaylyn Studlar (1996, 25ff) relates the star image of Douglas Fairbanks to a "self-defined crisis" of American, white, middle-class, and Protestant masculinity. Ginette Vincendeau (1985) and Robin Bates (1997) investigate the late 1930s French cinema and the contemporary political and cultural climate as a "crisis of masculinity" and "pushing traditional gender tensions to crisis". Frank Krutnik (1991, 91) suggests that the "dissonant and schismatic representations of masculinity" in post-war *film noir* thrillers be read as "evidence of some kind of crisis of confidence within contemporary regimentation of male-dominated culture". In *Masked Men: Masculinity and Movies in the Fifties*, Steve Cohan (1997, x–xii) examines "the post/war masculinity crisis" "as it has been depicted by some of this era's most popular films". The trope of crisis characterizes studies of 1950s British cinema as well. In Marcia Landy's (1991, 240) reading, "tragic melodramas" stage "men in the throes of an identity crisis" and Andrew Clay (1999, 52) explores the genre of the crime film (1946–1965) as marked by a "crisis in masculinity". In her *The Remasculinization of America: Gender and the Vietnam War* (1989), Susan Jeffords places the "crisis in masculinity" in the 1970s and the genre of war film. In *Male Subjectivity at the Margins*, Kaja Silverman (1992, 51–52, 214ff) discusses "a crisis of faith", a "radical loss of belief in the conventional premises of masculini-

2 In a review of article on recent studies on masculinity, Judith A. Allen (2002, 205–206) lists 18 titles which suggest that masculinity is "in crisis" or represent it in terms of "marginality, problem, impotence, trouble, resistance, anxiety, Gothic, unease, murdering, junk, perversion, and refusal".

ty" in a number of Hollywood films of the 1940s to "the utter ruination of masculinity" in Rainer Werner Fassbinder's films in the 1970s. As early as 1982, Pam Cook (1982, 39) asked whether *Raging Bull* "puts masculinity in crisis" and, thus, operates as "a radical critique of masculinity".

While these examples reveal just a hint of the large amount[3] of critical work on "fractured", "anxious", "alternative", "marginal", "deviant", or "threatened" masculinities in cinema, they draw attention to the trope of crisis itself and its centrality to representations of men and masculinities. (Cf. Modleski 1991,7; Cohan 1997, xi; Solomon-Godeau 1997, 35; Wiegman 2002, 32; Halberstam 2002, 351–352.) In addition, they resonate with the criticism Sally Robinson (2002, 142ff) presents against what she terms the traditional/alternative paradigm in feminist studies of masculinity. Here she is referring to readings which organize masculinities into two categories, one traditional, "bad", and unreconstructed (distant, cold, insensitive, and/or violent) and the other alternative, "good", and often more "feminine" (anything and everything else). Robinson questions the usefulness of this strategy for the study of men and masculinities. In her view, it tends to sideline historical specificities and emphasize alternatives at the cost of the dominant. Furthermore, as visibility (what is made visible) often reads as victimization (what has been suppressed) in a discussion climate that promotes an individualist understanding of gender and identity, the focus on alternative masculinities often feeds into the logic of the crisis view. (Robinson 2002, 144, 147, 151–153.)

In *Male Trouble*, Abigail Solomon-Godeau (1997, 35) also questions the crisis view of masculinity as she argues based on her own research on 18th and 19th century visual culture, that "'alternative' variants of masculinity" cannot be viewed as exceptional, but must be seen as a "recurring theme" in Western art and other cultural forms.[4] For this reason, she asks whether representations of "alternative" masculinities "can be directly linked to larger cultural and historical crises, or whether they merely represent the flip side of more familiar versions, and whose emergence is facilitated, or favoured, by particular historical and cultural conditions". Significantly, for my approach, Solomon-Godeau concludes: "it would seem that these crises and their attendant representations are closer to the rule than to the exception and are, in fact, recurring psychosocial phenomena". Robyn Wiegman poses a similar argument:

> "While a number of academic studies have made cogent arguments for understanding masculinity as by definition in perpetual crisis (in part through analyses of earlier historical periods), the very emergence of masculinity as an entity to be interrogated and understood finds its raison d'être in the popular acknowledgement and open representational display of masculinity as a domain seemingly beside itself: that is, internally contested, historically discontinuous, and popularly a mess." (Wiegman 2002, 32.)

3 See, for example, Penley & Willis 1988; Cohan & Hark 1993; Kirkham & Thumim 1993, 1995; Lehman 2001.

4 Solomon-Godeau (1997) refers to Michael Kimmel (1987), who has situated the crisis of masculinity in the late seventeenth-century and early eighteenth-century England as well as in the 1980s.

In this chapter, then, I *do not* argue that Finnish men or masculinities have or have not been "in crisis" at any particular point in time. Thus, it is not my intention to contribute to what Judith A. Allen (2002, 202) has termed "the sequel history of regular crises in masculinity".[5] Instead, I focus on the accumulated force of the crisis rhetoric itself as it has been articulated or challenged in promotional publicity, review journalism, visual framings, and critical commentary surrounding Niskavuori films and plays.

Starting in 1980s and 1990s review journalism, promotional publicity, and critical commentary, I close-read the frequent interpretations of *The Women of Niskavuori* (1938, 1958), *Aarne Niskavuori* (1954), and *Loviisa* (1946) as portrayals of "weak men". Linking these framings to contemporaneous discourses on the "Finnish man" in both sociological studies and popular books about the "Finnish man", I demonstrate how these analogous readings overlapped and contributed to a reality-effect, claiming a truth about the Finnish gender system and the "Finnish man". I illustrate that the figure of the man-in-crisis, i.e., the notion of "male trouble" (Penley & Willis 1988; Solomon-Godeau 1997), has figured in the interpretive framings of the Niskavuori films since the 1930s. In the 1930s and 1940s, both theatre and film reviewers expressed discomfort and even resentment towards the Niskavuori men, Aarne and Juhani, deeming them "nebulous", "inconsistent", and "implausible". In addition, a of number of distinctive publicity stills portrayed Juhani Niskavuori and Aarne Niskavuori, the male protagonists of *The Women of Niskavuori* (1938), *Loviisa* (1946), *Aarne Niskavuori* (1954), and *Niskavuori* (1984), as undergoing identity crises. Highlighting a repetition and recirculation of tropes, characterizations, and poses, I also focus on contradictory citational legacies of "the male trouble", the tropes of eroticization and rehabilitation as interpretive framings. In the context of cinema culture, namely, the figure of the man-in-crisis has connected to a spectacularization of the male star. Rather than merely representing men-in-crisis, visual framings of Niskavuori films (film trailers, posters, advertisements, and many publicity-stills) *eroticized* the Niskavuori men played by Tauno Palo (1938, 1946, 1954), in particular, but also Erkki Viljos (1958) and Esko Salminen (1984).

While arguing that stardom had a central role in readings of the Niskavuori men within the context of cinema and emphasizing the force of the star-image of Tauno Palo in the 1930s and 1940s, I show how review journalism dealt with "male trouble" by distinguishing the actors' performances from the male roles. This interpretive strategy of splitting and removing is familiar from post-war readings of the Loviisa Niskavuori character discussed in Chapter 3. In the 1950s, this reading route coincided with an aspiration to re-focalize the Niskavuori saga on the character of Aarne Niskavuori and to "rehabilitate", i.e., liberate and emancipate, the Niskavuori man from the shadow of the

5 For a discussion of the "dangers" of historicizing masculinity, see Dudink 1998, 421. According to Stefan Dudink, "the emphatic manner in which masculinity is marked and is shown to have been an issue in history can produce the unintended result of 'naturalizing' or 'reifying' masculinity, of – perversely – placing it beyond history". Focusing on repetitions over a long period, a study like mine obviously takes this risk.

monument-woman. In this chapter, I demonstrate how this urge to re-focalize and rehabilitate the Niskavuori man and, by elision, "the Finnish man", has been a salient feature of the "man-in-crisis" from the 1938 première of *The Bread of Niskavuori* to the 1950s leftist theatre productions, readings of Niskavuori fictions in the TV age, and Matti Kassila's 1984 remake. While attracting readings in terms of "crisis", "trouble", and "weakness", the Niskavuoren men also propelled narrative scenarios of resistance, empowerment, and individualization. In contrast to the ambivalent and often disturbing figure of the Niskavuorean man-in-crisis, film and theatre reviewers have unanimously praised Akusti, the working-class male protagonist in *Heta Niskavuori*, as only "decent" male character in Niskavuori fictions. In the early 1950s, moreover, the interpretive framings of Akusti coincided with a redefinition of both "the ideal Finnish man" and the nation.

As I argued in Chapter 3, Loviisa Niskavuori was both admired and abhorred as a matron-patron, a "masculine" woman; she was recurrently framed with words and expressions echoing the ideal Finnish man as characterized in the 19th century national imagination. The citational legacies of both Loviisa and the troubled Niskavuoren men suggest an uneasy relationship between men and masculinity as a norm.[6] In terms of gender politics, then, the figure of man-in-crisis is binding and productive in two senses. While it enhances the "discursive visibility of masculinity", it also implies "a loss of transparency", a taken-for-granted status, for men and masculinity (cf. Solomon-Godeau 1997, 18).

Protect the Finnish man! Aarne and Juhani Niskavuori in the age of television

> "Homelessness, father's reproaches, mother's rejection, and woman's accusations follow the Finnish man to every woodland and every pub. Only a small star in the black sky sheds light, understands, and shows mercy and acceptance."
>
> Martti Lindqvist 1986, 93–94.

At the end of the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s, two volumes were published, marking the start of Finnish men's movement: *Suojelkaa Suomen miestä* (*Protect the Finnish Man* 1979) by Matti J. Kuronen, a family therapist, and *Minä, keski-ikäinen mies* (*Me, a middle-aged man* 1982) by Juha Numminen, a journalist. While Numminen's book was devised as a "report" on the contemporary "situation" of the "Finnish man" and based on 121 interviews, Kuronen wrote explicitly in defence of "Finnish men". Around the mid-1980s, a number of other books were published – *Miehen*

6 Judith Butler (1990a), Judith Halberstam (1998; 2002), Robyn Wiegman (2002), and Leena-Maija Rossi (2003) have all argued for the critical importance of countering a normative gender discourse by unwedding masculinity from men, for not assuming an alliance between men & masculinity, women & femininity. See, especially, Halberstam 1998, 2ff.

mallit (*The models of man* 1985), *H.V. – kirjeitä veljelle* (*Dear brother* 1986), *Mies, löydä elämäsi* (*Man, go find your life* 1986), and *Miehen mittainen mies* (*A Man of measure* 1986). Many of them discussed "the crisis of men" as a matter of fact. Popular magazines published articles on "the status of men", and in 1984, *Anna*, the most widely read women's magazine in Finland featured a 15-page long "candid, honest, and shocking" report on the life of the "Finnish man". In this report, "man himself [told] woman about his feelings, fears, hopes, love, and sex life".[7] Governmental and popular interest in the "Finnish man" intensified in 1986 with the launch of a national health education project "Mies 2000" (Man 2000), which was designed to "support the survival of men and healthier life-styles". The same year, the Council of Equality between Men and Women published a pamphlet on the study of men (*Miestä päin/Toward a Man*1986).[8] During the same years, sociological and social policy researchers executed several studies on the changing way of life, which highlighted the effects of modernization on men in particular.[9]

Interestingly for my approach, neither popular writings on the "Finnish men" nor social scientific research focused merely on actual men, social changes, and gender policies. They also discussed various cultural representations reading them as evidence of history and the contemporary situation. In this manner, they not only investigated a cultural construction of manliness and masculinity, but also contributed to this construction process, literally crafting the portrait of the "Finnish man" with literary and cinematic references. Like many framings of Niskavuori films, then, these readings of the "Finnish man" forged links between cultural representations (films, novels, and poems), social situations, policies, histories, and mythologies. They revealed an intertextual framework of Finnish manhood which featured the Bible, the *Kalevala*, the *Kanteletar*, and *Vårt Land, Our Land* (Topelius 1875); *Vänrikki Stoolin tarinat* (*The Tales of Ensign Ståhl* 1848–1860), and *Seitsemän veljestä* (*Seven Brothers* 1870); classical texts (Cato 195 BC), Goethe (*Faust*), and T.S. Eliot; Tarzan, The Beauty and the Beast and *The Little Prince* (Antoine de Saint-Exupéry) as well as a number of Finnish novelists from Väinö Linna, Veikko Huovinen, Heikki Turunen, Mika Waltari, Kalle Päätalo, Markku Lahtela, and Christer Kihlman to poets Eino

7 "Raportti Suomalaisen miehen elämästä: Nyt mies kertoo naiselle tunteistaan, peloistaan, toiveistaan, rakkaudesta, seksistä", *Anna* 49 (4.12.1984), 53–68. *Anna* also featured a recurring column "A Man's Life" in which different men "told about their life in today's world". See, for instance, Anna 1/1985 (31.12.1984).

8 The project was financed and backed by the all the major health organizations in Finland: for instance, the Finnish Heart Association, the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health, the Cancer Society of Finland, the Finnish Association of Temperance Societies as well as the Allergy and Epilepsy Associations. The programme aroused public debates summarized in Maasilta 1988.

9 See, especially, Matti Kortteinen's study on suburban life (*Lähiö. Tutkimus elämäntapojen muutoksesta* 1982) and the study on urban pubs (*Lähiöravintola* 1985, published in English 1997 as *The Urban Pub*) by Pekka Sulkunen, Pertti Alasuutari, Ritva Nätkin and Merja Kinnunen. For a review and commentary on this sociological research as men's studies, see Peltonen 1986. Based on a Nordic comparison, sociologist Erik Allardt called Finnish men "the weaker vase" [astia] in 1976. See Julkunen 1993, 285.

Leino Otto Manninen, Uuno Kailas, Kaarlo Sarkia, and Paavo Haavikko. It included both pop and rock stars (Reino Helismaa, Juice Leskinen, Mikko Alatalo) and popular culture figures (Uuno Turhapuro, Auvo, Uncle Nasse). (Kuronen 1979; Lindqvist 1986.)[10]

In this rich web of intertextual references, theologist Martti Lindqvist (1986, 49–50) cited the image of Matti in *Our Land* as the prototypical "Finnish man" who is "slightly lost" and who is echoed in all the other "beloved male types of Finnish literature": the seven brothers, Sven Tuuva, the peasant Paavo from Saarijärvi, and the unknown soldiers:

> "There they go, before my eyes and in my soul, the Finnish men with their burdens (…) I am worried about one thing: have I been involved, along with my forefathers, in creating these myths or have these myths created me? I cannot deny my kinship with Matti. (…) In spite of their one-sidedness and extremity, both classical heroes and Finnish male types represent the whole life of a man in some sense. They are images of choices that have taken place within the soul and they depict its growth in a certain direction." (Ibid., 49–50.)

While framing these literary characters as preferred mirror images, Lindqvist, Kuronen, and other discussants (e.g., Helminen & Hurri 1985) interpreted many other images as troubling, embarrassing, and even insulting. Both these writers and contemporary social scientists studied literary and cinematic representations as indexical evidence of gender relations. Sociologists were especially keen students of cultural representations, analyzing, for instance, Finnish films from 1930s to 1970s as symptomatic of men and women's attitudes to alcohol use. Through an analysis of chosen film scenes, sociologists uncovered "a mythical structure of drunkenness" (Falk & Sulkunen 1983; Holmila & Määttänen 1981). Another scholar interpreted the 1970s cinematic anti-hero Uuno Turhapuro (Vesa-Matti Loiri] as symbolizing the Finnish gender system and "the era of increasing instability" in family life (Kortteinen 1984, 61ff). [Fig. 26] While none of these writers discussed the Niskavuori male characters, both the 1970s–1980s interpretive framings of Niskavuori fictions and the contemporaneous literature on the "Finnish men" constructed strikingly similar images of the man-in-crisis as "weak", a loser, lacking a will of his own, and being dependent on mother/women, but also as sensitive and prone to alcohol problems and anxiety.

In 1972, a Finnish TV magazine interviewed well-known male actors, asking whether images of men in Finnish films were "plausible" and "correct". Many interviewees mentioned Tauno Palo, who played all the male leads in Niskavuori films between in 1938–1957, as an exemplary actor whose roles were described as "heroic", "masculine", and "the best in Finnish film".[11] The actors complemented not only his acting skills, but also on his charm as

10 For an early analysis of Kalle Päätalo, the uncontested author of bestsellers in the 1970s and 1980s, as addressing the "the pain and trouble of manliness" ("Miehisyyden tuska ja vaiva"), see Pennanen 1970, 201ff.

11 For a discussion on "heroic masculinity" and its dependence on the "subordination of alternative masculinities", i.e., policing its meanings and boundaries, see Halberstam 1998, 1–2.

Fig. 26. For 1980s sociologists, the cinematic anti-hero Uuno Turhapuro served as a figure for understanding the victimized Finnish man in the throes of "strong women" and feminist movement. Uuno Turhapuro *1973 (FFA).*

a ladies man [naistenmies] and his appearance. Both Tauno Palo himself and Joel Rinne, who was featured in *Aarne Niskavuori* (1954) and *Niskavuori Fights* (1957), however, mentioned Niskavuori films as negative examples in terms of their images of men. Joel Rinne said, "The Niskavuori men did not do justice to men. The spirit of that time demanded serving the woman's lot and position, and this is what Hella Wuolijoki attempted to achieve in her works." His claim was echoed in Tauno Palo's comment:

> "The Niskavuori films put women on a pedestal. Men were subordinated and they were made into eccentric characters. But, of course, the [plays] by Hella Vuolijoki could not be changed, the actor simply had to do all he could to make the unpleasant men at least somewhat sympathetic."[12]

Other texts also articulated a framing of the Niskavuori men as overpowered by women and victimized by the female author. In his memoirs, Tauno Palo (1969, 109) asked, "Why [Wuolijoki] so often places the flaws of us poor men under a magnifying glass", and Eino Salmelainen (1972, 127) supported his laments. As the director of several Niskavuori plays in theatre, Salmelainen

12 *Katso* 51/1972: "Man in domestic films", 6–10. (Interviewees: Esa Pakarinen, Heikki Kinnunen, Joel Rinne, Tauno Palo.)

described the roles of the Niskavuori men as "unflattering" [epäkiitollinen]. Later, these characterizations of the Niskavuori fictions have been cited in many critical commentaries and historical accounts (both literary and cinematic) and interpreted as symptomatic of gender relations in Finland.[13] For instance, a 1998 overview of Finnish literature framed Niskavuori plays as a portrait of gender history:

> "A striking feature of the relationships in Wuolijoki's plays is the weakness of the men and the power of women; as a result, these plays have been viewed as portrayals of Finnish matriarchy."[14]

In 1972, TV reviewers already discussed this gendered imbalance of "power" and "strength" and summarized the Niskavuori saga in similar terms:

> "Hella Wuolijoki created powerful and determined female characters for the drama; in the Niskavuori-series, for example, women are systematically of stronger character than the men."[15]

> "Wuolijoki's strong female figures are in the dominant position; they are the upholders of the way of life and the uniting forces of the family."[16]

While these characterizations also echoed previous readings (for example, a 1942 description of the Niskavuori plays as "belittling of the whole male sex"[17]), the readings of Niskavuori films as portraits of Finnish gender history as one featuring "strong women" and "weak men" acquired new meanings in 1972, the year the Council of Equality between Men and Women (TANE) was founded as a standing committee under Prime Minister's Office. It was set up to carry out research on the position of men and women in society and to prepare reforms and policies (Holli 1990, 69).[18] In this context, the gendered notions of strength and weakness were also positions in terms of gender politics, arguments for and against policies in the making. Therefore, I argue, neither strength nor weakness should be taken at face value, but regarded as context-bound rhetorical figures that involved desires, fears, and hopes. When excavating the genealogies of the "weak man", therefore, one must question the link between weakness and masculinity that, according to Pat Kirkham and Janet Thumim (1993, 18), is integral to Western cinema.

13 For characterizations in literary histories, see Laitinen 1981, 458; Envall 1998, 173; Lyytikäinen 1999, 162. In cinema histories, see Sihvonen 1993, 174; Soila 1998, 62.
14 Envall 1998, 173.
15 *Antenni* 6/1972, 7.–13.2.1972.
16 *HS* 7.2.1972.
17 Olsoni 1942, 476.
18 TANE was preceded by the Committee on the Status of Women (1966–1970), which had proposed a permanent state organ for questions of gender equality. The 1960s students' and academics' equality movement Association 9 influenced the agendas of both the Committee and TANE. (Holli 1990, 69.) For a discussion of the Finnish "equality movement" and its state orientation, see Holli 1990; Parvikko 1990.

In their words, "strength" is "a yardstick of dominant masculinity", whereas "weakness" is used to signify "a lack of masculinity". "In Western cinematic constructions of masculinity", they argue, "the weak man is, simply, not a proper man, not a whole man. He is demonstrably *less* than a man and frequently feminised to emphasize the point."[19] However, interpretive framings of Niskavuori films complicate such purely negative notion of weakness; the continuous popularity of the figure of the man-in-crisis as well as its currency in debates on gender equality suggests that weakness is not merely about a lack of strength, but it is also a productive concept. Read as depictions of "strong women, weak men", Niskavuori fictions provided the new debate on gender equality with an agenda that, in fact, focused on men and questioned feminist interpretations of the gender relations from the start. Thus, although recurrently framed as pro-women or feminist, Niskavuori plays and films also contributed to an understanding of the "Finnish gender system" as one in which it is *men* who need attention and support. This perspective on the issue of gender relations was prominent in 1970s and 1980s sociological studies of the Finnish way of life as well as in a burgeoning literature on "the Finnish man". In my reading, this literature articulated the figure of the man-in-crisis in ways which coincided and overlapped with readings of the "weak" Niskavuorean man. In 1987, a reviewer of the TV films also suggested such connection:

> "[The plays and films] still seem alive in the present. Consider, for example, the relationship of the men who are subordinated by the powerful Niskavuori women to the much discussed male crisis of today."[20]

Many reviews of Niskavuori films, radio and TV plays characterized the Niskavuorean man as "sensitive" and torn by their desires. At the same time, they evoked an image of women as rational and realistic:

> "An old family farm in the most prosperous area of the Finnish countryside, the strong *mater familias* who can keep the farm up to scratch even in difficult times, and sensitive men blundering about."[21]

> "Women have backbone, sense, and pride, whereas men wriggle in the crossfire of their duties and desires."[22]

> "The sense and sensitivity of the Niskavuori men are not always in synch. Then the Niskavuori women are responsible for keeping things together."[23]

19 Until the 1980s, the feminized man was taboo in advertising, even in Finland. See Rossi 2003, 87ff. By "the feminized man", Leena-Maija Rossi means representations of decorative, passive, dependent, submissive, weak, nurturing, emotional, and bodily soft men (ibid., 89). For discussions of the "feminized male" in late 19th century and early 20th century literature and cultural criticism, see Felski 1995, 91ff; Hapuli 1995, 167–180.

20 *Keskipohjanmaa* 16.12.1987.

21 *Film in Finland* 1984, 53. "In production".

22 *TS* 20.7.1986 (review of a radio play); for a description of Aarne Niskavuori as a man "wriggling" between two powerful women characterised as "magnetic poles" see *Hyvinkään Sanomat* 16.8.1986.

23 *HS* 18.6.1992.

This image resonated with the image of the "Finnish man" as described by Juha Numminen (1979). According to him, "Finnish men", because of "their cultural heritage", idealized "a stout man who [concealed] his emotions, who [had] to bear and put up with everything" but, who, nevertheless, was "deep down very vulnerable and easily driven to suicide as a consequence of violations against his self-esteem, adversity, and/or use of alcohol". (Numminen 1979, 239.) In their studies of the modernization and urbanization of the Finnish society, social scientists often focused on alcohol use (Falk & Sulkunen 1983; Holmila & Määttänen 1981; Kortteinen 1982; Sulkunen et al. 1985). Reviewers of Niskavuori fictions also connected "sensitivity" to extensive alcohol use:

> "If the Niskavuori women were hard, it was often an absolute necessity, says the old matron. In this country, the firmness and resourcefulness of women has innumerable times maintained houses in the families, while weak and alcohol-driven men have all but wasted their inherited land."[24]

> "Because Juhani cannot forget Malviina, he drinks."[25]

A 1992 TV introduction of *Loviisa* suggested a similar reading as it identified "guilt and bad conscience" as "the two basic emotions of a Finnish man, together with proneness to self-destruction".[26] Within the narrative world of Niskavuori, Juhani's father, Juhani, and Aarne are all, at least implicitly, portrayed as alcoholics. One reviewer, however, interpreted the 1987 TV films' representation of Niskavuorean men as criticism against idealizing images of "sensitivity" in this sense:

> "Wuolijoki illustrates how cowardly, drinking, and childish men have been idealized through the ages. They are the keepers of the family name, the mark of the male."[27]

In addition to sensitivity and propensity to substance abuse, reviewers of Niskavuori fictions and authors of books about the "Finnish man" connected "weakness" to lack of individuality and independence. As suggested even by the 1990s representation of the "aarnes", the Niskavuorean man was recurrently characterized as dependent on women:

> "For Wuolijoki, all men are weak; woman is the one who endures and who keeps the things together as men fall apart. Even Aarne, who wrenches himself from Niskavuori, is dependent on his schoolmistress. He is not capable of independent judgements, although he thinks he is."[28]

24 *Maaseudun Tulevaisuus* 15.8.1978. In 1975, Anssi Mänttäri directed a film called *Pyhä perhe* (*The Holy Family*) based on a play by psychiatrist and poet Claes Andersson. It featured an alcoholic husband and father whose abuse problem was dramatized as an illness of the whole family. See *Teatteri* 13/1974 (20.9.), 8.

25 *Katso* 25/1992 (Lindqvist).

26 Peter von Bagh, "Pieni johdatus elokuvaan" (TV introduction to *Loviisa*) TV2 18.6.1992.

27 *AL* 5.12.1987.

28 *Savon Sanomat* 9.10.1977.

Moreover, many reviewers interpreted this dependency as oppression, describing Aarne and Juhani as overpowered and dominated by women, especially their mothers:

> "The opening episode of the Niskavuori series expresses the absolute power with which the women of the family have ruled over their weak men."[29]

> "Tervapää's relation to men's and women's issues is such that man comes second."[30]

> "The old matron governs the course of family life as she pleases. She wants more economic power for the house." [31]

This theme of female power and dominating mothers connected readings of Niskavuori films to contemporary debates on the position of "the Finnish man". Echoing these reviews and the 1950s framings of Loviisa as a "(s) mother", a matriarch, and a monster (see Chapter 3), Matti Kuronen (1979, 63–64) formulated a straightforward thesis: "A powerful mother-figure can always be found where the man is small". Following a psychoanalytical reasoning and recalling many other contemporary writers, Kuronen interpreted the son's problems as symptoms of maternal dominance and paternal absence: "Usually, these powerful female figures have men at their sides who do not give their sons any other model than that of submission. Due to their dependencies, these fathers with wet hats, often alcoholics, cannot perform the most fundamental task of a father, remove the child from all the wombs of the mother and allow him to enter the world." (Ibid., 64; cf. Vilska 1986, 51–52; Lindqvist 1986, 69–73; Siltala 1994; 1999.)

In *Protect the Finnish Man*, Matti Kuronen evoked a Kalevalaic legacy – as if mocking the monumentalizing tradition discussed in the previous chapter – as evidence for and an illustration of a long-standing female power and male subordination:

> "The *Kalevala* is a book about the landscape of the Finnish soul. As such, it is a story about weak, simple, and woman-starved men and strong, power-hungry women; Louhi is the first suffragist of our world, the only real man in the *Kalevala*, and the mother of Lemminkäinen is the mother of all mothers. With their help, it is possible to track the man's path that still applies today: it is a road that leads from woman to woman on woman's terms." (Kuronen 1979, 58.)

Through such reference to the *Kalevala*, the figure of the man-in-crisis connected to a long tradition. The Kalevalaic legacy gave the figure a sense of real history, attaching it to folklore and oral tradition. A reference to the "national epic" also outlined the figure as an indigenous formation, a "Finnish" specialty. Moreover, it invested the figure of the "weak man" with

29 *Katso* 4/1964, 45.
30 *TS* 11.3.1977.
31 *HS* 30.10.1982.

a mythical force, placing it beyond time and history. As illustrated in the previous chapter, readings of Niskavuori films, too, have repeatedly evoked the *Kalevala* as an interpretive framework.

At the same time, however, many reviewers have interpreted the "weakness" of the Niskavuori male characters as the expression of Hella Wuolijoki's programmatic ideology. In these readings, she has been evoked as a feminist, a proponent of the women's movement, and an advocate of the contemporary politics of gender equality:

> "In Niskavuori, women are stronger than men. The old matron is always the one who holds the house together. Men are always more or less bums or Don Juans. Here is the feminism of Wuolijoki."[32]

In this manner, reviewers regarded Wuolijoki as a biased author and portrayer of gender relations due to her sex. Furthermore, the female characters of Niskavuori fictions were often interpreted as her self-images:

> "The women in Hella Wuolijoki's plays are as mighty as Hella herself, strong, proud, and persistent. They all have something of her in them. As for the men, Hella portrayed them as individuals who escape responsibilities, who are reckless and weak. The women often compensated for the weakness of their men."[33]

Other reviewers discussed the "weakness" of Niskavuorean men as a sign of the times that discredit men, a tendency larger than that of Wuolijoki's authorship. One reviewer of the 1987 TV films suggested that the age of equality politics has emasculated the Niskavuorean man:

> "Juhani has, perhaps because of the current discussion on gender equality, lost much of his former masculinity. Veikko Honkanen's performance has moulded Juhani into a more contradictory, but at the same time, an even more realistic character. Now viewers have reason to ask themselves whether Juhani is a crook or a hero. Juhani used to be more unambiguously heroic. In Tauno Palo's time, it was a must!"[34]

1970s and 1980s writings of "the Finnish man" outlined women's movement as the main opponent of men and men's liberation. When describing the current situation, they portrayed Finnish men "under siege" or persecuted and saw the women's movement, "waged with foreign weapons", with "US, German and Swedish female agents", and "the whole machinery of sociology, anthropology and philosophy that makes noise in favour of women" as the perpetrators:

32 *Etelä-Saimaa* 30.10.1982.

33 *Kodin Kuvalehti* 5.11.1989. As examples of film reviews which operate with strong/weak distinction, see also *Antenni* 6/1972; *Savon Sanomat* 9.10.1977; *Maaseudun Tulevaisuus* 15.8.1978; *Etelä-Saimaa* 30.10.1982; *HS* 30.10.1982; *Film in Finland* 30.10.1982: *IS* 2.12.1987; *AL* 5.12.1987 (Laurila); *Katso* 25/1992, 4–5.

34 *KSML* 6.12.1987.

> "It appears that there is one universal and equal trial going on against the man. He has already been sentenced to the cruellest possible punishment, lifelong existence as a man. All that is left is the task of identifying his crimes. The sole humane trait of some of the proponents of the women's movement lies in the fervour with which they seek material for prosecuting man. Behind this persecution must be some guilty consciousness, which is also a humane element." (Kuronen 1979, 12.)[35]

Even a 1986 special report by the Council of Equality between Men and Women (TANE) urged men to liberate themselves from the power and definitions of "women" and the "women's movement". Interestingly, the elision of these two categories characterized all writings on the "Finnish man":

> "The women's movement has at each stage created its own ideal man. At the turn of the century, it referred to an abstinent, good-mannered, and responsible man, which is still the dream of many women. In the 1960s, men were supposed to share everything with their women. Since the 1970s, the ideal man has become a peace-loving and nature-protecting, softy man who in no way restricted the liberty of his woman. (…) Man has to change in order to make the woman feel well. (…) The ideals have been women's ideals and the women have hoped that men would become more like them." (*Miestä päin* 1986, 5; cf. Lindqvist 1986, 10, 69–70)

This interpretation of the "male crisis" as forced upon men by the women's movement was not particular to Finland, but applied internationally (cf. Gardiner 2002, 4–5). The rhetoric has also persisted in Finland; either the women's movement (the equality politics of the 1960s–1980s) or the restructuring of Finnish society and its labour market (the 1990s economic recession and unemployment) have been recurrently described as exterior forces afflicting men (cf. Hoikkala 1996, 3–5; Paananen 1996). This sense of "victimization" is one motor that drives the crisis view of masculinity (cf. Gardiner 2002, 7–8). Although extreme examples of the 1980s rhetoric, both a family therapist (Matti Kuronen) and a sociologist (Matti Kortteinen) illustrated the main line of reasoning as they presented the "Finnish man" as victimized and lacking in hope to the extent that the use of alcohol and "domestic violence"[36] are their only means to rebel:

> "When I am told about the violence against women, for which there is no excuse, I also hear about another kind of violence. These stories tell of a man who is born weaker than a woman and who lives a shorter and thinner life than a woman. When he dies, women still have ten years of unlived life." (Kuronen 1979, 13)

35 Lindqvist 1986, 71, 74–76; *Miestä päin* 1986, 5.

36 In Finland, until the late 1990s, the term "domestic violence" (the Finnish word *perheväkivalta* translates literally as family violence) was preferred over "violence against women". Hence, the gender issue remained clouded.

> "To what extent is home and domestic violence a blind male rebellion, based on the violent and defiant mode of Finnish intoxication, against matriarchality within the family?" (Kortteinen 1984, 71.)[37]

The critique of women's definitional power was coupled with cautions against a "feminization" of the "Finnish man". Men were advised to be aware of a threat of feminization, which was compared here, to "Finlandization" (Finlandisierung), the cold war buzzword for Soviet-driven quasi-independent foreign policy (Kuronen 1979, 66).[38] As Finnish politicians were thought to submit themselves to Soviet agendas, the feminization allegedly promoted by the women's movement with foreign ideas was perceived as threatening to take over Finnish men:

> "When a man becomes femininized, he is not capable of seeing the potential of growth that has to do with his own independence. When a man looks back, he sees only women. They also surround him. His own manhood waits for him in the future, in humanity. In a manly manner, a man must look into the future and down the man's path. There four tasks of development await him, four undertakings (…) on the road towards the kind of manhood that is not already laughed at by women or rutted by society." (Kuronen 1979, 66.)

As constructed in literature on the "Finnish man", the image of the man-in-crisis not only subordinated and oppressed promised potential liberation. In this manner, weakness was redefined as a crisis calling for action, whereas the qualities of the weak, emotionality and indetermination, stood out as the grounds of a new male identity.[39] Readings of Niskavuori films have articulated a similar rhetoric of weakness and liberation:

> "Only after a difficult crisis does Juhani submit himself to his role as the figurehead of the family. (…) Even here, Tauno Palo (…) embodies in a memorable manner, dimensions of a man who is strong outside, but weak inside, in other words, emotional."[40]

As early as 1968, one reviewer of a radio play interpreted the troubles and anxieties of the Niskavuorean man as a call for societal reforms. Even here, women were identified with the oppressive structures inhibiting male development:

37 This argument was reiterated in 2002 in discussion of Kari Hotakainen's novel *Juoksuhaudantie* (*Trench Road*). See Virtanen 2002.

38 Interestingly, Matti Kuronen himself cited a U.S. men's movement activist Warren Farrell and his bestseller *The Liberated Man* (1974).

39 *Suomen Kuvalehti*, the most prestigious weekly magazine in Finland, commented on this debate by publishing an interview ("The Child protects the woman, let the woman protect the man") with Irma Kerppola, a physician and writer who in her latest book, *Ruusujen matematiikka* (*Mathematics of roses* 1985), had uttered "a mild protest against feminism". The journalist introduced her book as "a defence for and a lover to men, an appeal on their behalf". *SK* 19 (10.5.1985), 23–25.

40 *IS* 30.10.1982.

> "Some have attempted to show that it is almost impossible to break up the traditional, agrarian society women uphold. Where do the economic necessities and demands of society drive men who waver between them and their own emotions, who do not measure up to their wives in terms of strength and honour?"[41]

In 1970s and 1980s literature on "the Finnish man", emancipation was devised as individualization. To liberate oneself from women's definitional power involved discovering a will of one's own, becoming independent both in terms of will and emotions:

> "Do not listen to the women. Women's talk makes one dizzy. Look at the man and find a human being because finding a human being makes one happy. Find the man for he is lost, the man who knows where he should be, but who doesn't know where he is, where he has gone." (Kuronen 1979, 14.)

In my reading, such characterizations have informed readings of Niskavuori films since the 1970s, and even the making of the latest Niskavuori film in 1984. Indeed, *Films in Finland* 1984 indirectly suggested such a connection by both promoting Matti Kassila's *Niskavuori* and publishing a small notice which reported how "sociologists interested in differences in lifestyle have been asked to explain why the so-called satirical and burlesque Uuno Turhapuro[42] films have continually attracted Finnish audiences":

> "These analysts have described the Emptybrook-syndrome as reflecting the crisis in family life in which the man starts feeling superfluous in the face of women's increasing economic independence and the migration to the cities; the woman survives without him, both in terms of money and practical issues. The Emptybrook films convince the man in the street that perhaps not everything needs to be overturned. In spite of everything, the woman still cannot help loving the man."[43]

A few years later, a group of Finnish film scholars presented the case of Uuno Turhapuro in the context of popular European cinemas and indigenous humour. This account (Hietala et al 1992, 135–136) linked the emergence of the character Uuno to "the popular discourses of the early 1970s in which the Finnish male was increasingly criticized, especially in women's magazines". According to Veijo Hietala, "the traditional Finnish man was often portrayed in a negative light; besides being a chauvinist, he was also a clumsy companion and lover, lousy at showing his emotions, let alone understanding the needs of women". Hence, the Uuno character was read

41 *US* 31.5.1968 (radio review of *The Young Matron of Niskavuori*).

42 Due to its syllabic structure, "Uuno Turhapuro" sounds like a legitimate Finnish name, but means something like "Dorky Useless" or "Jerk Futile". For these astute translations, I owe many thanks to Harri Kalha. However, in 1980s English-language promotional material, the name was translated flatly as "Emptybrook"

43 *Films in Finland* 1984, 46. The notice refers to without mentioning to Matti Kortteinen's analysis of "the Turhapuro syndrome": "As there is a direct correlation between the Turhapuro humour and the family crises depicted in this article, it is legitimate and astute to term the latter as Turhapuro syndrome" (Kortteinen 1984, 74).

as "a male counter-attack" on "radical feminism", "women's empowered consciousness", and "the crisis of male identity". (Hietala 1991a, 56–57.) In it, some argued, "the hidden potential of the Finnish male was revealed, and, at the same time, perhaps as a defensive, regressive male fantasy against the increasing demands for sexual equality and women's rights from the early 1970s onwards". (Hietala et al 1992, 135–136.) One psychohistorical framing from 1989 also interpreted Uuno Turhapuro as a shadow figure for the man-in-crisis, reading Uuno as "the regressive paradise of the Finnish man, where nourishment can be found in a symbiotic way even in adulthood" (Siltala 1989, 379).[44]

In the 1990s, the figures of the "Finnish man" and the man-in-crisis coalesced in studies of men's autobiographical writings. Concern for the "Finnish man" resulted in a 1992–1993 writing competition organized by the Council of Equality between Women and Men and the Folklore Archives of the Finnish Literary Society. A selection of the submissions (the contest drew 363 entrants, writing a total of 20,000 pages) was published under the title *Eläköön mies* ("*Long live the man"*, Siimes 1994). The material has prompted new research, for instance, in an anthology *Miehen elämää* (*The Life of a Man*, Roos & Peltonen 1994) and in a monograph *Miehen kunnia* (*The Man's Honour*, Siltala 1994).[45] Evoking the figure of the man-in-crisis, one editor of *The Life of Man* asked, "Why is the image of the Finnish man often so miserable, depressing, lacking any way out of the situation, full of hopeless loneliness, bitterness, hostility, disappointments, losses, remorse, guilt?" (Roos 1995, 68.)[46] The interpretation of this "male crisis" as prompted by women and the feminist movement was reiterated in 2002, when Kari Hotakainen's novel *Juoksuhaudantie* (*The Trench Road*) was discussed as a portrait of "a Finnish man", a representative of the first Finnish generation whose "main task was to liberate the home front and the women". For sociologist Matti Virtanen (2002), in a column published in *Helsingin Sanomat*, the largest daily newspaper in Finland, the novel read as a touching depiction of the men of his age caught in the "trenches of the war for women's liberation". This framing of the "man-in-crisis" once more discussed violence

44 Juha Siltala has pursued this argument on the regressive fantasies of the "Finnish man" further in Siltala 1994, Siltala 1999.

45 In another study on men and honour, *Kunnian kentät* (*The Fields of Honour*), sociologist Matti Kortteinen summarized the victimized position of the "Finnish man". What he terms "male ethos" underlines "the necessity of coping". Consequently, a man "faces the hardships of the world alone, without anyone's help", whereas "women do not have to survive first and then become members of a social community, they already are." He concludes: "When a woman sacrifices herself and behaves 'the right way', she can be wise and strict and maintain social order in her surrounding – especially in relation to those persons who do not behave respectfully (for example, in relation... to a man who doesn't behave properly but drinks)." See Kortteinen 1992, 60–63, 60–72.

46 While the feminist reading delineated in Chapter 3 posited that the "strength" of the "Finnish woman" derives from agrarian culture, Roos (1994, 69) maintains that "the misery of Finnish men has very strong rural roots". In his writings on the misery of the "Finnish man", Roos (1994, 2002) even uses Finnish films as illustrations. For a reading of films by Matti Ijäs – films portraying "the everyday battle of survival the Finnish man fights between the traditional and the modern models of man" as confirming the image of the "Finnish man" constructed in 1990s men's studies, see Ahonen 1999.

against women as a sign of the male protagonist's justified frustration: he does his best, Virtanen emphasizes, but the wife is never content. "Once and only once", he reacts to her insults by hitting her, and falls into a new trench as she leaves him and takes the child with her. While Hotakainen's novel can certainly be read as ironic, Virtanen's interpretation points to the genealogy of the figure of the man-in-crisis and its continued relevance on the debate on gender.

While I have paralleled the descriptions of the Niskavuori men in review journalism with contemporary social scientific writings and literature on the "Finnish man" *without* explicit references between these two domains (but, instead, based on my reading of the figure of the man-in-crisis), the link was made explicit in the context of theatre. In 1988, a feature article in *Teatteri*, the Finnish theatre magazine, presented the Niskavuori plays as "the common national memory" and along with Kalle Päätalo's novels, a self-evident intertextual framework for any talk on "Finnishness":

> "We have all come from Niskavuori. For most of us, the peasant background is only one generation away, for the rest it is at two generations' distance. Peasant thinking, association, and morality are even closer to us. A multi-generation urbanite is a true rarity. Even yuppies have grannies in Savitaipale and memories of feeding pigs.[47]

Besides addressing readers as "us" and hence, echoing the 1980s framing of the "agrarian past" as "our heritage" (see Chapters 2 and 5), the article provided a reading of the Niskavuori personae in terms of contemporary sociology and, in particular, the taxonomy of the Finnish ways of life J.P. Roos, now a professor in social policy, articulates in his influential monograph *Suomalainen elämä* (*The Finnish Life* 1987). In the framing constructed in *Teatteri*, Wuolijoki and Roos offered similar analyses of the "Finnish life". Both in Roos's study and in Wuolijoki's play, the article identified five typical life stories "Finns" tell themselves. First, all supporting characters of Niskavuori plays (Malviina's mother Juse, Akusti's mother Mari, the women managing the telephone exchange, Santra and Serafina) were read as embodiments of "miserable, unhappy life" in which there is "no external or internal control of life" and in which "life does not take shape as a whole, not even for the person living it". Second, the article described Loviisa and Juhani as well as other main characters as epitomizing "the empire of necessity", to use an expression coined by Juha Siltala in 1994. In Roos's vocabulary, it is a question of the imperatives [pakkorako] of the peasant life in which "external forces influence life, exceeding the will of an individual who nevertheless reconciles [sopeutuu] herself". Third, both Ilona (in *The Women of Niskavuori* 1936, 1938) and Malviina's son Juhani Mattila (in the play *What now, Niskavuori*? 1953, the film *Niskavuori fights* 1957) were identified as signifying "a harmonious, genuinely happy life". Fourth, "the educated children of Loviisa Niskavuori, the cabinet members and doctors with their wives, who have moved into the city" and who figure in the play

47 *Teatteri* 1/1988 (feature article on theatre performances).

The Bread of Niskavuori and the film *Aarne Niskavuori* (1954), were defined as "we-are-all-fine –types". Fifth and last, the article presented the marriage of Martta and Aarne (*The Women of Niskavuori* 1936, 1938) and Aarne's and Ilona's marriage (*The Bread of Niskavuori* 1938, *Aarne Niskavuori* 1954) as "cracks in the happiness barrier". Heta's and Akusti's marriage, however, was identified as a "straightforward family hell".[48]

The unhappy Oedipus in The Women of Niskavuori *(1938)*

> "[W]hat is so interesting is the recognition that masculine anxieties are not simply to be located in the awful spectacle of the castrated woman, but within the structures of masculinity itself. (…) Once masculine anxiety can no longer be displaced onto the female subject the prospect is indeed bleak, one might say tragic."
> Pat Kirkham & Janet Thumim 1995, 14.

The figure of the man-in-crisis emerged in the interpretive framings of the first Niskavuori play and film as early as the 1930s. While the later readings, within the intertextual framework of contemporary sociology and literature on "Finnish men", suggested an emancipatory perspective, 1930s readings expressed anxiety about the figure of the man-in-crisis. From the première of *The Women of Niskavuori* onwards, reviewers described the role of Aarne Niskavuori almost unanimously as "unsympathetic", "deficient", "weak", "psychologically unmotivated", "difficult to interpret", and "unflattering".[49] Reviews of the 1938 film echoed 1936 interpretations of Aarne's "constant hesitation" as the negative of "strong male will" [50]:

> "[T]he persona of the young patron is psychologically much too unmotivated. He acts because of an exterior will, the will of the author, rather than because of an interior, character-based reasons. As a character, he is rather incapacitated and devoid of impact."[51]

> "Aarne's ambiguous [häilyvä], undecided, and less manly character is aptly interpreted."[52]

The lack of a will of his own, his being "under his mother's strong will"[53], suggested that Aarne was a *mama's boy*.[54] In this respect, he echoed the mother-bound male protagonists of D.H. Lawrence's novels such as *Sons*

48 Ibid., 12–13.
49 *TS* 18.1.1938; *Varsinais-Suomi* 19.1.1938; *Savo* 18.1.1938; *ÅU* 19.1.1938; *Suomen Pienviljelijä* 27.1.1938; *IS* 17.1.1938; *US* 17.1.1938; *Ssd* 18.1.1938. See also See also *AL* 19.10.1936; *Naamio* 2/1937, 28; *Aamu* 2/1937; *AS* 1.9.1936; *HS* 1.4.1936; *Naamio* 6/1936, 93; *Uusi Aura* 25.10.1936.
50 See also *Ssd* 21.10.1936; *Aamu* 2/1937; *US* 27.1.1938.
51 *US* 1.4.1936.
52 *Kansan Lehti* 19.1.1938.
53 *US* 27.1.1938.
54 For psychohistorical readings of mother-son relations in Finnish history, see Siltala 1999, 61ff; Siltala 1994, 31–51.

and Lovers (1913), which was published in Finnish in 1934. (Cf. MacLeod 1985, 15–34).

Lamenting Aarne's lack of will and self-determination and seeing Aarne's "ambiguity" as a problem, these framings of the Niskavuori films participated in contemporary discussion of "proper manliness". As Ritva Hapuli (1995, 167) has argued, Finnish cultural critics of the 1920s and 1930s saw the effeminization of men as an even greater threat than the "masculinization" of women. The writings of the cultural critic Olavi Paavolainen, for instance, suggested that "proper" masculinity could be achieved through a control over one's drives. To be a man was to be able to control one's sexuality (ibid., 177). Thus, Paavolainen and other critics apprehended as representatives of radical, modernist agendas articulated an ideal of manliness reminiscent of 19th century English and German nationalist agendas. In *Nationalism and Sexuality*, George L. Mosse (1985, 5, 9, 181ff) shows how male masculinity wedded respectability and nationalism. Manliness was defined in terms of restraint and self-control, and it meant freedom from sexual passion, "the sublimation of sensuality into leadership of society and the nation" (Mosse 1985, 13, 46.)[55] In relation to this "ideal masculinity" (cf. Chapter 3) Aarne appeared as a troubling figure in many senses.

In 1938, the character of Aarne in the film was described as "a gloomy man of powerful emotions", emphasizing "the suppressed and confined, already half paralysed in Aarne", "the inner restlessness" which "discharges itself violently, but is just barely [nödtorftigt] controlled ".[56] Two publicity-stills portraying Aarne Niskavuori articulated a similar melodramatic take on the male character. One depicts Aarne standing in the barn; he is placed in the foreground, while couples are seen dancing in the background. Such a framing emphasizes his almost obvious anxiousness; as he looks off-frame, his body is tense and suggests an impending movement. Another still represents Aarne sitting by his desk with his head on his hands. Shot with an expressionistic lighting, he is positioned under a stuffed moose head. The horns hang over his head and overshadow him. The composition of the still hints at the "smallness" of Aarne as he occupies only the lowest third of the frame area. [Fig. 27] As narrative images, all of these stills suggested a narrative of a man's choice over two women and two ways of life.[57] A similar sense of anxiety was constructed in a medium-two shot of Aarne with his mother; their faces are averted off-frame as if waiting for something dramatic to happen. Moreover, their faces are covered with a shadow.

Reviews of *The Women of Niskavuori* play, however, did not outline Aarne in such melodramatic terms. Rather, they characterized him as "partly incomprehensible and spiritually unclear", as "illogical", "helpless", and "trivial", as "nebulous" and "not fully convincing", "a vague daydreamer".[58]

55 For an analysis of respectability and nationality in the Finnish context, see Siltala 1996a, 34–44.

56 *SvP* 18.1.1938; *Uusi Aura* 19.1.1938.

57 For a reading of the theme of male conversion in Italian cinema, see Landy 1998, 170ff.

58 *Sosialisti* 24.10.1936; *Ilkka* 26.5.1936; *TS* 24.10.1936.

Fig. 27. Aarne as the man-in-crisis in The Women of Niskavuori *1938 (FFA).*

The right-wing newspaper *Ajan Suunta* described Aarne through analogy to the "obscure and meaningless" male character in F. E. Sillanpää's "lousy piece of work", the novel *Miehen tie* (*The Man's Path* 1932). According to the reviewer, Aarne Niskavuori and Paavo Ahrola were "similar good-for-nothings".[59] This intertextual framework indicates a reading of *The Women of Niskavuori* in terms of the "vitalistic" discourses on gender and sexuality.[60] In Lasse Koskela's (1988, 150) reading of Sillanpää, "a man does not control his own path" and "the man does not understand it".[61] Instead, his own unconscious mental images and women are the two forces which determine his path. The title of the novel, which refers to the Old Testament, indeed offers manliness as a question of self and identity: Who or what determines "the

59 *AS* 1.9.1936. Nyrki Tapiovaara and Hugo Hytönen made *The Man's Path* into a film in 1940.

60 "Vitalism" as an intertextual framework is discussed in Chapter Five.

61 "Miehen tie ei ole miehen omassa vallassa, eikä mies ymmärrä tietään."

man's path" and where does it lead?[62] Breaking from common interpretations of Sillanpää's work as celebratory of peasant life, love, marriage, and erotic attachment, Koskela's (1988, 173–174) reading captures a psychoanalytically informed discourse on manhood and masculinity that suggests why 1930s reviewers found the Aarne character so repudiating:

> "Men especially have a weak self-esteem. They need support from daydreams or from women – often women whom about they dream. They easily fall in love and cling to women. They are not capable of an equal encounter. They cause the rejection themselves and languish reminiscing about the lost love. Only a lost love is the right one."[63]

In the 1930s, "male trouble", the troubling male protagonist, was discussed in terms of the intentions, sympathies, and ideological or political agendas of the author. The female author was introduced as either incapable (lacking skill) or unwilling to portray male characters. Immediately after the première of *The Women of Niskavuori*, the "inconsistency" of the male protagonist was explained as an effect of the gender of the true author:

> "The author has, however, been honest towards both men and women in this play, even if she has contented herself with sketching men as ready-made personae, whereas the women and their characters have been developed with obvious interest and great expertise. They are so clear that the path of development of each is fully comprehensible to the viewer." [64]

> "The author of the play that has recently attracted considerable attention and even inspired polemic appears under the name of Juhani Tervapää, but one does not need to be a psychologist to notice the strong feminine input in the play. In it, women have been portrayed with much more sympathy and why not even with more love than men."[65]

Reviewers also discussed the portrait of Aarne in terms of its allegedly "feminist" agenda. In two separate reviews, Lauri Viljanen framed Hella Wuolijoki as a "feminist" writer whose ideological agenda he then questioned: "The glowing feminism of the female author makes her male characters into marionettes."[66]

Readings that underlined Aarne's lack of will and his indecisiveness, as well as his eroticism, also linked him to Olavi in *Laulu tulipunaisesta kukasta* (*The Song of the Scarlet Flower*), the most popular Finnish film in 1938, directed by Teuvo Tulio and based on a novel by Johannes Lin-

62 "O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps" (Jeremiah 10:23); "Man's goings are of the Lord; how can a man then understand his own way" (Proverbs 20:24); "All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes; but the Lord weigheth the spirits" (Proverbs 16:2). See Koskela 1988, 142–143.

63 Koskela 1988, 173–17. For readings of Paavo Ahrola as the Finnish peasant, see *Valvoja-Aika* 1/1933, 27–31; Koskimies 1936, 94–100.

64 *Ilkka* 26.5.1936. See also *US* 1.4.1936; *HS* 1.4.1936.

65 *Aamu* 2/1937.

66 *HS* 11.3.1937. See also HS 18.1.1937.

nankoski. This film depicts a young farmer's son, Olavi, who falls in love with a female servant, defies his father who disapproves their relationship, and leaves his home estate in anger. Among wandering loggers, Olavi also lives as a serial romancer.[67] This intertextual framework enhanced readings of Aarne as character like Paavo Ahrola. In the 1930s, Aarne, Olavi, and Paavo were all framed as men who were unable to make life decisions and especially accept the assigned family role as the patron of the house. They all lacked father figures, and according to many readings, they all struggled with overpowering mothers. In light of the 1930s interest in psychoanalysis and Freudian theories, each of them was an "Unhappy Oedipus", as their family romances had failed and become tragedies that resulted in restless, torn men.[68] All of these characters searched for their "way" via women, a plot that the literary critic Lauri Viljanen underlined in 1936 when he defended Sillanpää's controversial novel against accusations that it told of "a bastard's rather than a man's path". Viljanen contended that Paavo Ahrola "will not be a man before he has attached his life to the woman, Alma Vormisto, who has been determined for him". In Sillanpää's defence, Viljanen traced the author's understanding of male-female relationships back to Goethe's novel *Der Wahlverwandtschaften* (1809, *Elective Affinities* 1872, *Vaaliheimolaiset* 1923) in which love is depicted as a cosmic union between partners. To quote Viljanen, "in love between a man and a woman, there is a (…) law in force that has decisive influence on one's life that (…) is better perceived by the woman than by the man".[69] This framing explained, then, Aarne's "nebulosity" with reference to his unloving wife Martta and his dominant mother Loviisa. The female stranger Ilona, on the other hand, appears as a positive and transformative force that helps Aarne detach himself from a paralyzing family pattern, and subsequently return to Niskavuori, assume the patronhood, and finalize the unfinished Freudian family romance in a proper manner. For Aarne, this plot promised empowerment and liberation, whereas it assigned Ilona the role of a catalyst and Loviisa the classic position of the mute mother.[70] (See Chapter 5.)

67 For a reading of Mika Waltari's *Vieras mies tuli taloon* (*A Stranger Came into the House* 1937) and Johannes Linnankoski's *Laulu tulipunaisesta kukasta* (*The Song of the Scarlet Flower*) as narratives about male identity, see Soikkeli 1998, 121–158. Tytti Soila (1994, 265ff) discusses the several Swedish and Finnish film versions of the *The Song of the Scarlet Flower*. *Elokuva-aitta* and Karhu-Filmi had organized a competition to find "the Finnish Olavi", the Finnish counterpart to Edwin Adolphson and Lars Hanson, the two Olavis in Swedish versions of the film.

68 An interest in Freudian psychoanalysis and his view of culture as repression has been identified as one of the ingredients in the 1930s "cultural crisis". "Communism, materialism, the biological conception of human beings, Freudian psychoanalysis as well as 'psychoanalytic novel' all suggested that culture was becoming 'too complex'." (See Sevänen 1994, 267; 115.) For a discussion of psychoanalytical cultural criticism in the 1930s Finland, see Ihanus 1999, 392–409.

69 Viljanen 1936b, 8. It is striking that Viljanen, here, does not mention the Oedipus-complex, which he, the very same year, offered as an interpretive key for *Mourning Becomes Elektra* by Eugene O'Neill. Viljanen 1936c, 345.

70 For readings of "family romance" in terms of gender politics, see Hirsch 1999 and Heller 1995.

In many respects, *The Women of Niskavuori* recalled other contemporaneous fictions which focused on "male trouble". In Artturi Leinonen's novel *Keväästä kevääseen* (*From spring to spring* 1935), an educated farmer falls in love with an urban young woman, a cosmopolite, but returns to his home estate. (Koivisto 1999, 193–195.) In *Vieras mies tuli taloon* (*A Stranger Came into the House* 1937), Mika Waltari depicted a male identity narrative similar to those in *The Song of the Scarlet Flower* and *The Man's Path*; all of these romances "civilize" the male characters and enable them to assume their proper positions (Soikkeli 1998, 153).

As "Olavi", Aarne also appeared as a ladies' man. In addition, one 1936 review framed Aarne mythologically as it described him as having "the *lieto*, restless blood of Niskavuori men" flowing in his veins.[71] The adjective "lieto" in Finnish language refers to Lemminkäinen, the male character of the *Kalevala* who is mother-bound and whose name refers to "making love" [lempiä].[72] A sense of eternal return was evoked when Aarne's story was recurrently described as if predestined by "blood":

> "The men at Niskavuori have never been faithful husbands. They have brought home rich wives with whose money they, through hard work and planning, have steadily increased the wealth of the estate. They have had their extra-marital escapades without provoking scandals and they have returned to the hearth of home."[73]

> "The men have been more restless; their blood flows in many of the neighbourhood's children, and they needed a lot of feminine endurance and wisdom to maintain the wealth and esteem of the house."[74]

> "Women have become the maintainers of the family's position, while the patrons have compensated for their longing for individual happiness with extra-marital affairs and alcohol." [75]

Such framings, then, suggested a pattern of compulsory repetition that implied a historical continuum and a sense of necessity.[76] Furthermore, the use of the noun "harhapolku" added to the mythological framing as it referred to the travels of Ulysses, and it underlined a reading of the film as being about "the man's path":

> "Women appear as upholders of all life and as its moral backbone, while men wander on their odysseys [harhapolkujaan] seeking personal happiness in the

71 *IS* 76/1936.

72 For an analysis of the heroism in Lemminkäinen character, see Harvilahti & Rahimova 1999, 97ff; Knuuttila 1999, 16–18.

73 *Hbl* 1.4.1936.

74 *HS* 1.4.1936.

75 *Uusi Aura* 25.10.1936.

76 Cf. Marcia Landy's (1998, 170) study of the 1930s Italian cinema and a particular narrative strategy that dramatized "embattled masculinity" by "marshalling familiar figures from folk tale and from religious narratives and myth". These characters and narrative motifs were then reworked to suit contemporary dramas.

lap of women and economic support from their wallets. (…) The men of this house have always had their odysseys, but they have always come back."[77]

On the other hand, many reviews from both 1936 and 1938 proclaimed the romance, the great love, of Aarne and Ilona and its effect implausible. They especially thought Aarne lacked character in this respect:

"It is [i]mpossible to believe how easily an heir of a big family estate in Häme, bound to Niskavuori with traditions of several generations, deserts his farm and his family."[78]

"[Aarne Niskavuori] should have had more character in order for one to understand how Ilona suddenly fell in love and showed affection for him. Now (…) he appeared as a weird blend of an operetta charmer and a male bastard. One could not form a good picture of him."[79]

Some reviews of the 1936 play, however, characterized Aarne as a realist image of an "ordinary type of man" "with all his faults and worths", a "mediocre" man who is in love, but "fears decisions", and is "no hero", but "one third granite, the rest soapstone":[80]

"The characters are portrayed downright realistically and truthfully, including subordinate roles and minor details. The only reservation to be made against the characters concerns the young patron of Niskavuori, the agronomist Aarne. I do not mean to say that the majority of men do not correspond to these weak, deceptive characters. For some reason, though, one hardly wishes to see them on the stage. (…) The conversion of Aarne seems, therefore, too unmotivated and too sudden to be plausible, especially after all the characterizations the old matron has given of the Niskavuori men in the play. As a viewer, one cannot help wondering whether this man, after all, is more suited to live in an empty marriage than with a woman whose standards he, on the basis of his behaviour, can hardly live up to." [81]

Images of "ordinary men" abounded in the 1930s European cinema and theatre. In the mid-1930s, male anti-heroes or "small men" appeared in plays by Marcel Pagnol and Somerset Maugham.[82] In French cinema, Jean Gabin epitomized "the world of the 'little people'"; in Bazin's characterization, he was "Oedipus in a cloth cap" (Vincendeau 1995, 250). After the collapse of the Popular Front government and the failure to counter German militarism

77 *Aamu* 2/1937.

78 *US* 17.1.1938. See also *Suomen pienviljelijä* 27.1.1938; *Ssd* 18.1.1938; *Varsinais-Suomi* 19.1.1938; *AL* 17.1.1938; *Uusi Aura* 19.1.1938. For readings of plausibility, see co *Hbl* 17.1.1938; *TS* 18.1.1938; *Sosialisti* 18.1.1938; *EA* 3/1938, 68–69.

79 *SvP* 1.4.1936; *HS* 1.4.1936.

80 *Kansan Lehti* 19.10.1936; *Ssd* 1.4.1936; *Naisten ääni* 9/1936.

81 *Ilkka* 26.5.1936.

82 Critic Katri Veltheim lists these as examples as she, in her memoirs, writes that "a small man" was at the time a concept connoting "a shabby and unnoticeable chap who did his insignificant job diligently and loyally, but was tramped on by impudent types who elbowed their way to success. See Veltheim 1989, 193–194 .

and fascism, the end of the 1930s has been described as a period "obsessed with the issue of male weakness" (Bates 1997, 26; cf. Vincendeau 1985). In Finnish cinema, a populist male anti-hero cropped up in the 1935 version of *Syntipukki* (*The Scapegoat)*; the male protagonist Mussu (Kaarlo Angerkoski), his name expressive of his very "softness", personified the difficulties "a small man" faced in moving to Helsinki and adjusting to the urban demands of the capital. As such, the character was a counter-figure to the heroines of the contemporary modern comedies, who as "modern women" and "flappers" fluently entertained the changing milieux and social conventions. (Cf. Koivunen 1995, chapter 5.) Although Aarne Niskavuori, as a patron figure, was not a "small man" in the same manner as Mussu, his "nebulosity", "incompetence", and relative "powerlessness" were clearly an issue in the 1930s reception. Aarne was not credible as the celebrated hero of the White Finland he was supposed to be. Since the 1918 Civil War, in which the peasants were the core of the White Guard and won over the Red Guard inspired by the Bolshevik Revolution, the peasants had been seen as the guarantors of continuity in Finnish social life.(Sevänen 1994, 111, 116.) Now Aarne clearly troubled this image.

Half peasant, half gentleman

In reviews of the 1938 film, descriptions of Aarne Niskavuori emphasized neither ordinariness nor mediocrity. Instead, a particular framing of Aarne emerged in the context of cinema culture; the *role* of Aarne was recurringly seen as weak, implausible, and poorly written, whereas its *performance* and the *star* playing the role, Tauno Palo, were described as strong, plausible, and successful.[83] In this manner, reviewers highlighted the actor's performance and star charisma in order to downplay or compensate for the "unsympathetic" features of the role. His performance was thought to restore the will and determination of the character and, importantly, to add credibility to the romance narrative:

> "As Aarne Niskavuori Tauno Palo made his role into a gloomy man of powerful emotions, who had hardly any of the characteristics that Palo normally uses to charm the audience. However, the result was good. One can understand (perhaps!) that Ilona has fallen in love with that kind of a Niskavuori patron, whereas one would not quite understand it if an ordinary womanizer were in question. And this man was clearly the son of his mother, a member of the Niskavuori family."[84]

83 *Uusi Aura* 19.1.1938; *Ssd* 18.1.1938; *Varsinais-Suomi* 19.1.1938; See also *US* 17.1.1938; *IS* 17.1.1938; *Kansan Lehti* 19.1.1938. Palo's acting was praised as "successful" in *AS* 17.1.1938; *Hämeen Kansa* 18.1.1938; *Kansan Työ* 26.1.1938; *HS* 17.1.1938; *Kauppalehti* 18.1.1938; *ÅU* 19.1.1938. For critical comments on "theatricality" or "lack of temperament" as drawbacks, see *Kauppalehti* 18.1.1938; *Savo* 18.1.1938; *Suomen Pienviljelijä* 27.1.1938.

84 *Uusi Aura* 19.1.1938.

In other words, reviewers saw Tauno Palo's performance as a successful mix of Häme and modernity, of "niskavuorism" and romantic charm:

> "[Tauno Palo] is a genuine and convincing Aarne Niskavuori. Half peasant, half gentleman. His homely taciturnity melted in the vicinity of young Ilona. And, upon leaving his homestead in order to set out into the world with his beloved, he displays both flexibility and strength".[85]

While this splitting between the role and the performer (or doubling of male characters, the good and the bad) occurred even in the 1950s public reception of the Niskavuori films and even in the context of theatre,[86] it characterized the framings of *The Women of Niskavuori* (1938) and *Loviisa* (1946) in particular. When the first performance of *The Young Matron of Niskavuori* was produced in 1941, review journalism again evoked the figure of male trouble.[87] Yet one more time, articles framed the play as a portrait of "an intensely erotic man wavering between the two women"; the play "blatantly illuminated" "the moral weakness and the scattered way of life of the men".[88] While the Aarne character was criticized for being incoherent and lacking in richness and nuances, he was framed as "a robust man of Häme", as "something of a peasant prince", and as "a real man despite his mistakes".[89] Hence, the question of plausibility ("Is he a Häme peasant?") also featured in framings of *Loviisa*, as Juhani was characterized as "the least convincing character", "diffusely sketched", and "a vacillating character".[90] In addition to the lack of will and determination, familiar themes even in the 1930s review journalism, reviewers also criticized the portrait of Juhani as asymmetrical and unequal to Malviina, his lower-class mistress:

> "How can it be explained that Juhani has nothing to talk about with Malviina who in the film reads literature – nothing less than Aleksis Kivi? In the play, this lack is aimed at enhancing the physical nature of their relationship and their spiritual unevenness. Now one starts to doubt that Juhani and his mental inability are to blame."[91]

85 *Elokuva-aitta* 3/1938, 68–69.

86 "Edvin Laine gave his character a rare amount of fire and blood, and most of all, of fresh masculinity (…) With only disparate ingredients, Edvin Laine managed to pull together a living person and in any case, a man who seems sympathetic as he should." *Ssd* 21.10.1936; see also *Kansan Lehti* 19.10.1936; "[Ensio Joukko's performance of Juhani Niskavuori] He had the solidity and self-esteem of a Häme peasant that one expects a Niskavuori son and patron to have" *SaKa* 4.1.1941; "Urho Somersalmi succeeded very well: even in his weakness, Juhani was moulded into a handsome male monument [miehenjärkäle]" *IS* 14.11.1940, *Hbl* 14.11.1940.

87 Juhani Mattila's (Tauno Palo) role in *Niskavuori Fights* was also criticized for being "superficial", "contradictory", "dispersed", and "unbelievable". See *NP* 18.11.1957; *Ssd* 18.11.1957; *US* 17.11.1957; *PS* 18.11.1957; *IS* 18.11.1957; *EA* 23/1957; *Pyrkijä* 1/1958.

88 *Valvoja-Aika* 1940, 385; *Nya Argus* 16.12.1940; *US* 14.11.1940; *Ssd* 14.11.1940; *HS* 14.11.1940; *Kansan Lehti* 15.11.1940.

89 *Valvoja-Aika* 1940, 385; *Lahti* 25.1.1941.

90 NP 30.12.1946; *Hbl* 29.12.1946.

91 *Ssd* 29.12.1946.

Fig. 28. Juhani "You have sworn obedience to me"; Loviisa "…and you have vowed fidelity". A marital fight in Loviisa *1946 (FFA).*

> "As Juhani Niskavuori, Tauno Palo was a typical Niskavuori patron, a womanizer, but unconditional in his emotions. He was tough, strong, serene, and passionate. (…) It was simply amazing that the educated Juhani had nothing else to say than 'You are beautiful!' to the educated Malviina."[92]

The visual promotional material of *Loviisa* suggested the figure of the man-in-crisis; it depicted Juhani (Tauno Palo) in poses suggesting an identity crisis as well as in scenarios of conflict with Martti, the farm hand, and his wife Loviisa. While the conflicts with Martti involve physical violence and imply a love triangle, the publicity-stills featuring marital rows place Juhani as the accused. Photographed from low-angle, in a long shot, with the spouses far apart, the effect of the conflict is enhanced. [Fig. 28] However, the face of Loviisa is lit, while Juhani stands in the shadow. In another still, Loviisa stands by a drunken Juhani; while Juhani's hat is on a slant, his black curls framing his desperate expression, key lighting gives Loviisa a halo-like glow. Two more publicity-stills presented images of a drunken Juhani: sitting by a table, with a bottle and, more interestingly, looking into a mirror and struggling to recognize himself in it [Fig. 29]. The photo, as a narrative image, reiterated similar framings of Aarne in 1938 and prefigured the 1980s emphasis on Aarne's identity crisis. Referring to the ending of the film, the decisive moment for Juhani, the still posed the question, will he see himself through the eyes of others, and will he submit himself to the normative role of the patron? Even a still that depicted Juhani in the woods, carrying a rifle,

92 *TKS* 31.12.1946.

Fig. 29. The patron's identity crisis in Loviisa *1946 (FFA).*

recalled "the inner restlessness" ascribed to Aarne in 1938. Here, he is partly shadowed by a tree and shot in a nocturnal setting referring to the two scenes in which first Loviisa, then Juhani escape to the woods. Lastly, the man-in-crisis, or rather son-in-crisis, is suggested by the still which depicts Juhani in a medium close-up, kneeling beside his mother who has just passed away, and weeping against her sleeve. [Fig. 30]

In review journalism, however, the splitting of protagonist/star prompted celebratory readings of Juhani Niskavuori as "full of vigour and glow"[93]:

> "Tauno Palo interprets the main protagonist in a powerful manner. He depicts that man overpowered by conflicts and passions as an interesting character. He should not be blamed for the fact that the story of the robust [jämerä] peasant, who falls so head over heels for a woman and even alcohol and seems somewhat unrealistic."[94]

Some saw a perfect fit (cf. Dyer 1979, 145–146) between the role and the performer, thanks to the actor:

> "He really *is* the young farmer, an authoritative master of a big estate, in whom we, at the same time, see glimpses of an uncontrollable fury, a boisterousness reminiscent of a folk song. For this reason, he ends up victorious in the rather difficult and embarrassing situation in which this grown man is caught wavering, with no will of his own, between the two women".[95]

93 *IS* 28.12.1946.
94 *Kansan lehti* 23.12.1946.
95 *US* 29.12.1946.

Fig. 30. Juhani as the son-in-crisis in Loviisa *1946 (FFA).*

> "Tauno Palo is Juhani, the patron of Niskavuori. He embodies the theme and he has the kind of Häme force that Juhani is expected to have."[96]

While the trouble with Juhani, like that with Aarne, was a trouble with "manliness", the effect of the splitting and doubling (Cf. Chapter 3.) was a "remasculinization" of the man-in-crisis. This effect was evident in the use of adjectives connoting strength, moral character, and erotic appeal. Through Palo's performance Juhani Niskavuori was framed not only as a plausible character, but even as an image of "a typical man" displaying both ethnic and national legacy (Häme) and manliness (pride, temperament, physical qualities suggesting phallic power):

> "Tauno Palo has precisely that sturdy power [jykevyys] and roughness [karskius] which makes his Juhani such a plausible character, not to mention how well he plays his role."[97]

> "He makes the character of Juhani and his changing moods much more understandable than what I remember actors doing on the stage with this role of a typical man. He displays a Häme-like taciturnity, the pride of a master, and a temperament that comes from Olavi in Linnankoski's novel."[98]

In negotiations around the Niskavuori men, the erotic appeal appeared as both something to be displayed and something to be controlled:

96 *VS* 30.12.1946.
97 *Ssd* 29.12.1946.
98 *HS* 29.12.1946. The plausibility of Palo's performance was also underlined by *Ssd* 29.12.1946; *Ylioppilaslehti* 13.2.1947.

"As Juhani Niskavuori, Tauno Palo performs the well-known Niskavuori-type man with vital force [verevä] and fervour [rajusti kuohuen]. He has male charm and deep down he is more than a lady-killer".[99]

The sovereign man: Tauno Palo as the spectacular lover

In the Niskavuori films of 1938 and 1946, the star-image of Tauno Palo provided an important subtext to the Niskavuori fictions. In his classic monograph on stardom, Richard Dyer (1979, 72) has suggested that star-images be studied as "polysemic structures". While characterized by complexity and contradictoriness, star-images do not equal the sum total of various media texts that feature the stars. Instead, Dyer emphasizes, "we need to understand that totality in its temporality". Following his approach, when studying star-images one must pay attention to differences and contradictions, to elements that reinforce each other, but also to the temporal changes in the image. Furthermore, studying star-images is not a question of determining what a particular star "meant for the 'average person' at various points", but rather "what the range of things was" that the star "could be read as meaning by different audience members". (Ibid.)[100]

In a 1938 reader poll in *Elokuva-aitta*, Tauno Palo was elected the best Finnish male actor.[101] The previous year, Suomi-Filmi had stirred up "a Tauno Palo –fever", as the male lead in *Hulda Juurakko* (1937, *Juurakon Hulda*) was reported as having conquered not only his Hulda, but also "a large number of female hearts all around Finland".[102] Later the same year, *Elokuva-aitta* published a poem (in Kalevala metre) featuring both domestic and foreign film stars; this poem declared Tauno Palo as the most "gallant" of Finnish males, "fully equal to [Robert] Taylor".[103] The cover of *Elokuva-aitta* portrayed him in a photo echoing Clark Gable with shiny hair, dark eyes, blank gaze, a cigarette, and a crooked smile. [Fig. 31][104] The same publicity-still was published in 1936 when *Eeva*, a new "magazine for modern women", featured an article on Tauno Palo, the new film charmer. Implying that the charm of Tauno Palo did not only attract female viewers, but also appealed to gay viewers, the male writer described him both as the "cutest" among Finnish "film heroes":

99 *AL* 28.12.1946.

100 For readings of Tauno Palo's star image, see Laine 1992, Koivunen 1994; 1995.

101 See *EA* 10–11/1938.

102 *SFUA* 9/1937. See also the article in *Elokuva-aitta* that introduced Tauno Palo as a star ("Tauno Palo tuli teatteriin ja elokuvaan laboratoriosta", *EA* 23/1935). The text discussed Palo's work in the theatre as well as his marriage, whereas the photos presented an amorous couple (Ansa Ikonen and Tauno Palo in *Kaikki rakastavat/Everybody Loves*, 1935) and a glamour still portraying Tauno Palo smiling, his teeth, eyes, and hair highlighted.

103 "Laulu taiteen taitajista, viisu filmin tähtösistä" *EA* 9/1938. "Tauno Palo, poika potra,/ Uros urhea, komea,/Hivus musta, mustat silmät,/Joissa veitikka asuvi,/Filmin kaunoinen kasakka,/Korein kukoista Suomen,/Täysin Taylorin veroinen./'Näkyvästi näyttelenkin,/ vien oivasti osani.'/Osui aivan oikeahan,/Totesi toden totisen."

104 For the cover and the vote, see *EA* 10–11/1938, 252.

Fig. 31. On the cover of Elokuva-aitta *(10–11/1938),Tauno Palo appeared as a romantic hero, his appearance resembling Clark Gable, a popular on-screen lover even in Finland.*

> "He has a slim body, shiny dark hair, and those dark moist eyes of a deer. The gaze is first slightly timid and wondering, but if the milieu does not seem dangerous, they soon will smile trustingly. Tauno Palo would certainly have the potential to become a very romantic hero if he had more of a gallant personality. Now he seems very polite and kind."[105]

While other Finnish male actors were reproached for being "solemn and stiff" in order to enhance themselves as "manly men", saw Tauno Palo as an exception:

> "He possesses that softness which is peculiar to Latin young men, but which seems alien to our Northern and barren theatre actors [meidän pohjoismaisen karuille teatteriherroillemme]. He has nothing of that boring quasi-manliness, but he is naturally and straightforwardly himself."[106]

105 *Eeva* 10/1936, 16, 36. For a discussion of the same quote as expressing gay sensibility, see Kalha 2003, 109–110.

106 Ibid.

The visual reference to Clark Gable enhanced a sexual and eroticized reading of Aarne Niskavuori, as Gable was marketed as "a real American he-man" in the 1930s. In Joe Fisher's analysis (1993, 36–46), Gable represented "a remarkably potent combination of elemental man and representative man, of 'extraordinary' and 'ordinary' masculinities" and in *It Happened One Night* (Frank Capra 1934), he became "a national sex object", "a man who transmits sex like sound waves".[107] Tauno Palo's contemporaries greatly admired his physiognomy, voice, and manner, and in retrospect, his female biographer endeavoured to capture the sensuality of Tauno Palo's bodily performance:

> "Through the camera, we could see his true nature. His unusual openness was mediated by the smile that lit his eyes to laugh genuinely. The silver screen manifested his free charm, the kind that cannot be performed unless one has it by nature. His unaffected appearance had original depth and force, but there was no trace of any sullen gravity. Tauno Brännäs was a true film lover. (…) He had qualities that cannot be acquired, but are innate. His outer appearance was exactly right; the proportions of his body were good, the proportion of his height to his shoulder width pleasant, his head posture naturally stately. His firmly outlined, purely articulated face, strong nose, firm chin, mouth, and eyes delicately revealed emotions without any jesting. Between skin, hair, and eyebrows he had the tonal variations required by black-and-white photography. He moved elastically, his step was naturally accentuated, although not heavy. His skin could take the close-ups and all of his appearance had clarity and purity that, in roles of heroes, was pre-requisite for credibility. In addition, the colour of his voice suited the mechanical reproduction of sound well, both in his singing and speaking voice. It was a voice that created a sense of presence. It was all perfect."[108]

In addition to eroticism, Tauno Palo's star image was, in retrospect, about sovereignty: His career on film stretched from the early 1930s to the early 1960s and included 67 roles in all. He was cast in the most diverse roles ranging from upper-class adventurers to petty criminals or village bullies, from urban charmers to peasant patrons, from drug abusers and violent rapists to war survivors (Laine 1992, 19–28). In many films, Tauno Palo's performance included singing and playing music (for instance in *Vaimoke The Surrogate Wife* 1936, *SF-Paraati/SF-Parade* 1940, *Kulkurin valssi/The Vagabondwalz* 1941). Even when ageing, his body was staged as an object of attraction, disguised spectacularly in, for example, *Rosvo-Roope* (*Bill the Bandit* 1949). Commentaries emphasizing the volume and variety of roles constructed the effect of sovereignty: "He was many things at once: a romantic hero, a superlative leading man, a brilliant musical star, the intense idealist of patriotic films, and finally a tragic looser".[109] The implicated affect

107 For a reading of Clark Gable's attraction among female audiences, see Taylor 1989, 109ff. Elsewhere (Koivunen 1994, 1995), I have argued that the post-war star image of Tauno Palo articulated the reading of violence as eroticism. In 1936, *Elokuva-aitta* stated that the only advice for all star hunters is "Go find us new Garbos and Clark Gables!". See *Elokuva-aitta* 13–14/1936.

108 Saarikoski 1981, 31–32.

109 von Bagh 1999, 24.

was one of astonishment and admiration. One 1946 film magazine described Tauno Palo with the adjective "sovereign" presenting his career – notably under the title of "The Man's Path", referring again to the novel *Miehen tie* by F.E. Sillanpää:

> "Nowadays Tauno Palo has taken the position of the Finnish romantic lover in a sovereign manner. His eyes have melted (on the screen, that is) all the female stars that our country can be proud of. However, the Glamour Boy has even become a good actor."[110]

In 1946, then, when *Loviisa* was released, five years after *The Vagabondwalz*, Tauno Palo was established as the uncontested romantic hero and the most celebrated actor in Finnish cinema. In all visual framings (lobby cards, publicity-stills, posters, and the trailer), he was the focal point as husband, lover, and patron. In my understanding, the framings of Tauno Palo as a "saviour" of the role of Juhani Niskavuori tapped into his "sovereignty" and, in a sense, continued to frame him as such, even under the guise of the-man-in-crisis. In this respect, the most popular Finnish film of the war years, *The Vagabondwaltz*, must be seen as an important intertextual framework for readings of *Loviisa*. *The Vagabondwaltz* was primarily a spectacle, not so much a spectacle of romantic love, rather, a spectacle of the romantic lover and sovereign masculinity. (Koivunen 1995, 170–183.) An analysis of the narrative and the public framings illustrate that Tauno Palo, playing a baron, disguised as a violinist, a circus star, and a vagabond structured the film as a series of performances. The film was a true star vehicle, a "Tauno Palo show", parading *everything* the performer could do. [Fig. 32] The publicity-stills used in advertising imitated the narration of the film and reiterated the logic of sovereignty:

- The Baron beats a Russian officer in a card game
- The Baron plays the violin in a restaurant in St. Petersburg.
- The Baron kills a Russian officer in a duel.
- [The Baron] escapes from Russia, singing and playing his violin on the train.
- [He] joins a circus group, sings, and performs in their show.
- [He] disguises himself as a Vagabond and is shown walking and singing on the road.
- He encounters a group of Romanies, Gypsies, and gains entrance to the group via his skillful playing and singing.
- He dances and romances with Rosinka (Regina Linnanheimo).
- [He] is challenged by a jealous rival, but beats Fedja in a duel (this time with knives).
- He continues walking and singing on the road and arrives at a mansion.
- He sings and dances – with both the daughter of the family, Helena (Ansa Ikonen) and her governess – at a feast.

110 "Kuinka tähti syttyy: Miehen tie: Tauno Palo", *SFUA* 3–5/1946. [Hänen katseensa edessä ovat käpristyneet (valkokankaalla nimittäin) kaikki ne naistähdet, joista maamme voi ylpeillä]

- He sings and dances with the servant girl, Stiina, in a working shed.
- He masquerades with Helena.
- He sings to the servants.
- Finally, he enters a wedding banquet, sings to the bride, dances with her, and robs her.

In its "narrative image" (Ellis 1985), *The Vagabondwalz* asserted that "Tauno Palo" could charm any woman; whether Russian or Romany, circus star or servant girl, countess or governess, young or old, all women immediately fell for him. The film space was filled with intra-diegetic audiences through whose eyes film viewers were invited to take pleasure in his performances; his eroticized, disguised, and thus emphasized body was placed as the object of spectatorial gazes. "Tauno Palo" was also presented as invincible as he would beat every man in competition, whether Russian officers challenged him, Russian police officers chased him, or they were jealous rivals in the circus, in the Gypsy camp, or in the mansion.[111]

While the intertext of *The Vagabondwaltz* articulates a discourse on a sovereign masculinity tied to a male body, it also brought the risks of a male spectacle to the foreground. For some reviewers, Tauno Palo's "type and his gestures" were "too decorative", i.e., feminized and, as such, unfit for "the role of a peasant".[112] At the same time, the troubled role as a peasant was even seen as favourable for Tauno Palo, diminishing his feminization and, hence, making him into a more plausible man:

> "As for Tauno Palo, it has been said many times that he is at his best when he does not have to portray a schoolgirl charmer with [brilliance] in his hair. As the kind of man who wavers between the home estate and women and who so fundamentally belongs to the Niskavuori atmosphere, [Tauno Palo] is more plausible and better than many times before."[113]

These comments express of a concern about the feminizing effect of stardom on the male masculinity or, at least, a continuous concern about the limits and qualities of manliness. As early as 1936, the year of his breakthrough as a film star, Tauno Palo was described as "a beautiful mama's boy", and reviewers suggested that he might be more than "the tame, sleek, and trivial man of Hilja Valtonen films" or "a gigolo with Stomatol-smile and brilliante in his hair"; "Our Thalia needs fierce and ardent lovers, so who will make Tauno wild?"[114]

111 Apart from skill, Tauno Palo's sovereignty is very much constructed in relation to space; the film is literally about movement from one space to another. It is also a movement from one country to another, from Russia to Finland. It passes through a different ethnicity, the Romanies, an ethnic group that most often stands as the exotized and erotized other in the Finnish context. Tauno Palo can surpass even these categories. For a discussion of the image of "Gypsies" in Finnish film, see Salakka 1991.

112 *Suomalainen Suomi* 1/1947, 51.

113 *Ylioppilaslehti* 13.2.1947.

114 *Eeva* 10/1936.

Fig. 32. The Vagabond Walz *1941 (FFA) framed Tauno Palo in terms of sovereign masculinity.*

As Steve Cohan (1997, xvi) has argued, "A star may play manly roles in his films, but the apparatus of stardom turns him into a spectacle, valuing him for his whole body as well as by his good looks even more than for his impersonation of agency." (See also Fisher 1993, 44–45.) Since Laura Mulvey's (1989) analysis of visual pleasure, the economy of looks in Western cinema and visual culture has been studied as carefully coded in terms of gender and power. "To-be-looked-at-ness" connotes passivity, which, to quote Richard Dyer (1992, 110) images of men "must disavow (…) if they are to be kept in line with dominant ideas of masculinity-as-activity". Strategies of disavowal include action (doing something) or at least promising action, showing potential for action (muscles, posture). In posters and publicity-stills, Tauno Palo as Juhani posed in a haymaking setting, sweaty from work, driving a horse carriage or turning a stone, and displaying muscular power through the contours of his workclothes. [Fig. 33] In this manner, his framing enacted the principles of displaying the male body that Richard Dyer (1992, 116) has identified in his study of male pin-ups: "Looked at but pretending not to be, still yet asserting movement, phallic but weedy".

Fig. 33. The patron as a visual spectacle in The Loviisa *1946 (FFA).*

As Juhani, Tauno Palo was represented in a pin-up-like publicity-still that had little significance as a narrative image, but had more significance as an image appealing to the star qualities of Tauno Palo. This still portrays him standing in the courtyard. His pose is relaxed; he is not going anywhere or doing anything, not straining in the sense outlined by Dyer as the quality that "makes man a man" (Dyer 1992/1982, 116). Instead, he stands with his hands resting on his belt, with his hips slightly bent forward, and the lighting emphasizes the stillness of his pose. In retrospect, the pose links the Juhani character to Western heroes à la John Wayne. As Juhani, Tauno Palo does not meet the eyes of the viewer, but gazes off-frame, following the gendering logic of pin-up poses (cf. Dyer 1992/1982, 104). [Fig. 34]

In the same manner Loviisa Niskavuori was portrayed as a monumental matron-mother posing on the field, "working", (see Chapter 3), Juhani was also shown working in the fields and framed from below and against the skyline. While Loviisa is depicted gazing upwards, displaying a conscious embodiment of idealized values, Juhani is framed posing for the viewer. In another photo included in the poster, he meets the viewer's gaze with ferocity. As a sovereign man, Tauno Palo could "afford" to do so.

Rehabilitating manhood: The prodigal son and the missing father

> "[T]he language of a 'masculinity crisis' falsifies history by implying there was once a golden time of unproblematic, stable gender, when men were men, women were women, and everyone was happy with their social roles."
> Judith Kegan Gardiner 2002, 14.

The split between the role and the actor in framings of both *The Women of Niskavuori* and *Loviisa* suggested that actors could "save" or "rehabilitate", restore masculinity and everything it connoted to the male roles understood as "weak", "implausible", and "troubling". The trope of rehabilitation, regaining a lost status, is at the heart of the crisis view of masculinity; the rhetoric of crisis implicates it. Suggesting a narrative of the past, implying that a troubling change has taken place, the crisis rhetoric calls for attention, action, and resolution. Judith Kegan Gardiner (2002, 14) has pointed out how that crisis rhetoric often remains "vague about the alleged problem, who is troubled by it, and who stands to benefit either from its incitement or its resolution". Tania Modleski (1991, 7) has also suggested that "cycles of crisis and resolution" do not shatter, but indeed consolidate male power. In her study of 1950s British cinema, Christine Geraghty has come to a similar conclusion. In her view, previous research has over-emphasized "the themes of general male anxiety and crisis"; more important, she claims, are versions of masculinity worked "not to express anxiety, but to offer reassurance about male roles" (Geraghty 2000, 177–178).[115] For framings of the Niskavuori story, the trope of rehabilitation has served different agendas: re-attaching normative masculinity to men, returning a male protagonist to patronhood, and even re-focalizing the Niskavuori narrative as a story about men.

Starting with review journalism on *The Bread of Niskavuori*, the sequel to *The Women of Niskavuori*, which had its theatre première in January 1939, the trope of rehabilitation (who is framed as valuable and idealizable) has interacted with that of re-focalization (who is the main protagonist). Although theatre reviewers criticized and resented the portrayal of Aarne Niskavuori in 1936, they framed *The Bread of Niskavuori* as a narrative about Aarne's transformation into a "manly", "affective", and "noble" character:

> "The most surprising transformation takes place in Aarne: he becomes a full-blown hero. (…) Aarne (…) has now, especially when talking about the bread of Niskavuori, something much more genuine and beautiful to interpret than before. Let us believe in his transformation!"[116]

The readings of Aarne Niskavuori in 1939 manifest that the trouble with Aarne Niskavuori was in his "unmanliness", his lack of masculinity in relation to his mother most of all:

115 For analyses on the redefinition of masculinity in the 1950s Britain and Germany, see Segal 1988; Fehrenbach 1998, 107ff; Jeffords 1998,163ff.
116 *HS* 19.1.1939.

Fig. 34. In a publicity-still for Loviisa *1946 (FFA), Tauno Palo's pin up -pose as Juhani echoes that of Western heroes such as John Wayne.*

> "Aarne becomes a coherent character [selkenee] and develops a serious manliness, and he has acquired beautiful sensitivity as well." [117]

> "In our mind, Aarne has acquired more backbone with age. (…) Last time, Aarne remained unequivocally in Ilona's shadow. Now, also thanks to the author, the setting is the opposite. This time, Aarne Niskavuori was more masculine, as he had become tougher (…)."[118]

> "Life has taught Aarne Niskavuori many things. He now transformed [seestyi] into a grave manliness and one almost devoured the spiritual and emotional changes in him. What an interpretion and how warm an affect!"[119]

As reviewers now framed Aarne as "more well-defined", "clarified", "coherent", and showing "inner strength", his troubling "weakness" was overcome: "Aarne turns out to be the stronger one."[120] Hence, the "true and acceptable qualities" which they gave Aarne were the same ones used to characterize the idealized old matron.[121]

117 *TS* 18.3.1939.
118 *Kaleva* 21.3.1939.
119 *Häme* 29.3.1939.
120 *Ssd* 19.1.1939; *Uusi Aura* 18.3.1939; *TS* 18.3.1939; *Häme* 29.3.1939.
121 *Elanto* 3.2.1939.

Niskavuori is a male tragedy!

In 1954, a leftist theatre production proclaimed a re-focalization and rehabilitation of Aarne Niskavuori. Theatre director Urpo Lauri (Suomen Työväenteatteri/Finnish Workers's Theatre, Helsinki) made headlines when he argued that the established understanding of the Niskavuori plays as centred on the character of the old matron was based on a mistake. Lauri claimed to have access to three manuscripts, which, instead, foregrounded Ilona and her worldview. Based on this conclusion, Lauri reinterpreted *The Women of Niskavuori* as "a male tragedy":

> "Only later did the old matron become the magnificent symbol of Häme-spirit that she is now known to be (in the original version she wasn't even from Häme, but married [into the region] from elsewhere). In fact, according to Lauri, she was originally intended as representative of an outdated worldview who governs through money and makes compromises. Moreover, this play is not about Niskavuori women (daughters-in-law, married in from elsewhere, who bring money into the house), but about the tragedy of Niskavuori men. 'The old matron' and Niskavuorism have over the time become false myths, which I for my part have tried to demolish."[122]

Reviews of the theatre production echoed the pre-publicity and the rehabilitation agenda Lauri had formulated:

> "[I]t seems as if Aarne Niskavuori is reborn as the most victorious, the most successful one. Kullervo Kalske did not attempt to 'play' the role in any special way, but, as such, Aarne was given justice in this new interpretation and rose from the banal level on which he existed in previous interpretations. A man who is pressed by escalating contradictions, who has 'tin in his veins', but a lust for life in his mind, was given a sympathetic face in Kalske's performance."[123]

As Lauri attempted to offer a corrective to the ideological reading of the play, to question its framing for agrarian and nationalist values, the readings of Aarne highlighted rehabilitation as "remasculinization"[124] and reiterated phrases familiar from the 1930s and 1940s:

> "Aarne appears in this play in a much stronger light than [he had] earlier. Kullervo Kalske achieves a surprisingly solid plausibility when performing both the contradictions and the manliness of 'the Häme peasant'. One must remember that, concerning Aarne, the text is not at its best."[125]

122 *AL* 31.10.1954; *VS* 31.10.1954.

123 *VS* 27.11.1954.

124 For the term "remasculinization", see Jeffords 1989 as well as the Forum on "The 'Re-masculinization' of Germany in the 1950s" in *Signs* 24:1 (1998).

125 *HS* 27.11.1954. See also *US* 1.12.1954 on "rough masculinity" and *IS* 27.11.1954 for a discussion of Aarne as a "hesitating lion man" and Kalske as managing "to balance between typical positive and negative masculine characteristics".

Along with remasculinization, restoring manliness and masculinity to male characters, review journalism also revealed an emphasis similar to that of Lauri on concentrating on the story of Aarne:

> "Aarne must choose the fate of his life between Niskavuori, the Niskavuorism, and his heart, which reaches out for a new time through Ilona. Aarne is filled with conflicts and he fumbles, although he has a lot of Niskavuoristic firmness, which in the end breaks the bow." [126]

Urpo Lauri's reinterpretation of Aarne suggested a reading of the 1930s in terms of "repressive hypothesis" discussed in Chapter 5.

Akusti as the missing father

Kimmo Laine (1994a, 200–201) asks why "the Finnish cinema of the 1950s concentrates, almost obsessively, on the man and images of men". Not only military farces, but also rillumarei films, vagabond- and log-floating comedies, Pekka & Pätkä –films, and crime films foregrounded "male trouble" (Koivunen & Laine 1993). In his analysis, Laine offers urbanization, industrialization, the ongoing reconstruction process, and the traumas of the lost war as explanations. (Ibid., 194–197; Hietala 1992, 13–15; Koski & Lindsten 1982, 109.) According to Matti Peltonen (1996b, 286–290; 2002), there was, indeed, a conscious effort to formulate a new male ideal for the post-war Finland. [127] Civic organizations promoting good manners and "moral rectitude" (*ryhtiliike*), academics, and cultural critics as well as auteurs of popular culture participated in a debate which articulated several ideals. Peltonen highlights a tension between the *gentleman*, *folksy man*, and *jätkä*. A manual of good manners from 1952 proposed a gentlemanly ideal, rooted in aristocratic notions and upper middle class decorum. Virtues included politeness, tact, honour, moderation, chivalry, sportsmanship, impeccable manners, and appropriate clothing in different situations (Peltonen 2002, 113–116). Ethnologists such as Sakari Pälsi and Kustaa Vilkuna, on the other hand, formulated a different ideal, that of a folksy man, based on peasant traditions and values. The two key criteria of this ideal included simplicity in the sense of being folksy and "rehti", connoting both honesty and integrity (ibid., 117–118). The third male ideal, the *jätkä* or "logger"[128], Peltonen argues, was rooted in the culture of the landless rural population and workers, and

126 *US* 1.12.1954.

127 According to Veijo Hietala (1992, 14), the image of the man was under reconsideration in Finnish cinema, which featured both macho heroes and wimps.

128 Pöysä 1997, 437: "The word *jätkä* was coined as a term to describe loggers in the 1900s and was only fully established by the Second World War. (…) Today the semantics of the word also convey the intimacy of close buddies and a sense of masculinity. Generally, we can infer from these changes that the word's gender associations and strong affective (both positive and negative) connotations have been central since the 1850s. Although the Finnish language does not lexically express gender, the word *jätkä* does convey strong features of a hidden gender meaning." On representations of *jätkä* in Finnish culture, see Pöysä 1997, 87—113.

it was articulated in different forms of popular culture, in films and schlagers identified as *rillumarei* (ibid., 120–122; Koivunen & Laine 1993, 142–144). The jätkä ideal prioritized fairness and equality above everything else.

In my reading, one must understand the public reception of Akusti (Kaarlo Halttunen), the working-class protagonist of *Heta Niskavuori* (play 1950, film 1952), in relation to the trouble with the images of Aarne and Juhani Niskavuori as well as the contemporaneous discussions of masculinities. Many writers expressed a sense of relief – "a proper man at last!" – around the first theatre production:

> "[F]or the first time, the Niskavuori personae are accompanied by a truly sympathetic and thoroughly portrayed male character, Akusti."[129]

> "It is difficult to assess Toivo Mäkelä's Akusti in an objective manner because it is hard for a viewer to disengage oneself from an emotion-based sympathy for this character."[130]

> "Akusti, who in comparison to Heta is a lame figure, is in no way less significant or weaker a character; in him, the positive development takes place. His masculine boldness and endurance from a slightly insecure, but brave farmhand and groom into a wise village councilor was interpreted, in a moving manner, by the talented actor Toivo Mäkelä."[131]

In my reading, the idealizing reception of Akusti implicitly welcomed him as the Missing Father of the Niskavuori saga. Fathers are absent from the Niskavuori narrative; Juhani's father figures in the storyline merely through his absence and reputation; Juhani himself, as Aarne's father, is described as alcoholic and unhappy in *The Women of Niskavuori*, and Aarne, having returned to Niskavuori (*Aarne Niskavuori*), repeats his father's fate and finally dies in war (*Niskavuori Fights*). In the Niskavuori saga, Akusti stands out as the only male figure who connotes qualities of heroic masculinity (cf. Halberstam 1998, 1–2) other than virility and sexuality.[132] Indeed, to paraphrase 1930s readings of Aarne, Akusti stands out as the only male character who knows his "path". In the idealizing words of a 1981 literary historian:

> "In comparison with the powerful female figures, men of the plays were more wavering [horjuvampia] and less resilient [sitkeitä], daydreamers who are driven by their emotions and uncertain of their decisions and to whom women tell how to "organize the life". Akusti in *Heta Niskavuori* stands out as an exception. He is seemingly soft and conciliatory, one who evades [conflicts], but, in reality, a mature human being who very consciously chooses his own path."[133]

129 IS 28.11.1950.
130 *US* 29.11.1950; *Ssd* 22.11.1950.
131 *VS* 19.11.1950.
132 Cf. Heide Fehrenbach's (1998, 117) analysis of the 1950s German "remasculinization" as "an ideological reassertion and reformulation of German patriarchy". In her reading, "the West German *Vaterland* was discursively refashioned as a *land of fathers*".
133 Laitinen 1981, 458.

In 1952, the film version of *Heta Niskavuori* was framed as "a story about a proud woman and the hard-working, gentle Akusti",[134] who was read as a counter-image of both Niskavuori men and his wife Heta. These definitional others resulted in an interesting variety of framings.

Reviewers characterized Akusti as an ideal Finnish man and a "manly" man.[135] He was ascribed both qualities of a man-of-the-people and the logger, as readings emphasized his diligence, energy, and his economical skills as well as tolerance and freedom from prejudices.[136] Reviewers saw an ideal hard-working man in him and called him "good-natured, diligent, and resourceful" and someone whose rise in social class was exemplary:

> "Akusti is not a gold digger, he just desires land of his own, and he admires Heta as a farmhand and as a daughter of an estate, but he does so without any sense of inferiority. Akusti, a wonderful dramatic persona, is a gifted and capable man, and with his own hands, he, starting from scratch, clears the large Muumäki farm for Heta, breaking the soil with a mattock and sowing, buying more forest and land and participating skilfully in the management of village issues."[137]

> "In his enduring wisdom and rootedness, Akusti was a glorious characterization. His development from a genial groom into an ageing man of power in village life was given beautiful and nuanced expression. The goodness of his heart accompanied by a certain shrewdness of a persistent businessman was portrayed with warmth and humour. One believed in the success of this man both in the village and next to Heta."[138]

His rise in social class was idealized, but he was not framed as an upstart figure. Instead, reviewers framed him as a "farmhand who throughout his life became a finer and finer person".[139] In this reading, he was a thoroughly sympathetic figure; in one reviewer's words, "one loves him as the villagers do".[140]

Many characterizations of Akusti linked him to representations of "the folksy man"; writers described Akusti as "undecorated", "authentic", "stubborn, a resilient man of people", "heart-warming", "sympathetic", "simple", and "warm".[141]

> "Akusti's good heart, his wise, but persistent humbleness and amiability were expressed well without turning Akusti into a wimp. His intellectual and human superiority compensated for his lack of visible power. He appeared as a sympathetic person as was the author's intention."[142]

134 Uusi Aura 29.12.1952.
135 *IS* 30.12.1952.
136 *EA* 2/1953. See also *SaKa* 28.12.1952; *Ylioppilaslehti* 9.1.1953.
137 *VS* 19.11.1950 [hoksukas, lahjakas, pystyvä, kyvykäs].
138 *VS* 5.4.1952.
139 *Hbl* 28.12.1952.
140 *HS* 4.1.1953; *AL* 6.1.1953.
141 *VS* 24.11.1952; *HS* 18.11.1952.
142 *VS* 5.4.1952.

Akusti was also read as an exemplary Finnish peasant, "enlightened" and "kind".[143] For the reviewers, he passed as a peasant hero; as a responsible and industrious settler, Akusti even corresponded to the ideal male of post-war reconstruction policies. (Cf. Soikkeli 1994, 50–51.)

Interestingly, he was characterized with words and expressions underlining "character", "endurance", and "strength", echoing the framings that idealized Loviisa, the old matron. (Cf. Löfström 1999, 160–161.) In this manner, then, the male norm against which Akusti was measured was embodied by a female figure (Loviisa) whose masculinity, however, as discussed in Chapter 3, was framed as problematic:

> "Akusti, the farm hand, who, with the help of his vigour rises to become a leading landowner, is a contrary image [to Heta]: quiet and composed, in terms of outer appearance, but full of inner strength and nobility of mind. In the character of Akusti, the author has the opportunity to realize and enact her democratic conviction and she does so with reason and warmth. There is a sprinkle of the crofters' issue, so topical at the time, included."[144]

These ideals also resembled post-war discussions of a new male ideal, discussed by Peltonen (1996b, 2002). Bishop Eino Sormunen (1948, 10, 108–114) emphasized the need to renew educational ideals in the light of history; in his formulation, "the Finnish man is, in terms of outer appearance, slightly clumsy and undisciplined, but tough, deliberative, responsible, and ready for sacrifices". Professor Eino Krohn (1948, 123–124) also sketched an ideal man who "is willing to forget himself and sacrifice himself for the sake of humanity by refusing violence and, instead, serving others and suffering in their place". Krohn noted that his proposal foregrounded what has often been dismissed as a sign of weakness. In the portrait of Akusti, these virtues were heralded.

Some readings drew attention to "the human and social truthfulness of the family life of Heta and Akusti".[145] In relation to Heta, Akusti was framed as an equal opponent: "Heta (Rauni Luoma) and Akusti (Sasu Haapanen) form an equal couple – one through her hardness, the other through his wisdom."[146] In addition, reviewers saw Heta and Akusti as diametrically different: "Heta builds herself up to beat others; the man builds the country and the world without asking for anything."[147] Furthermore, Akusti was also defined in terms of "feminine" and "maternal" qualities in contrast to the "hardness" and "coldness" of Heta as he was called caring and nurturing. In poetic terms, he was read as "a success of an unyielding, humble, and righteous Finnish man, radiantly good, quietly wise, skilfully steering his family through the sea of life"[148]:

143 *MK* 11.1.1953.
144 *Vaasa* 29.9.1956. According to Jan Löfström (1999, 160–161), the male ideal in agrarian culture highlighted diligence, resilience ("sisu"), reason, and moderation.
145 *VS* 19.11.1950.
146 *VS* 5.4.1952.
147 *Ylioppilaslehti* 9.1.1953.
148 *EA* 2/1953.

Fig. 35. Heta and Akusti as an unequal couple in Heta Niskavuori *1952 (FFA).*

> "The name of the play implies that Heta should be seen as the main protagonist and the whole work as such as created to characterize her and the land-owning class. (…) Akusti has the potential to be more than a reflecting surface for Heta's pride; in his own manner, he is an apparent counterforce. (…) the good natured fellow, who is not to be addressed as a patron (…), does not raise his voice into a rumble, but talks himself quietly towards his goal, is clever and diplomatic as he leads his wife wherever is necessary. He is not a deceitful man, but one of honour. (…) The meek may not inherit the whole earth, but large areas anyway!"[149]

As for visual framings, the publicity-stills portraying Akusti shared little with the aesthetic that structured the narrative images of Aarne and Juhani Niskavuori. The pictures of the actors in the theatre première, Bertta Tammelin and Toivo Mäkelä, were of equal size, whereas in stills of Rauni Luoma as Heta and Kaarlo Halttunen as Akusti, their difference in height was emphasized.[150] Several publicity photos and the film poster offered a narrative image of an

149 *Ssd* 5.4.1952.

150 Heidi Köngäs employed a similar height difference in a 1998 television film, *Liian paksu perhoseksi* (*Hardly a Butterfly* 1998). In one of the publicity-stills, the female protagonist was portrayed carrying her tiny husband.

Fig. 36. Akusti as Heta's lackey in Heta Niskavuori *1952 (FFA).*

unequal couple in a comic framing. One album-style photo displayed them both standing, Heta in the front and Akusti, the shorter one, behind her with a genial and clever smile on his face. [Fig. 35] Several other publicity-stills reiterated this and comic tone. A still referring to the scene in which Heta and Akusti arrive at Muumäki featured them in the foreground. Heta is placed close to the centre of the frame, while Akusti is positioned standing on the side. He is posed carrying a potted plant in his arms, suggesting a subordinate rank to Heta. [Fig. 36] Akusti's mother and Siipirikko are seen standing behind them. They all are depicted looking at Heta who, again, is not smiling. A publicity photo further underlined the difference in height and, hence, the implied mismatch between Heta and Akusti as it represented Akusti standing behind Heta, who is gazing longingly out the window towards Niskavuori. One still featuring the naked bodies of Heta and Akusti in the sauna framed Heta from behind and showed Akusti's illuminated face. While the publicity-stills, in the cases of Aarne and Juhani Niskavuori, eroticized the male body, the lobby cards of *Heta Niskavuori* featured a severe-looking man at work (clearing wood, working with fishing equipment) wearing loose work clothes which did not emphasize muscularity, but covered an ageing body. [Fig. 37] Two publicity-stills even framed Akusti as a comic body; in the Muumäki drawing room filled with the high society, he appears, first, with his dirty working clothes and, second, with his upper body naked. From this perspective, Kaarlo Halttunen's depiction of Akusti connected him more to the loggers, vagabonds, and jätkä-figures featured in other contemporary Finnish films than to the tormented and/or spectacularized romantic lovers of the two earlier Niskavuori films.

Fig. 37. Akusti as the exemplary Finnish peasant in Heta Niskavuori *1952 (FFA).*

The subject of history: The narrative re-focalization n the 1980s

> "Hella did not do justice to Aarne. I will try, Kassila promises."
> *IS* 4.8.1984, 19.

In 1984, when *Niskavuori* was released in the context of ongoing discussions on "the situation of the Finnish man", it was promoted as a historical film depicting a social and political change in the 1930s. (Cf. Chapter 2.) In addition, the film was framed as a rehabilitation of Aarne, a film that finally told *his* story and did *justice* to him. English-language promotional material marketed *Niskavuori* under the title "Land and Man".[151] In promotional publicity, the director Matti Kassila clarified his focus on Aarne as an "anti-hero" and a "mother-bound man": "I wanted to describe precisely this kind of soft man. He behaves so typically being afraid of change and wanting everything to continue as before."[152] In this manner, the film was outlined as an investigation into Aarne as a character:

151 *Film in Finland* 1985.
152 *Seura* 39, 20.8.1984, 61.

Fig. 38. Publicity-stills positioned Aarne as the protagonist of Niskavuori *(1984) (FFA).*

> "The central theme of the film is change, Aarne moving away from and returning to the countryside. Aarne is a poor man who is under the thumb [talutusnuorassa kulkeva] of his mother and other strong women. This film investigates what happens to Aarne in town where he cannot see the sunrise the way he could back home at Niskavuori. We explore how it helps him to move back to Niskavuori."[153]

Publicity photos of Aarne with Martta (Marja-Liisa Martón) and Ilona (Satu Silvo) also articulated this project of investigation. Two medium close-ups framed Aarne frontally with Martta or Ilona standing besides him as if attempting to understand and support him in his "identity crisis". While publicity-stills had suggested a reading of the Niskavuori men undergoing an "identity crisis" since the 1930s, the 1984 stills gave new emphasis to this rhetoric. In the two stills, Martta and Ilona are placed almost symmetrically, but in neither of them does Aarne acknowledge the looks or concerns of his intradiegetic audience; he simply stares off-frame, with empty eyes. [Fig. 38] Indeed, many publicity-stills of *Niskavuori* reiterated poses of the earlier Niskavuori films and, in the manner of a proper heritage film, cited all the appropriate Niskavuori gestures, but these poses and gestures acquired new meanings in the 1980s context. A still that portrayed Aarne (Esko Salminen) holding a rye bread in his hand was an exact reproduction of a much-circulated 1954 publicity photo of Tauno Palo. [Fig. 39–40] The 1984 still represented

153 *AL* 4.8.1984.

Fig. 39. Aarne as the prodigal son in Aarne Niskavuori *1954 (FFA).*

Aarne not so much as a prodigal son who falls for his mother's intrigues, but, rather, as an empowered man who makes his own decision – has a will of his own, as the 1930s reviewers would have wanted to see him.

Following the rhetoric of promotional publicity, some reviewers contended that the combined manuscript of the two plays, *The Women of Niskavuori* and *The Bread of Niskavuori*, displaced the narrative focus from women to Aarne.[154] Furthermore, readings of earlier Niskavuori films enacted a similar narrative re-focalization in contemporary review journalism. Compared to the 1940s reviews of *Loviisa*, most critics now identified Juhani, not the "narrative of growth", the becoming of the monument-woman as discussed in Chapter 3, as the film's subject matter.[155] A re-focalization of the narrative of *Loviisa* took even place in the sphere of ballet as Eero Hämeenniemi's ballet introduced a "male perspective" to the Niskavuori saga.[156] When

154 *HS* 22.12.1984; *Hbl* 22.12.1984.

155 The following reviews see Juhani's conflict as the central subject matter of the film *Katso* 9/1977, 31; *TS* 2.8.1986; *HS* 2.8.1986; *IS* 2.8.1986; *Hyvinkään Sanomat* 18.6.1992; *KU Viikkolehti* 18.6.1992; *Demari* 18.6.1992; *Katso* 25/1992, 38; *Savon Sanomat* 18.6.1992; *TS* 18.6.1992.

156 *US* 21.3.1987.

Loviisa was screened for a French audience in Rouen at the *2° Festival du Cinema Nordique* in 1989, the promotional brochure invited the viewers to focus on the "dramatic tension on a family estate whose master is trying to find his place between the voice of his heart and social status, between his own life and the weight of tradition".[157]

The rhetoric that emphasized male identity crisis abounded in 1990s reviews and press releases for the TV screenings of the Niskavuori films. As discussed in the beginning of this chapter, it connected the TV screenings to the figure of the man-in-crisis articulated in both contemporaneous sociological research and popular literature on the "Finnish man". In 1992 and 1993, YLE outlined the two versions of *The Women of Niskavuori* (1938, 1958) as "Aarne's Odysseys", as stories of his "growing apart" from Martta and the Niskavuori estate.[158] Reviewers reiterated similar psychologizing framings as they described how Aarne was "seeking" "the freedom and love he never received" from outside Niskavuori and "estranging himself" from his marriage of convenience with Martta.[159] The 1993 press release for the 1958 version reproduced in several newspapers summarized the film's plot as a narrative of Aarne's liberation:

> "Aarne is estranged from his wife; he is tense towards his mother and spends more and more time in 'meetings' (…) As Ilona announces that she is pregnant, Aarne finally pulls himself together and starts thinking about his future independently, without the shadow of Niskavuori and Loviisa."[160]

However, this emphasis on "a new Aarne" not only concerned his psychological development, but, in 1984, the re-focalization was connected to a desire to frame the Niskavuori film as a *historical* drama, to invest it with historical relevance comparable to that ascribed to Väinö Linna's *Tuntematon Sotilas* (*The Unknown Soldier*) and *Täällä Pohjantähden alla* (*Under the Northern Star*) (cf. Manninen 1990). Moreover, one can read this emphasis as an attempt to provide the Niskavuori saga with what it was seen to be short of as early as 1942. In one of the first essays on Niskavuori fictions, a critic expressed his astonishment at the popularity of the plays despite their lack of "convincing" and "psychologically plausible" male characters.[161] As discussed in Chapter 2, Matti Kassila framed his film as an interpretation of the 1930s for a 1980s audience, and the connection between historical narrative and a male subject became evident in many productional framings:

157 Retrosepctive du cinema finlandais d'apres-guerre 1989, 41. 2° Festival du Cinema Nordique 1 au 7 Mars 1989, Rouen-France.

158 For press releases, see "Viikolta valittua" Vko 27 29.6.–05.07.1992; YLE/Tiedotus, TV2, 15.6.1992, 2. (pr-material on *The Women of Niskavuori*, screened prime-time on July 2nd, 1992); "Viikolta valittua" (kansio: Lehdille lähetettyä) 1.2.–28.2.1993. YLE/Tiedotus, TV2, 3.

159 About *The Women of Niskavuori* (1938) in Kaleva 2.7.1992; Tapani Maskula TS 2.7.1992; ESS 2.7.1992; Katso 26–27/1992, 46.

160 ESS 16.2.1993, Pohjalainen 16.2.1993, Kaleva 16.2.1993. For the press release see "Viikolta valittua" (kansio: Lehdille lähetettyä) 1.2.–28.2.1993. YLE/Tiedotus, TV2, 3.

161 Olsoni 1942, 476.

Fig. 40. Rehabilitating Aarne as a subject of history in Niskavuori *1984 (FFA).*

> "The main characters in Kassila's *The Family Niskavuori* are not so much the strong women as a sensitive man, Aarne Niskavuori. (…) Through Aarne, the director hopes to investigate the emotions and the spiritual landscape of human beings living at a time of breakthrough."[162]

Such reading route positioned Aarne as a subject of not only his own life, but also one of national history.[163] A similar re-focalizing gesture was performed by Peter von Bagh's documentary series *Oi kallis Suomenmaa* (*Oh, dear Finland* 1998) on Finnish history, commissioned by the Finnish Broadcasting Company in 1997 for the 80th anniversary of Finnish independence. The last episode of *Oi kallis Suomenmaa* featured well-known historians, journalists, and philosophers as well as "ordinary Finns" discussing the meanings of EU membership for Finnish farmers, and echoing many 1990s reviews it framed the Niskavuori saga as a counter-image of European integration. The programme not only cited footage from the opening sequence of *Aarne Niskavuori* (1954) as an illustration of "the past", but it also evoked "Aarne

162 "In production", *Film in Finland* 1984, 53.
163 Cf. Palmgren 1979, Varjola 1979.

Niskavuori" as a prototypical Finnish peasant. In this narration, the voice over of the Niskavuori old matron which accompanies the opening sequence of *Aarne Niskavuori* was erased (cf. Chapters 2–3), as were the 1930s–1950s readings of Loviisa Niskavuori as personifying the values of agrarian life. Instead, as asked by the interviewer, Professors Juhani Pietarinen and Heikki Ylikangas explicitly comment on the survival of *Aarne* – not the matrons – in an intregrated Europe.[164] [Fig. 39–40]

Elsewhere, Peter von Bagh frames the Niskavuori films as "signal", i.e., *important*, through a similar re-focalization of the narrative. In his analysis, the acting qualities of Tauno Palo account for the popular appeal and the cultural historical value ascribed to Niskavuori films:

> "The signal rural saga, the Niskavuori series, continues to endure on the screen thanks largely to Palo; he participated in four of the five films. Through him was conveyed the tension of elemental themes: the theme of the land and the scent of the earth, the turmoil of the instinctual life, financial responsibility, the conflicting relationship between men and women."[165]

This reading reiterates and merges many previous interpretations of the Niskavuorean male characters and posits the Niskavuori men as subjects of not only history ("rural saga"), mythology ("elemental themes"), and economy ("financial responsibility"), but also those of sexuality ("instinctual life") and gender relations ("conflicting relationship"). Published in 1999, this reading illustrates how framings of Niskavuori fictions engage in politics of gender. Moreover, it testifies to contradictions among various coexisting interpretive framings. In the previous chapter, I demonstrated the continued appeal and circulation of the figure of the monument-woman even in the 1980s and 1990s. In this chapter, on the other hand, I have illustrated the currency of the narratives of remasculinization, rehabilitation, and re-focalization that the figure of the man-in-crisis invokes. Instead of testifying to a clear-cut oppositionality, the two gender figurations overdetermine and, thus, depend on each other. Rather than complementarity or reciprocity, the citational legacies of these narrative images manifest multiplicity and contradictions. More than anything, they highlight the complexity and inherent ambiguity of "strength" and "weakness" as gendered and gendering categories. Thus, they confound the terms of the alleged opposition most often cited to describe "Finnish gender", that of the strong woman and the weak man.

164 *Oi kallis Suomenmaa* (29.11.1998, TV1 Ykkösdokumentti).
165 von Bagh 1999, 24–25.

Sexual Politics: Passion, Repression, and Transgression

"This is a play about much more than peasant pride and honour."
Ssd 4.3.1954 (on a radio play).

"And,still, *The Women of Niskavuori* is more than a mere story about one man, two women, and adultery."
Antenni 27/1968, 22 (on a radio play).

"The question I would like to pose is not, Why are we repressed? But rather, Why do we say, with so much passion and so much resentment against our most recent past, against our present, and against ourselves, that we are repressed?"
Michel Foucault 1978, 8–9.

"An engagement with the narratives of romance (…) facilitates the re-scripting of other areas of life."
Lynne Pearce and Jackie Stacey 1995, 35.

In her study of the 19th century Latin American "foundational fictions", Doris Sommer (1990, 76) has focused on what she calls "an erotics of politics", i.e., the ways in which the trope of romance in the Latin American novels legitimates a conception of nation as family through "the language of love". (Cf. Parker et al 1992, 1; Arminen & Helén 1994.) To quote Lauren Berlant and Michael Warner (1998, 549), "national heterosexuality" is, indeed, an integral constituent of imagining public spheres as "national cultures".[1] The novels Sommer analyzes feature romance as a mechanism for integration as they cast "the previously unreconciled parties, races, classes or regions as lovers who are 'naturally' attracted and right for each other" (Sommer 1990, 81). Sommer argues that by coding political factors in romantic and erotic terms, these "foundational fictions" constructed a powerful affect; by making romantic and sexual desire "the relentless motivation" for a political project, they not only won readers' hearts, but also their minds (ibid., 82, 75,

1 "[T]he notion of the democratic public sphere, thus, made collective intimacy a public and social ideal, one of fundamental political interest", Berlant 1998, 283.

84). The trope of romance, however, has not only promoted integration and unification, but also rebellion. As Leslie W. Rabine (1985, 2) argues, "The romantic forms of sexual desire have given voice to fantasies of revolt". Rabine proposes that romance is "the cultural space of a privileged encounter between individual sexual passion and rationalized social order". In this space, she asserts, the myth of romantic love meets the myth of history. In other words, discourse on gender as a heterosexual matrix meets discourse on history as the quest of an individual hero, history as "end-oriented, rationally ordered, monolinear chains of cause and effect" (ibid., 2–3).

Both Sommer's and Rabine's conceptualizations show how sexual acts are charged with "an excess of significance" and disputes over sexual values carry "immense symbolic weight", to quote Gayle Rubin (1984, 267, 279). They also manifest the identity-effect of the trope of romance; as a reiterable narrative trajectory, as a script (Pearce & Stacey 1995, 10, 13; Pearce & Whisker 1998, 1ff) it provides both a history and a future. From this perspective, Lynne Pearce and Jackie Stacey (1995, 12) have characterized romance as "one of the most compelling discourses by which any one of us is inscribed". In their view, the force of romance lies in its "transformational promise"; as a script, narrative, and discourse, romance "holds out possibilities of change, progress and escape" (ibid., 17–18). As an affect, hence, romance builds on the futurity of visions, expectations, desires, and hopes. As such, the figure of romance mobilizes questions of ideality and idealization, which are at the heart of Kaja Silverman's (1996) discussion of the visual domain in her *The Threshold of the Visible World*.

Thus, the trope of romance articulates a discourse on affect *and* politics. In my reading, both Sommer's and Rabine's approaches underline what Ann Cvetkovich (1992, 28–30) has studied as the politics of affect. According to Cvetkovich, popular texts *produce* affect instead of functioning as a mere vehicle for it. In her work on the Victorian sensation novel, Cvetkovich (1992, 30–31) has criticized approaches to popular culture that assume affects are pre-discursive entities which cultural texts either manage or release. In her analysis, these approaches result in reproducing a particular discourse about affects as "repressed" signs of "the natural and authentic self", a discourse promoted by popular cultural texts themselves. Cvetkovich argues that this kind of discourse on affects operates like *the repressive hypothesis* theorized by Michel Foucault in his introduction to *The History of Sexuality* (1978, 10). As this discourse conceptualizes sexuality – and affects – as something "condemned to prohibition, non-existence and silence", it frames sexuality – and affects – as a moral and political issue for "the speaker's benefit" (ibid., 6). Echoing Sommer's reading, Cvetkovich (1992, 40–41) proposes that affects themselves be seen as disciplinary, as both productive and regulatory. (Cf. Rabine 1985, 2–3.)

In this chapter, I investigate the figure of *sexual politics* in the framings of the Niskavuori films – *The Women of Niskavuori* (1938, 1958) and *Loviisa* (1946), in particular, but even *Aarne Niskavuori* (1954) and *Niskavuori*

(1984).[2] I demonstrate how the tropes of passion, repression, and transgression have been evoked in different framings, in both review journalism and visual framings, and in relation to various discursive fields (sexuality, gender, class) and intertextual frameworks (political agendas, history of ideas, sexology, feminism, film theory) since the 1930s. Highlighting the centrality of these tropes as a meaning-making mechanism in framings of Niskavuori films, how passion is read as politics, how romance is apprehended as transgression, and how social control and power are conceived of as repression, I argue that the tropes have served different agendas as interpretive strategies. In the 1980s and 1990s, Niskavuori films were framed as representations of "the repressive past" both in sexual and political terms. Cases of film censorship were used as reading routes, and along with the film narratives, they were postulated as evidence of a past mentality and inter-war Finland was framed as "a Victorian age of our own". Thus, 1980s and 1990s review journalism and critical commentary mobilized the tropes of passion and repression as a mode of historical narrative. Interestingly, these same tropes had already been employed in the 1950s leftist interpretations in the context of theatre *and* in the 1930s right-wing readings of both the 1936 play and the 1938 film. Having traced the genealogy of the "repressive hypothesis" and its politics of class and gender, I examine "the first reception" of the Niskavuori saga and the sexual politics articulated in the framings of the first Niskavuori play and film in 1936 and 1938 respectively. I conclude the chapter by discussing 1980s and 1990s framings of Niskavuori fictions as soap opera, i.e., outside the context of sexual politics.

Reading against the grain: reading repression in the 1980s and 1990s

> "Perhaps, as Fredric Jameson suggests (…) we can only know the 'deeper realities' we would want to know (…) through the allegorical tellings of popular film and television. The last resort of the political real is leftist criticism."
> Jane Gaines 1992, 3.

The frequently reiterated framing of the Niskavuori story as a drama about the "eternal" conflict between money and love represents, in my reading, a version of "the repressive hypothesis" as theorized by Michel Foucault. As Foucault (1978, 7) writes in the introduction to *The History of Sexuality*, the repressive hypothesis operates as "a discourse on sexual oppression" which "smacks of revolt, of promised freedom, of the coming age of a different

2 With the term "sexual politics", I refer not only to the feminist legacy derived from Kate Millett, but also to recent studies which have focused on the "heritage" films as involved in the "sexual politics" of the nation, i.e., imagining the nation's past through tropes of sexuality. See Monk 1995b, 32–34; Vincendeau 1995, 30–32; Bruzzi 1997, 35–63; Higson 2003, 72–75. In their study of current discourses on marriage and divorce, Soile Veijola and Eeva Jokinen (2001, 8–13, 32–34, 132–132, 159–161, 199) posit Niskavuori fictions as a counter-image and read the plays as a depiction of how love and marriage were understood in "the Niskavuori age".

law". In this manner, the repressive hypothesis functions as a form of identity politics presenting the definers themselves as "transgressive" (ibid.). In addition, it testifies to Foucault's analysis of sex and sexuality as the "master key", especially since the 19th century, to knowing "who we are" (ibid., 78). This role of the repressive hypothesis as identity politics and, thus, a discourse on history, a past-present alignment, is also a key feature in 1980s and 1990s interpretive framings of Niskavuori films as both historical and topical. To paraphrase Juha Siltala (1994, 413ff), these readings devised Niskavuori films as representations of an "Empire of Necessity", the psychohistorical landscape of the "modern man" as a pull between a mistress connoting the dream of a profound transformation and a wife connoting "the eternal constraints of everyday life". Symptomatically, these two poles marking the path of the "modern man" were illustrated, on the pages of *Miehen kunnia. Modernin miehen taistelu häpeää vastaan* (*Man's Honour. The modern man's battle against shame*), in two publicity-stills from Finnish film, the one of Regina Linnanheimo as a "fallen woman" in *The Maid Silja*, the other showing the proverbial battle-axe, Justiina (Siiri Angerkoski), armed with a rolling pin. [Fig. 23] In the 1980s and 1990s, leftist and psychoanalytic critics interpreted Niskavuori films not only in terms of the "male trouble" discussed in the previous chapter, but also in terms of the repressive hypothesis. This interpretive strategy portrayed the Niskavuori men both as objects of maternal repression and as subjects of social, political, and even psychic-symbolic transformation:

> "In the Niskavuori series, peasant culture, property, and heritage grounded in land and house override everything else. Over and again, the drama is constructed through the opposing forces that threaten the stability of house and family, the most important of them being the 'weakness' of the Niskavuori men, their proneness to adultery, the directing of sexual desire outside the nuclear family. In a psychological sense, the matron, who defends the name and the honour of Niskavuori at all costs, paradoxically represents the Law of the Father, the traditional patriarchal order. She is on the side of the stability of land, property, and values, but against ambivalent emotions and intruders from outside. The man of Niskavuori ends up out of the pan and into the fire, between two alternatives, to adjust or to go."[3]

As this quote demonstrates, an interpretation informed by the repressive hypothesis defined power as negative *both* in sexual and political terms (cf. Foucault 1978, 10; Cvetkovich 1992, 34). The critic located "the Name of the Father" as the mark of an absolute power in the figure of the old matron, and identified the new love as the road to liberation from her rule:

> "The tension between the rights of an individual human being and the demands of society, the family, and the estate forms the basic thrust of the film. It is in this context that Aarne must live and make his decisions, given the opposing

3 Toiviainen 1992, 20. Cf. *AL* 2.7.1992; *AL* 16.8.1986.

poles that his aged mother, the mistress of Niskavuori, and his beloved Ilona represent."[4]

In this manner, 1980s and 1990s reviewers and critics interpreted the trope of romance as a code for politics, for the "deeper realities of the period" (Jameson 1992, 256). They read the romantic and sexual relationships in *The Women of Niskavuori* (1938), *Loviisa* (1946), and *Niskavuori* (1984) as signs and symptoms of social and political conflicts, class differences, and power structures.[5] When *Loviisa* was broadcast in 1992, promotional material outlined it as a "portrayal of class society". TV reviewers of the 1980s and 1990s characterized the film not only as a depiction of "the rigid class society of the last century", but as one in which "a permanent relationship between a patron and a farm maid was socially impossible".[6] In terms of sexual politics, marriage as an economical arrangement was read as an allegory for the power of the money against genuine affects and individual desires.[7] In a similar manner, a 1992 TV introduction framed *Loviisa* as a story about "crazy love" and "loss" as well as passion and repression:

"Love and ownership are two separate things; one has to choose either a life together, the passion between two human beings, or submission to land and property. People are forced to kill something in themselves, something which Niskavuori does not allow."[8]

Even scholars have framed Niskavuori films and "old Finnish cinema" as a whole in terms of the repressive hypothesis. The allegedly impossibility of cross-class marriage in Finnish films has been interpreted as evidence of "the unbridgeable gap within the peasantry", that is, between the propertied and the unpropertied classes (Peltonen 1992, 138–139). At the same time, however, occasions of cross-class romances and marriages in Finnish films have been interpreted as images of national integration (Ahtiainen 1978, 4; Laine 1999, 78).[9] Despite manifesting different conclusions concerning inter-war Finnish cinema and the possibility of cross-class marriages, these two reading routes have nonetheless both promoted an allegorical reading of the trope of romance.

The repressive hypothesis, thus, postulates the past as an age of repression, and in 1980s and 1990s reviews, inter-war Finland, in particular, was devised

4 "Land and Man", *Film in Finland* 1985.

5 For a critical discussion of the "symptomatic" mode of interpretation as a rhetorical device in film criticism, see Bordwell 1989, 198. Unlike Bordwell, I do not wish to discredit psychoanalytical, Marxist, or feminist reading strategies, but to draw attention to the guiding subtexts and the effects of these interpretive moves.

6 *Ssd* 30.10.1982. See also *Katso* 43/1982 (25.–31.10.1982); *Demari* 18.6.1992; *IS* 2.8.1986; *Pohjalainen* 18.6.1992. In 1992, the framing as "depiction of class society" was offered also by promotional material. See "Viikolta valittua" Vko 25 15.–21.06.1992; YLE/ Tiedotus, TV 2; 8.6.1992, 3.

7 *Suomenmaa* 1.8.1986; *HS* 18.6.1992.

8 *Pieni johdatus elokuvaan*, YLE TV2 18.6.1992. See also von Bagh 1992, 85, 161.

9 As Markku Soikkeli (1998, 92) argues, literary romances not only articulate unity, but also conflicts and differences.

as such a realm of repressive power. This idea was evident in readings of the 1938 version of *The Women of Niskavuori* as an allegory of "economical values" that suppress individual desires and emotions. Like *Loviisa*, it was interpreted as representing "agrarian cultural history" in which "money has power and emotions are smothered".[10] More specifically, however, promotional publicity and TV reviewers introduced *The Women of Niskavuori* (1938) as a film about "1930s moral conceptions", about a historical period and culture described as "a petrified common culture", an "old, static agrarian society", and "a closed agrarian world" with "a strict moral code that must not be violated".[11] These formulations reiterated in 1984 characterizations of *Niskavuori* as depicting "the traditions of the old agrarian society that bind a person's mind" with "norms and regulations". Such framing represented "the 1930s" as a Finnish version of "Victorian class society", an epitome of repressive age (cf. Simmons 1989, 157ff, 161; Barefoot 1994, 94–105).[12]

In 1986, reviewers articulated this reading of the past in terms of both political and sexual repression by referring to and discussing the act of censorship that *The Women of Niskavuori* was subjected to when released in 1938. Both in 1986 and 1992, reviewers constructed an image of "the 1930s" as a time of "ridiculous" and "surprising" moralism:

> "At the time, [*The Women of Niskavuori*] surprisingly got into trouble with censorship authorities who deemed a bedroom scene in which Aarne and Ilona are fully-clothed as immoral."[13]

> "At the time, *The Women of Niskavuori* was subjected to a censorship dispute which now seems ridiculous! A scene with Aarne and Ilona in bed was to be removed, although they were both fully clothed!"[14]

As a mark of difference between the pre-war repressive and post-war permissive age, the reviews recounted the post-war decision to include the forbidden scene. In addition, they stated how "still today we have an opportunity to marvel at the board of censors which was so frightened by so little".[15] In this interpretive framing, the intervention of the censorship authorities (the excision of the "bedroom scene") and the narrative plot of the film (the social

10 *KU* 16.8.1986.

11 *Pieni johdatus elokuvaan* YLE TV2 2.7.1992; *Katso* 26–27/1992; *Hyvinkään Sanomat* 16.8.1986; *KU* 2.7.1992; *TS* 2.7.1992; *TS* 16.8.1986.

12 *Lapin Kansa* 28.1.1985. See also *TS* 23.12.1984; *KU* 22.12.1984; *HS* 22.12.1984; *AL* 22.12.1984; *Filmihullu* 1/1985; *Länsi-Suomi* 20.12.1987. However, the construction of "the 1930s" as a past era of repression dates back to the 1950s; it was evident, for instance, in framings of Urpo Lauri's re-interpretation of *The Women of Niskavuori* (see *VS* 14.11.1954). In a radio review, the matron of Niskavuori has also been framed as "feudal", see *Antenni* 13.1970, 23. Cf. characterization of the 1930s moral conceptions in a theatre review: "a closed community characterized by gossip and double standard" (*Savon Sanomat* 9.10.1977).

13 *Katso* 33/1986 (11.–17.8.), 27.

14 *Ssd* 15.8.1986.

15 *Hämeen Sanomat* 16.8.1986. In 1986, the incident was mentioned also by *Hyvinkään Sanomat* 16.8.1986. Cf. *Kaleva* 22.12.1984, review of *Niskavuori*. As for 1992 see, *Hbl* 2.7.1992; *Demari* 2.7.1992; *Katso* 26–27/1992 (22.6.–5.7.1992), 92.

condemnation of adulterous romance) appeared as congruous and corroborating evidence of the 1930s general atmosphere "narrow-minded repression of emotions, disguised in prudery".[16] In 1986, *Loviisa* was also framed with a reference to censorship as promotional feature articles described how "according the film board the hem of a skirt rose too daringly in a scene, which is why a couple of seconds were nicked away" from the film.[17]

In review journalism, knowledge of the censorship cases overlapped with an understanding of history as repression and, furthermore, with the films' narratives, the events of the diegetic world in which the repressive atmosphere is embodied by the old matron of Niskavuori. Indeed, 1990s TV reviewers described the 1930s not only as "petrified", "uniform culture", and a "closed world", but also as "a matriarchy based on economic values".[18] The figure of the mother was framed as a guardian of "class hierarchies" and of "the limits of estate society" as well as an obstacle to "class mobility".[19] Reviewers described her as not only the "keeper of tradition and property", but also as an embodiment of emotional repression: "The man has a passionate relationship to the maid, but this is something the old matron, who autocratically governs the house and the family, cannot tolerate."[20] To reiterate the readings discussed in Chapter 3, Loviisa was defined as a monster and a matriarch both in economic and emotional terms.

Framings of *The Women of Niskavuori* articulated the repressive hypothesis via characterizations of Loviisa and Ilona. They posited Loviisa as the figure of repression in its different senses, whereas they depicted Ilona as a character connoting sexual as well as political rebellion and transgression. In 1986, a promotion feature portrayed the characters as representations of both different worlds and different femininities. The article identified Loviisa as a representative of "the stable agrarian community in Häme", but described Ilona as "a spontaneous, independent woman". Consequently, the framing interpreted the encounter of Loviisa and Ilona as "a fight of spirits" and a "collision" between "different attitudes to life" and "burning emotions".[21] As a composite of sexual and political rebellion, Ilona was depicted as "sensuous" and "liberal-minded".[22] Her character was read as embodiment of modernity and its potentially subversive values: liberalism, individualism, hedonism, and feminism. Not only "*sensual*", "beautiful and spiritual", some called her

16 *TS* 16.8.1986; *TS* 2.7.1992.

17 *Savon Sanomat* 2.8.1986; *ESS* 2.8.1986; *Kaleva* 2.8.1986; *KSML* 2.8.1986; *Pohjalainen* 2.8.1986. Mentioned also in AL 2.8.1986. The phrase referring to the censorship event stems from *Hyvinkään Sanomat* 30.10.1982.

18 *Katso* 26–27/1992; *KU* 2.7.1992. For characterizations as matriarchal, see *Katso* 33/1986 (11.–17.8.1986, 27; *Katso* 26–27/1992; *Hbl* 2.7.1992

19 *Katso* 43/1982; *Katso* 9/1977; *Kansan Tahto* 30.10.1982; *Satakunnan Työ* 30.10.1982. See also *KU* 30.10.1982; *Ssd* 30.10.1982.

20 *Etelä-Saimaa* 30.10.1982. See also *Kansan Tahto* 30.10.1982; *Satakunnan Työ* 30.10.1982.

21 *Savon Sanomat* 16.8.1986.

22 *AL* 2.7.1992.

an "emancipated" and "independent woman of her time", an "urban modern woman" who is "sparkling with ideas".[23] Furthermore, she was outlined as "a threat to the traditions of the estate", as "rebel against the rules" and "a fresh breath of emancipation". When compared to Loviisa, the embodiment of "old, static agrarian society", Ilona was seen as representing "modern urban thinking".[24]

The interpretations of Loviisa and Ilona illustrate how the repressive hypothesis operates as the historical narrative I have traced in 1980s–1990s review journalism and promotional publicity. In terms of historical narrative, "the past" is projected as the other of today, as a monolithic age of repression (embodied in the old matron) and rebellious sexuality (embodied in Ilona). Therefore, this repressive hypothesis has constructed an ideological juxtaposition and an axis of power between two women. While Loviisa was seen as the embodiment of tradition, continuity, order, and repression, Ilona was interpreted as the sign of sexual rebellion, radical politics, and modern feminism.

The decades of innocence and the stubborn drive

> "[T]he much-vaunted 'liberation' of our sexuality, our triumphant emergence of the 'dark ages' is thus not a liberation but a myth, an ideology, the definition of a new mode of conformity."
> Stephen Heath 1982, 2–3.

> "Where there is desire, the power relation is already present: an illusion, then, to denounce this relation for a repression exerted after the event; but vanity as we go questing after a desire that is beyond the reach of power."
> (Michel Foucault 1978, 81–82.)

In the 1980s and 1990s reviews of both the 1938 version of *The Women of Niskavuori* and *Loviisa*, the guiding logic of the repressive hypothesis not only produced positions of critical and corrective readings, but also created a particular discourse of sexuality as an uncontrollable force beyond and in opposition to the repressive power. As Foucault (1978, 5) argues in *The History of Sexuality*, the repressive hypothesis constitutes sexuality simultaneously as the object of repression, a "stubborn drive" akin to a natural force (Foucault 1978, 115; cf. de Lauretis 1998), and a site for social transgression. As "passion", sexuality is defined as "a thing abusively reduced to silence, and at the same time difficult and necessary, dangerous and precious to divulge" (Foucault 1978, 35). In this manner, the repressive hypothesis is productive in a double manner:

> "What sustains our eagerness to speak of sex in terms of repression is doubtless this opportunity to speak out against the powers that be, to utter truths and promise bliss, to link together enlightenment, liberation, and manifold

23 *AL* 2.7.1992; *Demari* 9.7.1992; *IS* 14.8.1986; *Katso* 33/1986 (11.–17.8.1986), 27; *KU* 2.7.1992; *TS* 16.8.1986; *HS* 2.7.1992; *Hyvinkään Sanomat* 16.8.1986.

24 *TS* 16.8.1986; *TS*; 2.7.1992; *Hbl* 2.7.1992; *Katso* 26–27/1992.

> pleasures; to pronounce a discourse that combines the fervour of knowledge, the determination to change the law, and the longing for the garden of earthly delights." (Ibid., 7.)

The "fervour", "determination", and "longing" Foucault mentions as effects of the repressive hypothesis were all articulated in the 1980s–1990s TV reviews, which not only employed the trope of repression, but also that of passion. Both in 1986 and 1992, TV reviews of *The Women of Niskavuori* (1938) underlined the trope of adulterous romance, and a publicity still representing the first encounter between Aarne and Ilona accompanied nearly all of them.[25] [Fig. 1] Promotional articles and reviews emphasized censorship as it served as evidence of repression (in the film and context), passion (in the film), and affect (for the viewer). The "visual impact" of the "secret relationship", the "forbidden" and "real" love, "which startled the censorship board", was described as "highly erotically charged".[26] The Niskavuori film was designated as a "garden of earthly delights" and a site of transgression as critics described Aarne's and Ilona's relationship as "forbidden eroticism" and "prohibited passions" which "burn reason", "prove stronger than money", and "break the traditions of the estate".[27] As these expressions indicated, the adulterous romance was seen, following the logic of the repressive hypothesis, both as an object of regulation and repression ("forbidden", "prohibited", "secret") and an act of "rebellion".[28] This view was explicated in a 1992 definition of eroticism in the context of film-stills:

> "Eroticism can be defined as the tension which emerges between sexual love and the demands of social existence."[29]

In this manner, the repressive hypothesis defines sexual passion as a function of social control and, moreover, eroticizes the social control itself. To quote Michel Foucault (1978, 103), sexuality, defined in terms of passion and repression and conceptualized both as sex and politics that sexuality, operates as a "dense transfer point for relations of power".

In the context of the repressive hypothesis, the analogy of sex and politics implied that both sexual and political desires be born out of repression. Furthermore, if the amounts of repression and passion correlate, the past not only appears as a realm of *more* repression, but as one of *more* passion. Indeed, in 1984 *Niskavuori* was viewed as a representation of a time when

25 See *TS* 16.8.1986; *Savon Sanomat* 16.8.1986; *KU* 16.8.1986; *AL* 16.8.1986; *Ssd* 16.8.1986; *Katso* 33/1986; *TS* 2.7.1992; *Kaleva* 2.7.1992; *KU* 2.7.1992; *HS* 2.7.1992; *Demari* 2.7.1992; *ESS* 2.7.1992; *AL* 2.7.1992. In 1986, *Hyvinkään Sanomat* (16.8.) reproduced the cover of *Elokuva-aitta*, which referenced the scene banned by the board of censors.

26 *Hbl* 2.7.1992; *Katso* 33/1986 (11.–17.8.1986), 27; *Savon Sanomat* 16.8.1986; *Hyvinkään Sanomat* 16.8.1986; *Hämeen Sanomat* 16.8.1986.

27 *KU* 2.7.1992; *AL* 2.7.1992; *AL* 16.8.1986; *Kaleva* 2.7.1992; *TS* 2.7.1992.

28 *Katso* 26–27/1992; *KU* 2.7.1992. See also *AL* 16.8.1986; *Katso* 26–27/1992, 92; *TS* 2.7.1992.

29 Sakari Toiviainen in *Viattomuuden vuosikymmenet* 1992, 7.

"passions still were real".[30] Similarly, the TV framings of *Loviisa* did not merely discuss the repressive class structure, but framed the past agrarian community as a world of both "powerful emotion" and rebellion:

> "Marriages that are mainly based on economic grounds produce both dwarfed and rebellious hearts which, when an occasion arises, are prone to resistance and endangering the honour of Niskavuori without listening to the voice of the 'reason'."[31]

Such reviews located rebellion and resistance in the visual language of the film, which was deemed as "rather erotic in view of the time of its release". "Especially in the love scenes between Juhani and Malviina", the critics saw "poise and fever" and "vibrations that make the directors of today envious".[32] Visual framings of the 1986 TV screening foregrounded the agrarian setting, peasant interiors, and buildings as well as the monitoring figure of Loviisa, whereas in 1982 and 1992, stills used as illustration highlighted the romance between Juhani and Malviina.[33] The publicity-still featuring Malviina and Juhani on the hay carriage [Fig. 41] was reproduced in conjunction with many reviews, often with captions referring to "burning glances" as "Juhani Niskavuori's (Tauno Palo) hand slips onto the dairy maid Malviina's (Kirsti Hurme) thigh".[34] This still was, furthermore, reprinted in a 1991 coffee-table book *Viattomuuden vuosikymmenet* (*The Decades of Innocence*) featuring "erotically charged scenes from Finnish films". It postulated the repressive era not only as a period of greatest passion, but also as one of innocence; and in this rhetoric of eroticism, nature played an important role:

> "In Finnish films, eroticism is often linked to everyday work and the rhythm of nature. Love scenes take place during the haymaking season in fields or in barns and even in the kitchen. According to Nordic mythology, summer is the time when love blossoms, and nature is the proper place for love. Summer signifies opening up, sexual liberation, a return to paradise lost."[35]

Many reviews of *Loviisa* articulated a similar "naturalizing" discourse of heterosexual desire and framed it as the main affective factor. Reviewers described the film as one in which "images of nature" as well as senses, "blood", emotions, and glances "burn" and in which "powerful emotions pulsate".[36] In the words of a 1979 *Filmihullu* article:

30 *AL* 22.12.1984. Two publicity stills of *Niskavuori* draw attention to a sequence within the film which represents working-class sexuality as "free" and "uninhibited" (a barn dance, a sex scene in the stable) in contrast to the middle-class social norms.
31 *IS* 30.10.1982; *Hyvinkään Sanomat* 30.10.1982.
32 *Savon Sanomat* 18.6.1992; *Katso* 25/1992 (15.–21.1992), 38; *HS* 18.6.1992.
33 *AL* 2.8.1986; *Katso* 31/1986; *IS* 2.8.1986; *Hämeen Sanomat* 2.8.1986; *KSML* 2.8.1986; *ESS* 2.8.1986. As for 1982 and stills featuring Malviina and Juhani either lying on the ground or sitting on the hay carriage, see *IS* 30.10.1982; *HS* 30.12.1982.
34 The publicity still was published in *HS* 18.6.1992; *Katso* 25/1992 (15.–21.1992), 38; *Demari* 18.6.1992; *Hyvinkään Sanomat* 18.6.1992. Also *HS* 30.10.1982.
35 See Sakari Toiviainen's preface to *The Decades of Innocence*, 10.
36 *KU Viikkolehti* 18.6.1992; 38; *AL* 2.8.1986; *Katso* 25/1992 (15.–21.1992); *Hyvinkään Sanomat* 18.6.1992.

Fig. 41. Passion and transgression in Loviisa *1946 (FFA).*

> "In *Loviisa*, the love between Juhani and Malviina is born on the field, in direct communion with the land, without the mediating factor of money or commodities. Vaala alternates between shots of Juhani and Malviina walking towards each other and close-ups and long shots of their encounter. In this manner, he binds the couple together as if through magnetism and harmoniously merges them with the nature; this mode is downright biological. The symmetry of images endows the relationship with a powerful, deterministic nature. It is as if a dam were about to burst."[37]

In this quote, the cinematic language which was thought to articulate the "biological" mode or tuning created an affect. Likewise, many reviewers characterized the relationship between Juhani and Malviina with expressions signifying "vitality" and attraction as "pull" or "magnetism".[38] In this manner, sexuality was outlined as "the stubborn drive, alien by nature and by necessity disobedient to a power which exhausts itself trying to subdue it and often fails to control it entirely" (Foucault 1978, 105). This discourse also informed numerous descriptions and reiterations of the "unforgettable scene" and "the most famous scene in the series" in which Juhani and Malviina "encounter each other during the flowering of rye".[39] [Fig. 42] Reviewers highlighted this scene echoing the rhetoric of *The Decades of Innocence,* as the scene was viewed as a display of the grammar of passion proper:

37 *Filmihullu* 7–8/1979, 23–24.

38 Biologistic notions of sexuality abounded in these reviews. Sexual attraction was described, for example, as "the call of life force" or as "magnetic pull". See *TS* 18.6.1992; *Hyvinkään Sanomat* 30.8.1986; *Hyvinkään Sanomat* 18.6.1992; *AL* 30.10.1982; *AL* 2.8.1986.

39 *Hyvinkään Sanomat* 2.8.1986; *HS* 18.6.1992.

Fig. 42. For 1980s and 1990s critics, this scene in Loviisa *1946 (FFA) epitomized sexual politics as a nature-like force.*

> "Life on the Niskavuori family estate is represented beautifully. The wind blows; summer clouds roll in the Häme sky and in the burning sunshine, even the passions of the patron Juhani (Tauno Palo) and the voluptuous maid Malviina (Kirsti Hurme) burn."[40]
>
> "The visual narration has density and vividness which elevate the film to a poetic level, for example, in the close-to-nature love scene in the middle of a field between Juhani and Malviina."[41]
>
> "Juhani and Malviina briskly walk from the opposite ends of a rye field, and nature pulls them together in the centre of the field. The rye waves with the wind. Vaala cuts alternatively to the man, to the woman, and to the runway."[42]

According to these quotes, the key elements of the grammar of "Finnish eroticism" included a prohibitive culture (repression), a class difference (transgression), a rural scene (naturalization, the "biological mode"), and a heterosexual couple. Agrarian world was described as a milieu "which almost inspires one to satisfy the drive".[43] Such a framing not only eroticized the social norms and nature, but also class difference.[44]

40 *AL* 30.10.1982. Cf. AL 2.8.1986.
41 *IS* 30.10.1982. See also *Hyvinkään Sanomat* 30.10.1982.
42 *HS* 18.6.1992.
43 *HS* 18.8.1978, review of *Aarne Niskavuori* (1954).
44 Social differences fuel romantic comedies in general, but Thomas Wartenberg (1999, 3) identifies "transgressive romance" as a particularly effective vehicle for social critique. He suggests that a "genre" which he terms "the unlikely couple film" (including films such as *King Kong*, *Pygmalion*, and *Desert Hearts*) is in a "unique position to destabilize categorical distinctions" (ibid., 7).

Thus, the 1980s–1990s readings of *The Women of Niskavuori* and *Loviisa* in terms of passion and repression and in relation to censorship produced metonymic chains of overlapping and interchangeable concepts. First, class society, the agrarian world, peasant culture (the Victorian, repressive, uniform, closed, and petrified "past") as well as censorship practices and matriarchal power were all linked to connote power as repression. Second, cross-class relationships, adulterous romance, heterosexual desire, class resistance, and modernization were all interpreted as signs of resistance.[45] In this manner, the interpretive strategy informed by the repressive hypothesis served as an identity discourse; the past was desired, imagined, and described for the purposes of the present. This notion of the past was also evident in framings of the 1984 *Niskavuori* (see Chapter 2). Promotional publicity outlined the 1930s as a period of change from "authoritarian into democratic", from "national into social", and in short, from pre-modern to modern.[46] The film was said to "chart the fundamental change which (…) has produced our modern society – the surrender of the stiff, patriarchal way of life in favour of a society built on more flexible understanding and the politics of consensus".[47] Thus, the cultural uniformity identified as a feature of the 1930s culture was reconceptualized as an old form of political rule in opposition to the 1980s norm, i.e., consensual decision-making through negotiations with several parties. The adulterous romance was seen as the pivotal locus of this change.

Overall, then, the repressive hypothesis constituted a pre-modern, repressive, and uniform national past as the counter-image of the modern, liberated, and heterogeneous contemporary self.[48] This identity construction was based on distance and difference, but also on desire and fantasy. While the "repressiveness" of the 1930s, signified by censorship, was deemed "ridiculous" and the film was viewed as "both revelatory and funny satire about the conventions of that time", the past also appeared as a rather appealing time of clear social structures and contradictions as well as "true love" and powerful passions.[49] The temporal distance between "now" and "then" was pertinent to this duplicity between distance and desire. Framings of the 1958 version of *The Women of Niskavuori* even proved this logic. Unlike the 1938 version, this film was not usually interpreted in terms of passion and repression. Though some readings saw a "somewhat 'feminist' theme, emancipation from the chains of traditions" in the 1958 version, the film was most often described as a "moderate" portrayal of agrarian class conflicts and characterized as "bleak" and "pale". In comparison with the 1938 version, 1980s reviewers saw the 1958 remake as a mere copy.[50] In a sense, 1980s

45 For representations of adulterous romances in terms of transgression in literature, see Tanner 1979, 12–13,

46 Cf. "Niskavuori-elokuvan synnystä", a press release 2.3.1984. FFA.

47 *Film in Finland* 1985, 29.

48 For postulations of "generation of repression" in sociological studies of sexuality, see Haavio-Mannila, Roos, and Kontula 1996.

49 *Ssd* 15.8.1986; *Demari* 2.7.1992; *KU* 2.7.1992.

50 *KU* 24.1.1981; *Katso* 7/1993; *HS* 24.1.1981. For readings as "moderate" and "bleak", see *HS* 16.2.1993; *Katso* 4/1981 (19.–25.1.1981, 20); *TS* 16.2.1993; *Demari* 16.2.1993; *Katso* 7/1993.

Fig. 43. The visual framings of The Women of Niskavuori *1958 (FFA) introduced Ilona (Teija Sopanen) in poses suggesting both sex and virginity.*

readings reiterated the 1958 reception in which many of actors were seen as *not passionate enough* in their roles. For example, Teija Sopanen, who played the role of Ilona in the 1958 version of *The Women of Niskavuori*, was framed as "only beautiful".[51]

In 1958, the remake was framed as "beautiful" without reference to a "deeper reality", despite that its publicity-stills constructed a narrative image similar to that of the 1938 film. Both in images of the stern old matron and in framings referring to the dramatic trial scene, publicity-stills and posters emphasized the illegitimacy of the adulterous love. At the same time, the publicity-stills concentrated on the passion between Aarne and Ilona even more strongly than they had in 1938. There were more stills presenting Aarne and Ilona embracing and kissing, now even in an tighter close-up. Moreover, the desirability of the female star (Teija Sopanen, the former Miss Finland) was constructed both in facial close-ups and pin-up like framings (shorts and bare legs in the row boat) as well as in photos featuring her in a baby-doll style pose and mimicry connoting both sex and virginity (Ilona between sheets). [Fig. 43, 61] These framings suggested a discourse of desirability (cf. Dyer 1987, 27) quite different from the 1930s representational strategies. One can ask whether they, in fact, suggested a new interpretive framework for *The Women of Niskavuori*, the emergence of the so-called "adult film" in 1950s

51 *Lahti* 24.9.1958; *Hbl* 21.9.1958; *IS* 23.9.1958; *TS* 19.10.1958; *SaKa* 21.9.1958; *Ylioppilaslehti* 26.9.1958. Rauni Ikäheimo as Ilona in *Aarne Niskavuori* was seen to "lack spirit" (*US* 28.3.1954), as a weak role and a minor character in the drama (*HS* 28.3.1954; *MK* 27.3.1954; *IS* 29.3.1954), as conflicting with the audiences image of Ilona (*ESS* 6.4.1954) or as "badly photographed" (*AL* 1.4.1954).

Hollywood and an emphasis on sexual drama in Finnish films such as *Hilja, maitotyttö* (*Hilja, the Milk Maid*) (cf. Klinger 1994, 51–57; Cohan 1997).

The emphasis on "sexual display" notwithstanding, both 1950s and 1980s reviewers considered the 1958 version of *The Women of Niskavuori* "insufficient", the problem being the temporal focalization of the film narrative. Because the story in this remake was not set in the pre-war era, but in the 1950s, reviewers maintained that the whole story was "without roots":

> "Twenty years of social rupture and precisely the change which has affected the peasant community is disregarded. The drama is centrally propelled by the homogeneity of peasant community and the archaic moral attached to it".[52]

As this quote demonstrates, reviewers discussed the lacking temporal distance as a cause for the absence of passion and affect they saw in the film. According to my understanding, a particular concept of history and sexual politics was at issue here. The reviewers longed for precisely the objectification of the "past" in terms of the repressive hypothesis and its conjoining fantasies I have discussed. Indeed, the repressive hypothesis has functioned as a major mechanism for generating affect in interpretations of Niskavuori as both historical and topical. It generates affect by postulating "the agrarian past" as the locus of the Finnish "National Symbolic" (cf. Berlant 1991, 5), both as the vehicle for notions of "common culture" ("the homogeneity") and a realm of repression ("the old-archaic moral"). Studies on Finnish nationalism have supported this view of history by identifying sensibility and sensuality as features that the formative 19th century constructions of Finnishness *excluded* (Siltala 1996, 193; Jääskeläinen 1998, 70). In a 1951 speech, the folklore scholar Matti Kuusi (1952, 83) identified the statement, "Beware of passions!" as one of the ten commandments of "our forefathers".[53] Hence, when the 1980s–1990s framings of the Niskavuori films evoked a sharp opposition between repression and passion, they combined "the fervour of knowledge, the determination to change the law, and the longing for the garden of earthly delights" (cf. Foucault 1978, 7), but they also tapped into the "National Symbolic". At the same time, when articulating the past as the locus of social and political conflicts and personifying the conflict in the two female characters, the interpretations produced a melodramatic and even a sensationalist reading. They constructed affect by revealing social conflicts, and once revealed, the conflicts were framed as real (cf. Cvetkovich 1992, 24, 203). As they did so, the interpretations implicated a discourse on sexuality as a "force". Paradoxically, they also posited this force as the passionate subtext of the "National Symbolic" for which this interpretive framing articulated a sexualized, gendered, and classed grammar.

52 *IS* 24.1.1981; *Katso* 4/1981 (19.–25.1.1981, 20); *Hyvinkään Sanomat* 16.2.1993. In a promotional article in 1981, the film was framed as featuring "the relationship" as "the most significant theme of the film" *Lapin Kansa* 24.1.1981; *US* 24.1.1981; *FL* 24.1.1981.

53 The suppression of the sensible and sensual has also been identified as a feature of J.V. Snellman's thinking; see Karkama 1999, 144–145. Cf. Karkama 1985, 40ff. Tuula Karjalainen (1993, 138) uses the term "Niskavuoristic" to describe a puritan ethos she detects in "Finnish cinema".

> "Male eros tended to haunt modern nationalism."
> George L. Mosse 1985, 64.

As the editors of *Nationalisms & Sexualities* (1992) contend, the *power of the nation* – the persuasive rhetoric of the nation – is often "couched as a *love of country*, an eroticized nationalism" (Parker at al. 1992, 1). Framings of the Niskavuori films in terms of the repressive hypothesis mobilize such rhetoric by imagining the nation as structured by a pull between familial structures and heterosexual transgression. This "grammar of nation" (Layoun 1992, 410–411) renegotiates, rehabilitates, and refocalizes (cf. Chapter 4) the male subject by positing the female characters (mothers, wives, sisters, lovers) as spaces and boundaries, as both emotional, sexual, and political choices, and alternative futures. A 1979 article in *Filmihullu* exemplifies not only a reading of Niskavuori films as a political allegory (cf. Chapter 2), but also as a male trajectory, as "a passage, a transformation predicated on the figure of a hero, a mythical subject" (de Lauretis 1984, 113):

> "Aarne could be a social democrat who discards bourgeois society ("The Women of Niskavuori"), returns to the government ("The Bread of Niskavuori"), gets frustrated, and gets killed in the war (…)".[54]

Thus, framings subscribing to the repressive hypothesis, a specific understanding of history and sexual politics conceive the gender difference in terms of two poles: "male-hero-human, on the side of the subject; and female-obstacle-boundary-space, on the other" (de Lauretis 1984, 121). Such an interpretive framing calls attention to a film's female characters and debates their symbolic resonances and political meanings, treating the male hero as a self-explanatory character beyond discussion. In this manner, the male hero is conceptualized, *ad infinitum*, as an invisible traveller, an Oedipus or Ulysses, who constantly and restlessly moves between the female poles. His desire, born out of the repression, structures the narrative movement.

The visual framings of the Niskavuori films clearly articulated this classic narrative structure. Posters for *Loviisa* suggested a love triangle between the wife, the husband, and the mistress, whereas posters and advertisements for *The Women of Niskavuori* (1938, 1958), *Aarne Niskavuori* (1954), and *Niskavuori* (1984) represented the man's choice as one not between the wife and the mistress, but one between the mother and the mistress. While they framed the mother and the mistress competitors, they marginalized or erased the figure of the wife. [Fig. 2, 8] Even publicity-stills, circulating as lobby cards, presented competing couples. In the visual framings of *Heta Niskavuori*, for instance, Akusti and Siipirikko posed as a couple in an album-style photo, reiterated in similar shots of Akusti and Heta, Aarne and Ilona (*Aarne Niskavuori*), or Ilona and Juhani Mattila (*Niskavuori Fights*).

54 *Filmihullu* 7–8/1979, 23.

Interestingly however, publicity-stills promoting the three versions of *The Women of Niskavuori* (1938, 1958, and 1984) featured no such photos of Aarne and Martta as a couple.

From the perspective of the Oedipal narrative trajectory as delineated by Teresa de Lauretis (1984, 121), one must look at the minor characters in the Niskavuori films – the "obstacles", "boundaries", and "spaces" – and the ways in which they have been interpreted. These minor characters of the Niskavuori saga (the dairy maid Malviina played by Kirsti Hurme in 1946, the house maid Siipirikko by Mirjam Novero in 1952, and the anonymous Steward by Åke Lindman in 1954) who perform important narrative functions for the protagonists have often been sidelined in review journalism, or characterized only in brief. But in visual framings, they have occ upied significant positions as "definitional others" for the protagonists. Although all of these characters are employees of the Niskavuori or Muumäki estates, their framings have varied.

Malviina

The Malviina character (Kirsti Hurme) is the most clearly sexualized female figure in the Niskavuori fictions. As such, Malviina belongs to the long tradition of "pathological and sexualized representations" of working-class women (Skeggs 1997, 124) and female servants (Collings 1996, 264ff).[55] Moreover, Niskavuori fictions overlapped with the concurrent cycle of fallen woman imagery in Finnish social problem films through the star image of Kirsti Hurme. In 1946, she both starred *Loviisa* and played a syphilis-stricken woman in *Synnin jäljet* (*Traces of Sin*, Hannu Leminen). (See Koivunen 1995, chapter 4.) In terms of the narrative, she served both as a double – the sexualized other – for the monument-woman, the matron-mother, and as an "obstacle", "boundary", and "space" in the narrative of Juhani Niskavuori's struggle. Thus, the three different readings of *The Young Matron of Niskavuori* and *Loviisa* as marital dramas, stories of Loviisa's growth, and cross-class, illegitimate romance all framed Malviina as a definitional other for the protagonists.

In 1940, *The Young Matron of Niskavuori* was characterized as "a dramatic, lively exposé of the marital tragedy of the Niskavuori matron, and of her maturation into a psychically and morally independent and strong personality".[56] Framed as a marital drama (cf. Laurila 1947) the play's dramatic power was thought to depend on the matron and patron as "equal opposing forces".[57] The public framings of *Loviisa* offered several reading routes. As discussed in Chapter 3, review journalism framed *Loviisa* as a story of the main character's "inner growth", of her path to the monumental matron-motherhood. One newspaper advertisement echoed this focalization:

55 Tatu Pohtila (2000, 93) also offers such a reading of Malviina in a psychohistorical framing, as he interprets Malviina as the epitome of "free instinctual life" – in contrast to the Niskavuori matrons.

56 *Nya Argus* 16.12.1940.

57 *US* 14.11.1940; *Kansan Lehti* 15.11.1940; *TS* 21.11.1940.

> "*Loviisa – the Young Matron of Niskavuori* continues the famous series by Juhani Tervapää on the defiant men of Niskavuori and their matrons, who are forced to fight for the honour of their husbands, the reputation of the house, and the happiness of their children".[58]

The visual and audiovisual promotion, however, foregrounded the topic of romance as the trailer, the poster, and the film-stills all emphasized the qualities of melodrama, underlined conflicts, sex, and illegitimate passions. [Fig. 44] The trailer framed *Loviisa* as a passionate love triangle film featuring three favourite Finnish stars: Tauno Palo, Emma Väänänen, and Kirsti Hurme. The trailer image-track opened with framings of these three characters: Loviisa in the main room of the house, Juhani taking his gun and leaving the house, and Malviina receiving money from Loviisa. Clips from Loviisa's and Juhani's fight cut to a scene framing Juhani as Malviina's jealous lover, to Juhani's mother, to Malviina and her other suitor, a farm hand Martti, and to Loviisa confiding in one of Juhani's sisters. Amdist rapid cutting a superimposed text flashed:

> "The fighting and loving heart of the Finnish woman was stronger than the man's passions! It is a woman's fight for her man's love against another woman… for the honour of the house, for the reputation of her husband, and for the happiness of her children…a film filled with Juhani Tervapää's sparkling narration."

The image track featured clips of Juhani and Malviina walking towards each other from the opposite ends of a rye field. In the trailer, rapid cutting and the superimposed text growing in size (opening up and flashing) intensified this scene and were identified in 1980s–1990s readings as a locus of passion-as-transgression. With a wipe, the trailer cut to Juhani and Malviina lying and kissing in the field. As the final words of the superimposed text flash, Juhani's hand moved up Malviina's leg. The trailer ended with a montage of landscape scenery and a haymaking scene, displaying the director's name and the film's title superimposed. The last image showed the estate itself. This trailer clearly emphasized the marital fight against adulterous passion, although the rye field scene is from the beginning of the film and takes place before Juhani's engagement to Loviisa. The closing image of the house along with the expression "a woman's fight" served as epitomes of repression.

A number of publicity-stills reiterated the narrative framing of the trailer, emphasizing passion, sex, marital fights, and jealousy. The visual language of the film was also praised in review journalism:

58 *HS* 24.12.1946. In the context of theatre, the emphasis this framing places on Loviisa's battle was articulated in 1940 as the narrative conflict between two women: "one's love contains her personal efforts, a responsibility for the children and the house, for all that had been entrusted them, while the other only listens to her blood, and the powerfully erotic man hovering between them". *Valvoja-Aika* 1940, 385.

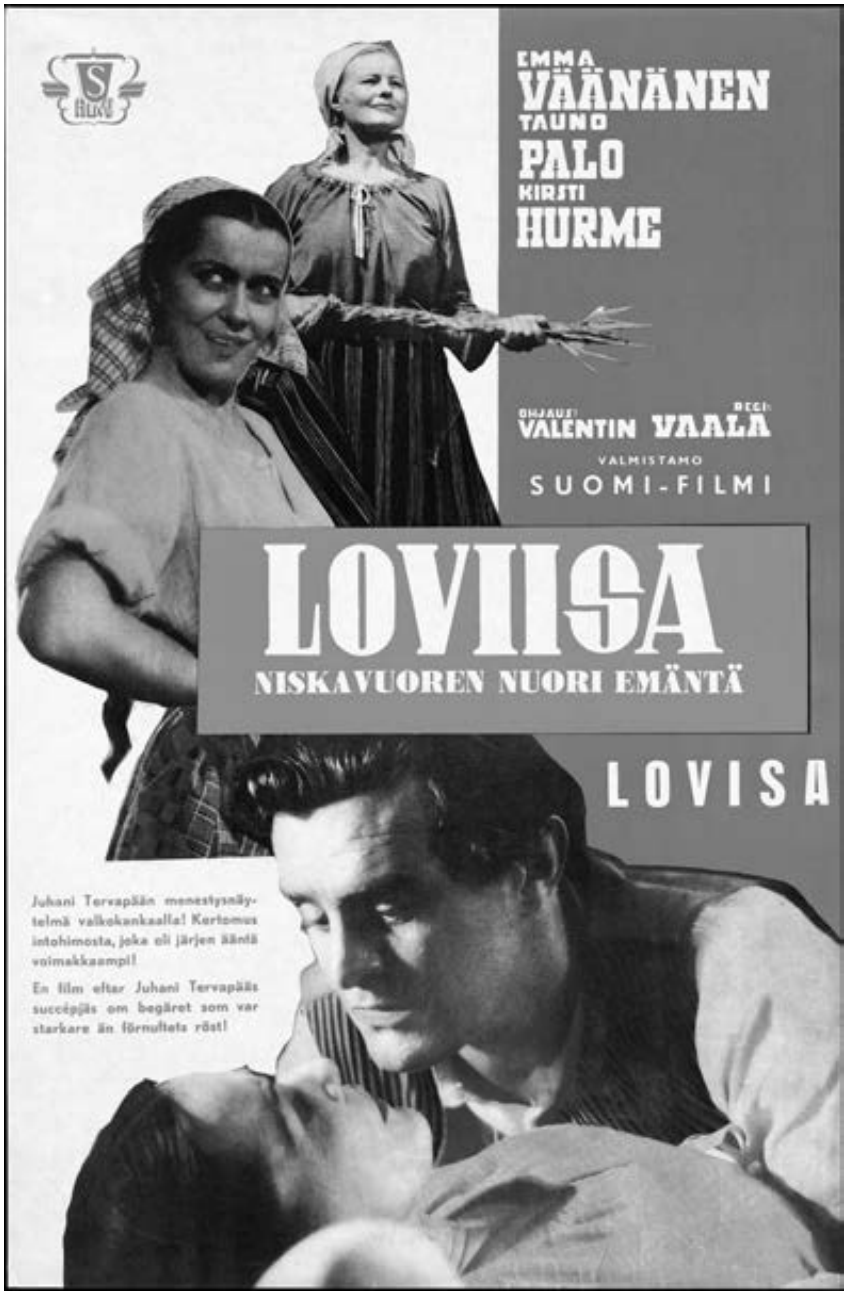


Fig. 44. The poster framed Loviisa *1946 (FFA) as a love triangle, emphasizing conflicts and illegitimate passions.*

> "The way in which Juhani and Malviina are photographed approaching each other has such fervour and brutal force that one wonders whether there has ever been anything like it in Finnish film."[59]

Review journalism most often framed the Malviina character in purely sexual terms and read her as the sexualized double of the Niskavuori matron, describing her as "hot-blooded", "voluptuous", and "sensuously hot and sarcastic at the same time".[60] For reviewers, the "beautiful, sultry, and exciting dairy maid" with a "dark, velvet voice" and "her bewitchingly luring glances" radiated "passion and fatefulness". They described Malviina's "vital femininity" as "sensuous", "powerful", and "enchanting".[61] For some, she had "too much vampire in her" when she should have been "naturally hot-blooded".[62] Reviewers recurrently characterized Malviina with the Finnish word *verevä* which etymologically relates to blood (*veri*). While *verevä* literally means being "full of blood", its figurative meanings range from having a ruddy complexion to being vigorous, full of life, and lusty as well as sensual and sultry. In 1940s film and theatre reviews, *verevä* connected with biologistic notions of sexuality (cf. "the stubborn drive") as well as with inter-war notions of life force and the so-called "vitalism" to be discussed further ahead. As such, the word *verevä*, "full of vitality", crystallizes the appeal of Malviina for readings of Niskavuori fictions in terms of sexual politics. Besides being read as a representative of an oppressed social class, as *verevä*, she could also be read as epitomizing "life" itself. Thus, while sexualizing framings conformed to a convention as they saw women of lower social classes as more sexual, some found more in this "enlightened and self-conscious dairy maid":

> "In the play, she is a weak-willed, passive creature, whose fate is obvious, whereas in the film, she turns out to be so strong that it is impossible to understand her submission into a mere object of Juhani's desires."[63]

Although many stills featured Malviina and portrayed her reading, drinking coffee, and working (in the courtyard, the dairy, the cowshed/piggery), even more of them framed her as a desirable body. A medium shot photographed her from the side with her work clothing and her alluring pose (hands resting on her hips) emphasizing the contours of her body and her head geared to meet the gaze of the viewer. Even the film's poster featured this image, giving it a special emphasis in the narrative image of the film (cf. Ellis 1985, 31–33). [Fig. 44] The discourse of desirability also structured stills which portrayed Malviina and Juhani sitting on a horse carriage and Juhani grabbing her bare thigh and close-ups of them lying on the ground. [Fig. 41] These

59 *IS* 28.12.1946.

60 *Suomalainen Suomi* 1/1947, 51; *Hbl* 29.12.1946; *TKS* 31.12.1946; *NP* 30.12.1946. The

61 *US* 29.12.1946; *ÅU* 10.1.1947; *AL* 28.12.1946; *VS* 30.12.1946. As a dark woman Malviina represented the "slightly exotic bad woman" Leena-Maija Rossi (1998, 9) has identified as one "traditional Finnish national gender".

62 *Kansan Lehti* 28.12.1946.

63 *TKS* 31.12.1946; *Ssd* 29.12.1946; *HS* 29.12.1946.

Fig. 45. Not only was she represented as a sexualized maid, Malviina was also framed as a fallen woman, accused and interrogated in Loviisa *1946 (FFA).*

stills framed Malviina as a wanton face, with her eyes and her gaze directed towards Juhani in focus. In addition, stills that depicted Malviina in a long shot, standing alone, in a pasture, by the lakeshore, or standing in front of her living quarters and gazing off-frame, implied and underlined that she expected company. Framings with Juhani also depicted Malviina as an object of illegitimate desire; for instance, a medium shot portrayed Juhani courting Malviina from outside a window, from another space. Other publicity-stills, showing Malviina with the farm hand Martti, suggested a love triangle. Stills featuring a physical fight between Martti and Juhani outside of Malviina's room presented Martti as a competing suitor.

Publicity-stills also highlighted Malviina's marginal status; she was portrayed lying awake and alone in her bed in the main room at the Niskavuori house, in tears (with Juhani in the Niskavuori main room), with her child in her mother's house or running away, and as a silent background figure in still life images, conversation piece -like shots of the Niskavuori interior. Echoing framings of Ilona in the visual promotion of the 1938 film, many stills depicted Malviina in settings implying condemnation, defiance, and interrogation. For instance, one portrayed her being questioned by the village priest and framed her from an extremely low angle. [Fig. 45] This expressionistic or film noir -like rhetoric reiterates that of a 1938 still which, referring to the closing "trial" scene of *The Women of Niskavuori* (1938), was shot from a bird's eye -perspective. But stills featuring an encounter with Loviisa positioned Malviina not only as an accused and immobile character, but also as Loviisa's equal opponent. [Fig. 46] Although a medium shot depicted

Fig. 46. In Loviisa *1946 (FFA), one has the estate and the money, the other the patron's love.*

them both standing and gazing at each other, lighting hierarchizes them by foregrounding the Loviisa character. This still suggests the obvious moral symbolism of *Loviisa*, familiar from many Finnish films, according to which fair-haired female characters are virtuous, whereas dark hair is coupled with "dark desires" (cf. Salakka 1991, 109–111; Dyer 1997, 28, 57–59). At the same time, however, this still confounds this moral logic as Loviisa, whose forehead is brightly illuminated, is portrayed to offer money to Malviina. Although a dark-haired figure, dressed in black and placed in the shadow, Malviina refuses to accept the money (to trade her love for Juhani for money) and, thus, questions Loviisa's moral superiority. While the character of Malviina conforms to both sexualizing and "racializing" logic of representation, her "vitality" complicates any stereotyping.

Siipirikko, the Broken-Winged

While promotional publicity and review journalism saw Malviina as a projection of female sexuality, both theatre and film reviewers read the Siipirikko (Mirjam Novero) character, the disabled servant of Heta and Akusti, as an image of victimized femininity, as her name "Broken-Winged" literally suggests. Portrayed as passive and powerless, weak, and unappreciated, Siipirikko was framed as a melodramatic character in a classic sense (Vicinus 1981, 130).[64] She prompted sympathetic readings and invited pity.

64 Among "the traditional Finnish national genders" proposed by Rossi (1998, 9), Siipirikko corresponds to "the natural blond shepherdess".

In these sentimental (cf. Clark 1991, 20, 22) framings, she was described as one "remained pale in the shadows of life" and "reminiscent of a featherless chick, whose whole being startles":

> "The most polished and harmonious character in the play is Siipirikko, the crippled, fragile crofter's daughter [rampa, heiveröinen torpantyttö], who with her altruistic [vähäisine pyyteineen] and her bleak being [valjuine olemuksineen] is such a moving, ascetic [elämänvieras] character. In this world, there are many like her."[65]

In this manner, reviewers described Siipirikko intertwining melodramatic and sentimental expressions ("featherless chick", "crippled, fragile crofter's daughter") with references to real world ("there are many like her").

According to Martha Vicinus (1981, 130), characters like Siipirikko were frequent in 19th century melodrama: "Their weakness made them vulnerable to the villain's worst designs, but their purity made them triumph, in heaven if not here." In her analysis, "One of the most popular elements in melodrama for a working-class audience was the theme of the mighty brought low" (ibid., 132; cf. Gaines 1996, 65). For many reviewers as well, this theme was the main message of the closing scene of *Heta Niskavuori* in which Akusti prioritizes Siipirikko and shows his power over Heta in his will. In that scene, the victimized maid defeated the monument-woman, at least momentarily. Both in the context of theatre and film, public framings outlined Siipirikko as a counter-image of the Niskavuori women. While Loviisa and Heta were devised as strong, determinate, and power seeking, Siipirikko was framed as "sensitive" and "soulful", as "motherly, humble, and susceptible", and as "modest" and "wise".[66] Idealizing her maternalism and self-abnegation, one reviewer described Siipirikko as a Mary Magdalene -kind of character who quietly bears her cross".[67] For other writers, she, being "simple and beautiful", embodied the "lyricism of the everyday life".[68]

Visual framings of *Heta Niskavuori* portrayed Siipirikko both as "natural blond shepherness", to quote Leena-Maija Rossi (1998, 9). As for the promotion of the film, publicity-stills featured Siipirikko in an album-like photo with both her face and blond, plaited hair accentuated by the lighting. [Fig. 47] They depicted her in kitchen interacting with the children Heta is shown to ignore and working outdoors with Akusti and Heta. Although her relationship to Heta in the publicity-stills suggests fear and condemnation, she, unlike Heta, is portrayed with the children. A magazine advertisement showcased a publicity-still in which Akusti and Siipirikko were framed as a couple, though separated by the fishing net in a manner similar to the window-frame between Juhani and Malviina. The framings of Akusti and Siipirikko, however, lacked romance and erotic coding. In addition, a pub-

65 *Ssd* 5.4.1952; *Vaasa* 29.9.1956.

66 *US* 29.11.1950; *VS* 19.11.1950; *EA* 2/1953; *HS* 4.1.1953.

67 *US* 1.4.1953; *US* 4.1.1953.

68 "[W]ithout exaggeration towards the sentimental or pathetic" *IS* 30.12.1952. On the danger of exaggeration in terms of mildness, see *Ylioppilaslehti* 9.1.1953; *Uusi Aura* 29.12.1952.

Fig. 47. An image of victimized femininity, Siipirikko was portrayed as an idealized character in Heta Niskavuori *1952 (FFA).*

licity photo in which Akusti carries Siipirikko in his arms connotes illness and weakness more than anything else. In these framings, then, Siipirikko not only functioned as a negative of Heta, but also as a projection of Akusti's goodness, serving as a visible sign of his choice and good nature.

Steward

Visual framings of *Aarne Niskavuori* foregrounded the romance of Martta (Hillevi Lagerstam) and Steward (Åke Lindman), while Aarne and Ilona, now a married couple, featured merely in album-style portraits. The visual language used to depict the romance was reminiscent of the manner in which Aarne's and Ilona's romance had been represented in the framings of *The Women of Niskavuori* (1938). Furthermore, they echoed the publicity-stills of Juhani and Malviina in *Loviisa* (1946).

Reiterating framings of Aarne and Ilona in the visual promotion of *The Women of Niskavuori*, a series of publicity-stills featured Martta and Steward posing by the lakeshore, under a birch tree, on a jetty, or by the water. Close-ups portraying them head to head, embracing, and kissing, cited in detail the conventions with which passion was represented in 1938 and 1946 publicity-stills. One framing of Steward and Martta on a horse carriage with a hay load echoed the setting of a publicity-still featuring Juhani and Malviina. This time, however, the framing flaunted the male employee as the desirable object with his naked upper body. Other stills portrayed Martta and Steward in an outdoor dance scene, a public display of affection and condemnation familiar from the framings of the two earlier films. Furthermore, in another still, Steward lifts up Martta in the same manner Aarne had lifted Ilona in 1938. [Fig. 48] Unlike the framings of the earlier films, the publicity photos

Fig. 48. Publicity-stills of Aarne Niskavuori *(FFA) presented the romance of Martta and Steward with motifs similar to those used in* The Women of Niskavuori *to present Aarne and Ilona's relationship.*

of *Aarne Niskavuori* also framed Steward as a violent lover, showing him stalking Martta, appearing drunk in a party, finding Martta kissing another man, and attacking the doctor who has replaced him as Martta's lover.

Though no publicity-stills presented Steward doing physical work – excluding the one frame with Martta from the haymaking – several publicity-stills featured him as a male pinup; Åke Lindman's muscular, naked upper body was photographed on the shore, leaning on a railing or on a hay carriage [Fig. 49]. These photos reprsented the male object of the eroticizing gaze was represented according to the conventional logic Richard Dyer (1992, 104) has analyzed; the emphasis on muscles promises action and the man's eyes are directed off-frame.

For the contemporary audience, Åke Lindman, a member of the Finnish Olympic soccer team and a film actor since the end of the 1940s, was marketed as a "manly man", a "he-man", and "a decent bloke". Even though described as less fierce, he was compared to Kirk Douglas in terms of his "simple, honest, taciturn, and powerfully masculine style".[69] As such "a man of action", Åke Lindman was the answer to a call for a heroic masculinity (cf. Halberstam 1998, 1–2), a Finnish equivalent to Burt Lancaster, Gordon MacRae, Marcel Pagliero, and John Wayne:

69 *EA* 14/1952, 8–9. From the perspective of the Butler-inspired gender theory of 21st century, the title of this article had an ironic tune when describing Lindman as "acting a manly man".

Fig. 49. As Steward, Åke Lindman posed for an eroticized gaze as a Finnish "he-man". Aarne Niskavuori *(FFA).*

> "For heroic roles, we now seek, instead of the beautiful men who used to be highly valued, 'proper robust [roimia] males' who have broad shoulders and robust muscular armour rather than beautiful faces. Even clearly 'ugly' men are now more desired than decorative faces as long as their bearing has the kind of masculinity and maleness [miehekkyys ja miehevyys] which makes them plausible and capable of heroic deeds."[70]

In a popular understanding, the "muscular masculinity" and the figure of the "he-man" were characterized in terms of their supposedly powerful appeal to *women*. In his study of 1950s Hollywood cinema, Steve Cohan (1997) con-

70 *EA* 31.10.1950, 3. In 1952, a film magazine published a feature article on "the muscular masculinity" of John Wayne ("John Waynen muskelimaskuliinisuus hyvässä huudossa", *EA* 19/1952, 16–17) and in 1953, a photo feature presented Anthoni Steel "as a typical he-man lover" in sports activities. See, "'He-man' Anthoni Steel urheilee toiveosaa odotellessaan" in *EA* 11/1953. In the English-language promotion material for *Hilja, the Milkmaid* (*Hilja Maitotyttö*) Tauno Palo was introduced as "Finland's N:o 1 'He Man'" who in this role has "a chance to stress his masculinity: he is strong, irresistible, and uncompromising" ("Hilja, the Milkmaid", FFA clip archive). For an analysis of this strain in Palo's star image, see Koivunen 1994.

nects this new emphasis on masculinity as virility to the 1950s reconstruction of heterosexuality as "nature" in sharp contrast to homosexuality:

> "Whereas in the mid-nineteenth century the male's 'base nature', his 'appetites' or 'passions' had needed to be civilized by femininity, it was now understood to form the core of a robust, vital masculinity in contradiction to femininity." (Cohan 1997, xiii.)

From this perspective, the representation of Steward did not merely incorporate a trendy figure in the narrative world of Niskavuori, a figure who made a romance possible and plausible in the film. It also marked a discourse on men and sexuality significantly different from that of *The Women of Niskavuori* or *Loviisa*. In those films, male desire was interpreted as trouble or a potential for transformation, depending on different framings. Furthermore, romance and sex were read as politics. In the case of Steward and *Aarne Niskavuori*, however, sex was considered "merely sex". Not surprisingly, then, whereas Aarne's and Ilona's adulterous love and Juhani's and Malviina's cross-class romance have frequently been read as transgressive, Martta's relationship with Steward has not prompted such allegorical interpretations. Unlike Aarne or Juhani, Martta did not count as a subject for nation and history and, unlike Ilona or Malviina, Steward was not interpreted in terms of sexual politics. For reviewers, he was merely muscle.

The first reception: The Women of Niskavuori *(1936, 1938) and the cultural crisis*

The readings of the Niskavuori story in terms of sexual politics and the repressive hypothesis have not, however, been peculiar merely to the review journalism of the 1980s and 1990s. On the contrary, in the 1930s, when the first theatre and film productions of the Niskavuori saga were introduced, sexual politics was a salient topic on the cultural agenda and the tropes of passion and repression important vehicles for discussing social and political issues. In this sense, *The Women of Niskavuori* was "from the beginning" informed by the repressive hypothesis and framed in relation to contemporary debates on "the cultural crisis" (Huuhtanen 1978, 204ff; Mikkeli 1996; Karkama & Koivisto 1999). In the following, thus, I offer a revised reading of the 1930s debates concerning the so-called the cultural crisis. I question the 1980s–1990s readings of the 1930s as an era of repression by illustrating and discussing the plurality of reading routes available at the time of "the first reception" of the Niskavuori fictions.[71] Furthermore, I wish to show how

71 For example, Erkki Sevänen (1994, 32) has in his study on the inter-war regulation of the literary life maintained that the Foucauldian notion of power as discursive cannot be employed to analyze the inter-war period, an era of deep social and cultural conflicts, which the state and "the hegemonic circles" managed through force and means of coercion.

the 1930s, in fact, featured a lively debate on the issues of sex and politics, providing the first reception of *The Women of Niskavuori* in both theatre and cinema with a dynamic interpretive framework. In particular, I focus on the gendering effects of the 1930s sexual politics.

As *The Women of Niskavuori* was first performed in Helsinki Folk Theatre on 31st of March 1936, the cultural debate was accelerating into what has been termed "the literature fight" [kirjallisuustaistelu] (Huuhtanen 1984; Lappalainen 1984; Mäkinen 1989b). This "fight" focused on the politics of literature and literary criticism, as well as on the moral of literature and began in 1936 when the novelist Mika Waltari, disappointed at how his novel *Palava nuoruus* (*The Burning Youth* 1935) had been received by the critics the year before, publicly attacked what he regarded as "liberal" literary criticism. In his article "Our Literature at the Crossroad", he argued that the liberal criticism practised in Finnish newspapers discriminated against right-wing authors and, in fact, promoted a Bolshevist political agenda. Although Waltari did not mention any critics by name, he was obviously referring to the two most prominent critics of the time, Lauri Viljanen, a critic for *Helsingin Sanomat*, and Kaarlo Marjanen, a critic for *Uusi Suomi*. The debate culminated in February in a public discussion entitled "Literature Fight", organized by the Liberal Student Union (Vapaamielinen ylioppilasyhdistys) and featured both Lauri Viljanen and Matti Kurjensaari who was at the time a columnist at the liberal paper *Nykypäivä* and who later, through his memoirs (Kurjensaari 1962, 1966), had strong influence on the interpretations of 1930s Finnish cultural life. In the public discussion, Viljanen continued the debate by distinguishing between social and political criticism, defending the former as anchored in "life", and rejecting the latter as "programmatic". Thus, he challenged both the conservative and the leftist criticism and offered his "humanistic" approach as an alternative. (Kurjensaari 1962, 38–40; Lappalainen 1993, 104–105; Sallamaa 1994, 103; Mikkeli 1996, 122–123.)

In an essay on "Art and Morals", Lauri Viljanen discussed his vision, anchoring his critical practice in the "vitalistic" "truth of instincts" rooted in the Bergsonian notion of *l'elan vital*.[72] In Viljanen's view, valuable literature revealed the "immorality" disguised by conventional moral standards and, in this manner, gave way to more "genuine" and "authentic" morals. (Viljanen 1936a, 6–7.) The theme of "life worship" and the revitalizing power of "instinctual" life was further elaborated in a collection of essays published later in 1936, *Taisteleva Humanismi* (*The Fighting Humanism* 1950). In this book, Viljanen discussed a series of European writers and distinguished between "life worshippers" and those defending reason as the basis for culture. The essays featured, for example, a reading of Goethe, Nietzsche, D. H. Lawrence, and his Finnish soul mate, F. E. Sillanpää. (Viljanen 1950; Lappalainen 1993, 79–107.) Theologian Yrjö J. E. Alanen, who had published a pamphlet on *Christianity and Culture* (*Kristinusko ja kulttuuri*) in 1933,

72 For Viljanen's connection to the philosophy of Henri Bergson, see Lappalainen 1993, 91–92; Mikkeli 1996, 130–131. Päivi Lappalainen (1993, 79–87) discusses Viljanen's vitalism extensively. On vitalism in literature, see also Koskela 1999, 320–330.

opposed Viljanen's ideas. He saw Viljanen's "vitalism" and "life worship" as clear symptoms of "cultural crisis" and offered Christianity as a remedy. (Alanen 1933; Alanen 1936.)

The 1930s debate on "cultural crisis" dated back to the 1920s when, in particular, theologians launched a discussion about the degeneration of western civilization, inspired by Oswald Spengler's *Der Untergang des Abendlandes* (two volumes published in 1917 and 1922). In Finland, Bishop Erkki Kaila identified a multilevel crisis shaking the western societies in 1921. In addition to the political crisis in the aftermath of the Great War, he saw a religious and moral crisis precipitated by increasing secularization, a social crisis compelled by socialist ideas of class struggle and brought about by mechanization and its effects on human beings. (Mikkeli 1996, 127–128.) In the late 1920s and during the 1930s, these themes were increasingly discussed in relation to literature as the so-called Tulenkantajat group ("Torch-Bearers"), a new intelligentsia, including a number of prominent young authors and critics, e.g., Arvi Kivimaa, Olavi Paavolainen, Erkki and Katri Vala, Mika Waltari, and Lauri Viljanen. This group was perceived as a threat to the status of the national church ideology, the alliance between the newly independent state and the Lutheran Church. (Mäkinen 1989a, 286–288.) In the 1930s, this cultural debate culminated in what has been termed "the literature fight", but as many studies have shown, the themes discussed were not limited to literature (Huuhtanen 1979, 204ff; Huuhtanen 1984, 28–29; Lappalainen 1984, 40–43; Sallamaa 1994, 93–105.) Heikki Mikkeli (1996, 122–123, 128–130) has argued that the "cultural crisis" was approached from at least four different perspectives. While the literature fight featured "conservative", "left-wing", and "vitalistic" views of morally acceptable and recommendable literature, theologians were concerned with the secularization and the erosion of Christian values, and philosophers with a clash between spiritual and technical, instrumental values. In a sociological analysis, the crisis was about the emergence of a new middle-class, "a rebellion of the masses" (*la rebelión de las masas*) as theorized by José Ortega y Gasset (1930).[73] Both Mikkeli and others who have analyzed the 1930s cultural debates have disregarded the centrality and, in particular, the complexity of sexuality and femininity as *tropes* in the contemporary rhetoric and as *issues* in the debates. While inter-war discussants articulated notions of both sexuality and gender when debating the ethics and politics of modernity and modernization from their different perspectives, the first Niskavuori play and film even coincided with explicit, topical discussions on sexuality.

73 Although Finland in a European comparison was one of the most agrarian countries during the inter-war period – 65% of the population worked within agriculture in 1938 (in Sweden 38%) – a structural change was taking place. Both industrialization and urbanization proceeded rather rapidly and the middle-class was growing fast into a significant consumer group. And the new weekly magazines and growing advertising business catered to their tastes. In 1938, a committee was appointed to reflect upon the status and significance of the growing class. See Mikkeli 1996, especially 139. According to Pirkko Koski (2000, 110–111), *The Women of Niskavuori* addressed precisely the 1930s growing urban popular audiences.

A drama of ideas or a marital drama?

As discussed in Chapter 3, contemporary reviewers framed *The Women of Niskavuori* (1936) as a drama of ideas which not only debated tradition and modernity, the key themes of the 1930s cultural debates, but also different femininities. In this framing, Loviisa (the tradition) and Ilona (the modern) were seen as main characters embodying the dramatic conflict, whereas Martta, the third woman, was marginalized. In a contemporary review, the specific lives and histories of these fictitious women were recounted as if they were *any* women, allowing a generalization effect:

> "Many generations upheld the estate of Niskavuori, the mighty centre of a parish in Häme, with the monetary dowry brought in by matrons. Under these circumstances, family life within the house has been as shattered as the power of the house has appeared unbroken from the outside. Women developed into the maintainers of the family's social status, while the patrons have substituted their longing for individual happiness for extra-marital affairs and alcohol. The widowed old matron represents the traditionally strong, sturdy matron-type who owns half of the estate. A wrecked marriage and harsh life experience have hardened her into a cold and calculating ruler-character for whom maintaining the external honour of the house and the economic or other power-position of the family is the first priority even at the cost of the personal happiness of her family members."[74]

This quote exemplifies many of the interpretive framings discussed in Chapters 2–4, including the self-evident location of Finland in Häme, the reading of Niskavuori family saga as social history, the mythologizing of kin as predestination, and a monumentalization of the old matron. All of these readings, in other words, can be traced back to the first reception and its framework. In a similar fashion, another theatre review suggested a social historical reading of the Niskavuori saga in 1936:

> "The wealthy family estate of Niskavuori has, since the new Inheritance Code began to threaten its entirety, remained undivided only on the condition that the family's oldest son found a rich enough spouse. With her funds, the other heirs, who have been many, have been bought off the estate. Of course, the marriages of convenience contracted in this manner have not been the happiest ones, and the deep-rooted, in some sense sanctified habit of the patrons has been to seek comfort outside the home. Thus far women have accepted the lapses of their husbands with an unrelenting tranquillity and have continually maintained the position of the family. The fate of Niskavuori has, thus, depended on the grand-natured matrons who have sacrificed their personal happiness."[75]

From this perspective, the new and meaningful in the play resided in its anchoring in the Finnish reality, in its rootedness "in some special problems in our system of land ownership". Other contemporary reviewers, however,

74 *Uusi Aura* 25.10.1936.
75 *Suomalainen Suomi* 3/1936, 159–160.

interpreted the play not as a drama of ideas, but as a social problem play, whose central topics included those of marriage, sexuality, adultery, and divorce.[76] In this reading, the play was framed to the audience as a timely and honest portrayal of marriage:

> "The author's intention has not been to set an example; she just states the facts, not only in the marriage of *The Women in Niskavuori*, but more or less universally. This truth can be seen by anybody who has the courage to face the facts and life as they really are. Moreover, in this play, psychological and physiological marital problems receive more attention than in most modern plays that deal with these issues. They are treated in a courageous and straightforward manner which escapes hypocritical conventionality."[77]

Though one theatre reviewer rejected the topic of marriage as "old-fashioned", "the omnipotence of love" having been celebrated "since the antiquity", he, too, acknowledged that "the problem of divorce [was] far from unusual even in Finland".[78] In 1938, a film reviewer articulated a similar reading of *The Women of Niskavuori* in terms of marriage as a current social problem

> "It is true that the film condemns those marriages of convenience which have been so common even among our rural gentry that there has been no point in talking about love as the basis of marriage. Nevertheless, it would be wrong to say that it is immoral and indecent to show and demonstrate where marriage contracted in this manner leads. The marriage of the Niskavuori young couple should have been depicted slightly more thoroughly and the cause of the failure should have been stated even more clearly, i.e., that the marriage was contracted on money and not love. There would have been no possibility for wrong interpretations."[79]

Indeed, both as a play and a film, *The Women of Niskavuori* entered a lively discussion on marriage, sexuality, and gender relations. In the 1930s, novelists, civic educators, sexologists, theologians, women activists as well as cultural critics participated in this discussion.

In 1936, a review article in the journal *Valvoja-Aika* addressed the issue of marriage as a social problem, as it presented the socio-anthropological studies of Edward Westermarck. Upon publication of Westermarck's latest book, *The Future of Marriage in Western Civilization* (1936), and its Swedish translation, his ideas were presented to the Finnish readership and he was engaged him in the current debates on sexual morals. When compared to scholars who criticized the institutions of marriage and family, Westermarck was presented as a defender of monogamy and of the importance of marriage. In a concluding quote, Westermarck did not seem to idealize marriage, but seemed to take a pragmatic stance: "Because the continuance of marriage

76 *Kansan Lehti* 19.10.1936; *Ssd* 1.4.1936; *Sosialisti* 24.10.1936; *Uusi Aura* 25.10.1936; *SvP* 1.4.1936; *Ilkka* 26.5.1936; *Hbl* 1.4.1936; *Suomalainen Suomi* 3/1936, 159–160.

77 *Ilkka* 26.5.1936.

78 *Suomalainen Suomi* 3/1936, 159–160.

79 *Suomen pienviljelijä* 27.1.1938.

promotes the success of the individual, it is obviously necessary to the social order". In Westermarck's view, "marriage is not created for everybody, it does not please everybody, and it is not suitable for everybody to try". Yet, he revealed that it can be improved "with the help of increasing knowledge, consideration, and self-control" as well as through changes in societal and moral attitudes towards "relationships between the sexes" (Olsoni 1936, 512).[80]

Indeed, the debate on marriage also addressed the issue of gender relations. In Finland, the status of marriage and spouses was a timely issue even in legal sense, as the Marriage Act of 1929 granted spouses legal equality. As a result, women were no longer the wards of their husbands. (Pylkkänen 1994, 602–606.) Furthermore, female activists and feminists had been discussing the so-called companionate marriage since the turn of the century. Many accounts envisaged it as a "relationship based on an equal and mutual respect and attachment", a relationship, which ideally involved "two individuals who voluntarily live together" and "the economic independence of the spouses". (Räisänen 1995, 133.)

The goals of the women's movement met with little sympathy among the members of Finnish intelligentsia. In 1934, the philosopher Erik Ahlman discussed, on the pages of *Valvoja-Aika*, the effects of the women's movement on "the structures of Western culture" by focusing on working life, education, the marriage market, the nativity, the nature of marriage and eroticism, the use of stimulants (drinking, smoking), sports, and women's physical appearance. In all of these areas, he detected a tendency towards masculinization as he lamented that marriage had become more of a "companionship between two equal partners, in some respects reminiscent of a relationship between men". Ahlman also detected some changes in "the actual erotic attitudes of the sexes": "Even here the freedom of women has increased. She is not any more subjected to such strict control and surveillance as she was before and still is in the Mediterranean countries." (Ahlman 1934, esp. 306.)

In *The Fighting Humanism* (1936), Lauri Viljanen also suggested a change in debates on marriage, as "the question of the relations between the sexes", according to him, was now posed from the women's point of view: "What is woman *as a woman* entitled to demand from man and society?", he asked. As a phenomenon exemplifying the cultural crisis, he considered this novel situation to be a consequence of a new "scientific" approach elicited by psychology, medicine, and sociology, not one of the women's movement or other social activist groups. (Viljanen 1950, 404; Lappalainen 1993, 97.)[81] The very same year, Olavi Paavolainen, a cultural critic and once a famous

80 For adiscussion on Westermarck's views of marriage, see Salmela 1998, 28–31. Westermarck's first study, *The History of Human Marriage* was published in 1891 (in England) and reproduced in five printings by 1921. It was translated into seven languages and published in an abbreviated form in Finnish in 1932 (*Avioliiton historia*). In 1934, Westermarck had published *Three Essays on Sex and Marriage* as a reply to his critics. One of the essays was directed at Sigmund Freud, who had criticized his theory of incest.

81 Päivi Lappalainen (1993, 97–98) argues that Viljanen's defence of "new sexual morals" was clearly written from "a male viewpoint".

"Torch-Bearer", discussed the question of sexual politics. In his book *Kolmannen valtakunnan vieraana* (*As a Guest in the Third Reich* 1936), Paavolainen argued that "precisely in love and sexual life, the most dangerous liberalism and individualism have recently risen to rebellion". As "the best allies" he identified the belles-lettres and "the new psychological science". "Family and marriage have been submitted to severe criticism, and the new sexual morality is the slogan of the day", he wrote. (Paavolainen 1936/1993, 200. Cf. Mäkinen 1989a, 275–290.) Both Viljanen and Paavolainen diagnosed the new psychology and especially Freudian psychoanalysis as the sources of the new view of sexuality, but the references to sociology and medicine drew attention to sexology and the guidance literature marketed to the public. The fact that "the reading world is offered popular scientific guidebooks, handbooks of "perfect marriage" or manuals in "the school of love" was for Viljanen (1950, 404) a clear sign of the new approach he detected in culture.[82]

In Finland, this proliferation of sex education resulted in altogether 21 manuals which were published during the inter-war period, eight as Finnish originals and the rest translated from foreign languages. (Friberg & Vuoma 1986, 46ff.) The translations of two international bestsellers, *Die Vollkommene Ehe* (1926, *Täydellinen avioliitto* 1930) by T. van de Velde and *Married Love* (1918, *Aviopuolisot* 1925) by Marie Stopes also highlight the importance of the sexological knowledge in the inter-war years.[83] As sexology gained ground and as religion started losing its dominance on moral issues, a significant change took place in the manuals' image of woman; the non-religious guidebooks started to regard woman as a sexual being. (Friberg and Vuoma 1986, 46 ff.) Symptomatically, then, Julia Sucksdorff (1936, 42, 86) wrote in her *Marriage and Its Problems* (*Avioliitto ja sen ongelmat* 1936): "In our times, it is not always the husband that deceives the wife; the wife can also be unfaithful to the husband. (…) A woman often sneaks between spouses and takes what belongs to someone else." Sucksdorff explained that she wrote about "woman's guilt for infidelity and divorce, since it is illustrative of our times" (ibid.).

Indeed, marital problems were the theme of "our times" even in different areas of culture. In the context of cinema, both sex comedies and melodramas abounded. In 1935–1936, Helsinki cinemas ran a number of both Hollywood and European films that featured marital problems.[84] By 1936,

82 For a discussion of the influence of psychoanalysis on Viljanen's thinking, see Lappalainen 1993, 55–56, 83–84.

83 T. van de Velde's book was printed 42 times in Germany between 1926 and 1932, and the English translation, first published, in 1928 went through 43 printings. See Weeks 1981, 206. In Finnish translation, *Die vollkommene Ehe* went through two printings by 1933 and 14 more by 1968 when a new translation of the book appeared. As for Marie Stopes, *Married Love* had gone through 28 editions and been translated into 14 languages by 1955. See Jackson 1987, 65. In Finland, it had nine printings by 1945, two in the first year and five by 1933. Another book by Stopes, *Enduring Passion* (1928), was also translated, and the Finnish version, *Kestävä rakkaus* (1932) went through six printings by 1946, two during the first year.

84 For example, *Anna Karenina*, *Of Human Bondage*, *Walpurgis Night* (*Valborgsmässoafton*), *The Gay Divorcee*, *Wife versus Secretary*, *No More Ladies*, *To Mary – with Love and Desire*.

the "marital novel" had become established as a genre category, and it was used as a subtitle in contemporary novels dealing with "the contradictions of a modern marriage".[85] While Maria Jotuni's novel *Huojuva talo* (*The Tottering House*) and its critique of the bourgeois marriage as a cage of violence remained unpublished at the author's request until 1963 (Juutila 1989a, 413–414, 417–418; Juutila 1989b, 421), many other contemporary Finnish female authors discussed marriage and female sexuality in their novels, most notably Iris Uurto in *Ruumiin ikävä* (*The Yearning of the Body* 1930) and *Kypsyminen* (*Maturation* 1935) and Helvi Hämäläinen in *Lumous* (*Enchantment* 1934) and *Katuojan vettä* (*Water in the Ditch* 1935).[86] Both *The Yearning of the Body* (1930) and *Enchantment* (1934) featured a controversial theme, women's dissatisfaction with their marital sex lives and their escape from it through divorce. Contemporary reviews explicitly connected these novels to the new psychology (e.g., psychoanalysis) and its treatment of sexuality as well as to D. H. Lawrence's sexual mysticism. But these authors were not seen as contributors to the cultural debates or discussants among others, they were instead identified as signs and proof of the current crisis. (Cf. Koskela 1999, 320–330.)

Professor K.E. Laurila was the autors' strongest opponent and, in his book *Battle over Art and Morality* (*Taistelu taiteesta ja siveellisyydestä* 1938), he characterized Uurto's novels as the prime example of not only "immoral literature" and "Finnish pornography", but also "blasphemy" and "Bolshevist tendency" (Laurila 1938, 157–160). Interestingly, Laurila also suspected Juhani Tervapää/Hella Wuolijoki of Bolshevist tendencies (cf. Chapter 3) and discussed Niskavuori plays – to use an expression from another contemporary right-wing voice – as "poisonous sugar", as promotion of "dangerous" ideas within a deceitfully pleasurable setting.[87] In this manner, Wuolijoki's plays were introduced to the particular readership of right-wing magazines as "white socialism":

> "By beating the drums of advertising, the achievements of Tervapää's theatre have been made familiar to all Finnish people and like the proletarian impregnated by its ideology even the orthodox bourgeois world has emptied its purses into the theatre cash register."[88]

In this manner, then, the framings of *The Women of Niskavuori* as a drama of ideas and as marital drama overlapped, as they all interpreted sex as politics and/or politics as sex. While Laurila's characterization is an extreme

85 For example, *Sokkosilla* (*Blind man's buff*) by Maija Suova, and *Mahdoton mahdolliseksi* (*The Impossible Becomes Possible*) by Hilja Haahti.

86 In the context of feminist literary history, both Uurto and Hämäläinen have been mentioned as writers who inspired "a need to define a new female sexual identity". See Juutila 1989a, passim; Juutila 1989b, 413–431. On the so-called "matristic wave" and its relation to D. H. Lawrence's thinking, see Lehtonen 1983, 153–162.

87 *Kinolehti* 2/1938, 52. In this article, the expression "poisonous sugar" was connected to reviews of *Die Blaue Engel*, thus, suggesting the liaison between cinema, sexuality, and politics.

88 *Ahjo* 2/1938, 23.

example, it does follow the logic of the sexual politics traced in this chapter from 1980s and 1990s review journalism to the 1930s cultural debates. While adulterous romance signified a positive transgression for the 1980s and 1990s reviewers, this right-wing framing interpreted it as "Bolshevist", using the inter-war code for anything considered unacceptable. (Cf. Laine 348–351.)

A new woman

In the context of theatre and within the generic framework of drama of ideas (see Chapter 3), the character of Ilona Ahlgren was understood to represent everything "new" as a counterweight to Loviisa who was conceived as an embodiment of everything "old". In 1936, the reviewers in both right- and left-wing papers saw the ideas represented by Loviisa as stronger than those promoted by Ilona. Readings that underlined an imbalance between the two characters not only figured in right-wing papers, but even elsewhere:

> "An attempt has been made to produce a stately, grandiose play about the life of the people, with demands of the family and the young, with free love's right to exist as opposite forces. The drama, however, remained somewhat crippled as the opposites were not represented as even nearly equally powerful. Old traditional knowledge is so strong and it possesses such a moral effect that in comparison, the love story of the young remains a mere passing fancy without any further interest."[89]

In reviews of the 1936 theatre performances, the Ilona character received a mixed response. She was ascribed a range of positive characterizations: "youthful gallantry, responsible liberty, and individual thirst for life", "the grace of a young, brave, and intelligent woman who has just entered the life", "the poetry and integrity of emotion". At the same time, she was also seen as "a new kind of schoolmistress, self-confident and thirsty for life, and one who does not evade nor care about the consequences of her love".[90]

In the context of the 1930s, thus, the character of Ilona and her relationship with Aarne were interpreted not only as a general critique of bourgeois marriage, but also as a manifesto for life worship [elämänpalvonta] à la D.H. Lawrence.[91] In contrast to Loviisa's and Martta's marriages of convenience, this relationship was based on "the harmony of blood", a concept that signals the vitalistic understanding of an alliance between the sexual, the gendered, and the social. Describing "the new sexual morals" in the thinking of Lawrence, Lauri Viljanen (1950, 416, 409–410) wrote, "The question is: What does woman want from man and man from woman? The answer is: coincidence of the spiritual and the sexual within the erotic circle. In a fight between two mutually hostile powers, the development has to lead to a synthesis that includes an unforeseen happiness".

89 *Naamio* 2/1936, 29.
90 *IS* 76/1936; *TS* 24.10.1936; *Naisten ääni* 9/1936.
91 A 1939 review of *Vastamyrkky/Antidope* connected associated Wuolijoki/Tervapää's authorship explicitly with "Lawrence impulse". See *Wiborgs Nyheter* 25.11.1939.

The Ilona character was repeatedly described with adjectives such as "free", "individual", and "modern", all traits of a *new woman* called *backfish* in the contemporary reviews.[92] The negative readings of Ilona especially emphasized her character as representative of this integral emblem for debates on modernity and modernization. In Finland, "new women" and "flappers" had been imagined, desired, and debated since the 1920s; by the mid-1930s, they had even entered Finnish films (Hapuli et al 1992; Hapuli 1992; Koivunen 1995):

> "The schoolmistress represents 'a new life ideal', the kind we have learnt to know with the 'Torch-Bearer'. 'The ideal of life' is expressed, first, in her wearing trousers, breaking etiquette, and fraternizing with the alcohol drinkers, and finally, in her sexual relationship with the patron of Niskavuori and the impudently self-confident confession of this liaison. Long live free love, — the resulting child will certainly survive because his mother is 'an independent woman'. And if the 'narrow-mindedness' of other people prevented her from getting jobs as a teacher, something else would certainly come up. And, as the schoolmistress explained her 'new life ideal' to her lover, this patron of a hundred-year-old family estate is ready to leave – just like that – his house and things, his wife and children, and does so with Ilona to acquire 'enlightenment'".[93]

In this review, the image of Ilona was not only connected with ideas of the Torch-Bearers group, but also with the idea of free love (propagated, in the Nordic countries, most famously by the Swedish writer Ellen Key at the turn of the century) and the feminist rhetoric of women's independence. Moreover, following the logic of sexual politics, all of these frameworks were lumped together with a more general idea of unconventionality in the face of social norms.

While 1980s and 1990s TV reviewers applauded the love affair of Ilona and Aarne as transgressive, many 1936 commentators deemed the romance implausible. The fact that Ilona disregarded the "consequences of her love" was viewed as "not psychologically and humanly motivated or plausible".[94] Ilona's "new life ideal" and especially her indifference to the break-up of a family contradicted the Christian family view that for example Professor Yrjö J. E. Alanen defended as the foundation of culture in his book *Christianity and Culture* (*Kristinusko ja kulttuuri* 1933). Alanen argued that family was

92 Ilona was called a "backfish" in a review of a theatre production in the Turku Theatre. *Uusi Aura* 25.10.1936. In *HS* (1.4.1936), Lauri Viljanen read Martta Kontula's performance as a representation of "modern youth". *SvP* 1.4.1936 used the expression "whirlwind" [virvelvind], which was one of the Swedish euphemisms for "the new woman". Hence, the character of Ilona was read in terms of "new womanhood" discussed in Finland as early as the 1920s and, in the mid- and late-1930s, strongly visible in Finnish cinema, in a series of "modern comedies" produced by Suomi-Filmi since 1935 (*Kaikki rakastavat/ Everybody loves* 1935, *Vaimoke/A Surrogate Wife* 1936 were the first successful films in this genre). See Hapuli et al 1992, 98–112; Koivunen 1995, 203–209; Hapuli 1995, 153–167.

93 *AS* 1.9.1936.

94 *Uusi Aura* 25.10.1936.

the cornerstone of defence in the face of the cultural crisis compelled by modernization because according to his understanding, family aroused the basic quality of a culture, *piety*, "a feeling of deep, devout reverence", in its members. Alanen thought the Freudian theories cultural liberalists subscribed to (and to whom the image of Ilona was related) tarnished "the finest and holiest relations of the human life" with libidinal obsessions of a "sexual maniac". (Alanen 1933, 69–70. Cf. Mäkinen 1989a, 286–288.)

In 1936, some reviewers called Ilona "a mouthpiece for the female author's ideas" and "a literary cliché", a character that was loaded with bombastic language and flowery phrases, psychologically implausible, yet idealized by the author.[95] She was seen as a carrier of not only leftist and vitalistic, but also feminist agendas. While *The Women of Niskavuori* was described as "radically liberal philosophy of life", it was also associated with Minna Canth and the women's movement. One reviewer stated that the film belonged to "a trend from Minna Canth to our times" according to which "a woman has to create an opportunity for herself to get along in life independently".[96] For Professor K.S. Laurila, this legacy was as contested as the other ideological luggages with which he identified Ilona:

> "The eulogy to illegitimate children and women's instinctual freedom Ilona tries to sing in this play by order of the author is one of those jingles which still perhaps a hundred years ago some nymphomaniac old maids may have listened to, sighing and with their heads inclined. For a long time, however, the shallowness and stupidity of that jingle have been obvious to everybody who can use his head a little. Nowadays all sensible persons contend to smile compassionately at that song." (Laurila 1938, 162–163.)

From this perspective, although the film narrative and the 1936 public reception posited Ilona as a representative of the "new", she was also framed a representative of the "past":

> "It can be noted that the moral doctrine of *The Women of Niskavuori* is obsolete and outdated. The ideological ground of Tervapää is as little as possible a modern one, it dates back a few decades to the end of the previous century, when in theatre and literature the standard of rebellion was raised against the so-called conventional morals. Now these questions have been exhausted."[97]

The feminist legacy troubled even other critics. In his summary of the 1936 "literary life", Lauri Viljanen articulated a similar interpretation. In his analysis, the character of the old matron of Niskavuori was "as an achievement" much more lasting and impressive than "the modern content of the work, the glowing feminism of the female author".[98] In his review of the second

95 *Naamio* 7–8/1936, 116; *US* 1.4.1936; *TS* 24.10.1936; *Uusi Aura* 25.10.1936.

96 *HS* 1.4.1936; *Aamu* 2/1937.

97 *US* 17.1.1938. For a discussion on the feminist agenda of the author as an explanation for the "male trouble", see Chapter 4.

98 *HS* 18.1.1937. As Päivi Lappalainen (1989, 235) has remarked, this statement goes against the emphasis on modernity Viljanen expressed elsewhere.

Niskavuori play, *The Bread of Niskavuori* (1939) Viljanen returned to *The Women of Niskavuori*, describing its feminist agenda as obsolete: "The character of Ilona Ahlgren personified a modern, urban, individual young person, a modern woman, whose arguments, however, dated back to the decades of Ellen Key". According to Viljanen, "the demand for happiness she declared seemed theoretical" and the relationship between Aarne and Ilona did not strike him as psychologically plausible as he underlined that this lack of plausibility was precisely one of the play's weaknesses, not the fact that the play "treated the theme of 'free love' in a positive sense".[99] Accordingly, while the Ilona character was read in terms of radical discourses on womanhood, she was at the same time seen as an implausible and unconvincing carrier of these discourses. In other words, while cultural liberalists made use of womanhood as a symbol of a cultural change, they did not approve of women making feminist politics of gender in the manner of the turn-of-the-century sexual reformers. (Cf. Witt-Brattström 1996, 55–59.) This objection became apparent, for example, in the harsh remarks on Ellen Key and the women's movement. The reviewers' discussion of the old matron and Ilona suggested an interesting distinction. While the character of the old matron was connected to a positive, "Kalevalaic" power feminism as a monument-woman, she was defined against and in opposition to Ilona who, on the other hand, was read as an embodiment of the negative "feminism" proper.

Although the discourses of femininity were structured around an opposition between the "traditional" and the "new" in 1930s reviews of *The Women of Niskavuori*, this opposition was far from stable. Instead, what its terms connoted varied from one review to another. Loviisa was read as an image of both the Christian view of family, peasant culture, and motherhood, whereas the image of Ilona was interpreted in relation to both the turn-of-the-century women's movement and the ideal of "free love" ("independent woman"), the new sexual morals promoted in cultural life by the Torch-Bearers group ("unwed mother", "sexual woman") and a more general opposition to the middle-class life style ("turning the lever of the world"). In both characters, desirable as well as undesirable qualities were detected. The resolute attachment of Loviisa to her principles was mostly applauded, while Ilona was often accused of "preaching". As Loviisa's insensitivity precipitated criticism, Ilona's courageousness at times met with admiration. At the same time, some commentators detected a silent understanding and even solidarity in the encounters between Loviisa and Ilona.[100]

Interestingly, however, publicity-stills of *Aarne Niskavuori* and *Niskavuori Fights* suggest that Ilona later *assumed* Loviisa's position, however unwillingly. [Fig. 52–53] As for *Aarne Niskavuori*, a publicity-still referencing the closing scene of the film placed (a reluctant) Ilona at the end of the dinner table. The framing recalled a dinner table scene in *The Women of Niskavuori* in which the old matron was addressed as a "monument" [Fig.

99 *HS* 19.1.1939.
100 See, for example, *SvP* 1.4.1936; *Kansan Lehti* 19.10.1936; *Uusi Suomi* 27.1.1938.

11]. A publicity-still of *Niskavuori Fights*, on the other hand, portrayed (a tearful) Ilona wrapped in a knitted shawl, one of Loviisa's key attributes as a matron-mother.

The hysterical wife

Although framings of *The Women of Niskavuori* (1936) both as a drama of ideas and a marital drama implicated a third woman, the wife, reviewers gave little attention to the Martta character. She was read as an exclusively negative image of "ordinary mediocrity and narrowness", "small-minded shallowness", and "pettiness and pretentiousness", as well as a "feminine mix of silliness, weakness, and egoism".[101] Moreover, most reviewers labelled Martta *hysterical*.[102] In her case, according to critics, hysteria involved implausible and excessive emotionality.[103] As evidence for this condition, reviewers cited her "quick and violent transitions from one mood to another, surprising whims, defiance, and desperate pain", "uptight and agitated mimicry" and "transitions from hysteria into prattle".[104] As constructed in theatre reception of *The Women of Niskavuori*, such image of Martta as a hysteric informed many reviewers of the 1938 film version. For instance, many critics stated that the cinematic Martta (Irja Lautia) could have been *more* "hysterical". She was viewed as "somewhat too tame to be a hysteric whose behaviour causes her relationship with her husband to cool down".[105] This language of hysteria connected Martta to contemporary vitalistic discourses of marriage, and sexuality. According to these, the marriages of both Loviisa and Martta were both seen as degenerate and doomed because "a kinship of taste and mind" was not regarded a lasting foundation for a marriage. Instead, such marriage, it was thought, aroused "mutual anger that might erupt, without any reason, as outright paroxysms of rage" (Viljanen 1950, 416, 409–410).

Reviewers suggested the "hysteria" of the Martta character as a cause for the marital drama and an explanation for Aarne's "trouble" (see Chapter 4). In addition, publicity-stills of the three film versions of *The Women of Niskavuori* (1938, 1958, 1984) all represented Martta as a minor character, portraying her as a woman who quarrels with her husband, clings to him, is angry or cries, and demands his attention. In this manner, Martta was framed as an unattractive woman, an unfit wife, and an uninteresting character. [Fig. 50–51] As such a character, Martta recalled another contemporary cinematic wife figure, Margit (Edna Best) in *Intermezzo – A Love Story* (Gregory Ratoff 1939), a Hollywood remake of Gustaf Molander's film from 1936. According to Tytti Soila, the film represented Margit as "an unfit wife": unattractive

101 *US* 1.4.1936; *Tampereen Sanomat* 20.10.1936; *Ssd* 1.4.1936; *SvP*1.4.1936.

102 Hysteria was mentioned, for example, in *US* 1.4.1936; *HS* 1.4.1936; *Ilkka* 26.5.1936; *Naamio* 2/1936; 29; *Nya Argus* 9/1936; *Kansan Lehti* 19.10.1936; *AL* 19.10.1936; *Ssd* 21.10.1936; *Tampereen Sanomat* 20.10.1936; *Sosialisti* 24.10.1936; *TS* 24.10.1936; *Uusi Aura* 25.10.1936.

103 For a discussion on the gendering of hysteria in Finland, see Uimonen 1999, 54–82.

104 *TS* 24.10.1936; *HS* 1.4.1936. Cf. *IS* 76/1936.

both physically and spiritually, aggressive, suspicious, irresponsible, and clinging [efterhängsen].[106]

In 1930s review journalism, Martta embodied a whole range of negative qualities termed "superficiality". She was a bourgeois wife (whereas Loviisa was a peasant matron and Ilona a professional working woman). She enjoyed women's club activities outside home (while Loviisa ran the estate and Ilona worked in the school world). She endorsed the virtues of housewifery, i.e., needlework and cookery in contrast to Loviisa's "spiritual leadership" and Ilona's ideological engagement. Martta read popular literature and women's magazines, whereas Loviisa was shown reading the Bible and Ilona portrayed as a person with education. Furthermore, she was reproached for being unable to understand her husband in contrast to Loviisa who displayed endurance and Ilona who embodied passion. Thus, contemporary reviewers coded the image of Martta as the downside of both Ilona and Loviisa. As the Martta character was most often discussed only in passing; she became a kind of "anti-person", a definitional other, functioning as a mirror and a negative of the other characters.[107] These interpretations of the Martta character in relation to Loviisa and Ilona evoke the controversial history of middle-class discourses on femininity in Finland. (Cf. Sulkunen 1987; 1989; 1990.) The qualities linked to the middle-class ideal were dispersed on all the three female characters and coded as both positive (the responsibility and self-control of Loviisa, the idealistic nature of both Loviisa and Ilona) and negative (the club activities of Martta, her housewifely interests, the power position of Loviisa).

In framings of *The Women of Niskavuori* as a marital drama, Martta was opposed to Ilona. Visual framings underlined Ilona's attractiveness (see below) and presented Martta merely as a reactive character. For reviewers, even Ilona's "preaching" appeared more acceptable in relation to their reading of Martta as a wife. Ilona was a professionally educated woman, a social agent, who spoke about the new world, whereas Martta was reproached, in the dialogue of the play, for being into needlework and reading "only" *Kotiliesi* (*The Hearth*, a women's journal), handicraft magazines, food recipes, and contemporary popular literature from Ingeborg Sick to Bertha Ruck.[108] A 1936 review described Martta as lacking both the ability and desire to understand "the inner life of her husband":

105 *Ssd* 18.1.1938; *Kansan Lehti* 19.1.1938; *ESS* 20.1.1938. In *EA* 3/1938, Martta was labelled "hysterical" and "crazy for needlework".

106 Soila 1991, 131. I am grateful to Tytti Soila for drawing my attention to this point of comparison.

107 Such emphasis was evident in the promotion of the 1938 film, as the advance publicity disregarded the Martta character; promotion articles, publicity-stills, and posters all foregrounded Ilona and Loviisa. See, for example; *EA* 10/1937; 242–243; *EA* 15–16/1937; *EA* 24/1937; *SFUA* 5/1937; *SFUA* 1/1938. Martta was excluded from the posters for the film which featured a drawing of Loviisa as a peasant woman, Loviisa and Ilona, or Ilona and Aarne. FFA.

108 *Tampereen Sanomat* 20.10.1936; *Aamu* 2/1937.

Fig. 50. Aarne Niskavuori *1954 (FFA) framed Martta (Hillevi Lagerstam) as a fallen woman.*

> "As the opposite of the Old Matron, there is Martta, the wife of the young patron, the agronomist. She is skilful in home economics and needlework, enthusiastic about all the parochial women's activities, club activities and charity, White Ribbon, etc. Only she has never been able to understand the interior life of her husband, his spiritual demands, his inner being, nor even realize that she should care to investigate it. She belongs to the group of women who think that once married, a relationship involves all the external aspects, but nothing internal."[109]

To recall a quote from *Kotiliesi* (20/1938) cited in Chapter 3, as a biblical Martha, Martta was, indeed, "in danger of forgetting the inner values" and could not qualify as "an ideal matron".

The 1930s reading of Martta as an opposite of Loviisa recalls the thesis asserted by the historian Kai Häggman (1994) in his study of 19th century Finnish middle and upper classes. According to Häggman's analysis, the nature of woman was defined as an array of desirable and undesirable features. The image of Loviisa contained several valued "feminine virtues" such as piety, unselfishness, impatience, religiousness, and archaism, whereas Martta personified solely negative qualities: vanity, pretence, inconsistency, moodiness, fondness of amusement, over-sensitivity, superficiality, curiosity, childishness, a tendency to gossip, and a desire to please. While Loviisa possessed some "domestic virtues" [husliga dygder], Martta embodied only

109 *Ilkka* 26.5.1936.

Fig. 51. In The Women of Niskavuori *1958 (FFA), Martta (Hilkka Helinä) appeared as an unfit wife for the patron of Niskavuori.*

features that risked the family life. (Ibid., 182–183.) From this viewpoint, the image of Martta violated the Snellmanian ethics of duty (cf. Chapter 3); instead of concentrating on the Niskavuori estate or the value of the peasant life, Martta focused on herself and her own happiness. Hence, the difference between Loviisa and Martta was highlighted by the fact that Martta did not succumb to the "Niskavuori doctrine of self control". Unlike Loviisa, she did not "bravely" "understand, suffer, and contend to follow [her husband's affair] from aside". Nor did she give first priority to "maintaining the external honour of the family as best she could".[110]

110 *TS* 24.10.1936.

Fig. 52. In the closing scene of Aarne Niskavuori *1954 (FFA), Ilona (Rauni Ikäheimo) assumed the place of the monument-woman.*

Jukka Ammondt (1979a, 59–62, 64–67) interprets both Loviisa and Martta as signs of a Marxist understanding of "the woman question", i.e., as signs of the idea that private ownership turns women into merchandise. Both women characters have entered marriages of convenience and come to Niskavuori via marriage and thanks to a generous dowry aimed at securing the preservation of the estate in its entirety. By referring to Wuolijoki's interest in "the woman question" and to her writings around the issue, Ammondt proposes a reading of the women characters in Wuolijoki's rural dramas as reflections of August Bebel's ideas. Bebel's book *Die Frau und der Sozialismus* (1879) was published in Finnish first as *Nainen ja yhteiskunnallinen kysymys* (*Woman and the Social Question* 1904) and later as *Nainen ja sosialismi* (*Woman and Socialism* 1907). According to Ammondt, *The Women of Niskavuori* represents the "down-to-earth women's movement" as outlined by Bebel and H. G. Wells. According to Ammondt, Wuolijoki assumed this approach, which recognized the demands of "the human nature" and "natural powers", and, thus, did not demand a demolishing of either family or marriage. Instead, it proposed a renewal and reformation of the institutions so that they would become "more natural". Here, an interesting parallel emerges between Ammondt's Marxist account and the Lawrencian ideas about "the harmony of blood" as the basis for a new, improved moral code. Both ways of thinking combine sexuality (the pleasures of the body), love (an emotional attachment), gender (social identities), and a promise of a social change. The two views attack both the institutions of bourgeois marriage and family for repressing "nature" and "the harmony of blood". Within the Bebelian-Wellsian "down-to-earth woman question" and the Lawrencean "life

Fig. 53. In Niskavuori Fights *1957 (FFA), Ilona (Mirjam Novero) wore a shawl, a recognizable attribute of Loviisa Niskavuori.*

worship", Loviisa and Martta were articulated not only as negative images of "repressed" and distorted, "unnatural" womanhood, but also as tragic victims and captives of the bourgeois family system. The image of Ilona, rather, condensed the promise of the future inherent in both lines of thought.

In 1930s review journalism, a hierarchy of discourses on womanhood can be detected, for instance, in the use of words "plausible" and "acceptable". The character of Loviisa was deemed highly plausible and only rarely was she described as not acceptable. The character of Ilona, though, was often considered as both implausible (in her love for Aarne) and unacceptable (in her defiance); but as being the romantic heroine, her image also contained positive qualities of love, idealism, and devotion. The character of Martta, on the other hand, was regarded as plausible, but highly unacceptable because of her "egoism". However, 1930s readings were not uniform and they cannot be reduced to a mere wish to suppress the forces of modernity personified, according to many reviewers, by Ilona. The modern middle-class femininity was represented as controversial. In addition, several critics criticized the stage production of representing the romance as implausible and lame compared to the emotional effect Loviisa's fate suggested. Thus, although many critics did judge the play in relation to standards of realism, they also expressed a desire for more heightened a moral conflict, more melodramatic affect. In the context of cinema, on the other hand, the romantic plot aroused far fewer comments about a disproportion between the old and the new. Apparently, the lack of such criticism was at least partly due to the productional publicity that emphasized both realism (topicality) and romance, both the theatrical background and the stardom. The visibility of Sirkka Sari and Tauno Palo in the advertisements supported a reading of the film in terms of romance.

The fallen peasant and other scandals: re-viewing the censorship debate

In his study on the formation of national cinema in the 1930s, Kimmo Laine (1999, 356–358) argues that the cinematic adaptations of the Wuolijoki plays show how "national cinema" was not a unified or homogeneous concept, not even in the 1930s which, in his view, was the heyday of cinematic nation-building. The fact that *The Women of Niskavuori* and other Wuolijoki plays were adapted for the silver screen indicates, in Laine's analysis, that what was outlined as "national cinema" did not necessarily avoid conflicts but, instead, utilized them (see also Koivunen 1995, 230–247). As Laine focuses on the differences in how the two major Finnish film studios, Suomi-Filmi and Suomen Filmiteollisuus, incorporated "social problem films" such as Wuolijoki adaptations into their public image, he offers an interpretation of the censorship dispute. In fact, his title, "The stir about morals and emancipation", echoes the repressive hypothesis articulated in the 1980s–1990s TV reviews of the Niskavuori films (Laine 1999, 339). Although he criticizes notions of the 1930s as a uniform era of repression, his reading is premised on the existence of a hegemonic, right-wing public sphere in 1930s Finland that even exerted pressure even on the film production companies. According to Laine, *The Women of Niskavuori* was controversial for two reasons: the authorial signature, which associated with left-wing politics, and the act of censorship that framed the release of the film. Though the author's identity, in his reading, remained a divisive issue about the film (it was something the studios could not help) the censorship incident, in fact, did a favour to Suomi-Filmi. In Laine's analysis, it "displaced" the conflicts "from the political to sexual level". He concludes: "even for the right-wing public sphere, it was slightly easier to tolerate Tervapää as an advocate of new morals than as a socialist. And the censorship stir of *The Women of Niskavuori* was suitable for suppressing the latter in favour of the former." (Ibid., 349.)

Although I find Laine's analysis insightful, the interpretation he proposes does not address or question the repressive hypothesis, but rather, turns it upside down. Furthermore, the sleight of hand – sexuality instead of politics – he suggests seems implausible in the 1930s context, as Laine (ibid., 349–350) himself notes that politics and sexuality were not mutually exclusive then but, instead, "new morals" were interpreted as a sign of left-wing radicalism or Bolshevism. In my understanding, to investigate meanings of the censorship incident in the 1930s, the premise of the cultural repression must be questioned. In what follows, I argue that the "repressive hypothesis" in its various forms fails to acknowledge the multifarious and contradictory public sphere that surrounded the 1938 première of *The Women of Niskavuori*. Moreover, I complicate the notion of the "repressive hypothesis" further by discussing it in relation to 1930s cinema culture, in particular the discourses on stardom, romance, and the "cinematic".

I argue that censorship be examined as a productive mechanism that not only may open unforeseeable spaces for cultural critique and resistance, but also challenge the National Symbolic, often thought of as the governing logic and the raison d'être of censoring practices. Rather than understanding cen-

sorship as a *prohibitive* praxis exerted by state-licensed institutions on "inert, passive" film objects, I follow Annette Kuhn (1988, 2–3, 131) in regarding censorship as "a process of negotiation between contending powers, apparatuses, and discourses". As a premise, censorship as a problem to be justified or condemned; nor does it "reflect" any singular logic of the context or state interests. Rather, censorship is a technology of meanings, whose articulation is dependent on a film's overall contextual situation ("discursive surround", Klinger 1997). In this sense, as Judith Butler has argued in *Excitable Speech* (1997, 128–133), censorship is a form of performative action. Acts of censorship not only literally cite laws: legislation concerning film censorship as well as moral laws, cultural, political norms, or power-knowledge nexuses. They also draw their force from laws, but as all citational, reiterative practices, an act of censorship also articulates meanings and produces effects that are not contained by the intentions governing the legislation or its outspoken objectives. (Cf. Butler 1998, 247–249.)

Based on a close-reading of the newspaper coverage and commentary prompted by the act of censorship, I maintain that the incident surrounding the release of *The Women of Niskavuori* not only sparked discussions of censorship as a praxis and policy, querying its justifications and comparing different cases. The incident also created spaces for articulating political oppositions and protesting against the moral and political agendas underwriting censorship. In addition, the incident allowed for sensationalist publicity emphasizing the "scandal of sexuality".

Appropriating censorship

> "What is peculiar to modern societies, in fact, is not that they consigned sex to a shadow existence, but that they dedicated themselves to speaking of it *ad infinitum*, while exploiting it as *the secret*."
> Michael Foucault 1978, 35.

Five days before the première of *The Women of Niskavuori*, The State Office of Film Censorship (Valtion Filmitarkastamo) decided to ban the film, as the production company Suomi-Filmi had refused to cut off a 12 metre long "bedroom scene" in which the film's romantic couple – the young master of the Niskavuori farm, Aarne Niskavuori (Tauno Palo), and the new schoolteacher, Ilona Ahlgren (Sirkka Sari) – are framed in a close-up, lying on a bed, heads on the same pillow, fully clothed yet cheek to cheek.[111] [Fig. 54]

In the contemporary press, the majority of commentators did not approve of the intervention of censorship authorities.[112] In many newspapers, the excision resulted in comments on "narrow-mindedness", "arbitrariness", "panic reactions," and "guardians of chastity".[113] While there were some voices

111 State Office of Film Censorship 877/11.1.1938. FFA.

112 *IS* 12.1.1938; *TS* 13.1.1938; *AS* 12.1.1938; *Ssd* 13.1.1938. The ban was also condemned in *HS* 13.1.1938; *AL* 14.1.1938.

113 *IS* 12.1.1938; *Ssd* 13.1.1938; *Arbetarbladet* 14.1.1938; *ÅU* 15.1.1938; *Suomen pienviljelijä* 27.1.1938.

Fig. 54. The censored close-up from The Women of Niskavuori *1938 (FFA).*

advocating moral relativism and objecting to censorship as a moralistic practice pursuing political agendas, [114] most commentators accepted censorship in principle and quite a few newspapers framed *The Women of Niskavuori* as to some extent "immoral" or ethically suspicious. Interestingly enough, there was a lot of press coverage concerning the censorship decision before the première, whilst many of the actual reviewers refrained from commenting upon the incident at all.[115] As for the public debate, four different yet overlapping approaches to censorship can be discerned:

First, there was *a policy-oriented, legalist reading* which compared *The Women of Niskavuori* to other films, domestic and foreign, and asked whether the actions of the State Board in this case were in line with its the overall policy or not. Most commentators came to the latter conclusion, even in extreme right-wing papers.[116] The actions taken by The State Board of Film Censorship were condemned as a panic reaction prompted by a topical, on-going public debate concerning the moral standards of domestic film.[117] In the former case, censorship authorities and film critics were not reacting against a film's depiction of sexuality or its moral implications; instead, some

114 Critical voices against censorship include *IS* 12.1.1938 (Elokuvakahnaukset); *Ssd* 13.1.1938; *HS* 13.1.1938; *Arbetarbladet* 14.1.1938.

115 *IS* 17.1.1938; S*avon Työmies* 18.1.1938; *Hbl* 17.1.1938; *Kansan Lehti* 19.1.1938; *Savo* 18.1.1938; *AL* 17.1.1938; *Savon Sanomat* 18.1.1938; *Ssd* 18.1.1938; *Kauppalehti* 18.1.1938; *Sosialisti* 18.1.1938.

116 *AS* 12.1.1938

117 *IS* 12.1.1938 (Elokuvakahnaukset); *IS* 12.1.1938 (Säilä); *TS* 13.1.1938; *ÅU* 15.1.1938.

members of the public instigated a heated debate that resulted in retroactive self-censorship on the part of the producer.[118] Many newspapers claimed that the State Board of Film Censorship was being neither consistent nor even-handed in its decisions, as foreign films, they argued, featured scenes that were much more "daring" than the banned "bedroom-scene" in *The Women of Niskavuori*.[119] Many writers called for a degree of "tolerance" and "relativism".[120]

Second, there was *a moral approach* focusing on the assumed effects of the film, asking whether the film was damaging or harmful for the nation's mind. On the one hand, some discussants argued that the whole "stir" had been groundless, and for these critics, the film did not feature anything "delicate" or "improper". They wondered if it ever had.[121] With regards to any "ordinary cinema-goer", the film was said to contain "nothing ethically lowly" or "tastelessness that would violate decency". Rather, the film was described as "of higher moral standard than what is usual".[122] On the other hand, many reviewers framed the film as morally corrupt to various degrees. The three right-wing papers *Ajan Suunta*, *Uusi Suomi*, and *Varsinais-Suomi* underlined the impropriety of the film's "general ethical idea" and its damaging effect to the social order.[123] A film in which "a man with a family falls head over heels in love and commits adultery" was seen as improper especially for "young eyes", but potentially for everybody.[124] The film was criticized for solving "the problem of the illegitimate love affair" according to the "degenerated progressivity of our time". In so doing, the critics maintained, the film "violated the law of causality, cause and reconciliation in a modern manner". Hence, in this reading, the problem was not the adulterous romance in itself, but that the adulterous couple was not punished. This lack of punishment was offered as the motivation for framing the film as "ethically, morally, socially, and religiously unacceptable".[125] The ending of the film was also interpreted as "open" and, therefore, troubling as it "[did] not satisfy the spectator, but [remained] somehow hanging in the air".[126]

118 *The Maid Silja (Nuorena nukkunut)*, a F. E. Sillanpää-adaptation by Teuvo Tulio's independent film company, which had not, prior to its première been subject to censorship, had aroused a public controversy. *Suomen Kansallisfilmografia* 2 (1995), 187–190.

119 See, for example, *IS* 12.1.1938; *AL* 14.1.1938; *Ssd* 13.1.1938; *TS* 13.1.1938.

120 *IS* 12.1.1938 (Elokuvakahnaukset); *IS* 12.1.1938 (Säilä); *Ssd* 13.1.1938; *HS* 13.1.1938; *Ssd* 14.1.1938; *ÅU* 15.1.1938.

121 *Lahti* 22.1.1938; *Suomen Pienviljelijä* 27.1.1938.

122 *IS* 12.1.1938 (Säilä); *IS* 12.1.1938 (Elokuvakahnaukset); Ssd 12.1.1938; *Ssd* 13.1.1938; *Ssd* 14.1.1938.

123 *AS* 17.1.1938; *US* 17.1.1938; *Varsinais-Suomi* 19.1.1938. For letters to the editor which condemned the film as immoral, see *Uusi Suomi* 27.1.1938.

124 *AS* 17.1.1938. The film was deemed suitable and non-harmful for "a mature spectator who understands life". *Tampereen Sanomat* 18.1.1938.

125 *AS* 17.1.1938. One "incriminating" factor was the detected compassion of "the author" – understood here to be Hella Wuolijoki – for Ilona Ahlgren. According to this reading, Ilona should have been represented as having "more doubts" and suffering from "inner fights".

126 *HS* 17.1.1938.

127 See especially, *Ssd* 14.1.1938; *Arbetarbladet* 14.1.1938.

Third, both the policy-oriented and the moral approach permitted the articulation of ideological contradictions, including those between the political right and left, and the production of *political readings* of censorship. The intervention of censorship authorities allowed the left-wing press to raise question of the political agendas governing the censorship and protest against repressive forces and controlling instances.[127] Left-wing journalists seized this opportunity to write dramatic headlines:

> "Women of Niskavuori is a dangerous film. Forbidden by the censorship"[128]
> "*The Women of Niskavuori* –screening banned. State Office of Film Censorship thinks an unwed mother must not be happy. And such a woman should not be portrayed in film together with schoolchildren."[129]
> "The mother of an illegitimate child must not be depicted as happy in Finnish cinema! Peculiar censorship bickering in the field of film industry."[130]
> "Purge of domestic films under way"[131]

These headlines linked the censorship incident to delicate political issues. The State Office expressed motivations that reopened the debate on single mothers, a matter of dispute between working-class women and middle-class female activists since the turn of the century. In addition, the term 'purge' referred to the control and repressive power exerted upon leftist activists in the name of "social order" after the Civil War and during the 1920s and 1930s. (Sulkunen 1989, 44–48; Sevänen 1994, 31–33, 105, 111.) Some papers interpreted the intervention of censorship authorities directly in terms of party politics or linked it to extreme right-wing actions from the early 1930s.[132] The prevalence of knowledge on Hella Wuolijoki's persona, monitored by the State Police since her political activities since the 1920s, enforced a reading of the act of censorship as a right-wing protest against her and everything she was thought to represent. Furthermore, the excision of *The Women of Niskavuori* provided critics with an occasion to mention the question of "pure Nazi propaganda" screened in all German films of the time.[133]

Finally, the act of censorship warranted a *scandalizing approach* to censorship, emphasizing the scandal of prohibited sexuality:

> "Unique film scandal. 55 metres of lewd scenes erased from *Nuorena nukkunut*. The guardians of the screen demand that *The Women of Niskavuori* be subjected to removals."[134]

128 *SvP* 12.1.1938.
129 *Työn Voima* 12.1.1938.
130 *Eteenpäin* 13.1.1938; *Ssd* 12.1.1938.
131 *Kansan Lehti* 12.1.1938.
132 *Syd. Österbotten* 22.1.1938; *Arbetarbladet* 14.1.1938. Cf. *Ssd* 14.1.1938.
133 *Ssd* 14.1.1938.
134 See *Työn Voima* 12.1.1938; *Eteenpäin* 13.1.1938; *Kansan Lehti* 12.1.1938; *Länsi-Savo* 13.1.1938; *SvP* 12.1.1938.

Whilst the authorities banned the bedroom scene as morally offensive, they also launched a public discussion about the elements banned, i.e., a debate *on* and *about* the immoral, the morally low, and the indecent. Thus, they opened a space for contest. One critic, condemning the morals of *The Women of Niskavuori* (1938), noted that in the film "free, secret love is shown as victorious and proud vis-à-vis social commitments and family morals".[135] For example, *Helsingin Sanomat, Suomen Sosialidemokraatti*, and *Arbetarbladet* used this opportunity for sensationalism by publishing a photo from "the prohibited series of images" in connection with their coverage of the censorship incident.[136] In another instance, *Mikkelin Sanomat* sensationized the State Board of Film Censorship's confirmation of the SOFC decision, emphasizing the event in its headline:

> "*The Women of Niskavuori* may be screened to those above 16 years on the condition that a bedroom scene is removed from the second part of the film."[137]

The scandalizing frame constructed a reading that emphasized the "will to knowledge" (Foucault 1978) as contemporary reviewers noted:

> "Since all that is prohibited has always tended to stimulate curiosity much more than the things specially recommended, many persons may have feared that the film in question would have become uninteresting after the removal of the short bit. Others have thought that because the film contains such 'real' scenes, which no one dares to reveal for the public's admiration, the film, as a whole, must have something especially valuable. And these contradictory preconceptions drive the masses to see the film first hand."[138]

In other words, as many reviewers noted, the intervention of censorship authorities encouraged a heightened curiosity, a desire to see and to know more.[139] Instead of hiding or veiling, then, the act of censorship enhanced the status of sexuality and gender as salient cultural metaphors and metonymies. Furthermore, as Annette Kuhn (1988, 96) has argued in the context of British cinema history, "film censorship creates censorable films", which are lucrative objects for marketing precisely because of "the lure of forbiddenness conferred by known acts of censorship".

The commentary surrounding the censorship incident defined sexuality as a policy issue, as a moral issue, as a political issue, and as a secrecy issue. In addition, the discussion called attention to distinctions and hierarchies:

> "A delicately photographed scene between Aarne and Ilona (...) has been banned by our censorship authorities. I saw the film prior to its excision, and in my opinion, the removal of this beautiful and important scene damages the

135 *US* 17.1.1938.

136 *HS* 12.1.1938; *Ssd* 13.1.1938; *Arbetarbladet* 14.1.1938. See also the cover photo of *EA* 1/1938. For an analysis of film posters as both idealizing and sensationalizing heterosexual bonding, see Haralovich 1982, 54–55.

137 *Mikkelin Sanomat* 13.1.1938. See also *Sosialisti* 12.1.1938.

138 *Hämeen Kansa* 18.1.1938.

139 *Hämeen Kansa* 18.1.1938; *AS* 17.1.1938; *US* 17.1.1938; *Kansan Lehti* 19.1.1938.

film's artistic impact. Close-ups of the faces of these young persons, cheek to cheek, express a charming tenderness and gentle melancholy. It is curious that this kind of innocent beauty is banned while the same censorship authorities a few weeks earlier accepted, in a certain other domestic film, a downright tasteless and embarrassing scene in which a drunken man forcefully tries to embrace a crying young girl, accompanied by the snores of a farmhand, another drunkard."[140]

Hence, the censorship of the film called for articulations of distinctions and hierarchies, definitions of what *kind* of sexuality was deemed acceptable, what was not. In this quote, the adjectives "beautiful", "charming", "tender", "gentle", and "melancholic" are juxtaposed with "tasteless", "embarrassing", violent ("forcefully"), noisy (snore), intrusive (peeking), and lowly (drunkard). As similar definitional discussion of the kind of sexuality represented followed the release of *The Maid Silja* (*Nuorena nukkunut*), a melodrama by Teuvo Tulio. In the public controversy, the film was accused of being "tasteless" and containing "half-pornographic scenes" and, as a consequence, Tulio agreed to voluntary censorship and removed two scenes from the film, a "love scene" located in a stable and a scene in which a patron peeks at Silja who is bathing in sauna.[141] Both in the above quote and in the Niskavuori films themselves (especially in *Niskavuori* 1984), the trope of repression is only used in constructions of middle-class sexuality, whereas women and men of the working-class are portrayed as "uninhibited". According to the logic of the repressive hypothesis, discussion of the morals of the working class is indeed one more opportunity to talk about sex.

The lure of lyricism, or the cinematic sex appeal

"The close-up, specifically the close-up of the female star, played its part in the development of the cinema as an industry and as a set of conventions."
Laura Mulvey 1996, 40.

"Unlike other actors, stars do not represent roles, but pictures. Their performance is the adaptation to a picture and as such they remain in our memories. For this reason, stills have a special significance. They form the memory album after the motion picture has long since disappeared across the screen."
Gertrud Koch 1993, 26.

Thus far, I have maintained that the 1930s public sphere was – contrary to many recent readings (Sallamaa 1994, Sevänen 1994) – highly complex and contradictory, and rather than closing down, the prohibitive act of excision opened up discussions. In the following, I argue that the act of censorship did *not* contradict *but*, on the contrary, coincided with the promotional publicity of *The Women of Niskavuori*, intensifying the emphasis on discourses

140 *EA* 3/1938. Cf. Mary Beth Haralovich's (1982, 54) argument that Hollywood film posters of the middle and late 1930s represented heterosexual relationships as innocuous and idealized.

141 *Suomen Kansallisfilmografia* 2 (1995), 187–190.

Fig. 55. The visual framings of The Women of Niskavuori *1938 (FFA) emphasized passion and romance as well as and the ever present social control.*

of stardom and romance foregrounded, for example, in publicity photos in which Sirkka Sari and Tauno Palo were framed as stars and as a star couple. [Fig. 55–56]

The marketing strategy of the film was dualistic. On the one hand, the stage success of *The Women of Niskavuori* and the play's reputation in the theatre context provided the basis for he productional publicity: "As a film, it will surely cause as much public attention and animated discussion as it did as a play."[142] This framing emphasized the topicality of the drama, its address of contemporary issues and social problems, and its framing as a drama of ideas. On the other hand, the promotional publicity highlighted stardom, the "new find" with a whole series of photos featuring Sirkka Sari as Ilona in different clothing (dresses, hairdos, hats), in close-ups and medium shots, emphasizing her status as a star. [Fig. 57–58] Likewise, the publicity-stills foregrounded adulterous romance as the controversial close-up of the amorous couple was accompanied by shots of Ilona's room. One still depicted the couple lying in Ilona's bed alcove, softly lit in the otherwise dark room. This lighting echoed both the promise of the romance and its social illegitimacy. In another still set within a similar lighting, but shot from another angle, the brightly lit couple was partly veiled by a curtain, as if accentuating the status of the forbidden love. Publicity-stills also featured Aarne and Ilona in moments of grave discussion (e.g., Aarne's difficult decision) and in the climactic trial

142 *SFUA* 9/1937.

Fig. 56. This publicity-still, quoted even in advertisements for The Women of Niskavuori *1938 (FFA), echoed a rhetoric of passion familiar from, for instance, many Greta Garbo films.*

scene.[143] [Fig. 59] In the advertising, the foregrounding of romance linked *The Women of Niskavuori* to a whole range of 1930s romantic comedies and melodramas. Within the context of cinema culture, as opposed to that of theatre, the image of Ilona was not only discussed in terms of moral principles or symbolic-political resonances, but also "consumed" in relation to the lures and promises of *stardom* and its connections to heterosexual romance. As Raymond Bellour (2000, 14) argues, the image of the heterosexual couple is "absolutely central" to what he terms "the fiction of a cinema". According to Bellour, cinema is "powerfully obsessed by the ideology of the family and of marriage, which constitutes its imaginary and symbolic base". (Cf. Haralovich 1982, esp. 54.)

As the image of Ilona Ahlgren was dislocated, re-cited, and re-framed within cinema culture and its emphasis on stardom and romance, some critics became discontent. For instance, many left-wing critics lamented that the cinematic Ilona lacked "fervour"[verenkäyntiä], "self-consciousness", or "temperament"; in their view, she was not an "energetic and determinate"

143 While these stills echoed the art of movie stills as "emotive stereotypes" (Müller 1993, 21) as practiced elsewhere in Europe and in Hollywood, they also became generic in the promotion of *The Women of Niskavuori*. In the visual framings of the 1958 and 1984 remakes of the narrative, close-ups of Ilona abound and close-ups of the amorous couple (in 1984 of naked bodies) increased in number. For a discussion of the history of the movie still, see Hurlimann & Müller 1993; Finler 1995.

"modern woman", but appeared more like "the most tame girl type".[144] In comparison with presumed intentions of the author or the perceived theatrical original, some thought Sirkka Sari's Ilona lacked the qualities of "that energetic and determined young woman whom the author [had] described"[145]:

> "In her interpretation, Ilona was not the kind of modern woman fighting for her love which the original work intended."[146]

> "She is a beautiful girl, but fairly slack and insignificant in appearance. Ilona should represent the young and, in my view, temperamental generation; but Sirkka Sari is the most tame kind of girl. She has nothing of the pulsating vitality [verenkäynti] one would expect from Ilona. Her lines seemed learned by heart, and her facial expressions lacked any deeper soulfulness."[147]

> "It is in any case Sirkka Sari (from Viipuri, by the way) who was chosen to play Ilona. She is beautiful enough, but as an actress she is fairly lame, and has nothing of the self-consciousness and temperament of a true Ilona."[148]

For other critics, the reinterpretation of Ilona in cinema appeared as success. In particular, the right-wing papers that had earlier criticized the morals of the play on stage regarded the film as "a successful moderation of Tervapää's propaganda":

> "[I]n the film, Tervapää's propaganda has been successfully moderated (…). The Ilona Ahlgren of the film is not the cheeky utopian, nor the coquettish preacher of free love we have encountered on the stage. Rather, she is an inexperienced, loving woman who has not yet encountered the seriousness of life."[149]

> "[H]er face is equally beautiful seen frontally or in profile. In any case, she is not a teacher or a suffragist."[150]

In promotional publicity, the discourse on stardom was foregrounded. The first advance advertisement for the film already characterized Sirkka Sari as a "star" with a "natural" "charm" and even ethnic credibility:

> "Sirkka Sari's truly promising qualifications include her inborn charm and grace, her uncorrupted naturalness, and the delicately vivid gestures animated by her Karelian nature. Her Ilona will undoubtedly arouse well-deserved excitement."[151]

144 *Kansan Lehti* 19.1.1938; *Kansan Työ* 26.1.1938; *Ssd* 18.1.1938; *ESS* 20.1.1938.
145 *ESS* 20.1.1938.
146 *Kansan Lehti* 19.1.1938.
147 *Ssd* 18.1.1938.
148 *Kansan Työ* 26.1.1938.
149 *Varsinais-Suomi* 19.1.1938.
150 See also *Kuva* 3/1938.
151 The advertisement was published in both *SFUA* 5/1937 and *Kinolehti* 5/1937.

Fig. 57. A Finnish film star? Sirkka Sari as the new "cinematic face" in The Women of Niskavuori *1938 (FFA).*

Interestingly, the judgmental discourse of censorship hardly seemed to affect the cinematic institution of stardom. Instead, censorship highlighted the reading route outlined in promotional publicity because all reviewers, both in right- and left-wing press, praised the beauty of Sirkka Sari, the "new cinematic face". In the first coverage of the film in *Elokuva-aitta*, for instance, there was a full-page photograph of Sirkka Sari's "beautiful and expressive face". Her face played a central role in the entire promotional advertising campaign. Indeed, the production company Suomi-Filmi built the advertising of the film around "the newly found film star" and, in doing so, satisfied to some extent the much debated need of an indigenous "Finnish film star".[152]

> "The third main role has been assigned to Sirkka Sari, a newcomer who is lively and – dare I say – pretty as a picture. She has obvious potential. Her looks alone are enchanting: the dark hair; the delicate features, the sensitive face; the long, silky eyelashes; the even, white teeth behind rosy lips; and, finally, a natural, animated expression."[153]

Echoing the promotional publicity and in contrast to the theatre reviews, film reviewers emphasized Sirkka Sari's star qualities: her "favourable physical appearance", "young sensualism", "impulsivity", "freshness", "physical qualifications", "charm", and "naturalness".[154] They framed her as a "new

152 *EA* 10/1937, 242. For the search for a Finnish star since the 1920s, see Koivunen 1992a, 22–26. The face of Ilona was a central element in many other magazine advertisements as well; see *Kuva* 1/1938; *EA* 1/1938 and *EA* 2/1938.

153 *Kinolehti* 12/1937, 425–427.

Fig. 58. Through portraits of Ilona in different, modern outfits, publicity-stills for The Women of Niskavuori *1938 (FFA) offered pleasures for the consumerist gaze.*

find"[155] with what was called a "cinematic face":

> "She has a cinematic face of exceptional quality, not only in her features, but also in her facial expressions, and she moves with plasticity."[156]

In lyrical terms, the reviewers recounted her "beautiful face with the big eloquent eyes" and her "soulful" acting. [Fig. 60] Although many reviewers called attention to her lack of acting skills, her charm was foregrounded as "sympathetic and truly beautiful", "natural and pleasant", "soft and easy", "charming and natural", "very young and very beautiful", or as "spontaneous and youthful".[157]

The reviewers concluded: "Ilona was so blessedly beautiful that we in the cinema theatre were completely happy over so much original temper and such a fresh and full-blooded charm".[158] In some readings, recalling the splitting

154 See, for example, *AL* 17.1.1938; *HS* 17.1.1938; *AS* 17.1.1938; *US* 17.1.1938; *IS* 17.1.1938; *SvP* 18.1.1938; *Hbl* 17.1.1938; *Kauppalehti* 18.1.1938; *TS* 18.1.1938; *Kansan Lehti* 19.1.1938; *Varsinais-Suomi* 19.1.1938; *ÅU* 19.1.1938.

155 *HS* 17.1.1938; *AS* 17.1.1938; *Savon Sanomat* 18.1.1938; *Uusi Aura* 19.1.1938.

156 *AL* 17.1.1938; *US* 17.1.1938; *Eteenpäin* 18.1.1938; *Kansan Lehti* 19.1.1938; *Varsinais-Suomi* 19.1.1938; *AS* 17.1.1938.

157 *IS* 17.1.1938; *ESS* 20.1.1938; *AS* 17.1.1938; *Tammerfors Aftonblad* 20.1.1938; *TS* 18.1.1938; *Uusi Aura* 19.1.1938; *Hämeen Kansa* 18.1.1938; *Kauppalehti* 18.1.1938.

158 *SvP* 18.1.1938.

Fig. 59. With publicity-stills referring to the climactic trial scene, the visual framings of The Women of Niskavuori *underlined a discourse of repression even in 1958 (FFA).*

between the role and the actor in the case of Aarne, Ilona was idealized *in spite of* the values with which she was identified:

> "A strong and beautiful girl with pretty eyes and broad white teeth, and with a fresh wind of healthy, young sensualism, and bold determination surrounding her elastic and well-trained [välgymnastiserad] persona. In a strikingly cleaver manner, she slid through the many poetic blunders the female author had placed in her mouth, giving the role a wise and soft clarity which makes one entertain high hopes for Sirkka Sari."[159]

Significantly, the emphasis this reading placed on stardom and sensual appeal co-existed with the moral, judgemental tone used in right-wing newspapers, condemning the *character* of Ilona as immoral. For instance, on the day between the censorship coverage and the opening night for *The Women of Niskavuori*, the extreme right-wing newspaper *Ajan Suunta* published a promotional article entitled "Sirkka Sari as a schoolmistress" without any reference to the censorship incident and the issues raised.[160] The article reiterated productional publicity material which framed the film as "dramatic and powerful in its topic", featuring "a battle between old Häme traditions and ever-youthful, omnipotent love". In addition, the piece praised performances by the leading actors, Sirkka Sari, Olga Tainio, and Tauno Palo. Paradoxically, right-wing newspapers that a day or two earlier had

159 *Hbl* 17.1.1938.

160 *AS* 15.1.1938. Promotional articles with the same rubric, but with slightly altered contents had previously been published in *Kansan Työ* 12.1.1938 and *Kansan Lehti* 12.1.1938.

Fig. 60. In the 1930s, Finnish film critics employed Balázsian ideas of film, emphasizing the facial close-up as the locus of the cinematic. Even those critical of Wuolijoki admired Sirkka Sari's "soulful" eyes in The Women of Niskavuori *1938 (FFA).*

welcomed the censorship's moral condemnation of Ilona's character, then published promotion articles applauding the beauty of Sirkka Sari and using the star-effect to motivate and legitimate the controversial intrigue:

> "It is wonderful to see how this young girl from Viipuri, Sirkka Sari, who has never before appeared in front of the camera, plays the part of Ilona. She has warmth, passion, and an enchanting beauty that possesses the viewer completely. When one looks at Ilona's narrow, delicate face, her dreamy eyes behind long lashes, one understands the unconditional and intoxicated love that forces Aarne Niskavuori to abandon home and wife, children and mother in order to follow her."[161]

161 *Turunmaa* 13.1.1938; *AS* 15.1.1938.

Detailed descriptions of physical appearance, face, skin, eyes, and gestures characterized the 1938 review journalism's discourse on stardom, echoing a specific understanding of film within the 1930s cinema culture. Stardom was not thought of as a mere marketing strategy or as a site of fandom. Instead, contemporary critics ascribed it a "spiritual" dimension and understood stardom as an expression of the modernity cinema as a medium was thought to epitomize. Such a view of cinema was present, for instance, in the first Finnish-language monograph on film *Film – the image of our times* (*Filmi – aikamme kuva* 1936) by Roland af Hällström. His work as well as writings of several other critics (Roland and Raoul af Hällström, Nyrki Tapiovaara, Antti Halonen) of the late 1920s and 1930s were strongly influenced by the Hungarian-born film theorist Béla Balázs whose influential book *Der sichtbare Mensch* (*The Visible Man* 1924) has circulated widely in Europe since its publication. (See Hake 1993, 222; Lukkarila 1991, 133.) Finnish critics endorsed Balázs's thesis about film as "the popular art of our century", his utopian and deeply metaphysical vision of cinema as a new form of communication based on the body as well as the merger of the aesthetic and the social he proposed (Hake 1993, 228–229; Balázs 1924, 24.)

In Finnish review journalism, Balázsian ideas were fused with an admiration for French cinema. At the same time when Hollywood cinema and its concomitant star system enjoyed great popularity and visibility in Finnish cinema culture, review journalism promoted European and in the late 1930s, especially French, "psychological cinema" as ideals. This preference was evident in writings that discussed the "French style" which favoured delicate topics (e.g., social problems) and narrative techniques deemed a "visual" and "cinematic" style.[162] In French cinema, which particularly influenced films produced by Suomi-Filmi (see Laine 1999, 141–142), contemporary critics saw a realization of their ideas of the cinematic. In it, the Balázsian notion of cinema and the critics' belief in the new medium converged. Following Balázs, the human body and the close-up were foregrounded as the locus of the cinematic:

> "When printing was invented, the written word became increasingly prominent and the rich and expressive gestural language of an earlier age, especially that of Hellenic times, was forgotten. Bodies became inexpressive and mute, as words could now express everything. Only after the dominance of the silent film could gesture, *gestus*, regain its role as a mediator between people. Man and woman were discovered as bodily beings [keksittiin ruumiillisesti]. The human being became visible again."[163]

162 For a commentary on "the French film" as identical with a good film, see "Runsaasti ranskalaisia filmejä tulossa", EA 16/1938. See also, for example, Hällström, Roland af [Do Ré] 1931, 6–9; Tapiovaara 1936, 150–153; L.O. "Kamera taiteilijan kädessä", *EA* 24/1937; af Hällström, Raoul 1937a, 373; "Probleema kotimaisessa elokuvassa", *EA* 7/1938, 155; "Suomalainen filmi. Eräitä nykyhetken huomioita", *Valvoja-Aika* 2/1938, 110–111; Tapiovaara 1938; "Elokuvasta yleensä ja parista erittäin", *Valvoja-Aika* 1938, 510–511; L.O. "Elokuvan atmosfääristä", *EA* 18/1939, 365.

163 Hällström, Roland af [Do Ré] 1931, 6. In *Der sichtbare Mensch* (1924, 25), Balázs writes: "Der Mensch wird wieder sichtbar werden."

As this quote demonstrates, in the 1920s–1930s, the art of cinema itself was framed in terms of "the repressive hypothesis" as critics envisaged the art of cinema as a saviour of both embodiment *and* eroticism:

> "Sports, dance, and cinema bring human beings closer to nature than the cultural man has ever been. Now we take pleasure in everything beautiful and exciting. We intensify our bodily presence. The human being has become *visible* again. Today man finds joy in seeing the beauty and charm of woman; woman finds joy in seeing the strength and proficiency of man – for, even man is discovered as a body."[164]

While visibility (*Sichtbarkeit*) in principle was conferred on both female and male bodies, a close-reading of 1920s–1930s film journalism reveals that the cinematic in this discourse was located in the body and face of a young *female* star. This gendering and ageing of the cinematic was most evident in the discourse on "lyricism" which foregrounded close-up as the locus of the cinematic.[165] Following Balázs, Roland af Hällström (1936, 314ff) wrote about film as "the art of close-up" and about an actress's face, the characteristic subject of a close-up, as "a lyrical medium".[166] He posited precisely this "lyricism" as the inner being and pivotal quality of cinematic expression. Furthermore, for the "lyricism" to be realized, for it to become visible, "cinematic faces", i.e., stars, were needed.[167] Required star qualities included beauty, eroticism, and "mystic soulfulness". According to Hällström, "in film, noble or attractive facial features express the appearance of the soul". Unlike in theatre, he maintained, the cinematic beauty was "real".[168] As examples of "film faces" that transmitted the sought-after lyricism, Finnish journalists discussed (following their European colleagues) Greta Garbo, Asta Nielsen, Marlene Dietrich, Elisabeth Bergner, and Pola Negri.[169] In addition, since the 1920s, there had been a yearning, and even a literal hunt (competitions, etc.) for proper Finnish film stars who could meet the cinematic criteria.[170] The title of one 1929 article posed the question, "why are there no film stars in

164 Hällström, Raoul af 1930a, 64.

165 On the gendered discourse of the cinematic, see Koivunen 1992b. See also Hake (1993, 231). In 1936, the issues of the new women's magazine *Eeva* illustrated the primacy of close-up and the female face. Three out of 10 cover photos were film stills, and in September, *Eeva* (9/1936) published an article that showcased photos of "ordinary" Finnish women. This article featured an interview with a male photographer's analysis of his work and of the photographic qualities of Finnish women.

166 For a discussion of the close-up as integral to the construction of a star, see Dyer 1979, 16–17; Dyer 1987, 11.

167 Star qualities were discussed in the film magazines: "What is a cinematic face?"/"Mitkä ovat filmaattiset kasvot?", *EA* 19/1938, 389; "Create new faces for us"/"Luokaa meille uusia kasvoja", *EA* 1/1937, 501.

168 Hällström 1936, 309, 316; Hällström, Roland af 1929b. On the influence of Balázs on Finnish film culture, see "Näkyvä ihminen", *Tulenkantajat* 11–12/1930; Hällström, Roland af 1931; "Leikkaajan sivu", *EA* 23/1936.

169 Hällström, Roland af 1929b, 34–40; Halonen 1930, 13–14; Hällström, Raoul af 1930b, 52–58; Halonen 1931b, 8–9; Julius, "Kaksi naista: Elisabeth Bergner ja Pola Negri", *EA* 6/1936, 125; Hällström, Raoul af 1937b, 422–423.

170 For a discussion of the desire for "Finnish film stars", see Koivunen 1992a, 26–30; Koivunen 1992b, 172–181.

Finland?" and offered an explanation based on the definition of the cinematic face and its integral relationship to eroticism:

> "This notion refers to many things from technical aspects of photography – the camera does not favour all faces – to some kind of mystical soulfulness that is almost inexplicable, but somehow based on eroticism. Finnish film actresses lack this quality, which hinders their development [as stars] because eroticism is about the self-conscious embodiment of the soul [sielun itsetietoinen ruumiillistuminen], and as such, part of the general aim of the art of film."[171]

The cinematic face, then, was not only about beauty, but also about "self-consciousness" and proper heterosexual desire. According to this account, the beauty of the female star required desiring male gazes in order to become "lyrical".[172] In this framing of the cinematic, the detailed descriptions of Sirkka Sari's physical features (eyes, eyelashes, hair, skin, teeth, and lips) acquired a new meaning suggesting a further intertextual framework for this emphasis on film stars' bodily performances and physical traits. Indeed, this framing suggests a parallel between a specific discourse on film and "the new eroticism" promoted during the 1920s and 1930s by the Torch-Bearers group, "cultural liberals", and modern sexology. Significantly, the word *sex* was introduced into Finnish language use precisely in the context of 1920s and 1930s cinema culture; at that time, the notion of "sex appeal" circulated in discourses on stardom, especially in writings on Greta Garbo.[173] From the realm of cinema, the expression and notion of the cinematic as "new eroticism" or "new romanticism" reached the pages of contemporary cultural journals such as *Aitta* and *Tulenkantajat*.[174] Discussing the attraction of films and the phenomenon of film fandom, film magazines defined sex as a "spiritualized eroticism", a particular blend of physicality, spirituality, and imagination, a mix of representations and fantasies. In the cinematic context, sex appeal stood out as both a visual pleasure and a dynamic of closeness (the huge close-ups of film stars' faces on the screen) and distance (the cinematic world being elsewhere).[175] Upon its release, thus, *The Women of*

171 Hällström, Roland af 1929b, 4–5.

172 Ibid. For a discussion on this notion of the cinematic in relation to contemporary sexology, see Koivunen 1992a; 1992b, ch. 2.

173 In *Nykysuomen sanakirja* (1990, 507), Kalevi Koukkunen defines "sex" as a shortening of "sex appeal", and he offers an argument that the notion of sexual attraction as epitomized in the notion of sex derives from the cinematic context. In 1936, two *Elokuva-aitta* covers featured Greta Garbo as Camille and Countess Walweska.

174 For example, *Tulenkantajat* (9–10/1930, 136–137, 146) published a translation of Bernard Shaw's essay on the subject, "Sex appealin salaisuus. Nykyajan moraali – miksi naiset käyttävät vaatteita?" ("The secret of sex appeal. The moral of today – why do women wear clothes?"); Leo Anttila, "Ne tulevat!" ("They are coming!"), *Tulenkantajat* 13–14/1930, 177–178; Hällström, Raoul af 1930a, 50–62.

175 For a discusssion of the cinematic sex appeal in Finnish film magazines, see Antti Halonen (1931a, 13–14) on "Elokuvasankarien sex-appeal" ("The sex appeal of the film heroes"); Antti Halonen (1930, 13–14) on "Greta Garbo – 'nainen jonka hymyä kuu punastuu...'" ("Greta Garbo, a woman whose smile makes the moon blush…"); Raoul af Hällström (1930b, 52–58) on "Jumalallinen Greta" ("Divine Greta").

Fig. 61. The Women of Niskavuori *1958 (FFA) reiterated the visual rhetoric of the 1938 version, portraying the female star both as desirable and desiring.*

Niskavuori was introduced not only within frameworks of ideological battles and social problems, but also those of the intertwined discourses on sexuality and cinema. [Fig. 56, 61–62.]

According to previous research, the censorship issue and the moral debate surrounding the film version of *The Women of Niskavuori* were essentially about the character of *Ilona*.[176] As Kimmo Laine (1999) has suggested, extra-marital affairs and illegitimate children were the proper objects of censorship. Although these narrative motifs were standard in literature, theatre, and film, Laine maintains that it was "Ilona's defiant attitude and her refusal to repentance" that ultimately provoked the censorship authorities. In his interpretation, in other words, the act of censorship and the moral debate surrounding the film was a result of a *female* character's role as a spokesperson for "new sexual morals" that had vitalistic and Lawrencean connotations. Had a man done so, he implies, there might not have been any debate or need for censorship. (Ibid., 348–349.)

Laine's reading is supported by the fact that, as mentioned above, the novels by two female authors, Iris Uurto and Helvi Hämäläinen, were subject to heightened moral indignation in the 1930s review journalism, and that K.S. Laurila (1938, 157–160), in his writings, was most harsh towards the eroticism in Uurto's novels. However, the cinematic context was different from the literary world in many respects, and here the character of Ilona was

176 For example, Ammondt 1979a, 144–147. When analyzing the reception of the play, Jukka Ammondt pays no attention to the debate concering the character of Aarne, and neither does Kimmo Laine (1999).

not a singular phenomenon. On the contrary, I suggest, many flapper-type and cheeky heroines in modern comedies and sex comedies matched the audacity of Ilona in the face of moral conventions. Even as a highly eroticized image, she blended into the mainstream. Therefore, what was special about *Women of Niskavuori* in the cinematic context was, rather, the convergence of several readings: a reading of the successful play as a realist drama of ideas, the connections to "the new sexual morals", the reputation of the author as a left-wing political activist, the discourse on stardom emphasized in the advertising and in reviews as well as the mobilization of the Balázsian idea of cinema that emphasized the visuality of the human body, and in particular the female body.

The censored bedroom scene and the adulterous romance, however, featured not only Ilona, but also *Aarne*. While Bebelian-Wellsian and Lawrencean "new sexual morals", the ideal of "lyrical cinema", and the discourse on stardom all necessitated a female star to symbolize the new world, they also required an equal male counterpart to consummate the promise of the heterosexual couplehood. Indeed, one of the questions often discussed in reviews of the film version focused on the plausibility of Aarne's and Ilona's romance. Would the viewer believe in their being in love? Was Aarne worthy of Ilona's love? Was their passion strong enough for Aarne to leave his family and the Niskavuori farm?[177] Considering that many reviewers expressed an overt dislike of Aarne as "male trouble", as I argued in Chapter 4, I suggest that (operating within an interpretive framing that looks for repression and transgression) we ask whether it was indeed *the man* and not the woman represented in the film that caused the scandal leading to the ban of the scene! Was it not because the censored close-up featured a Finnish peasant that it caused the stir? The peasant, once crowned as a national hero in the White Finland after the civil war, now rested cheek to cheek with his lover, with closed eyes and a blissful smile? Before being banned, this close-up was used in advertising and published, for instance, on the cover of *Elokuva-aitta*.

In conclusion, I propose a re-reading of the censorship incident. The forbidden close-up performed, in the light of 1930s discourses on nationality, sexuality, and manliness, a contested framing of the freeholding peasant, and hence, an improper citation. While films and posters had featured innumerable facial close-ups of "fallen women" and while schoolmistresses had been radicalized in Hilja Valtonen's popular novels since the 1920s, an eroticized fallen peasant was, indeed, something new! Furthermore, when related to 1930s cinematic ideal and the common star imagery, it seems likely that the object of censorship in the close-up was not so much the lyricism of Ilona as that of Aarne. It was *his* "soulfulness", his visibility, and "Sichtbarkeit" which were, dare I say, too transgressive. He was transgressive both in terms of gender and sexuality; to pass successfully as a Häme peasant, he was too feminine and too eroticized.[178]

177 See, for instance, *AL* 17.1.1938; *Uusi Aura* 19.1.1938. In the context of theatre, this issue was raised, for example, in *Ilkka* 26.5.1936.

178 According to *Wiborgs Nyheter* (25.11.1939), a "Lawrencean impulse" hit the *male* protagonist even in *Vastamyrkky/Antidote*.

Fig. 62. Sexuality is a key site for historical imagination in heritage films such as Niskavuori *1984 (FFA).*

Passion without politics? Readings of Niskavuori as soap opera

> "Land, money, power. Man, wife and another woman. Family, generations, and debt. Love and lovelessness. Therein the dough out which both rye and syrupy bread is baked."
> *Me Naiset* 18.12.1984, 71.

As I have demonstrated, the figure of sexual politics (romance and sex as politics) the tropes of passion, repression, and transgression have figured in the framings of the Niskavuori films in the 1980s and 1990s as well as in the 1930s and 1940s. Romance, however, has also been read as "just" romance or sex as "just" sex. As discussed above, neither the image of the sexualized Steward in *Aarne Niskavuori* nor the remake of *The Women of Niskavuori* in 1958 were read in terms of the repressive hypothesis in the 1950s or later. However, while the repressive hypothesis circulated as a leftist reading route to Niskavuori films in the 1980s and 1990s, another framing emerged, i.e., seeing the Niskavuori saga as a Finnish version of *Dallas* or *Dynasty*.

While reviews and promotional publicity of *Niskavuori* evoked this new intertextual framework in the 1980s,[179] one reviewer had already suggested a similar framing in 1968, framing the British TV series *The Forsyte Saga* with reference to the Niskavuori series:

179 *HS* 1.9.1984; *SK* 2/1985 (11.1.1985).

> "Hella Wuolijoki's Niskavuori series is the Forsyte Saga for us Finns: peasant society, which with greedy fingers holds onto its property and its power, and the rebellious youth, which moves to the town to live out their own lives."[180]

In retrospect, the 1984 association of *Niskavuori* with *Dallas* and *Dynasty* has proven a productive rhetorical move. Two years later, as a series of Niskavuori films were broadcast on television and radio dramas sent on the radio, the notion of dynasty entered many promotional features and reviews. In 1987, three Niskavuori TV movies were shown as YLE's commemorative gestures, monuments, to the 70th anniversary of Finnish independence; and when the TV station framed them for viewers, it had become a recurrent reading route, resulting even in new articulations, seeing the farm as "Niskavuori Ltd.", a company comparable to Ewing Oil, characterizing the drama series as "soap opera", the TV movies as "spectacles" and the Niskavuori family as a "rye dynasty".[181]

By the 1990s, the soap opera intertext had become an ordinary reading route. In 1992, *Loviisa* (1946) was promoted as a portrayal of "the rye dynasty of Niskavuori" indicating that Niskavuori films were seen through the framework of popular television series such as *Dallas* and *Dynasty*.[182] The plot of *Aarne Niskavuori* (1954) was said to have "many turns and, to be a Finnish film, with surprisingly many relationships of all kinds". This description inspired the reviewer to draw a parallel between the success of the Niskavuori films and that of television melodramas: "No wonder *Peyton Place* was once so popular among us."[183] In 1968, the re-runs of adaptations for television mentioned above were called "genuinely Finnish pine soap" and described freely in spoken low-style Finnish:

> *"The Young Matron of Niskavuori* begins at the end of the 19th century. Young and starry-eyed Loviisa has just arrived at the farm, which is in a chaotic state. The old matron is going senile in a rocking chair, and Juhani, who daydreams of becoming an MP, cannot maintain group discipline at home. The oldest sister Heta unscrupulously commands both Loviisa and the crofters. What adds to the confusion is the patron's messing about in his sexual relations. There is a lot of howling and gnashing of teeth as the farm maid seems more attractive than his own wedded wife. To counterbalance all kinds of Yankee soaps there is, for once, a true and genuine Finnish pine soap available."[184]

Thus, the review pages of a TV magazine equated the Niskavuori dramas with any other TV series and described them in similar terms and mode. However, the reference to soap opera did not only emerge only in the realm of television. As *The Women of Niskavuori* was staged at the Jyväskylä Theatre in 1994, a critic compared the play to *The Bold and Beautiful*: "at

180 *KSML* 19.3.1968 Toini Virisalo, "Eipä tässä".

181 *IL* 9.8.1986; *Kodin Kuvalehti* 5.11.1987; *AL* 5.12.1987; *AL* 6.12.1987; *KU Viikkolehti* 7.11.1987, 14; *SaKa* 6.12.1987; *US* 2.12.1987; *US* 6.12.1987; *US* 13.12.1987; *Hämeen Sanomat* 13.12.1987. See also *HS* 18.6.1992; *KU* 10.2.1998; *Treffi* 5.2.1998.

182 *HS* 18.6.1992; *HS* 31.3.1998.

183 *Seura* 27/1992.

184 *Katso* 7 9.2.–15.2.1998, 37.

their best, the Niskavuori plays display the entertaining dramatic pattern of serial films that appeals to security and continuity, the everlasting drama of money, love, and power struggle – an agrarian 'bold and beautiful'"[185] In the 1990s media context, reviews and presentations of the Niskavuori films often used "soap opera" and "melodrama" as labels.[186] [Fig. 63]

The equation of the Niskavuori dramas with soap operas and TV melodramas was not unchallenged and many review journalists also opposed such a reading. Romance was not merely romance when the difference between the national and international was concerned. Reviewers maintained a distinction between the "sterility" and "triviality" of the American serials and the (by implication) more "real" and "substantial" *Niskavuori*. In other words, the Niskavuori family saga was framed as "more real", "more powerful", and "more original" than the US equivalents:[187]

> "There is no reason to relate Niskavuori to Dallases or Dynasties (…) In the cool and painting-like films of Vaala and the pathetically stiff films of Laine, there is, despite their political caution, a distinct social ridgepole under which clear images of Finnish customs, mindscapes, natural landscapes and a spectrum of characters appear. TV series that are like sugar candy and develop along the axis of good and bad lack such depth."[188]

A qualitative difference in the "relevance", the social and political rootedness, was suggested as well as a different affective impact:

> "The heroines of *Dynasty* are like pale dummies compared to the full-blooded women of Niskavuori."[189]

As an "indigenous" cultural product, reviewers described the Niskavuori saga as more "realistic" than TV series produced for the international distribution. (Cf. Ruoho 2001, 210–211ff.) The prime time melodramas broadcast on TV were referred to as "superficial", whereas Niskavuori films were characterized as having "depth". The TV series were described as "sugar candy" and in terms of their narratives supposedly constructed along "a simple axis of good and bad", whereas Niskavuori films were outlined as having "a distinct social ridgepole". In other words, they were thought to deal with issues of social significance, i.e., agrarian class conflicts and power relations.[190]

185 *AL* 21.11.1994. A corresponding cinematic intertext was evoked by the poster which advertised the 1997 production of *The Women of Niskavuori* at the Tampere Theatre; the composition of the poster, the man holding the woman in his arms, makes obvious reference to *Gone With The Wind* (1939) and, in so doing, frames the play not so much as a "fine piece of Finnish history", but as a classic love story. The poster was published on the designer's homepage "http://www.abo.fi/~toahlbac/html/theatre.html" (15.7.1998) and as the cover of the brochure for the play.

186 *KU* 9.7.1992; for a characterization of *Heta Niskavuori* as a melodrama, see *Katso* 10 (2.–8.3.1998), 40.

187 *IL* 9.8.1986; *US* 6.12.1987; *Hämeen Sanomat* 13.12.1987.

188 *Katso* 25/1992, 70–71. See also *US* 6.12.1987; *Hämeen Sanomat* 13.12.1987, *KU* 10.2.1998.

189 *IL* 9.8.1986.

190 *HS* 16.2.1993; *Katso* 26–27/1992.

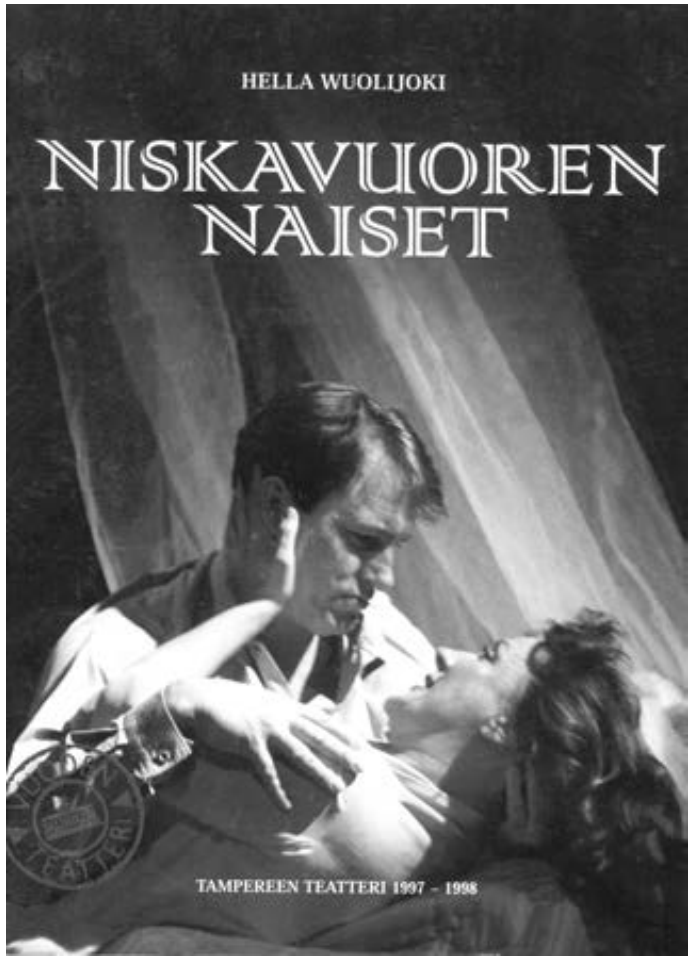


Fig. 63. In a brochure and poster for The Women of Niskavuori *at the Tampere Theatre (Tampereen Teatteri), Niskavuori fiction and the visual rhetoric of* Gone with the Wind *overlapped.*

Haunting signatures: framing the authorial legend

1980s and 1990s TV reviews thematized repression as a historical context of the Niskavuori films with reference to the "legend of Wuolijoki".[191] As a characteristic of the authorial signature, namely, the trope of repression has been a recurrent feature in interpretive framings of the Niskavuori fictions both in theatre and film since the 1930s. The fact that Hella Wuolijoki wrote all Niskavuori plays under the male pseudonym of Juhani Tervapää has been explained as a consequence of Wuolijoki's controversial reputation in the

191 I borrow the notion of the "legend" used by Barbara Klinger (1994) and Jane Shattuc (1995) in their studies of the "authorization" of Douglas Sirk and Rainer Werner Fassbinder respectively. Shattuc (1995, 70–72) conceptualizes the image of an author as similar to the star image in Richard Dyer's work (1979, 72–98), i.e., as a polysemic text.

1930s climate of strict right-wing control. Her two previous plays, *Talon lapset* (*The Children of the House* 1914) and *Laki ja järjestys* (*Law and Order* 1933) had been either banned or censored for political reasons immediately after their opening nights. The State Police had continuously monitored Hella Wuolijoki as a left-wing activist since the Civil War. With such a history, some have argued Wuolijoki was able to enter the public sphere only by hiding and disguising her "real" identity. As Juhani Tervapää, her play got into production and was not immediately rejected as "political". (Palmgren 1979, 8; Niemi 1980, 180; Koski 1987, 66–67; Vapaavuori 1989, 433; Koski 2000, 93–94; von Bagh 2000, 20.)[192]

Furthermore, the various adapters of the Niskavuori plays in theatre and cinema have been seen as "censors". Eino Salmelainen, the director of the first public performance of *The Women of the Niskavuori* and many other Wuolijoki plays, who published his memoirs in 1954, claimed that he had shortened Ilona's part into "a half of the original" and made Loviisa into the main character of the play. According to Salmelainen, Wuolijoki was not, because of her pseudonym, able to protest, but was forced to accept Salmelainen's changes which turned out to be successful. (Salmelainen 1954, 225.) Although it is unclear whether the original version of the play has been preserved at all, the theatre scholar Pirkko Koski (1992, 139–141) has been able to relativize and confirm partly Salmelainen's activity on the basis of a comparative analysis of the existing versions. As a result of Salmelainen's dramaturgic activity, Ilona's lines did, according to Koski, become less "romantic" and "ideologically enthusiastic", which again shifted the balance of the play to the character of Loviisa in order to foreground a more "realistic tone". Thus, through Salmelainen's changes, elements of both "propagation" and "romanticism" were subject to censorship. (Ibid. See also Salmelainen 1954, 228; Palmgren 1979, 12; Niemi 1980, 180; Koski 1987, 65–67.) In the context of cinema, furthermore, both Valentin Vaala and Edvin Laine as directors and Suomi-Filmi and Suomen Filmiteollisuus as production companies have been posited as "repressors" of Wuolijoki's "intentions" or the *real* political agendas of the plays. For example, in the 1970s–1990s, "Vaala's intepretation" of *Loviisa* has been read as "diluting" what has been termed "the social pathos of Wuolijoki". Some believe it "covers" hidden and "repressed contradictions" and "softens" the class differences. Furthermore, it has been read as "avoiding" the original message, "the strong contradictions of the play", and, hence, missing "Wuolijoki's sharpest social edge".[193]

In this manner, then, the authorial legend, as a site of continuous negotiation, has functioned as an intertextual frame of reference. In all the previous chapters, I have identified readings that have "corrected" or "supplemented" the cinematic adaptations with references to the authorial signature. In Chapter

192 For Wuolijoki's plays and censorship authorities, see Rossi 1990, 175–186; on the right-wing hegemony and the control of the left during the inter-war period, see Sevänen 1998, 311–313. The National Archive holds the police files on Hella Wuolijoki, see EK-Valpo I–II.

193 *KU* 30.10.1982; *Kansan Tahto* 30.10.1982; *Katso* 43/1982 (25.–31.10.1982); *IS* 2.8.1986; *Katso* 31/1986 (28.7.–3.8.); *Katso* 25/1992 (15.–21.1992), 38.

2, I showed how reviewers of *Niskavuori Fights* supplemented the film with the historical and political context that they argued had been "excluded" from it or with references to Wuolijoki's "original" intentions that had been "distorted". Indeed, *Niskavuori Fights* has been most consistently critiqued for "smoothing out", "diluting", and "smothering" contradictory elements attributed to the "original" text.[194] In Chapter 3, I illustrated how both right- and left-wing interpretations of the character of the old matron were based on splitting and doubling; they foregrounded some and marginalized other features by referring to Wuolijoki's "left-wing" intentions that were either idealized or discarded. In this process of splitting and doubling, "Juhani Tervapää" appeared either as a repressive name or a guarantor of acceptability. In Chapter 4, I traced a reading of the Niskavuori films as narratives that "marginalize" men. In Chapter 5, "Hella Wuolijoki" and "Juhani Tervapää" appeared as multiple ideological positions, connoting Bolshevism, vitalism, and feminism as well as socialist doctrines and national aspirations. By outlining "Wuolijoki" as a signature connoting feminism and women's interests, directors, actors, and reviewers have positioned themselves as rehabilitators or as defenders of the male gender.

In this manner, the trope of repression has also enhanced status of the author. Appropriating Lea Rojola's (1998, 254–259) analysis of authorial signatures, it appears that "Hella Wuolijoki as Juhani Tervapää" has been a successful performative *not* because it has provided consistency and coherence but because it has permitted so many different readings. The multiple (female, male, left-wing, right-wing, feminist, vitalist) authorial signatures have, in their explicit visibility, proven to be a potential for multiple meanings, employed for different purposes. As an intertextual framework in the corrective and contesting readings of the Niskavuori films, the importance of "the legend of Wuolijoki" has exemplified Michel Foucault's (1977, 123–124) analysis of the "author" as "a function of discourse". The two authorial names and the different roles, agendas, and aims they have been assigned have served as a classificatory and contextualizing device establishing "different forms of relationships among texts" (ibid., 123).

194 See, for instance, *Etelä-Saimaa* 26.9.1972; *Antenni* 38/1972 (18.–24.9.1972); *Katso* 9/1977 (28.2.–6.3.); *Demari* 16.9.1978; *Katso* 37/1978 (11.–17.9.1978).

Re-citable legacies, melodramatic pleasures

> "There is an immense melodramatic pull in the fates of the iron ladies and the weak men of Niskavuori. Therein the secret of their attraction."
> *Kaleva* 6.12.1987.

> Although we often treat these representations as simple mirrors, they do not so much reflect us as cast their reflection upon us. They are carriers of – among other things – sexual, racial, and class difference. For these reasons, the subject does not always occupy the field of vision happily.
> Kaja Silverman 1996, 57.

In 2000, the Finnish Broadcasting Company (YLE) televised an educational ("open university") TV series called *Sammon sirpaleet. Suomalaisuuden mytologia* (*The Smithereens of Sampo – the Mythology of Finnishness*). The second episode in this series, entitled "The Empire of Women", focuses on notions of gender. In my reading, it encapsulates many of the key issues discussed in this book. Both the titles and the opening sequence point to the ways in which gender, sexuality, nation, and history are figured for the cultural screen: how they are imagined and narrated, but also remembered, known, and experienced. Manifesting the intricate work of interpretation, the opening sequence illustrates how links are forged on the cultural screen between the everyday mentality of today, social history, folklore, landscape ("nature"), and fiction (such as film).

After a short title sequence, the episode opens with anonymous women and men posing as "ordinary Finns" and making statements for the camera: they are framed frontally in medium shots and positioned against a virtual birch forest. In this framing, four women and one man testify to the everyday mentality as related to qualities of a "typical" Finnish woman and man:

> "The Finnish woman is…is… equal in the Finnish fashion."
> "The Finnish woman is very strong and independent."
> "The Finnish woman is fairly strong and powerful."
> "The Finnish woman is strong."
> "For some reason, I think of the matron of Niskavuori. In my opinion, it is a very good characterization. She does not talk much, but when she does, she has a lot to say. Instead of talking, she works by the sweat of her brow."

While the testimonies of these anonymous Finns are projected against a prop, they are intercut with interviews with academic experts, framed sitting in natural landscapes: on a dead pine in a marsh (Academy Professor Anna-Leena Siikala), rowing a boat on a lake (Professor Seppo Knuuttila), or standing on a river bank in a wild winter landscape (Docent Kirsti Simonsuuri).[1] Following the anonymous testimony, Professor of Folklore Studies Anna-Leena Siikala explains the links between the Finnish gender system of today, mythology as folklore, and "the ways of life":

> "In my understanding, women are portrayed as fairly independent in Finnish mythology. The culture and the ways of life that have carried this old mythical thinking until today have, of course, contributed to the fact that the position of women in Finland differs completely from that in Central or Southern Europe. The Finnish and also the Nordic woman are considerably much stronger and freer, and more like equal partners."

The question of gender, in this framing, is introduced as a question about the status of Finnish women, the strength and freedom of women – compared both to the absent men and to the allegedly weaker position of other women in Central or Southern Europe. According to the logic of the gender performative that is operative here, women and men come in couples. This coupling is underlined by the following insert in which anonymous interviewees characterize "the Finnish man":

> "I believe that a Finnish man is more of a quiet and introvert kind…"
> "The man… The first things I think about are the communication problems, drinking and such…"
> "If they say that the Finnish man neither talks nor kisses, that may be the starting point, but even those things one can be taught to do!"

In this case, all the featured interviewees are women, as if the question of gender is indeed an "empire of women". However, they are followed by an insert in which Professor Seppo Knuuttila describes Lemminkäinen, the romantic hero in the *Kalevala*, who thus, by implication, is offered as an image of the "Finnish man":

> "Lemminkäinen is this kind of amusing and roguish character in the *Kalevala*, a rogue and an adventurer. Lemminkäinen is the one who jokes. He is, of course, also famous for his erotic escapades. He is something of a playboy who nevertheless is about to settle down as a family man…"[2]

Knuuttila proceeds to describe Lemminkäinen's relationship to Kyllikki as a failed contract. Before their marriage, Kyllikki had demanded that Lem-

1 The narration of the episode "naturalizes" what both the anonymous interviewees and experts say by positioning the voices of culture within landscape scenery. However, a hierarchical difference is constructed; the experts are located in "real" landscapes, giving their knowledge a further aura, whereas the witnesses are framed by a screen projection, underlining their distance to the "real" knowledge.

2 As discussed in Chapter 4, the name Lemminkäinen refers to "lovemaking" and he was evoked as an intertext in theatre reviews of *The Women of Niskavuori* in 1936.

minkäinen promise not to wage war. She, on the other hand, promised not to seek entertainment outside her home. However, both spouses broke these vows.[3] Thus, while the TV programme imagines "the Finnish woman" in terms of strength, freedom, and independence (in relation to both men and women elsewhere), it figures "the Finnish man" through sexuality, romance, and a failed contract (with women). For Professor Siikala, Kyllikki appeared as a "modern woman"; other scholars read the story of Lemminkäinen and Kyllikki as one of a "strong woman" and a "mama's boy" (Kupiainen 1999, 151–154).

The episode continues with a montage sequence in which clips from 1930s–1950s Finnish feature films are edited into a miniature story about an unhappy romance. The black-and-white film footage of well-known films stars such as Ansa Ikonen, Tauno Palo, and Jalmari Rinne has been tinted with bright colours to appear as a comic strip. The accelerated tempo of the montage sequence enhances the humoristic tone. A voice-over telling this story of Lemminkäinen and Kyllikki structures the sequence, thus, connecting a folklore narrative with film images and the gender frame articulated in the preceding interviews.

In a condensed manner, this opening sequence not only features two figures of the cultural screen, the monument-woman and the man-in-crisis, discussed in this book. "The Empire of Women" enacts and displays the performative construction of the cultural screen as a repertoire of re-citable images, narratives, and framings. (Cf. Bhabha 1991, 91; 1994, 203; Landy 1996, 1–29.) The episode performs links between everyday mentality and opinions (voiced by the anonymous men and women) and "mythology" in the two senses of the notion. While the professors interviewed are authorities of mythology as folklore and popular religion, the title expression "mythologies of Finnishness" also plays on Barthesian notion of mythology, as an ideological formation, referring to what "goes without saying", to the obvious (Barthes 1987, 143). In addition, the opening sequence of "The Empire of Women" connects mythology as everyday mentality not only to mythology as scholarly expertise on folklore or to connotations of nature/the natural, but also to footage from old Finnish films. These clips, like many pre-1960s Finnish films, serve as an indexical representation of the obvious, comparable to the statements by the "ordinary Finns". Neither the interviewees nor the films quoted have any individuality in this narration. While the footage in this case is tinted and visually manipulated, it manifests a steadily growing trend within Finnish Broadcasting Company to offer excerpts from its film bank as illustrations of the past. As an interesting counter-tendency to the "crisis of indexicality", the anxiety surrounding the discussions on computer-generated images and the ethical bonds of photography in the digital era (Elsaesser 1998, 31ff), this praxis manifests a great belief in the indexicality of old films. A wide range of television programmes (news, current affairs programmes, chat shows, magazine programmes) since the 1970s has quoted

3 For a 1888 translation of "Kyllikki's Broken Vow" see <http://www.sacred-texts.com/neu/kveng/kvrune12.htm>.

footage from Niskavuori films to illustrate political, economic, social, and cultural history as well as that of women. (See Appendix 8.) As film, the past is literally citable and insertable. Moreover, history has become an old movie, to quote Thomas Elsaesser (1989, 278; see also Elsaesser 1996, 145ff).

Therefore, when studying Niskavuori films, I have studied the massive repetition in which the phenomenon is embedded and the re-citable legacies upon which it draws. As the signifier "Niskavuori" has travelled through decades, different media, and framings, it has acquired not only a heterogeneous legacy, but also a *magnitude*, a force of history. In different citations, the signifier "Niskavuori" is mobilized as a label for a recognizable mentality, national or personal. While a commemorative TV programme series on Finnish history characterizes the Finnish society of the 1950s in terms of a "Niskavuori ethos", a student magazine feature article on single mothers refers to the risks and costs of "pride à la Niskavuori" in individual lives.[4] "Niskavuori" is also invoked as an exemplary image of the pre-modern, agrarian Finland; in both academic research and popular journalism, "Niskavuori" figures as shorthand for agrarian culture.[5] As the title and the opening sequence of "The Empire of Women" indicate and as I have shown in the previous chapters, the signifier "Niskavuori" is a *given* ingredient in the citational legacies which frame "the Finnish gender".

In the many years of writing this book, I have encountered innumerable experts on Niskavuori. They – "we" – all "know" the images, the narratives, and the meanings; "we" have them all in our heads. "We" remember everything about Niskavuori, and I, when talking about my research, tend to assume this knowledge. As Laura Mulvey (1994, 127) has suggested, popular cinema functions as "collective mnemic symbols" allowing "'ordinary people', us, to stop and wonder or weep, desire or shudder, momentarily touching 'unspeakable' but shared psychic structures". For Niskavuori, however, the "shared" is all but unspoken. In her discussion of the cinematic uses of the past, Marcia Landy (1996, 19) argues that cinema as popular history relies on "proverbs, prophecies, truisms, and the celebration of repetition". In this manner, "melodrama and history feed on familiarity, ritualization, repetition, and overvaluation of the past to produce a déjà vu sense of 'Yes, that is the way it was and is'" (ibid.). The cultural screen works precisely in this way, disseminating both "the given-to-be-seen" and its counternarratives (Silverman 1996, 178–179).

Re-citable legacies

In this book, I have argued that the Niskavuori films are in multiple and often contradictory ways imbricated with what I, following Kaja Silverman, have called "the cultural screen": the representational coordinates which enable and constrain public fantasies about gender, sexuality, nation, and history.[6]

4 *Oi kallis Suomenmaa* 5, 1997; *Aviisi* 16/1996.

5 Kuisma 1989, 59–60; Apo 1998, 88; Ahonen 1998, 56–57; *City* 14/1998; Wikman 1998.

In the four preceding chapters, I have investigated this cultural screen through four figures tracing how the films via their interpretive framings have articulated and recycled notions of nation and history ("the archive"), those of gender, sexuality, and nation ("the monument-woman", "the man-in-crisis") as well as those of sexuality and history ("the sexual politics"). "The Empire of Women" as well as the audiovisual and other citations of Niskavuori assume and, hence, implicate an audience that shares unified intertextual frameworks and performs similar readings of the Niskavuori fictions. From this perspective, the citations work to consolidate "a foundational fiction", "a grand narrative", which addresses "the nation as an audience" who shares a common agrarian past located in a specific place and landscape, and in an unspecified pre-modern time. In public reception, the Niskavuori films have been recurrently framed as stories with identity-effects, as stories about "us", representing and consolidating a national identity. An integral part of this narrative is its gender logic featuring "strong women" and "weak men", sexualized or idealized others as well as the articulation of sexuality and politics in terms of passion and transgression for the male subjects of history.

Analyzing the visual promotion and the review journalism surrounding the Niskavuori films, I have shown that diverse and often dissonant framings characterized all the films upon their release. In 1938, *The Women of Niskavuori* was outlined as both a tribute to peasant culture and a threat to it, as both a drama of ideas and a modern film romance à la Greta Garbo and John Gilbert. In 1946, the visual promotion of *Loviisa* constructed a narrative image that highlighted the passionate cross-class romance, the star appeal of Tauno Palo, and marital tension, whereas review journalism focused on the emergence of the monument-woman and the "Finnishness" of the film. In 1952, *Heta Niskavuori* was framed as a film about a monster-like matriarch and male rehabilitation, the film's poster and publicity-stills suggesting a monument-woman and a love triangle. In 1954, reviewers proclaimed *Aarne Niskavuori* a quality film in contrast to the rillumarei genre, while visual framings spectacularized the illegitimate romance between Martta and Steward. Furthermore, both reviewers and visual framings aligned the film with Finnish folklore and German Heimat films. In 1957, *Niskavuori Fights* was read as a tribute to the wartime home-front, a historical depiction of the war years, sentimental therapy for contemporary audiences, and a depoliticized version of a potentially critical story. In 1958, review journalism both appreciated the remake of *The Women of Niskavuori* as "national cinema" and described it as a bleak version of the "original". The visual framing enhanced sex and romance, not the old matron. In 1984, promotional material introduced *Niskavuori* as an historical film and a return to national cinema proper. While

6 As Kaja Silverman (1996, 19) stresses, the cultural screen should not be conceptualized as a window or a mirror. In her discussion, the relationship of the cultural screen and the viewing/visible subjects appears as complex. We assimilate with and seek affirmation from the cultural screen; we may feel protected or entrapped by it, and we may use it to conceal ourselves. However, we may also understand it as something distant or as something that we refuse. (Ibid., 201–202.)

review journalism featured a critique of historicism and old topics, many reviews and visual framings enjoyed a heritage aesthetic in the film.

The interpretive framings, I have argued, have drawn on a myriad of intertextual frameworks and discursive fields. In the 1930s, the readings connected Niskavuori, explicitly or implicitly, to *Gösta Berling's Saga* and D.H. Lawrence and the "vitalist" literature, to Bolshevist politics and fin-de-siècle feminism, to marital fictions and the preservation of peasant culture. In the context of cinema, the Niskavuori story connected to contemporary discourses on stardom and notions of the cinematic and their links to contemporary sexology. In the 1940s, books describing Finland in pictures, those on "the Finnish woman" as well as Tauno Palo's star image were evoked as frames of reference. In the 1950s, intertextual frameworks included Finnish log-floating comedies, the transnational proliferation of adult films, German Heimat films, Polish and Russian plays such as *Madame Dulshka* and *Vassa Zheleznova*, psychoanalytical discourses on pathologized motherhood, and images of battle-axes in Finnish comedies (Justiina). In addition, at this point, Niskavuori itself became a frame of reference for other Finnish films such as *The Matron of Sillankorva* and *The Ruler of Riihala*.

In the 1960s, Niskavuori moved to television; it was framed as cultural history and read as a point of comparison for *The Forsyte Saga*. In the 1970s, the intertextual web consisted of Finnish TV series featuring "strong women" (e.g., *Elämänmeno/The Way of Life*), family fictions dealing with alcoholism (*The Holy Family/Pyhä perhe*) and comic representations of the "weak man" (*Uuno Turhapuro/Jerk Futile*). During this period, if not already in 1950s rillumarei-culture, Niskavuori became an object of parody (*Pohjavuorelaiset*). The 1980s brought readings of Niskavuori as the Finnish *Dallas* or *Dynasty* as well as heritage culture and a meta-text of both "Finnish mentality" and "the Finnish gender". In 1980s and 1990s sociological research, studies on the "Finnish man" and the "Finnish way of life" emerged as more or less explicit frame of meaning-making for fictional representations. These framings also occurred in the 1990s and were accompanied by references to nostalgic TV series, soap operas (*The Bold and the Beautiful*), Finnish family series (*Metsolat*), and prime time TV fictions (*The Sopranos*). As I have discussed the various moments in the diachronic life of the Niskavuori films, I have paid attention to specific Finnish debates and phenomena (e.g., the cultural crisis of the 1930s, the Heimat movement in the 1940s, the literature on the "Finnish woman", the gender debates of the 1970s and 1980s, the sociological and historical research on the "Finnish man" in the 1980s and 1990s). At the same, I have also highlighted connections to trends and themes in other European cinemas and, thus, refuse to equate nation-specific contexts with notions of indigenousness.[7]

7 On the notion of the national as it is defined in comparative studies, see Kettunen 2001. I owe many thanks to Professor Pauli Kettunen for asking me to give a presentation at a seminar in December 2002 on the distinction between domestic and foreign politics – how "national" does not equal "interior" or "indigenous", how "international" is one thing, and "exterior" another.

In this book, I have argued for a diachronic approach to film history that neither single films out as separate "events" nor regards them as a closed cultural sphere of their own. Instead, I have emphasized the historicity of viewing, reading, and meaning making in time. By focusing on the interpretive, visual, and verbal framings of the films, by close-reading the narrative images constructed for them, by charting the intertextual and intermedial frameworks the films have been aligned with, explicitly or implicitly, and by tracking repetitions and re-articulations in these framings, I have investigated "the historicity of meaning beyond origins", attempting to give "authority to all of the semantic intrigues surrounding films during the course of their social and historical circulation", to quote from Barbara Klinger (1997, 112). The "semantic intrigues", as I understand them, are the "representational coordinates" of the cultural screen that I have explored as the interpretive work of framings. Furthermore, this diachronic approach to film history highlights both the multi-media origin of the films (dramatic texts, different theatre productions, radio plays) and the "post-origin appearances" of cinema in broadcast television, video format circulation, and in other forums (Klinger 1997, 123). In this book, while entering the realm of the Niskavuori fictions through the prism of film, I have argued for an intermedial approach, paying attention to the ways in which films have made sense through and in relation to other media.

Unpacking the citational legacies of "Niskavuori" via four figures of the cultural screen, a number of conflicting interpretive strategies have been discussed. One of these dual pulls concerns the focalization of the Niskavuori narrative: Shall it be read as a context-bound representation of the inter-war or the post-war Finnish mentality, or is it more of a timeless, mythological drama? Another question concerns the link between gender and focalization: is the Niskavuori narrative female- or male-centred? Is it a radical or conservative story? Does it articulate contradictions or attempt to conceal them? Furthermore, there is a tension between a "realist" reading that focuses on whether characters, issues, and actions are plausible; the milieu authentic; the mentalities and historical detail true and a "melodramatic" reading that emphasizes dramatic effect and affective impact. As I have suggested, these dissonant interpretive framings have also concerned the question of authorship: Wuolijoki or Tervapää? A Bolshevist or a nationalist? A woman or man? A feminist author or masculine male director/actor? Wuolijoki or Vaala/Laine/Kassila? Theatre or cinema?

Melodramatic pleasures

In this book, I have foregrounded, rather than hidden, the ongoing interpretive activity which is an inseparable part of films in their diachronic life. In particular, I have emphasized the historicity and the productivity of the interpretive framings. In this way, I have also questioned the views of "Finnish culture" as "a low context" presented since the 1980s. Notably, these views are based on readings of literature and film.

In 1985, sociologist Klaus Mäkelä argued that Finnish culture could be

characterized as lacking hierarchical structure of cultural variation and, thus, as unusually homogenous because of Finnish class history; working and middle class values have not been alienated from one another. Although cultural tastes do vary in different social groups, in Mäkelä's view, there are few traces of well-established cultural hierarchies compared to, for example, France. (Mäkelä 1985, 253ff) Another sociologist, Risto Alapuro (1989,74), also uses France as the point of reference in contrasting "the naive mimeticism" and the presence of only one institution of interpretive cultural rules in Finland with the French situation "in which several layers of meanings separate language from reality and various code systems compete [for dominance]." Semiotician Eero Tarasti (1990, 207–208) agrees with Alapuro as he describes "Finland's universe of signs as sparse". In a study of Finnish reading culture, the repertoire of reading strategies, sociologist Kimmo Jokinen (1994) reiterarates arguments by Mäkelä, Alapuro, and Tarasti: "The Finnish milieu provides relatively few different signs to be decoded, whereas people in other cultures are accustomed to receiving a constant flow of messages, possibly even conflicting ones, from different directions. Moreover, the Finnish sign world has fewer borrowed elements." (Jokinen 1993, 30). For this reason, Jokinen argues, the Finnish repertoire of reading strategies is limited to such a degree and "books are directly associated with social reality". For him, the explanation is also the "short history" of Finnish culture, "too short to have been able to foster a habit of seeing books in a wider literary or cultural context". Jokinen asserts that there has been no perspective of change either: "This being the case, a possible trend towards cultural diversity and the changing over to a whole new type of social order will most likely not cause any rapid erosion of the requirement of cultural uniformity or ideological structures closely connected with national affairs." (Jokinen 1993, 30; cf. Ehrnrooth 1996, 38–63.)

By investigating the complex interpretive work implicated in the cultural screen and complicating the framings of the Niskavuori films as in any sense "realistic", I have questioned the hypothesis of "Finnish culture" as a "low context" and, by implication, a more "indigenous" domain.[8] Moreover, I suggest that this hypothesis itself be excavated as an interpretive framing: it builds upon an equation of nationality, indigenousness, and interiority, and disallows the possibility of any consideration of the dissemination of meaning. Furthermore, the proponents of this approach take images, narratives, and readers' reports "at face value" and, hence, translate their own lack of interpretive skills into a depiction of "Finnish culture".

I have illuminated some of the complex ways in which the Niskavuori films have been made to mean since the 1930s. I have demonstrated how

8 For insightful critiques of Klaus Mäkelä (1985), see Peltonen 1992, 127,141; Knuuttila 1994; 44–46; Knuuttila 1996, 169–170; Knuuttila 1998, 21–21, For a critique of the use of "old Finnish film" in Mäkelä 1985 and Peltonen 1992, see Laine 1989, 76–78. For a detailed discussion of the notions of realism in Finnish TV journalism, see Ruoho 2001, 191–192, 203–204. Iiris Ruoho distinguishes between "empirical", "emotional", "generic", and "channel specific" realisms as well as between "corrective", "thought-provoking", and "redemptive" realisms.

"Finnishness" – gender, sexuality, and history – as "interiority" is an effect of persistent interpretive work that is constantly repeated, recycled, and re-cited. Indeed, it is not only that films have been framed in multifarious ways. Underlined in this book is the immense the work of interpretation and imagination involved in the construction of gender, sexuality, history, and nation.

The pleasure in proliferation and repetition, I assert, does not so much indicate a flair for realism as one for melodramatic pleasures. Feminist studies of melodrama regard it as a mode rather than genre. As a mode of imagination, melodrama "signifies a recognition of the complexity and conflict fundamental to living in the modern world" (Ang 1990, 78–79). Rather than reconciliation or resolution, therefore, melodrama evokes contradictions (Mulvey 1987, 79) and in doing so, it is characterized by a "founding heterogeneity" (Gledhill 2000, 232ff). In my analysis, this serves as a felicitous rubric for the interpretive activity surrounding "Niskavuori". While this study has been essentially about repetition – repetition of names, definitions, adjectives, nouns, tropes, questions, problems, images, narratives, plots, contexts, intertexts, and so forth – the emphasis has been on differences and dissonances within and among framings. The interpretive moves manifested in "The Empire of Women" *are* "familiar" and "obvious"; even in this educational project, the objections insisting "There is no such thing as a Finnish woman or a Finnish man!"[9] are marginalized. Nevertheless, I have demonstrated how the citations of Niskavuori are so countless and the number of the repetitions concerning its "meanings" so massive that they open up, rather than close down, any "obvious" or "given" grand narrative. When called upon in different uses, the meanings of "Niskavuori" travel to different contexts and connect to new situations, new associations, and new intertexts. Though this practice of quoting brings about, in Walter Benjamin's (1999, 486) terms, "a persistent semblance" which provides a sense of continuity, it also raises questions that challenge that semblance; in different citations and reiterations, "Niskavuori" is made to mean in ways that are not coherent or logical but, rather, filled with complexity and contradiction. Repetition entails proliferation instead of the consolidation of meaning. As such, it promises endless melodramatic pleasures.

9 A comment on the soundtrack during the end titles of *The Smithereens of Sampo*.

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APPENDIX 1

The Niskavuori films (1938–1984)

The Women of Niskavuori (Finland 1938)
Production: Suomi-Filmi/Risto Orko. Director: Valentin Vaala. Manuscript: Jaakko Huttunen, Orvo Saarikivi base on Juhani Tervapää's play *The Women of Niskavuori* 1936. Photography: Armas Hirvonen. Music: Harry Bergström. Editing: Valentin Vaala. Sound: Pertti Kuusela. Actors: Olga Taino (Loviisa Niskavuori), Tauno Palo (Aarne Niskavuori), Sirkka Sari (Ilona Ahlgren), Irja Lautia (Martta Niskavuori), Lea Joutseno (Anna-Liisa Niskavuori), Ossi Elstelä (the patron of Simola). Première: 16 January 1938 in Helsinki.

Loviisa (Finland 1946)
Production: Suomi-Filmi/Risto Orko. Director: Valentin Vaala. Manuscript: Valentin Vaala based on Juhani Tervapää's play *The Young Matron of Niskavuori* 1940. Photography: Eino Heino. Music: George de Godzinsky. Art direction: Ville Hänninen. Editing: Valentin Vaala. Sound: Harald Koivikko. Actors: Emma Väänänen (Loviisa), Tauno Palo (Juhani Niskavuori), Kirsti Hurme (Malviina), Hilkka Helinä (Heta), Holger Salin (Martti), Maija Nuutinen (the old matron of Niskavuori), Elli Ylimaa (Iita), Toini Vartiainen (Kustaava), Reino Häkälä (Antti), Kerttu Salmi (Juse, Malviina's motheri), Reino Valkama (the patron of Saaroinen, Loviisa's father). Première: 25 December 1946 in Helsinki.

Heta Niskavuori (Finland 1952)
Production: Oy Suomen Filmiteollisuus/T.J. Särkkä. Director: Edvin Laine. Manuscript: Hella Wuolijoki, Paula Talaskivi, based on Wuolijoki's play *Heta Niskavuori* 1950. Photography: Pentti Unho. Music: Heikki Aaltoila. Editing: Armas Vallasvuo. Art direction: Karl Fager. Sound: Taisto Lindegren. Actors: Rauni Luoma (Heta Harjula, born Niskavuori), Kaarlo Halttunen (Akusti Harjula), Mirjam Novero (Hilja Elsa Maanoja, Siiprikko, the Broken-Winged), Leo Lähteenmäki (Santeri Lammentausta), Martti Katajisto (Jaakko), Hillevi Lagerstam (Aliina), Marjatta Kallio (Kerttu). Première: 25 December 1952 in Helsinki.

Aarne Niskavuori (Finland 1954)
Production: Oy Suomen Filmiteollisuus/T.J. Särkkä. Director: Edvin Laine. Manuscript: Hella Wuolijoki, Pentti Unho on Juhani Tervapää's play *The Bread of Niskavuori* 1938. Photography: Pentti Unho & Kalle Peronkoski. Music: Heikki Aaltoila. Editing: Armas Vallasvuo. Art Direction: Karl Fager. Sound: Björn Korander. Actors: Elsa Turakainen (Loviisa Niskavuori, the old matron), Tauno Palo (agronomist, Dr. Aarne Niskavuori), Rauni Ikäheimo (Ilona Niskavuori, born Ahlgren), Hillevi Lagerstam (Martta Niskavuori), Åke Lindman (Steward), Martta Kinnunen (Sandra), Joel Rinne (Dr. Varelius). Première: 26 March 1954 in Helsinki.

Niskavuori Fights (Finland 1957)
Production: Oy Suomen Filmiteollisuus/T.J. Särkkä. Director: Edvin Laine. Manuscript: Juha Nevalainen based on Hella Wuolijoki's play *What now, Niskavuori?* 1953. Photography: Osmo Harkimo. Sound: Kurt Vilja, Björn Korander. Editing: Armas Vallasvuo. Art Direction: Aarre Koivisto. Music: Heikki Aaltoila. Actors: Elsa Turakainen (the old matron of Niskavuori), Mirjam Novero (Ilona Niskavuori), Tauno Palo (Juhani Mattila/Juhani Niskavuori), Martti Katajisto (Paavo Niskavuori), Leila Väyrynen (Lilli Niskavuori), Martta Kinnunen (telephonist Sandra), Hillevi Lagerstam (Martta Santala), Joel Rinne (Doctor Artturi Santala), Artturi Laakso (Minister Kaarle Niskavuori). Première: 15 November 1957 in Helsinki.

The Women of Niskavuori (Finland 1958)
Production: Suomi-Filmi Oy/Risto Orko. Director: Valentin Vaala. Manuscript: Usko Kemppi, Valentin Vaala, based on Juhani Tervapää's play The Women of Niskavuori 1936. Photography: Eino Heino. Music: Harry Bergström. Editing: Armas Laurinen. Sound: Heikki Laakkonen. Actors: Emma Väänänen (Loviisa, the old matron of Niskavuori), Erkki Viljos (Aarne Niskavuori), Hilkka Helinä (Martta Niskavuori), Teija Sopanen (Ilona Ahlgren), Leni Katajakoski (Anna-Liisa Niskavuori), Heikki Savolainen (the patron of Simola). Première: 19 September 1958 in Helsinki.

Niskavuori (Finland 1984)
Production: Skandia-Filmi Oy/Matti Kassila ky. Director: Matti Kassila. Manuscript: Matti Kassila, based on Juhani Tervapää's play The Women of Niskavuori 1936. Photography: Pertti Mutanen. Sound: Johan Hake. Editing: Tepi Salokari. Art direction: Matteus Marttila. Costume: Leila Jäntti. Music: Rauno Lehtinen. Actors: Rauni Luoma (Loviisa, the old matron of Niskavuori), Esko Salminen (agronomist Aarne Niskavuori), Satu Silvo (schoolteacher Ilona Ahlgren), Maija-Liisa Márton (Martta Niskavuori), Tuomas Mattila (the patron of Simola), Martin Kurtén (Dr. Henrik Warelius), Aarno Sulkanen (Anttila, Steward). Première: 21 December 1984 in Helsinki.

APPENDIX 2:

The Niskavuori story on the radio and television (including TV ratings)

(r) = radio play
(f) = film
(p) = TV play
(p/s) = TV play edited into a TV series
(f/s) = film edited into a TV series

1945:
19.2. *The Women of Niskavuori* (r)
7.5. *Aarne Niskavuori* (r)
11.6. *Aarne Niskavuori* (rerun, r)
9.7. *The Young Matron of Niskavuori* (r)

1946:
22.7. *The Women of Niskavuori* (r)

1954:
8.2. *The Young Matron of Niskavuori* (r)
15.2. *The Women of Niskavuori* (r)
22.2. *Aarne Niskavuori* (r)
1.3. *What now, Niskavuori?* (r)

1955:
10.10. *Heta Niskavuori* (r)

1963:
14.4. *Heta Niskavuori* (f) STV
1 060 000

1964:
30.1. *Aarne Niskavuori* (f) STV 1 130 000
29.3. *Niskavuori Fights* (f) STV (ratings unknown)
12.9. *Loviisa* (f) MTV 650 000
31.10. *The Women of Niskavuori* 1938 (f) MTV
920 000

1967:
25.1. *Heta Niskavuori* (f) TV-2 550 000
22.2. *Aarne Niskavuori* (f) TV-2 410 000
22.3. *Niskavuori Fights* (f) TV-2 380 000
9.7. *The Women of Niskavuori* (r)
4.9. *The Women of Niskavuori* 1958 (f) MTV-1 1 520 000
16.11. *Loviisa* (f) MTV-2
630 000

1968:
1.1.*What now, Niskavuori?* (r)
27.5. *The Young Matron of Niskavuori* (r)
17.6. *The Women of Niskavuori* (r)
15.7. *The Bread of Niskavuori* (r)
29.7. *What now, Niskavuori?* (r, repeat)

1970:
2.3. *The Women of Niskavuori* 1958 (f) MTV-1

1 830 000

1972:
7.2. *Heta Niskavuori* (f) MTV-1 1 380 000
3.4. *Aarne Niskavuori* (f) MTV-1 1 570 000
18.9. *Niskavuori Fights* (f) MTV-1 1 560 000

1973:
15.1. *The Women of Niskavuori* (r)

1975:
1.6. *The Women of Niskavuori* (r)
1.8. *Heta Niskavuori* (f) TV-2 1 253 000

1977:
5.3. *Loviisa* (f) MTV-2 1 494 000

1978:
11.8. *Heta Niskavuori* (f) TV-2 1 219 000
18.8. *Aarne Niskavuori* (f) TV-2 1 388 000
16.9. *Niskavuori Fights* (f) TV-2 1 494 000

1981:
24.1. *The Women of Niskavuori* 1958 (f) MTV-2 2 103 000

1982:
30.10. *Loviisa* (f) MTV-2 1 604 000

1986:
20.7. *The Young Matron of Niskavuori* (r)
2.8. *Loviisa* (f) TV-1 425 000
9.8. *Heta Niskavuori* (f) TV-1 682 000
16.8. *The Women of Niskavuori* 1938 (f) TV-1 569 000
23.8. *Aarne Niskavuori* (f) TV-1 715 000
30.8. *Niskavuori Fights* (f) TV-1 808 000

1987:
6.12. *The Young Matron of Niskavuori* (p) TV2
13.12. *Heta Niskavuori* (p) TV2
20.12. *Niskavuori* (f) TV-2 1 239 000
27.12. *What now Niskavuori*? (p) TV2

1992:
18.6. *Loviisa* (f) TV-2 795 000
25.6. *Heta Niskavuori* (f) 685 000
28.6. *The Young Matron of Niskavuori* 1/3 (radio)
2.7. *The Women of Niskavuori* 1938 (f) TV-2 906 000
5.7. *The Young Matron of Niskavuori* 2/3 (radio)
9.7. *Aarne Niskavuori* (f) TV-2 811 000
12.7. *The Young Matron of Niskavuori* 3/3 (radio)
13.7. *The Young Matron of Niskavuori* 1-3 (rerun, radio)
16.7. *Niskavuori Fights* (f) TV-2 801 000
19.7.*Heta Niskavuori* 1/3 (radio)
23.7. *Niskavuori* (f) TV-2 692 000
26.7. *Heta Niskavuori* 2/3 (radio)
2.8. *Heta Niskavuori* 3/3 (radio)
3.8. *Heta Niskavuori* 1-3 (rerun, radio)
9.8. *The Women of Niskavuori* 1/3 (radio)

16.8. *The Women of Niskavuori* 2/3 (radio)
23.8. *The Women of Niskavuori* 3/3 (radio)
24.8. *The Women of Niskavuori* 1-3 (rerun, radio)
30.8. *The Bread of Niskavuori* 1/2 (radio)
6.9. *The Bread of Niskavuori* 2/2 (radio)
7.9. *The Bread of Niskavuori* 1-2 (rerun, radio)

1993:

16.2. *The Women of Niskavuori* 1958 (f) TV-2	830 000

1998:

10.2. *The Young Matron of Niskavuori* 1/3 (p/s) TV2	
17.2. *The Young Matron of Niskavuori* 2/3 (p/s) TV2	
24.2. *The Young Matron of Niskavuori* 3/3 (p/s) TV2	
25.2. *The Women of Niskavuori* 1938 (f) TV-1	314 000
3.3. *Heta Niskavuori* 1/4 (p/s) TV-2	
4.3. *Heta Niskavuori* (f) TV-1	400 000
10.3. *Heta Niskavuori* 2/4 (p/s)	
11.3. *Aarne Niskavuori* (f) TV-1	330 000
17.3. *Heta Niskavuori* 3/4 (p/s)	
18.3. *Niskavuori Fights* (f) TV-1	286 000
24.3. *Heta Niskavuori* 4/4 (p/s)	
31.3. *Niskavuori* 1/4 (f/s) TV-2	494 000
7.4. *Niskavuori* 2/4 (f/s) TV-2	457 000
14.4. *Niskavuori* 3/4 (f/s) TV-2	582 000
21.4. *Niskavuori* 4/4 (f/s) TV-2	153 000

2000:

26.2. *Loviisa* (f) TV-2	338 000

Sources:
Yleisradion tv-arkisto/Richard Creutz 24.11.1998
Yleisradio/Tuula Jantunen 12.2.1998
Radioteatterin esityskortisto/Marja-Liisa Vesanto 30.10.1998
Suomen Kansallisfilmografia 2—6
Kotimaiset elokuvat television valtakunnanverkossa -tilastot 1957—1998 /Kari Uusitalo

APPENDIX 3

The Niskavuori plays in theatres (1936–2002)

1936 *The Women of Niskavuori*, Helsingin Kansanteatteri (Helsinki Folk Theatre)
1936 *The Women of Niskavuori*, Lahden teatteri (Lahti Theatre)
1936 *The Women of Niskavuori*, Porin Teatteri (Pori Theatre)
1936 *The Women of Niskavuori*, Tampereen Työväen Teatteri (Tampere Worker's Theatre)
1936 *The Women of Niskavuori*, Turun Teatteri (Turku Theatre)
1936 *The Women of Niskavuori*, Viipurin Kaupunginteatteri (Viipuri City Theatre)
1938–1939 *The Bread of Niskavuori*, Helsingin Kansanteatteri (Helsinki Folk Theatre)
1938–1939 *The Bread of Niskavuori*, Viipurin Kaupunginteatteri (Viipuri City Theatre)
1938–1939 *The Bread of Niskavuori*, Tampereen Työväen Teatteri (Tampere Workers' Theatre)
1938–1939 *The Bread of Niskavuori*, Turun Teatteri (Turku Theatre)
1939 *The Bread of Niskavuori* , Hämeenlinnan Työväen Näyttämö (Hämeenlinna Workers' Theatre)
1939 *The Bread of Niskavuori*, Jyväskylän Työväen Näyttämö (Jyväskylä Workers' Theatre)
1939 *The Bread of Niskavuori*, Kemin Teatteri (Kemi Theatre)
1939 *The Bread of Niskavuori*, Kotkan Näyttämö (Kotka Stage)
1939 *The Bread of Niskavuori*, Lahden Teatteri (Lahti Theatre)
1939 *The Bread of Niskavuori*, Lappeenrannan Työväen Näyttämö (Lappeenranta Workers' Theatre)
1939 *The Bread of Niskavuori*, Oulun Näyttämö (Oulu Stage)
1939 *The Bread of Niskavuori*, Porin Teatteri (Pori Theatre)
1939 *The Bread of Niskavuori*, Vaasan Näyttämöharrastajat (Vaasa Amateur Actors)
1939 *The Bread of Niskavuori*, Varkauden Työväen Teatteri (Varkaus Workers' Theatre)
1940 *The Young Matron of Niskavuori*, Jyväskylän Työväen Teatteri (Jyväskylä Workers' Theatre)
1940 *The Young Matron of Niskavuori*, Suomen Kansallisteatteri (National Theatre)
1940 *The Young Matron of Niskavuori*, Tampereen Työväen Teatteri (Tampere Workers' Theatre)
1940–1941 *The Young Matron of Niskavuori*, Turun Työväen Teatteri (Turku Workers' Theatre)
1941 *The Women of Niskavuori*, Tampereen Työväen Teatteri (Tampere Workers' Theatre)
1941 *The Young Matron of Niskavuori*, Hämeenlinnan Työväen Teatteri (Hämeenlinna Workers' Theatre)
1941 *The Young Matron of Niskavuori*, Joensuun Työväen Näyttämö (Joensuu Workers' Stage)
1941 *The Young Matron of Niskavuori*, Lahden Teatteri (Lahti Theatre)
1941 *The Young Matron of Niskavuori*, Lohjan Työväen Näyttämö (Lohja Workers' Stage)
1941 *The Young Matron of Niskavuori*, Porin Teatteri (Pori Theatre)
1941 *The Young Matron of Niskavuori*, Rauman Kaupunginteatteri (Rauma City Theatre)
1941 *The Young Matron of Niskavuori*, Varkauden Työväen Teatteri (Varkaus Workers' Theatre)
1941 *The Young Matron of Niskavuori*/Unga värdinnan på Niskavuori, Svenska Teatern i Helsingfors (Swedish Theatre)
1942–1953 *What now, Niskavuori?*, Tampereen Työväen Teatteri (Tampere Workers' Theatre)
1945–1946 *The Bread of Niskavuori*, Kymin Työväen Yhteisteatteri (Kymi Workers' Theatre)
1945–1946 *The Young Matron of Niskavuori*, Kokkolan Työväen Näyttämö (Kokkola Workers' Stage)
1945–1946 *The Young Matron of Niskavuori*, Pietarsaaren Näyttämö (Pietarsaari Stage)
1949–1950 *The Women of Niskavuori*, Kymin Yhteisteatteri (Kymi United Theatre)

1950–1951 *Heta Niskavuori*, Jyväskylän Työväen Teatteri (Jyväskylä Workers' Theatre)
1950–1951 *Heta Niskavuori*, Kemin Kaupunginteatteri (Kemi City Theatre)
1950–1951 *Heta Niskavuori*, Kotkan Kaupunginteatteri (Kotka City Theatre)
1950–1951 *Heta Niskavuori*, Kuusankosken Teatteri (Kuusankoski Theatre)
1950–1951 *Heta Niskavuori*, Lohjan Työväen Näyttämö (Lohja Workers' Theatre)
1950–1951 *Heta Niskavuori*, Tampereen Työväen Teatteri (Tampere Workers' Theatre)
1951–1952 *Heta Niskavuori*, Helsingin Kansanteatteri-Työväenteatteri (Helsinki Folk Theatre – Workers' Theatre)
1951–1952 *Heta Niskavuori*, Joensuun Kaupunginteatteri (Joensuu City Theatre)
1951–1952 *Heta Niskavuori*, Lappeenrannan Kaupunginteatteri (Lappeenranta City Theatre)
1951–1952 *Heta Niskavuori*, Oulun Teatteri (Oulu Theatre)
1951–1952 *Heta Niskavuori*, Turun Kaupunginteatteri (Turku City Theatre)
1952–1943 *What now, Niskavuori?*, Lappeenrannan Kaupunginteatteri (Lappeenranta City Theatre)
1952–1953 *What now, Niskavuori?*, Helsingin Kansanteatteri (Helsinki Folk Theatre)
1952–1953 *What now, Niskavuori?*, Kemin Kaupunginteatteri (Kemi City Theatre)
1952–1953 *What now, Niskavuori?*, Kotkan Kaupunginteatteri (Kotka City Theatre)
1952–1953 *What now, Niskavuori?*, Oulun Teatteri (Oulu Theatre)
1952–1953 *Heta Niskavuori*, Hämeenlinnan Työväen Teatteri (Hämeenlinna Workers' Theatre)
1952–1953 *Heta Niskavuori*, Kuopion Yhteisteatteri (Kuopio United Theatre)
1952–1953 *Heta Niskavuori*, Lahden Kaupunginteatteri (Lahti City Theatre)
1952–1953 *Heta Niskavuori*, Porin Teatteri (Pori Theatre)
1953–1954 *What now, Niskavuori?*, Hämeenlinnan Työväen Teatteri (Hämeenlinna Workers' Theatre)
1953–1954 *What now, Niskavuori?*, Joensuun Kaupunginteatteri (Joensuu City Theatre)
1953–1954 *What now, Niskavuori?*, Jyväskylän Kaupunginteatteri (Joensuu City Theatre)
1953–1954 *What now, Niskavuori?*, Kuopion Yhteisteatteri (Kuopio United Theatre)
1953–1954 *What now, Niskavuori?*, Porin Teatteri (Pori Theatre)
1953–1954 *What now, Niskavuori?*, Rauman Kaupunginteatteri (Rauma City Theatre)
1953–1954 *What now, Niskavuori?*, Savonlinnan Teatteri (Savonlinna Theatre)
1953–1954 *What now, Niskavuori?*, Turun Kaupunginteatteri (Turku City Theatre)
1953–1954 *What now, Niskavuori?*, Varkauden Kaupunginteatteri (Varkaus City Theatre)
1953–1954 *The Women of Niskavuori*, Kemin Kaupunginteatteri (Kemi City Theatre)
1953–1954 *The Women of Niskavuori*, Oulun Teatteri (Oulu Theatre)
1954–1955 *What now, Niskavuori?*, Kokkolan Maakuntateatteri (Kokkola Regional Theatrew)
1954–1955 *What now, Niskavuori?*, Lohjan Työväen Näyttämö (Lohja Workers' Stage)
1954–1955 *What now, Niskavuori?*, Mikkelin Teatteri (Mikkeli Theatre)
1954–1955 *Heta Niskavuori*, Oulun Teatteri (Oulu Theatre)
1954–1955 *Heta Niskavuori*, Savonlinnan Teatteri (Savonlinna Theatre)
1954–1955 *The Women of Niskavuori*, Suomen Työväen Teatteri (Finnish Workers' Theatre)
1956–1957 *Heta Niskavuori*, Vaasan Suomalainen Teatteri (Vaasa Finnish Theatre)
1957–1958 *The Women of Niskavuori*, Kajaanin Työväen Teatteri (Kajaani Workers' Theatre)
1957–1958 *The Women of Niskavuori*, Porin Teatteri (Pori Theatre)
1957–1958 *The Young Matron of Niskavuori*, Helsingin Työväen Teatteri (Helsinki Workers' Theatre)
1957–1958 *The Young Matron of Niskavuori*, Imatran Teatteri (Imatra Theatre)
1957–1958 *The Young Matron of Niskavuori*, Lappeenrannan Kaupunginteatteri (Lappeenranta Theatre)
1957–1958 *The Young Matron of Niskavuori*, Tampereen Työväen Teatteri (Tampere Workers' Theatre)
1958–1959 *What now, Niskavuori?*, Lahden Kaupunginteatteri (Lahti City Theatre)

1958–1959 *The Women of Niskavuori*, Jyväskylän Työväen Teatteri (Jyväskylä Workers' Theatre)
1958–1959 *The Women of Niskavuori*, Kokkolan Maakuntateatteri (Kokkola Regional Theatre)
1958–1959 *The Women of Niskavuori*, Riihimäen Teatteri (Riihimäki Theatre)
1958–1959 *The Young Matron of Niskavuori*, Mikkelin Teatteri (Mikkeli Theatre)
1959–1960 *Heta Niskavuori*, Mikkelin Teatteri (Mikkeli Theatre)
1959–1960 *The Women of Niskavuori*, Kemin Kaupunginteatteri (Kemi City Theatre)
1959–1960 *The Young Matron of Niskavuori*, Savonlinnan Teatteri (Savonlinna Theatre)
1960–1961 *Heta Niskavuori*, Rauman Kaupunginteatteri (Rauma City Theatre)
1960–1961 *The Women of Niskavuori*. Kuopion Yhteisteatteri (Kuopio United Theatre)
1960–1961 *The Young Matron of Niskavuori*, Joensuun Kaupunginteatteri (Joensuu City Theatre)
1960–1961 *The Young Matron of Niskavuori*, Turun Kaupunginteatteri (Turku City Theatre)
1961–1962 *Heta Niskavuori*, Kokkolan Kaupunginteatteri (Kokkola City Theatre)
1961–1962 *The Women of Niskavuori*, Imatran Teatteri (Imatra Theatre)
1961–1962 *The Women of Niskavuori*, Tampereen Työväen Teatteri (Tampere Workers' Theatre)
1961–1962 *The Young Matron of Niskavuori*, Hämeenlinnan Kaupunginteatteri (Hämeenlinna City Theatre)
1961–1962 *The Young Matron of Niskavuori*, Kouvolan Teatteri (Kouvola Theatre)
1962–1963 *The Women of Niskavuori*, Kouvolan Teatteri (Kouvola Theatre)
1962–1963 *The Young Matron of Niskavuori*, Rovaniemen Teatteri (Rovaniemi Theatre)
1964–1965 *The Young Matron of Niskavuori*, Kotkan Kaupunginteatteri (Kotka City Theatre)
1964–1965 *The Young Matron of Niskavuori*, Lahden Kaupunginteatteri (Lahti City Theatre)
1964–1965 *The Young Matron of Niskavuori*, Riihimäen Teatteri (Riihimäki Theatre)
1964–1965 *The Young Matron of Niskavuori*, Vaasan Suomalainen Teatteri (Vaasa Finnish Theatre)
1965–1966 *Heta Niskavuori*, Kemin Kaupunginteatteri (Kemi City Theatre)
1965–1966 *The Women of Niskavuori*, Lappeenrannan Kaupunginteatteri (Lappeenranta City Theatre)
1966–1967 *Heta Niskavuori*, Hämeenlinnan Kaupunginteatteri (Hämeenlinna City Theatre)
1967–1968 *Heta Niskavuori*, Turun Kaupunginteatteri (Turku City Theatre)
1969 *Heta Niskavuori*, Joensuun Kaupunginteatteri (Joensuu City Theatre)
1970 *Heta Niskavuori*, Oulun Kaupunginteatteri (Oulu City Theatre)
1971 *Heta Niskavuori*, Jyväskylän Kaupunginteatteri (Jyväskylä City Theatre)
1971–1972 *Heta Niskavuori*, Lappeenrannan Kaupunginteatteri (Lappeenranta City Theatre)
1971–1972 *Heta Niskavuori*, Riihimäen Teatteri (Riihimäki Theatre)
1972 *The Women of Niskavuori*, Hämeenlinnan Kaupunginteatteri (Hämeenlinna City Theatre)
1972 *The Young Matron of Niskavuori*, Jyväskylän Kaupunginteatteri (Jyväskylä City Theatre)
1972 *The Young Matron of Niskavuori*, Kuopion Yhteisteatteri (Kuopio United Theatre)
1973 *Heta Niskavuori*, Suomen Kansallisteatteri (Finnish National Theatre)
1974 *What now, Niskavuori?*, Kouvolan Teatteri (Kouvola Theatre)
1974 *Heta Niskavuori*, Kuopion Yhteisteatteri (Kuopio United Theatre)
1974 *Heta Niskavuori*, Savonlinnan Teatteri (Savonlinna Theatre)
1974 *The Young Matron of Niskavuori*, Mikkelin Teatteri (Mikkeli Theatre)
1974–1975 *The Young Matron of Niskavuori*, Seinäjoen Kaupunginteatteri (Seinäjoki City Theatre)
1976 *Heta Niskavuori*, Kouvolan Teatteri (Kouvola Theatre)

1976 *Heta Niskavuori*, Mikkelin Teatteri (Mikkeli Theatre)
1976 *The Young Matron of Niskavuori*, Porin Teatteri (Pori Theatre)
1977 *The Women of Niskavuori*, Joensuun Kaupunginteatteri (Joensuu City Theatre)
1977 *The Women of Niskavuori*, Kuopion Kaupunginteatteri (Kuopio City Theatre)
1977 *The Women of Niskavuori*, Vaasan Kaupunginteatteri (Vaasa City Theatre)
1977 *The Young Matron of Niskavuori*, Helsingin Kaupunginteatteri (Ithe Helsinki City Theatre)
1978 *What now, Niskavuori?*, Riihimäen Teatteri (Riihimäki Theatre)
1978 *The Young Matron of Niskavuori*, Lappeenrannan Kaupunginteatteri (Lappeenranta City Theatre)
1978 *The Young Matron of Niskavuori*, Rovaniemen Teatteri (Rovaniemi Theatre)
1979 *What now, Niskavuori?*, Tampereen Työväen Teatteri (Tampere Workers' Theatre)
1980 *The Women of Niskavuori*, Kokkolan Kaupunginteatteri (Kokkola City Theatre)
1980 *The Women of Niskavuori*/Kvinnorna på Niskavuori, Svenska Teatern i Helsingfors (Swedish Theatre)
1980 *The Young Matron of Niskavuori*, Varkauden Teatteri (Varkaus Theatre)
1981 *The Women of Niskavuori*, Oulun Kaupunginteatteri (Oulu City Theatre)
1982 *Heta Niskavuori*, Kemin Kaupunginteatteri (Kemi City Theatre)
1982 *The Women of Niskavuori*, Mikkelin Kaupunginteatteri (Mikkeli City Theatre)
1983 *The Women of Niskavuori*, Lahden Kaupunginteatteri (Lahti City Theatre)
1984 *The Young Matron of Niskavuori*, Imatran Kaupunginteatteri (Imatra City Theatre)
1984 *The Young Matron of Niskavuori*, Turun Kaupunginteatteri (Turku City Theatre)
1985 *Heta Niskavuori*, Hämeenlinnan Kaupunginteatteri (Hämeenlinna City Theatre)
1985 *Heta Niskavuori*, Seinäjoen Kaupunginteatteri (Seinäjoki City Theatre)
1986 *Heta Niskavuori*, Kotkan Kaupunginteatteri (Kotka City Theatre)
1986 *The Young Matron of Niskavuori*, Jyväskylän Kaupunginteatteri (Jyväskylä City Theatre)
1987 *Heta Niskavuori*, Imatran Kaupunginteatteri (Imatra City Theatre)
1987 *Heta Niskavuori*, Lahden Kaupunginteatteri (Lahti City Theatre)
1987 *Heta Niskavuori*, Tampereen Työväen Teatteri (Tampere Workers' Theatre)
1987 *The Young Matron of Niskavuori*, Lahden Kaupunginteatteri (Lahti City Theatre)
1988 *Heta Niskavuori*, Varkauden Teatteri (Varkaus Theatre)
1989 *Heta Niskavuori*, Porin Teatteri (Pori Theatre)
1990 *The Women of Niskavuori*, Imatran Kaupunginteatteri (Imatra City Theatre)
1991 *The Young Matron of Niskavuori*, Rovaniemen Kaupunginteatteri (Rovaniemi City Theatre)
1993 *What now, Niskavuori?*, Kouvolan Teatteri (Kouvola Theatre)
1993 *Heta Niskavuori*, Vaasan Kaupunginteatteri (Vaasa City Theatre)
1993 *The Young Matron of Niskavuori*, Joensuun Kaupunginteatteri (Joensuu City Theatre)
1994 *What now, Niskavuori?*, Porin Teatteri (Pori Theatre)
1994 *The Women of Niskavuori*, Jyväskylän Kaupunginteatteri (Jyväskylä City Theatre)
1995 *Heta Niskavuori*, Savonlinnan Kaupunginteatteri (Savonlinna City Theatre)
1995 *The Bread of Niskavuori*, Helsingin Kaupunginteatteri (Helsinki City Theatre)
1995 *The Women of Niskavuori*, Rovaniemen Kaupunginteatteri (Rovaniemi City Theatre)
1996 *The Young Matron of Niskavuori*, Varkauden Teatteri (Varkaus Theatre)
1997 *Heta Niskavuori*, Lappeenrannan Kaupunginteatteri (Lappeenranta City Theatre)
1997 *The Women of Niskavuori*, Tampereen Teatteri (Tampere Theatre)
1997 *The Young Matron of Niskavuori*, Joensuun Ylioppilasteatteri (Joensuu Students' Theatre)
1998 *The Young Matron of Niskavuori*, Savonlinnan Kaupunginteatteri (Savonlinna City Theatre)
1998 *Heta Niskavuori*, Suomen Kansallisteatteri (Finnish National Theatre)
1999 *Heta Niskavuori*, Kajaanin Kaupunginteatteri (Kajaani City Theatre)
2001 *Heta Niskavuori*, Seinäjoen Kaupunginteatteri (Seinäjoko City Theatre)
2002 *The Young Matron of Niskavuori*, Seinäjoen Kaupunginteatteri (SeinäjokI City Theatre)

APPENDIX 4

Review journalism and articles in newspapers, popular magazines, and trade press

Shortenings used for newspapers and magazines:
AL = Aamulehti
AS = Ajan Suunta
EA = Elokuva-aitta
ESS = Etelä-Suomen Sanomat
Hbl = Hufvudstadsbladet
HS = Helsingin Sanomat
KSML = Keskisuomalainen
KU = Kansan Uutiset
MK = Maakansa
NP = Nya Pressen
PS = Päivän Sanomat
SaKa = Satakunnan Kansa
SFUA = Suomi Filmin Uutisaitta
Ssd = Suomen Sosialidemokraatti
SvP = Svenska Pressen
TKS = Työkansan Sanomat
TS = Turun Sanomat
US = Uusi Suomi
VS = Vapaa Sana
ÅU = Åbo Underrättelser

The names of the films:
The Women of Niskavuori 1938, 1958
Loviisa 1946
Heta Niskavuori 1952
Aarne Niskavuori 1954
Niskavuori Fights 1957
Niskavuori 1984

The names of the plays:
The Women of Niskavuori 1936
The Bread of Niskavuori 1938
The Young Matron of Niskavuori
Heta Niskavuori 1950
What Now, Niskavuori? 1953

1930
Tulenkantajat 9–10/1930. Bernhard Shaw, "Sex appealin salaisuus", 136–146.
Tulenkantajat 11–12/1930 Percy Bill., "Näkyvä ihminen", 161.
Tulenkantajat 13–14/1930 Leo Anttila, "Ne tulevat!", 177–181.

1933
Ssd 8.11.1933. H. V. "Kotimainen ensi-ilta Koiton näyttämöllä" (theatre review of *Law and Order*).
Valvoja-Aika 1/1933. A.K., "Kertomakirjallisuutta: Miehen tie", 27–31.

1935
EA 10–11. "Äänestyskilpailumme voittajat näette tällä sivulla", 233.
EA 17/1935. Jukka, "Kävimme Roinilan talossa".
EA 23/1935. T.P. "Tauno Palo tuli teatteriin ja elokuvaan laboratoriosta", 450–451.

1936
Ajan Suunta 1.9.1936. H. J. "Suuri hämäläisnäytelmä – todellinen draama" (book review of *The Women of Niskavuori*).

AL 19.10.1936. -rk-. ”Niskavuoren naiset Työväen Teatterissa” (theatre review of *The Women of Niskavuori*).
Eeva 8/1936: M.S., “Yhteiskunta naisistuu – naiset miehistyvät”, 5.
Eeva 9/1936. Piccolino. “Rakastan suomalaisia naisia”, 18–20, 32, 34.
Eeva 10/1936. Piccolino. “Kuka villitsee Taunon?”, 16, 36.
Eeva 11/1936. Tonika. “Sivistyneen äidin avioliitto”, 9.
EA 6/1936. Julius, “Kaksi naista: Elisabeth Bergner ja Pola Negri”, 125.
EA 8/1936. Jokeri, “Ns. filmaattinen näkemys”, 181–199.
EA 11–12/1936. “Kameran läpi”, 251.
EA 13–14/1936. “Mistä ja miten ilmestyvät elokuvan tähdet”.
EA 19/1936. Loo, “Me kaipaamme charmia”, 357.
EA 23/1936 “Leikkaajan sivu”, 461.
ESS 21.11.1936. F. A. K. ”Lahden teatterilla antoisa ja onnistunut ensi-ilta” (theatre review of *The Women of Niskavuori*).
Hbl 1.4.1936. “Inhemsk skådespelspremiär på Kansanteatteri” (theatre review of *The Women of Niskavuori*).
Hbl 24.11.1936. “Estoniateatern i Revel på gästspel till Helsingfors” (news coverage).
HS 1.4.1936. Lauri Viljanen. ”Huomattava kotimainen ensi-ilta” (theatre review of *The Women of Niskavuori*).
Helsingfors Aftonblad 1.4.1936. Hj.L. “Inhemsk skådespels premiär på Kansanteatteri” (theatre review of *The Women of Niskavuori*).
HS 5.12.1936. Arvi Nuormaa. “Teatteria Turussa” (theatre review of *The Women of Niskavuori*).
Ilkka 26.5.1936. Eva-Rosa. ”Salaperäinen näytelmä Kansanteatterissa” (theatre review of *The Women of Niskavuori*).
Ilkka 7.11.1936. Sakeus. ”Niskavuoren naiset kommunismin poluilla” (column).
IS 76/1936. V. R-s. ”Voimakas kotimainen draama-uutuus Kansanteatterissa” (theatre review of *The Women of Niskavuori*).
Kajaani 3.10.1936. L. K. ”Kajaanin Näyttämö. Juhani Tervapää: Niskavuoren naiset” (theatre review of *The Women of Niskavuori*).
Kainuun Sanomat 3.10.1936. N. ”Onnistunut ensi-ilta. Niskavuoren naiset torstai-iltana Kajaanin Näyttämöllä” (theatre review of *The Women of Niskavuori*).
Kainuun Sanomat 13.10.1936. Ilmari Kianto. ”Avoin kirje Ernst Iso-Keisarin perään” (letter to the editor).
Kansan lehti 19.10.1936. Y. V. ”Niskavuoren naisten ensi-illasta muodostui suuri teatteritapaus” (theatre review of *The Women of Niskavuori*).
Karjala 9.10.1936. V. K. ”Niskavuoren naiset Kaupunginteatterissa” (theatre review of *The Women of Niskavuori*).
Kinolehti 10/1936. “Elokuvakerho”, 298
Kinolehti 11/1936. T. J. Särkkä, “Aito ympäristökin on suuri tekijä”.
Lahti 21.11.1936. E. S. ”Niskavuoren naiset Lahden Teatterissa” (theatre review of *The Women of Niskavuori*).
Lalli 24.12.1936. V. S. ”Niskavuoren naiset Porin Teatterissa” (theatre review of *The Women of Niskavuori*).
Länsi-Savo 1.9.1936. ”Niskavuoren naiset ja Järviluoman Pohjalaisia tuodaan parrasvaloon Mikkelin Työväen Teatterissa ensi näytäntökaudella” (news coverage).
MK 10.10.1936. P. S. ”Erinomainen kotimainen ensi-ilta Viipurin Kaupunginteatterissa” (theatre review of *The Women of Niskavuori*).
Naamio 2/1936. Eino Palola. ”Nykyaikaista ja klassillista” (theatre review of *The Women of Niskavuori*), 29.
Naamio 6/1936. T. W. Tirkkonen. ”Maaseudun parrasvaloista” (theatre review of *The Women of Niskavuori*), 90.
Naamio 6/1936. Fanny Sartto. ”Maaseudun parrasvaloista” (theatre review of *The Women of Niskavuori*), 93.
Naamio 7–8/1936. Kyllikki Heinonen. ”Maaseudun parrasvaloista” (theatre review of *The Women of Niskavuori*), 116.

Naamio 7–8/1936. Eino Havas. ”Maaseudun parrasvaloista” (theatre review of *The Women of Niskavuori*), 119–120.
Naisten Ääni 9/1936. A. K. (theatre review of *The Women of Niskavuori*).
Nya Argus 9/1936. E. O. “Teater” (theatre review of *The Women of Niskavuori* etc.), 122–124.
Nykypäivä 22/1936. ”Merkillinen julistus” (column).
SaKa 17.12.1936. A. P. S. ”Kotimainen ensi-ilta Porin Teatterissa” (theatre review of *The Women of Niskavuori*).
Sosialisti 24.10.1936. M. E. M. “Niskavuoren naiset” (theatre review of *The Women of Niskavuori*).
Ssd 1.4.1936. S-K. K. “Huomattava kotimainen draamauutuus” (theatre review of *The Women of Niskavuori*).
Ssd 4.9.1936. Sasu Punanen. ”Mitä Sasulle kuuluu” (column).
Ssd 21.10.1936. H. V. ”Niskavuoren naiset Tampereella” (theatre review of *The Women of Niskavuori*).
Ssd 22.11.1936. ”Niskavuoren naiset herättävät pahennusta” (column).
Suomalainen Suomi 3/1936. Kaarlo Marjanen ”Helsinkiläistä teatteria. Uutta talonpoikaisdramatiikkaa” (theatre review of *The Women of Niskavuori* etc.), 157–161.
SvP 205/1936. “Finsk succépjäs på Svenska teatern” (news coverage).
SvP 1.4.1936. -qv-. “Märklig finsk urpremiär” (theatre review of *The Women of Niskavuori*).
SvP 23.11.1936. “Hella Vuolijoki passar inte för skyddskårister” (news coverage).
Tampereen Sanomat 20.10.1936. Hagar. ”Juhani Tervapään Niskavuoren naiset Työväen Teatterin juhlanäytäntönä” (theatre review of *The Women of Niskavuori*).
Turunmaa 25.10.1936. N–aa. ”Voitollinen kotimainen ensi-ilta” (theatre review of *The Women of Niskavuori*).
TS 24.10.1936. T. S. ”Juhani Tervapää: Niskavuoren naiset Turun Teatterin eilinen mielenkiintoinen uutuus” (theatre review of *The Women of Niskavuori*).
Tulenkantajat 14/1936 (3.4.). ”Merkittävä kotimainen ensi-ilta Kansanteatterissa” (promotion of *The Women of Niskavuori*).
Työväen Näyttämötaide 9/1936. ”Kansanteatteri alkoi lupaavin merkein” (news coverage).
Uusi Aura 25.10.1936. E. T. ”Niskavuoren naiset Turun Teatterissa” (theatre review of *The Women of Niskavuori*).
US 1.4.1936. E. P-la. “Hämäläisnäytelmä Kansallisteatterissa” (theatre review of *The Women of Niskavuori*).
Vasabladet 6.10.1936. (theatre review of *The Women of Niskavuori*).
Wiborgs Nyheter 22.10.1936. “God inhemsk problempjäs på Stadsteatern” (theatre review of *The Women of Niskavuori*).

1937

Aamu 2/1937. Maili Laitinen. ”Juhani Tervapään Niskavuoren naiset Helsingin Kaupunginteatterissa” (theatre review of *The Women of Niskavuori*).
Aamu 2/1937. Fanny Sartto. ”Juhani Tervapään Niskavuoren naiset” (book review of *The Women of Niskavuori*).
EA 1/1937. “Luokaa meille uusia kasvoja”, 501.
EA 8/1937. ”Ketkä ovat suosikkitähtenne”, 199.
EA 8/1937, ”Elokuvatähtien kilpalaulanta”, 198.
EA 10/1937. ”Suomi-Filmin tulevat kotimaiset uutuudet” (promotion of *The Women of Niskavuori* incl. publicity still of Sirkka Sari), 242–243.
EA 10/1937. ”Leikkaajan sivu” (column), 245.
EA 11–12/1937. ”Äänestyskilpailumme voittajat”, 266.
EA 15–16/1937. ”Välähdyksiä Suomi-Filmistä” (advertisement for *The Women of Niskavuori* etc.), 528–529.
EA 24/1937. ”Niskavuoren naiset” (advertisement for *The Women of Niskavuori*), 522.
EA 24/1937. ”Sirkka Sari ja Tauno Palo – Niskavuoren naiset -elokuvan Ilona ja Aarne

– kuusta sytyttämässä" (publicity still from *The Women of Niskavuori*).
EA 24/1937. L.O. "Kamera taiteilijan kädessä".
Etelä-Savo 28.12.1937. "Niskavuoren naiset valkokankaalla" (promotion of *The Women of Niskavuori*).
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APPENDIX 7

List of audiovisual citations

Aarnes from Niskavuori Go Tukholma. TV2 Visailu/Puheryhmä 24.8.1996.
Aarnes from Niskavuori Go Kalevala. TV2 Visailu/Puheryhmä 31.8.1996.
Aarnes from Niskavuori Go Kosmopolitan. TV2 Visailu/Puheryhmä 7.9.1996.
Aarnes from Niskavuori Go Russia. TV2 Musiikkiteatteriryhmä 12.3.1995.
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Akuutti – erikoisohjelma terveydestä. TV 2 29.5.1996.
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A-Studio TV 1 30.1.1993.
Ekoisti — Luonnollinen kuluttaja. TV 2 15.12.1993.
Ekoisti — Luonnollinen kuluttaja. TV 2 23.2.1994.
Ekoisti. TV 2 4.10.1996.
Ekoisti. TV 2 Ympäristöprojekti 26.4.1996
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Kotimaan katsaus Katsojan suora. TV 2 12.3.1998.
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Kotimaan katsaus. TV 2 6.12.1993.
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MOT. Tutkiva ryhmä. Miten käy puhelinosakkeen. TV1 21.4.1997
Nyrkin ja hellan välissä/Marja Pensala. TV 1 Dokumenttiohjelmat 23.8.1997.
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Pieni johdatus elokuvaan (“A small introduction to the film” TV Introduction *Aarne Niskavuori*) Peter von Bagh TV 2 9.7.1992.

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Tähdet kertovat — Matti Kassila: Wuolijoki-elokuvat. TV1 2.7.1996.
Taju kankaalle: Komisario Palmun yritys ja erehdys. TV1 Opetusohjelmat 7.11.1995.
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Tiistaitiima. TV1 Erityisprojektit 9.2.1988.
Tosi Asia: Elokukuplia. TV1 Dokumenttiohjelmat 31.10.1995.
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Veijareita ja Leijona: Keinottelijoiden aika. TV2 30.4.1997.
Ykkösdokumentti: Teija on Teija. TV1 Dokumenttiohjelmat. 29.3.1998.
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Äidin kuva – Se haalistumaton. TV1 Viihdetoimitus. 8.5.1998.

Index

Aaltoila, Heikki 87
Aaltonen, Esko 109
Aarne Niskavuori (*Niskavuoren Aarne* 1954) 35, 36, 53, 55, 61, 73, 74, 80, 88–100, 101, 103, 104, 132, 153, 156–157, 159, 160, 163, 181, 198, 202, 213, 236, 245–246, 260, 262, 270–273, 284, 310, 311, 320
Aarne Niskavuori, character of 201–207, 213–221, 222, 232–235, 241–246, 236, 252, 260, 270, 273, 282, 290, 292, 298, 303–304, 308–309
Aarnes from Niskavuori Go Russia/ Stockholm/Cosmopolitan/Kalevala/Business Trip 195, 196, 205
adaptation 40, 80, 82
advertisements 26, 29, 30, 40
affect 17, 18, 248, 252–253, 254–261, 283, 285–289
affective impact 17, 85, 87, 90, 92, 95, 102, 115, 124, 125, 126, 153, 139, 153, 156, 164, 196, 254–261, 312, 322
agrarian past 49, 50, 53, 55, 57, 58–59, 64, 251–253, 259–261, 319, 320
Ahlman, Erik 278
Ahtiainen, Lasse 251
Aktivistit/The Activists (1939) 131
Akusti Muumäki, character of 199, 213, 262, 269–270
Alanen, Yrjö J. E. 120–123, 274–275, 282–283
Alapuro, Risto 131, 132, 323
alcohol 201, 205, 206, 208, 218, 223, 236
allegorical reading 59, 64, 251
Allen, Judith A. 196,198
ambiguity 116, 117, 124, 127, 132, 142, 143, 151, 156, 161, 164, 168, 174–176, 180, 181, 184, 185, 192, 194, 196, 199, 213–214, 246, 322
Ammondt, Jukka 38, 40, 58, 151, 289, 308
Anderson, Benedict 182
Ang, Ien 139, 193, 324
Angelas krig (*Angela's War* 1984) 75
Angerkoski, Siiri 170, 188–189, 250
Anna 200
anthropology 175
Anttonen, Anneli 134, 157, 183
Anu ja Mikko (*Anu and Mikko* 1940/1956) 80
Apo, Satu 113, 114, 133, 145, 146, 167, 175, 180, 193
archive, the concept of 46, 51–52
Aro, Matti 130
Asesorin naishuolet (*Assessor's Trouble with Women* 1937/1957) 80
audience, address of 65, 67–70, 82, 89
audiovisual citations 43–44, 60, 245–246, 320
Austin, J.L. 22–25
authenticity 65, 66, 73, 77, 79, 86, 97, 100, 103, 105, 106, 110, 111, 112, 130, 166,
authorial framing 12, 38–39, 44–45, 55, 58, 61, 63–64, 67, 92, 103, 118, 149–150, 160, 163, 179–181, 202, 205, 207, 216, 280, 281, 283, 291, 294–295, 300, 313–315, 322
authorial legend 313
authority, figures of 122–123, 124, 126, 159–162
Autio, Orvokki 183, 193
Babettes Gæstebud (1987) 72
Bagh, Peter von 43, 57, 61, 88, 89, 111, 205, 227, 245–246, 251, 314
Bakhtin, Mikhail 15, 29
Balázs, Béla 304–306, 309
Barthes, Roland 25, 30, 49, 146, 318
Bates, Robin 196, 220
battle-axe 188–189, 250, 321
Baudrillard, Jean 79, 81, 110
Bebel, August 289, 309
Belle Epoque (1992) 72
Bellour, Raymond 26
Benjamin, Walter 71, 182, 299, 324
Bennett, Tony 181
Bergner, Elisabeth 306
Bergson, Henri 274
Berlant, Lauren 247, 261
Bhabha, Homi 15–16, 26, 159, 162, 318
biblical references 123, 127–128, 139, 152, 200, 215–216, 269, 282–283, 287
Birds, The (1963) 169
Bloch, Ernst 103
blood, metaphors of 218, 266, 268, 289, 300
Blut und Boden 93–94, 121
Bold and the Beautiful, The 311–313, 321
Bolshevism 179, 274, 277, 280, 281, 291
Bordwell, David 57, 251
Bread of Niskavuori, The (*Niskavuoren leipä* 1938) 33, 34, 35, 59, 64, 66, 108, 153–154, 156, 184, 199, 213, 232–233, 243, 284
Brecht, Bertolt 165

Brideshead Revisited (1981) 76
Brooks, Peter 139
Brunette, Peter 27
Bruno, Giuliana 16
businesswoman 184, 186, 187
Butler, Judith 15, 16, 18, 19, 20–24, 25, 116, 137, 199, 271, 292
Canth, Minna 147, 152, 283
censorship 32–33, 44, 252–253, 291–297, 301, 308–309, 314–315
Chariots of Fire (1981) 72, 76
Château des oliviers, Le (1993) 62
chronology 46, 61–62, 182
cinematic, notion of 291
citational legacy 13, 17, 19, 23–24, 26, 45, 117, 132, 144, 151
citationality 23, 26, 27, 29, 60, 71, 72–80, 104, 188–191, 192, 270–273, 292, 318–319, 309
Clark, Suzanne 87, 269
class 45, 47, 124, 163–166, 247, 251–253, 256, 258, 259, 261, 262–266, 269, 273, 275, 284, 286, 287, 290, 295, 297, 312, 314
class history 55
Clay, Andrew 196
close-up 292–293, 296–309
Cohan, Steve 196, 197, 230, 261, 273
commemoration 38–39, 63, 64, 82, 85, 115, 117, 146, 147, 149, 245–246, 311
Conformist, The (*Il conformista* 1970) 76
conservatism 120, 121, 151, 163, 164, 177, 275
context 23, 24, 28, 45
Cook, Pam 197
Copjec, Joan 24–25
costume film 76
Council of Equality between Men and Women (TANE) 200, 203, 208, 211
crisis of masculinity 47, 196–199, 232, 201–213
crisis view of masculinity 196
cultural crisis 120, 273–275, 278, 280, 283, 321
cultural history 49, 52, 56–57, 58, 59, 60
cultural memory 51, 63, 80, 85, 103, 110, 129, 319, 321
cultural screen 13, 15, 18, 19–20, 182, 316, 319
Cvetkovich, Ann 248, 250, 261
Da Capo (1985) 75
Dallas 118, 183–185, 191, 310–312, 321
Damned, The (*La caduta degli dei* 1969) 76
Danto, Arthur 129–130, 131
Darling Buds of May (1991, 1993) 62
de Lauretis, Teresa 13–14, 15, 18, 39–40, 254, 262, 263,
deep-rootedness (juurevuus) 121
Derrida, Jacques 15, 22–23, 25, 26, 27, 29, 44, 52, 116
detail, attention to 72–80
diachronic life of cinema 14, 322
dialogism 15, 29
Dirty Story (1984) 75
discursive field 28–30
doubling 179–181, 187, 192
Douglas, Kirk 271
drag 25
drama of ideas 119–124, 298, 276–281
Duras, Marguerite 24
Dyer, Richard 15, 30, 72, 78, 94, 223, 225, 230, 231, 260, 268, 271, 306, 313
Dynasty 118, 183–185, 310–312, 321
Earth, The (1930) 112
economic history 60, 145
Edelfelt, Albert 95
Eeva 168, 225, 306
Ehrnrooth, Jari 323
Ei enää eilispäivää (*No More Yesterday* 1956) 81
Elämänmeno (*The Course of Life* 1975) 193–194
Elämänmeno (*The Course of Life* 1978) 193–194, 321
Ellis, John 29–30, 229, 266
Elsaesser, Thomas 76, 93, 127, 318, 319
epoch film 76
eroticization of men 198, 225–231, 270–273
Eskola, Taneli 95–96
ethnological film 53
ethnology 77, 97, 102, 108, 110, 150, 157–158, 162, 175
European Union, the 50, 54, 60, 245–246
Evakko (*Evacuated* 1956) 81
familiarity 15–16, 19, 32, 95, 316–324
family novels 121
family photography 53, 70, 185
family romance 217
fandom 225, 305
Farnham, Marynia 169
father, the missing 236
Fehrenbach, Heide 232, 236
femininity 20, 46
femininity, middle-class 149, 150, 151, 152, 167, 174, 175, 176, 179, 286–290
femininity, victimized 268–270
feminism as victimizing men 202, 207–209, 211–212, 216
feminism, woman-centred 12, 134, 147, 148, 151, 183
feminist framing 133–134, 144–153, 253, 259, 282–284, 289, 315, 322

feminist nationalism 117, 133–134, 144–153, 157, 162, 176, 192–194
feminist-nationalist literature 117, 133–134, 144–147, 150, 152, 157, 193–194
feminization of men 167–168, 204, 209, 229
Fennomanian nationalism 54, 60, 150, 174
figure, figuration 45
Finland in Pictures (1944) 96, 157
Finnish Broadcasting Company (YLE) 37, 43, 60, 61, 63
"Finnish eroticism" 256, 258
"Finnish gender", the 15, 46, 145, 146, 198, 201, 203, 204, 246, 266, 268, 269, 316–317, 319
"Finnish man", the 198, 199–213, 237, 316–317, 321
"Finnish masculinity" 167
"Finnish woman", the 113, 116, 132–134, 135, 140, 144–153, 156, 157, 159, 167, 192–194, 306, 316–317, 321
Fisher, Joe 227
flashbacks 85
Florin, Bo 95
folk culture 131
folk, notion of 131
folklore 13, 92, 108, 110
folkloristic framing 12, 93, 95, 102, 108, 144–153, 162, 175, 206–207, 218, 316–318, 320
folklorization 159
force, notion of 16, 17, 23–24
Forsyte Saga, The 310–311, 321
Forward – into Life! (*Eteenpäin – elämään!* 1939) 35
Foucault, Michel 18, 22, 29, 47, 52, 76, 87, 115, 247–250, 254–255, 257, 261, 273, 292, 296, 315
foundation, metaphors of 121–122
foundational fictions 17, 40, 320
frame, framing 13, 15, 26–32
Frenckell-Thesleff, Greta von 132
Freud, Sigmund 18, 217, 278
Friedberg, Anne 53, 102
Gable, Clark 225–227
Gaines, Jane 249, 269
Gallen-Kallela, Akseli 95
Garbo, Greta 299, 306–307, 320
Gardiner, Judith Kegan 196, 208, 232
gay reading 225, 226
Geertz, Clifford 22
gender equality 133, 145, 146, 175, 200, 203–204, 207, 208
gender performative 116, 195
gender, concept of 20–24
genealogy 16, 22, 32, 45, 52
Geraghty, Christine 91, 184, 232
Germany, Pale Mother (*Deutschland, bleiche Mutter* 1979) 76
Gilroy, Paul 40
given-to-be-seen 15, 19–20
Gledhill, Christine 127, 139, 324
Godfather, The (1972) 183
Godzinsky, George de 97
Goethe, J.W. 200, 217, 274
Goldene Stadt, Die (1942) 93
Gone With the Wind (1939) 13, 40, 312, 313
Gorky, Maksim 165–166
Gösta Bergling's saga (1891) 175, 321
Gramsci, Antonio 18
greed 166, 177, 187
Green Gold, The (*Vihreä kulta* 1939) 35
Haatanen, Martta 141
Haavio-Mannila, Elina 145
Häggman, Kai 121, 143, 149, 150, 151, 152, 287
Hake, Sabine 305
Halberstam, Judith 167, 197, 199, 236, 271
Hall, Stuart 64
Hällström, Raoul af 43, 168, 305–306
Hällström, Roland af 305–306
Halonen, Eemil 148
Halonen, Tarja 114
Halttunen, Kaarlo 236–241
Häme 12, 63, 77, 96, 98–100, 101, 105, 110, 124, 126, 129, 153, 154, 163, 164, 180, 184, 189, 219, 221, 224, 234, 253, 276, 309
Hämeenlinnan kaupunginteatteri (Hämeenlinna City Theatre) 187
Hämeenniemi, Eero 39, 243
Hannula, Risto 94
Hapuli, Ritva 167–168, 175, 214, 282
Haralovich, Mary Beth 297, 299
Harlan, Veit 93
Hauho 34, 39, 105–108
Heath, Stephem 29, 53, 254
Heimat (1984) 62
Heimat 46, 51, 53, 63, 91–92, 95–100, 101–104, 105, 108, 112, 153, 155–156, 321
Heimat film 53, 91–94, 101, 155, 156, 186, 320, 321
Heino, Eino 94, 97
Helinä, Hilkka 177, 288
Helmikuun manifesti/The February Manifesto (1939) 131
he-man 227, 271–273
Heporauta, Elsa 147–148
heritage 17, 46, 51, 71–80, 104, 108, 112, 157, 249, 321

heritage cinema 53, 72, 76, 77–78, 249, 310, 320
heritage framing 71–80
Herr Puntila und sein Knecht Matti 106
Heta Niskavuori (*Niskavuoren Heta* 1950) 33, 34, 177–179, 186–187, 235–240
Heta Niskavuori (*Niskavuoren Heta* 1952) 35, 36, 37, 53, 55, 56, 80, 88, 91, 92, 94–100, 104, 177–179, 186–187, 199, 235–240, 262, 268–270, 320
Heta Niskavuori (TV play, *Niskavuoren Heta* 1987) 39
Heta Niskavuori, character of 113, 118, 174–179, 186–187, 213, 238–240, 269–270
heterosexuality 247, 256, 258, 259, 297, 273, 299, 307
Hietala, Veijo 62, 94, 99, 111, 210, 211, 235
Higson, Andrew 17, 76–78, 249
Hilja, maitotyttö (*Hilja, the Milk Maid*) 261
Hirsch, Marianne 70
historical evidence 52, 54, 57, 64
historicality 16, 56, 58, 66
historicism 71, 78, 104, 131, 159, 321
historicity 14, 15, 16, 17, 20, 21, 23, 27, 53–54, 58, 62, 66, 104
historiography 81, 104
history as identity 52, 79–80, 90–92
history as therapy 62, 65, 111, 320
history of mentality 52, 55–56
history, male subject of 241–246
history, notion of 46, 49–64, 76, 82–88, 91, 101–104, 109, 110
history, popular 319
Holli, Anne 203
home-region movement 90–91, 95, 102
Hon dansade en sommar (1951) 101
Honka-Hallila, Ari 75, 80, 99
Hotakainen, Kari 209, 211–212
housewife 147, 148, 149
Hulda Juurakko (*Juurakon Hulda* 1936) 33, 35, 106, 225
Hurme, Kirsti 256–259, 263–268
Huuhtanen, Päivi 273–274
Huyssen, Andreas 113, 114, 115, 129, 131
hyggefilm (genial films) 91
hysteria 285–288
Höfig, Will 105
Höfig, Will 105
Iampolski, Mikhail 29
identity crisis, male 196, 198, 222, 223, 242, 244, 250
identity politics 21, 51, 79–80, 93, 94, 148, 150, 250, 259
identity, national 51, 53, 58, 59, 65, 66, 67, 69, 70, 71, 90–92, 104, 112, 132, 320
Ihmiset hämärässä (*People in the Haze* 1952) 81
Iitti 39
Ikäheimo, Rauni 289
Ilona Ahlgren, character of 213, 217, 219, 220, 233, 234, 235, 242, 244, 253–254, 260, 270, 273, 276, 281–286, 290, 292, 294, 298–307
Imitation of Life (1959) 25–26
Immensee (1943)
indexicality 49, 56–57, 59, 65, 95, 108, 108, 183, 318
interiority-effect 321, 324
intermediality 12–13, 17, 32, 39–40, 322
Intermezzo – A Love Story (1939) 285
interpretive framing, concept of 13, 14, 26–32, 28–30, 43
intertextual framework, concept of 13, 28, 29–30, 43
intertextuality, notion of 13, 14, 17, 29
Intohimon vallassa (*Possessed by Passion* 1947) 144
Isoviha/The Great Northern War (1939) 131
iterability, notion of 23, 26, 28, 29
Iversen, Gunnar 112
Jääkärin morsian/A Yager's Bride (1938) 131
Jäätteenmäki, Anneli 114
Jallinoja, Riitta 134, 149
Jameson, Fredric 53, 72, 78, 79, 110, 251
jätkä 235
Jean de Florette (1986) 72
Jeffords, Susan 196, 232, 234
Jewel in the Crown (1984) 76
Joenpelto, Eeva 183, 193
Jokinen, Eeva 249
Jokinen, Kimmo 323
Jotuni, Maria 133, 280
Juha (1937/1956) 80
Juhani Mattila, character of 57, 83–86, 212, 221–225, 228, 230–231, 221, 262
Juhani Niskavuori, character of 201–207, 209, 212, 221–225, 229–232, 233, 236, 251, 256–258, 262, 263–268, 270, 273
Julkunen, Raija 145, 200
Justiina (*Justiina* 1937) 33, 35
Kaes, Anton 49, 53, 80
Kalevala Women's Association 147–149, 156, 176
Kalevala, The 12, 70, 134, 147–150, 152, 176, 182, 200, 206–207, 218, 225, 284
Kalevalaic framing 50, 147–150, 175, 316–318
Kalha, Harri 104

Kallio, Kyösti 88–90
Kalske, Kullervo 234
Kansallisteatteri (the National Theatre) 33, 136, 162, 186
Kansanteatteri (Helsinki Folk Theatre) 32, 33, 119, 153, 274
Kanteletar, the 200
Kaplan, E. Ann 169
Kara, Helena 170
Karapään Katri (*Katri Karapää* 1946) 144
Karjalainen, Tuula 78, 157, 261
Karkama, Pertti 151, 261, 273,
Kassila, Matti 14, 35, 43, 67, 71, 182, 241–245
Kaurismäki, Aki 80
Kekkonen, Sylvi 114
Kettunen, Pauli 321
Keväästä kevääseen (*From spring to spring* 1935) 218
Key, Ellen 282, 284
Kirby, Lynne 196
Kirkham, Pat 197, 203, 213
Kivi, Aleksis 33, 145, 175
Kivimäki, Ari 42, 92, 103
Klaani (*The Clan – The Tale of the Frogs* 1984) 75
Klinger, Barbara 14, 17, 27–31, 261, 313, 322
Knuuttila, Seppo 51, 70, 108, 317, 323
Koch, Gertrud 155–156, 186, 218, 297
Korhonen, Kaisa 49
Kormano, Riitta 131
Kortteinen, Matti 200, 201, 205, 208, 209, 210, 211
Koskela, Lasse 215–217, 274, 280
Koski, Markku 59, 235
Koski, Pirkko 32–34, 43, 44, 111, 118, 158, 188, 275, 314
Kotiliesi (*The Hearth*) 152, 157, 167, 286, 287
Kracauer, Siegfried 57
Krohn, Eino 238
Krutnik, Frank 196
Kuhn, Annette 81, 292, 296
Kulkurin valssi (*The Vagabond Waltz* 1941) 227–230
Kuriton sukupolvi (*An Unruly Generation* 1937/1957) 80
Kurjensaari, Matti 58, 274
Kuronen, Matti 199, 201, 206, 208, 209, 210
Kuudes käsky (*The Sixth Command* 1947) 144, 169, 170
Kuusi, Matti 261
Kuusipalo, Jaana 117, 133, 134, 145
Kyllikki 317–318
Kyrönseppä, Kari 188
Lacan, Jacques 18, 19–20
Lacombe Lucien (1974) 76
Lagerstam, Hillevi 287
Lahden Kaupunginteatteri (Lahti City Theatre) 187
Lähellä syntiä (*Close to Sin* 1955) 1955
Laine, Edvin 14, 221, 312, 314
Laine, Kimmo 44, 67, 75, 227, 235, 236, 251, 281, 291, 305, 308–309, 323
Laki ja järjestys (*Law and Order* 1933) 32, 314
landsbygdsfilmer (countryside films) 91
landscape painting 95, 96, 111
landscape photography 53, 94–100, 133
landscape scenes 77, 94, 96, 102, 155
Landy, Marcia 15, 18, 26, 51, 95, 104, 115, 196, 214, 218, 318, 319
Lappalainen, Päivi 274–275, 278–279, 283
Laulu tulipunaisesta kukasta (*The Song of the Scarlet Flower* 1938) 216–218
Lauri, Urpo 163–166, 181, 234–235, 252
Laurila, K.S. 179–181, 280–281, 308
Lautia, Irja 285
Lawrence, D.H. 213, 274, 280, 281, 289, 308, 309
Layoun, Mary 15, 262
left-wing reading 47, 84, 92, 103, 163–166, 181, 192, 234–235, 249, 250, 274, 275, 281, 283, 289, 291, 295, 299– 301, 309, 310, 314–315
Lehtonen, Mikko 32, 167–168
Leibman, Nina C. 169,174
Leinonen, Artturi 218
Lemminkäinen 218, 317–318
Lemminkäinen's Mother 147–148, 156, 182, 183, 192, 206
Lempiäinen, Kirsti 133
Liian paksu perhoseksi (*Hardly a Butterfly* 1998) 193, 239
Lili Marleen (1980) 76
Lindgren, Liisa 131, 147, 155
Lindman, Åke 193, 263, 270–273
Lindqvist, Martti 199, 201, 206, 208
Linna, Väinö 200, 244
Linnankoski, Johannes 121, 216
Little Foxes (1941) 169
locality 102, 108
Löfström, Jan 166, 167, 168, 238
Loiri, Vesa-Matti 201
Lönnrot, Elias 95
Louhi 147–150, 175–177, 192, 206
Lounela, Pekka 58
Loviisa (*Loviisa* 1946) 35–36, 53–57, 59, 60, 85, 90, 91, 94–100, 104, 132, 134–144, 149, 159, 177, 198, 205,

221–225, 229–232, 233, 244, 251–253, 256–259, 263–268, 270, 311, 314, 320
Loviisa (the ballet, 1987) 39, 243
Loviisa Niskavuori 113–194, 202–207, 217, 222, 250–251, 253–254, 276, 283–290, 314
Lundberg, Ferdinand 169
Luoma, Rauni 36, 165, 177–179, 183–185, 238–240
Mäkelä, Klaus 322–323
Mäkinen, Eino 97, 109, 110, 150, 158
Mäkinen, Kari 274–275, 279, 283
male bonding 195
male trouble 198
Malmberg, Tarmo 92
Malviina Mattila, character of, 212, 221–222, 256–258, 262–268, 270, 273
"mama's boy" 213, 229, 318
man-in-crisis, the 195–246
manliness, ideal of 214, 224, 237
marital drama 276–281
Marjanen, Kaarlo 274
Markkola, Pirjo 133, 145, 194
Marnie (1964) 169
marriage 213, 222, 251, 277–281, 285–290, 299
Martta Niskavuori, character of 213, 217, 242, 244, 270–273, 276, 281, 285–290
masculine woman 166–168, 183
masculinities, alternative 197, 201
masculinity 20, 147, 167–168, 196–199, 308–309
masculinity, as different from men 199
masculinity, feminist studies of 197
masculinity, heroic 201, 236
masculinity, muscular 271–273
masculinity, sovereign 227–228
masculinization of women 173, 174
Massey, Doreen 101
matriarch 147, 162, 163, 164,166, 169, 170, 174, 175, 183, 184, 185, 187, 188, 206, 209, 253
matron, the gender of 127
matron, the image of 113–194
matron, the notion of 146
matron-literature 121
matron-mother, the 113–194, esp. 116, 263–264
Maugham, Somerset 219
Maurice (1987) 72, 76
McClintock, Anne 70
melancholy 51, 78, 80, 86, 112
melodramatic heroine 127–128, 194
melodramatic imagination 139, 324
melodramatic reading 12, 13,127–128, 139, 141–143, 149, 151, 193, 194, 196, 214, 261, 264, 268, 269, 279, 290, 297, 299, 311, 312, 319, 322, 324
memorial 90, 115, 117, 129–130, 133, 160–161
memory 46, 49–64, 82–88, 91–92, 101–104, 108–109
men, victimization of 202, 207–208, 211
men's liberation 199, 207, 209, 210, 212, 213, 217, 244
men's movement 199–213
men's studies 199–212
metonymy 88, 96, 122, 155, 189, 259
Metsolat(*Metsolas*1993, 1995, 1996) 62, 186, 321
Metz, Christian 24
Mickwitz, Joachim 103–104, 111
Mieheke (*Surrogate Husband* 1936/1955) 80
Miehen tie (*A Man's Path* 1932) 215–217, 228
Miehen tie (*A Man's Way* 1940) 144
Mies 2000 (Man 2000) 200
Mikkeli, Heikki 273–275
modern comedies 282
modernism 74, 104
modern/modernity 53, 91, 109, 111, 131–132, 221, 253–254, 273–285, 290, 305
modernization 55, 89, 101, 109, 110, 121, 122, 200, 205, 259, 275, 282, 283
Modleski, Tania 197, 232
monster/monstrosity 163, 176, 178, 179, 181, 188, 206, 253
monument, monumentality 46, 90, 112, 114–193, 206, 231, 263, 276, 284
monument-woman, the 113–194, esp. 116, 263, 269, 284, 289, 320
morality 122, 125, 126, 150–151, 163–166, 167, 180, 204
Morsiusseppele (*The Bridal Garland* 1954) 170
Mosse, George L. 150, 167, 214
Mother Earth 153–154, 159, 182, 183, 186
Mother Finland 154, 159, 182, 186
motherhood vs. matronhood 132–153, 182, 185
motherhood, archaic 156
motherhood, bourgeois 166
motherhood, dominating 169–174
motherhood, heroic 140–141
motherhood, middle-class 157
motherhood, mythical 153–154
motherhood, phallic 169–174
motherhood, suffering 140–141, 156, 269
mother–son relationship 195, 199, 201, 206, 207, 213, 217, 218, 220, 241, 242, 250

Mrs. Dulska's Morality (1907) 165–166, 168, 177, 321
Mulvey, Laura 139, 142, 230, 297, 319, 324
museum, metaphor of 129, 131
museum aesthetic 71–72, 78, 102, 104, 112
Musil, Robert 115
Mutter, Die (1932) 165
mythological framing 12, 94, 146, 182–183, 206–207, 218, 276, 316–319,
Näkemiin, Helena (*Goodbye, Helena* 1955) 170
narrative image 29–30, 45, 229
nation and gender 133–153, 154–156, 214
nation as family 69–70, 90
nation, grammar of 147, 150, 155, 262–263
national cinema 11, 17, 44, 67–70, 86, 89, 93, 94, 95, 103, 291, 320–321
national imagination 13, 15, 16, 17, 26, 49, 91, 93, 95–96, 98, 150, 154–162, 199, 212–213, 261, 262, 311–312, 316–324
national memory 49, 51, 212
national romanticism 50
national sentiment 95, 153
National Socialism 57, 130–131, 158–159, 279
national specificity 17, 130
nationalism-as-narrative 15–16, 40, 159
nationalist framing 12, 15, 156, 161
Nätkin, Ritva 117, 145, 157, 169
Negri, Pola 306
new woman 281–285, 300–304
Nichols, Bill 25
Nielsen, Asta 306
Niemi, Irmeli 114, 119, 176, 314
Nietzsche, Friedrich 114, 116, 131, 187, 192
Night Porter, The (*Il Portiere di notte* 1974) 76
Niskavuori (1984) 35, 53, 64–80, 181–185, 198, 199, 210, 241–245, 251, 252, 255–256, 259, 262, 297, 310–312
Niskavuori events 38–39
Niskavuori Fights (*Niskavuori taistelee* 1957) 35, 36, 53, 56–57, 74, 80, 82–88, 100, 104, 132, 146, 160–161, 181, 185, 202, 212, 236, 262, 284–285, 315, 320
Nora, Pierre 50, 52, 63, 105, 109
Northern Exposure (1990–1995) 62
nostalgia 51, 66, 75, 76, 79, 101, 107, 112
nostalgia film 76, 78, 81
nostalgic framing 62, 66, 101
Novero, Mirjam 179, 263, 268–270, 290
Now, Voyager (1942) 169
Nowell-Smith, Geoffrey 53–54
Numminen, Juha 199, 205
Nummisuutarit (*The Heath Cobblers* 1864) 175
Nuorena nukkunut (*The Maid Silja* 1937) 250, 294, 297
Nuovo Cinema Paradiso (1988) 72
Oedipus 217, 219, 262, 263
Oi, kallis Suomenmaa (*Oh, dear Finland* 1940) 135
Oi, kallis Suomenmaa (*Oh, dear Finland* 1998) 61, 245–246
Ollila, Anne 133, 134, 144, 146, 148, 151, 167, 194
Opri (1954) 160
Ortega y Gasset, José 275
Päätalo, Kalle 200, 201, 212
Paavolainen, Olavi 130–131, 158, 214
Paavolainen, Pentti 133, 193, 278–279
Pagnol, Marcel 219
Palava nuoruus (*The Burning Youth* 1935) 274
Palmgren, Raoul 44, 58–59, 314
Palo, Tauno 36, 198, 201–202, 207, 209, 220– 231, 256–258, 264–268, 290, 292, 298, 303–304, 309, 318, 320,
Pälsi, Sakari 109, 110, 175–176, 235
panorama 96
Pantti, Mervi 42, 75, 92
Parker, Andrew 16, 247, 262
parody 188–191, 321
Passage to India, A 76
passion, trope of 247–248, 251, 254–261, 264, 266, 270, 273, 286, 304, 309, 310
past as a place 102
past as repression 251–261
past, sense of 50–51, 79
pastiche 78–79
pastness 77, 79
pastoralness 62, 76
pathologizing discourse 170, 171
pathos 58, 87, 127
patriarchy 166, 167, 175, 176, 250
Pearce, Lynne 247, 248
peasant culture, preservation of 109–109, 130, 131–132
peasant drama 89, 119, 166
peasant film 91, 109, 144
peasant man 216, 220, 229, 238, 309
peasant melodrama 112
peasant values 56, 70, 88–92, 97, 119–122, 124, 129–132, 144–153, 201, 251, 276, 284
peasant woman 134, 135, 144–153, 157–159, 174, 182
Pedon merkki (*The Sign of the Beast* 1980) 75
Pekka ja Pätkä films ("Pete and Runt")

171, 188–189
Peltonen, Matti 92, 101, 102, 109, 150, 188, 235–236, 238, 251, 323
performativity 13, 15, 20–26, 52, 159,162, 292, 315, 320
period film 76
Peyton Place 311
photo album 85
Picket Fences (1995–1996) 62
Pietarinen, Juhani 246
Pohjalaisia (*The Osthrobothnians* 1936) 111, 188, 321
Pohjavuorelaisia (1972) 188–191
political history 52, 54–55, 57, 60, 64, 83–84, 145, 189
popularity 13, 17, 36–37, 186, 311
posters 26, 30, 40, 185, 297
postmodernism 72, 78–80
Poutvaara, Matti 98–99
power 12, 21, 22, 122–123, 126, 159–162, 164–166, 166–179, 183–186, 203, 206–208, 249–254
power feminism 117, 134, 147, 183, 284
Powrie, Phil 76
Probyn, Elspeth 80
promotional publicity 29–30, 41
Psycho (1960) 169
psychoanalytical framing 206, 211, 216, 217, 250, 279
psychohistory 62, 250, 263
psychologizing framing 171, 174, 181, 187, 211, 213
public fantasies 13–14, 15, 18, 26, 194
publicity-still 26, 29, 30, 40, 299
Puhtaat valkoiset lakanat (*Clean White Sheets* MTV3) 186
Pulkkinen, Tuija 125, 151
Pyhä perhe (*The Holy Family* 1975) 205, 321
quality film 68, 72, 320
Qvist, Per Olov 91, 92
Rabine, Leslie W. 248
radio plays 38, 54, 61, 63, 83–84, 85, 165, 166, 177, 247
Rantalaiho, Liisa 133, 145
Rantalainen, Elsa 118, 124, 126, 144, 170
Räsänen, Aino 170
Ratkaisun päivät (*Days of Decision* 1956) 81
realism 103, 104, 183, 323–324
realist reading 12, 322
reality-effect 13, 26, 49, 58, 83, 112, 198
Rebecca (1940) 169
reception 11, 13, 17, 28, 30–32
re-focalization 198, 232, 234, 243–245
regionality 93, 105
Reitala, Aimo 131, 154, 155
remasculinization 224, 234, 235, 236, 246
repetition 12, 13, 15, 16, 19, 21, 316–324
representation 15, 18, 19–20
repression, trope of 47, 142, 248–262, 264, 273, 289–291, 295, 297, 309, 310, 313–315
repressive hypothesis, the 47, 235, 248, 249–262, 273, 291, 297, 306, 310
retro film 76, 78
review journalism 28, 30–31, 41–43, 88, 92, 103, 305–307
right-wing reading 47, 92, 179–181, 249, 274, 280, 281, 291, 293–295, 300–301, 303–304, 314–315
Riihalan valtias (*The Ruler of Riihala* 1956) 144, 169–174, 321
rillumarei films 81, 92, 235, 320, 321
Rinne, Joel 202, 318
Rintamalotta (*Voluntary Women on the Front* 1956) 81
Robinson, Sally 197
Roiha, Mikko 34
Roinilan talossa (*On the Roinila Farm* 1935) 111
Rojola, Lea 315
romance 138–139, 141, 219, 220, 247–248, 269, 281, 290, 296–312, 320
romance as politics 248, 250–254, 273
romantic hero 226, 228
Room with a View, A 76
Roos, J.P. 211–213
Rosa Luxemburg (1986) 72
Rossi, Leena-Maija 72, 78, 137, 166, 167, 199, 204, 266, 268, 269
Rosvo-Roope (*Bill the Bandit* 1949) 227
Rovaniemen markkinoilla (*The Market of Rovaniemi* 1951) 188
Rubin, Gayle 248
Runeberg, J.L. 189
Runoilija ja muusa (*The Poet and the Muse* 1978) 75
Ruoho, Iiris 62, 186, 312
Ruohonen, Laura 38
rural film 112
sacrifice 137–144, 146, 152
Saisio, Pirkko 193
Salakka, Matti 229, 268
Sallamaa, Kari 274–275, 297
Salmelainen, Eino 58, 90, 130, 144, 164, 202–203, 314
Salmi, Hannu 26, 94, 99, 104
Salminen, Esko 198, 242–246
Sammon sirpaleet (*The Smithereens of Sampo* 2000) 316–318, 324
Samuel, Raphael 50–51, 60, 62, 63–64, 101

Sandberg, Mark B. 112
Sari, Sirkka 292, 298–307
Satka, Mirja 117, 145, 168
Saussure, Ferdinand de 24
Secret Beyond the Door (1948) 169
Sedgwick, Eve Kosofsky 178
Seikkula, Irma 170
Seinäjoen Kaupunginteatteri (Seinäjoki City Theatre) 50
Seitsemän veljestä (*Seven Brothers*1935) 111, 145, 195, 200
sensitivity of men 197, 201, 204–205, 220, 233, 245
sentimentality 87, 161
seriality 60, 61–62
set design 72–80
Setälä, Päivi 133, 145, 193
Sevänen, Erkki 132, 297, 314
sex appeal 307
sex comedies 279
sex education 279
sex, as notion in Finnish language 307
sex, biologistic notion of 256–258, 266, 289
sex, sexuality 248–250, 254–255, 257, 260–261, 266, 268, 273, 275, 277, 279–281, 285, 289, 291–293, 295–297, 308–309
sexology 277–279, 307–308
sexual morals 55, 251–254, 277–285, 291–309
sexual politics 47, 247–315
Shakespeare, William 33
Shattuc, Jane 17, 313
Sibelius, Jean 50
Sieglohr, Ulrike 134
Siikala, Anna-Leena 317–318
Siipirikko (Broken-Winged), character of 179, 262, 263, 268–270
Sillankorvan emäntä (*The Matron of Sillankorva* 1953) 144, 169–174
Sillanpää, F.E. 215–217, 228, 274
Siltala, Juha 133, 169, 206, 211, 212, 213, 214, 250, 261
Siltalan pehtoori (*The Steward of Siltala* 1934/1953) 80
Silverman, Kaja 13, 14, 15, 18, 19–20, 52, 114, 186, 191, 192, 194, 196, 248, 316, 319, 320
Simonsuuri, Kirsti 317
simulacrum 79–80
simulation 53, 71, 79
Snake Pit, The (1948) 169
Snellman, Johan Vilhelm 150–151, 174, 288
soap operas 54, 184, 191, 310–313, 321
social history 52, 55, 57, 58, 60, 64, 86, 276
social problem film 174, 263, 277, 291
socialist realism 158–159, 165
sociological discourse on "the Finnish man" 199–213, 321
Söderbergh Widding, Astrid 112
Soikkeli, Markku 218, 238, 251
Soila, Tytti 11, 112, 217, 285–286
Soita minulle, Helena! (*Play for Me, Helena!* 1948) 169, 170
Solomon-Godeau, Abigail 195, 197, 199
Somersalmi, Urho 221
Sommer, Doris 16, 17, 247, 248
Song of the Motherland 153–154
Sopanen, Teija 191, 260, 308
Sopranos, The 183, 321
Sorlin, Pierre 60, 63, 91
Sormunen, Eino 110, 120–121, 238
soundtrack 87
spectacle 78, 82, 108
speech act theory 22–23, 24
Spengler, Oswald 120, 275
Spigel, Lynn 30–31
splitting 179–181, 192, 220–221, 224
Stacey, Jackie 31, 247, 248
Staiger, Janet 28, 31
stardom 198, 220–231, 298–307
Steward, character of 263, 270–273, 310
Stopes, Marie 279
strength, notions of 114, 120, 121, 124, 127, 120, 126, 132, 136, 137, 139, 161, 162, 163, 167, 170, 182, 187, 193, 203–204, 206, 207, 209, 210, 213, 220, 221, 222, 224, 233, 234, 238, 242, 245, 246
strength as masculinity 167–168
"strong woman", the 12, 46, 114, 123, 126, 137, 142, 143, 149, 159, 166, 169, 174, 176, 183, 193, 202, 246, 316–
Studlar, Gaylyn 196
Sturken, Marita 51, 63, 64, 129–130, 131
Sulkunen, Irma 133, 134, 145, 151, 286, 295
Suomen Filmiteollisuus (SF) 60, 67, 291, 314
Suomen Työväenteatteri (Finnish Workers' Theatre) 163, 165, 234–235
Suomi-Filmi 67, 291–293, 305, 314
Suomisen perhe (*Suominen Family* 1940) 37, 157, 170
symptomatic reading 57, 59, 108
Synnin jäljet (*Traces of Sin*) 263
Syntipukki (*Scapegoat* 1935/1957) 80, 220
tableaux aesthetic 74, 77, 95
Tainio, Olga 126–127, 161, 163, 303
Taistelu Heikkilän talosta (*The Fight over the Heikkilä Farm* 1936) 144

Talon lapset (*The Children of the House* 1914) 314
Tampereen Työväen Teatteri (Tampere Workers' Theatre) 33
Tapiovaara, Nyrki 305
Tarasti, Eero 323
taste 74, 92
television and history 52–64
television movies 39, 63, 114, 186, 204, 207
television screenings 36–37, 54, 58,
televisual historicality 60
temporality 14, 15, 28, 45–46, 52, 53, 58, 66, 90, 115, 130, 156–157, 160–161, 182, 183, 206–207, 259, 261
Thatcher, Margaret 184
theatre 13, 32–34
Thumim, Janet 197, 203, 213
Toiviainen, Sakari 89, 250
Topelius, Zachris 90, 95, 96, 145, 150, 154, 174, 189, 200, 201
tourism 53, 102, 104, 105–108, 111
touristic gaze 102, 108, 111
tradition 117, 120, 131–132
tradition-consciousness 73, 77
trailers 26, 29, 30, 41
transfiguration 136, 139–142
Transfigured Heart, The (*Kirkastettu sydän* 1943) 140–144, 152
transgression, trope of 249–250, 254–255, 258, 262, 266, 273, 279–285, 309, 310
Tulenkantajat (Torch-Bearers) 275, 279, 282, 284, 307
Tulio, Teuvo 216, 294, 297
Tulipää (*Flame-Top* 1980) 75
Tuliportaat (*Stairs of Fire* TV 1) 186
Tuntematon sotilas (*The Unknown Soldier* 1955) 68, 81, 82, 146, 244
Tuntematon sotilas (*The Unknown Soldier* 1985)
Tuomioja, Vappu 58
Turakainen, Elsa 157, 159, 160, 191
Turner, Bryan S. 66, 101
Turner, Victor 22
Twin Peaks (1990–1991) 62
tyrant 164, 186
Ulysses 218, 262
Uosukainen, Riitta 114
Utrio, Kaari 145, 147, 183
Uuno Turhapuro 201–202, 210–211, 321
Uurto, Iris 280, 308
Uusitalo, Kari 36, 42, 43, 64
Vaala, Valentin 14, 257–258, 312, 314
Väänänen, Emma 36, 135–136, 138–144, 157, 161–162, 171–174, 177, 191
Vaimoke (*The Surrogate Wife* 1936) 227, 282
Valtion Filmitarkastamo (The State Office of Film Censorship) 292–297
Valtonen, Hilja 229, 309
Vänrikki Stoolin tarinat (*The Tales of Ensign Ståhl*) 189, 200
Varjola, Markku 59
Vårt Land (*Our Land* 1875) 98, 200–201
Vartioitu kylä 1944 (*The Guarded Village 1944* 1979) 75
Vassa Zheleznova (1910) 165, 321
Velde, T. van de 279
Verta käsissämme (*Blood on Our Hands* 1958) 81
Vicinus, Martha 139, 268–269
Vieras mies tuli taloon (*A Stranger Came into the House* 1937, novel) 217, 218
Vieras mies tuli taloon (*A Stranger Came into the House* 1938, film/1957) 80
Viikari, Auli 81, 104
Viljanen, Lauri 216, 217, 274–275, 278–279, 281–285
Viljos, Erkki 198
Vilkuna, Kustaa 97, 109, 150, 157, 235
Vincendeau, Ginette 72, 79, 196, 219, 220, 249
Virtanen, Matti 211–212
virtue 121, 126, 136, 151
vitalism 215, 274–275, 281, 283, 285, 308, 315, 321
vitality 257, 266
Waltari, Mika 274–275
war, memories of 57, 80–81, 82–88, 320
Warner, Michael 247
Wayne, John 231, 233, 271, 272
"weak man", the 47, 196, 198, 203–204, 206, 246, 317
weakness 124, 199, 201, 203–209, 213, 216, 219–221, 232, 233, 236, 238, 246
Wells, H.G. 289, 309
Wendelin, Martta 78, 157
Westermarck, Edward 175, 277–278
What Now, Niskavuori? (*Entäs nyt, Niskavuori?* 1953) 33, 34, 35, 83, 85, 160, 166, 212
What Now, Niskavuori? (TV play, *Entäs nyt, Niskavuori?*1987) 39
White, Hayden 26
White, Mimi 53
Wiegman, Robyn 197, 199
Wills, David 27
Witt-Brattström, Ebba 44, 45, 284
Wittig, Monique 21
woman, becoming of 134–144
Women of Niskavuori, The (*Niskavuoren naiset* 1936) 32, 33, 34, 59, 64, 66,

90, 111, 115, 117, 118–132, 147, 161, 163–166, 174, 180, 188, 213–221, 236, 252, 276–277, 280–288, 290, 298–301, 311–312
Women of Niskavuori, The (*Niskavuoren naiset* 1938) 35, 36, 53, 56, 57, 73, 74, 110, 111, 117, 118–132, 147, 159, 161, 181, 191, 198, 213–221, 236, 244, 251–253, 255, 259, 260, 262–263, 267, 270, 277, 284–286, 290, 291–309, 320
Women of Niskavuori, The (*Niskavuoren naiset* 1958) 35, 36, 37, 56, 73, 74, 80, 100, 132, 135, 157, 161–162, 191, 198, 244, 259–261, 262–263, 310, 320
women's history 55, 60, 183
women's movement, turn-of-the-century 278, 283–284, 300
Woollacott, Janet 181
work, thematization of 97, 145–146, 150, 167, 193
work scenes 97, 240, 271
Wright, Magnus von 95
Wuolijoki, Hella 11–12, 32–34, 38–39, 44–45, 58, 67, 88, 92, 103, 105–106, 116, 149–150, 151, 160, 162, 165–166, 179–181, 202, 216, 280, 281, 283, 291, 294, 295, 300, 313–315, 322
Ylikangas, Heikki 246
Young Matron of Niskavuori, The (*Niskavuoren nuori emäntä* 1940) 33, 34, 35, 136–137, 139, 141, 142, 221, 263–264
Young Matron of Niskavuori, The (TV play, *Niskavuoren nuori emäntä* 1987) 39, 311
Yrjänän emännän synti (*The Sin of the Mistress of Yrjänä* 1943) 144
Zapolska, Gabriela 165–166
Zweite Heimat, Die (1992) 62