

“Our Aki”  
The auteurial-national nexus and  
Aki Kaurismäki’s Finland trilogy

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## Abstract

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This thesis explores the interconnections of 'Finnishness' and 'Kaurismäkianness' in and around Aki Kaurismäki's so-called Finland trilogy: *Drifting Clouds* (1996), *The Man Without A Past* (2002) and *Lights in the Dusk* (2006). The thesis addresses how Kaurismäki, whose work and public persona have tended to be critical of national institutions and preoccupations, has developed into an increasingly national figure in Finland's years of Europeanisation.

In order to examine the links between 'Finnishness' and 'Kaurismäkianness' I establish, first, the way in which Kaurismäki's films engage with national themes; and, second, the way in which this Kaurismäkian take on Finnishness is received and further appropriated in Finland. I provide a textual analysis of each of the focus films, paying particular attention to their national aspects and their references to Kaurismäki's other films. I combine this close analysis of the film texts with discussion of the context of the films, their media presence and 'afterlife', for example the discourses surrounding the films after their initial release or the ways in which their 'Kaurismäkianness' has been appropriated by others for specifically national purposes.

In seeking to understand how Kaurismäki's auteurial engagement with narratives of Finnishness feeds back into Finnish society this thesis contributes to current debates about the relationship between auteurs and national identity. The research is important as it develops an original approach for analysing the way in which cinematic authors can be implicated in processes of national imagining.

I find that the films of the Finland trilogy reflect a broader 'cultural turn' in Finnish society following the end of the Cold War and Finland's membership of the European Union in particular. The films retain a socially critical edge, but they reflect an increasing desire to belong, make friends and find love in a largely inhospitable city. At the same time the films' self-reflective and ritualised 'Kaurismäkianness', together with their international critical successes, leads to a process of national imagining that involves an awareness of international perceptions. I argue that it is in its role as the interface between national culture and international audiences that 'Kaurismäkianness' has become an important alternative narrative of Finnishness: an inspiration for cultural and marketing strategies and a catalyst for national debate.

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## Statement of Candidate Contribution

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This thesis contains only sole-authored work. Parts of this thesis have been published or have been accepted for publication as

- “Soup, soap and national reawakening – the ambiguous role of the Salvation Army in *The Man Without A Past*” in *WiderScreen* no.2 (2007)
- “Still in the *Shadows*: Reconsidering History through Intertextual References in Aki Kaurismäki’s European Films” in *Remapping Cinema, Remaking History. The XIVth Biennial Conference of the Film and History Association of Australia and New Zealand. Conference Proceedings. Volume Two: Select Refereed Papers*, edited by Hilary Radner and Pam Fossen, 85-95. Dunedin: University of Otago, 2009.
- “East, West and In-Between. Marginal Cold War Identities in *Shadows in Paradise* and *Ariel*” in *In Between Fear and Freedom. Cultural Representations of the Cold War*, edited by Kathleen Starck, 25-38. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010.
- “Aki Kaurismäki” in *Directory of World Cinema: Finland*, edited by Pietari Kääpä. Bristol: Intellect, forthcoming 2012.
- “Kati Outinen” in *Directory of World Cinema: Finland*, edited by Pietari Kääpä. Bristol: Intellect, forthcoming 2012.
- “Matti Pellonpää” in *Directory of World Cinema: Finland*, edited by Pietari Kääpä. Bristol: Intellect, forthcoming 2012.
- “The Man Without A Past” in *Directory of World Cinema: Finland*, edited by Pietari Kääpä. Bristol: Intellect, forthcoming 2012.
- “Shadows in Paradise” in *Directory of World Cinema: Finland*, edited by Pietari Kääpä. Bristol: Intellect, forthcoming 2012.

Parts of this thesis are under review for publication as

- “From Hämeentie. The Local Logic of Aki Kaurismäki’s Helsinki” in *Cities of the Imagination: Helsinki*, edited by Pietari Kääpä and Silja Laine. Bristol: Intellect, forthcoming 2012.
- “Crossing Over: On Becoming European in Aki Kaurismäki’s Cinema” in *Frontiers of Screen History: Imagining European Borders in Cinema, 1945–2010*, edited by Raita Merivirta, Kimmo Ahonen, Heta Mulari and Rami Mähkä. Bristol: Intellect, forthcoming 2012.

## Notes on Referencing and Translation

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Some references do not include specific page numbers. These sources have been accessed either through various full-text digital archives, which often do not provide pagination details for articles, or the National Audiovisual Archive (KAVA) in Helsinki. KAVA maintains a useful collection of press clippings related to Finnish cinema; however, many items do not include complete source details: page numbers are commonly missing, and sometimes even the name of the original publication is not listed. In cases where I have not been able to ascertain key details such as the title or date of a source, I have given the item's file number at the archives instead.

All translations are my own. The bibliography follows English alphabetisation conventions and does not distinguish between A, Ä and Å; or O, Ö and Ø.



## Introduction

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Ever since his first directorial project Aki Kaurismäki has had his own, recognisable cinematic style. Essential to this even minimalist style has been its connectedness to Finland and Finnishness. Aki Kaurismäki's "Workers' trilogy" and "Finland trilogy" depict Finland in an entirely new, rough and low key way.

[...]

Aki Kaurismäki is one of the few Finnish artists whose unique style is known worldwide. His surname has almost become an adjective to also describe the work of others apart from him. There is no doubt that Aki Kaurismäki is our internationally best known filmmaker. His significance as the pioneer of Finnish film and other art is significant and enduring.<sup>1</sup>

The above statement was released by the Arts Council of Finland in 2008 after the Finnish filmmaker Aki Kaurismäki was named Academician of Cinema. 'Academician' is an honorary life-long title, which carries neither duties nor bursaries. At the time of Kaurismäki's appointment the title could be held simultaneously by a maximum of eight artists, each representing a different medium, but since then the number of Academicians has been raised to eleven to provide representation for a wider range of art forms. In recommending Kaurismäki for the title the Arts Council of Finland made reference not only to his international significance, but also to the director's social criticism and his broader role in developing Finland's film culture through founding the Midnight Sun Film Festival and acting as a distributor for the works of other filmmakers. What was particularly striking about the statement was the way in which it linked Kaurismäki and Finland: the distinctive 'Kaurismäkian' directorial style was considered deeply embedded in 'Finnishness', and Kaurismäki was also considered a connecting point between Finnish national culture and the rest of the world.<sup>2</sup>

Some of the reporting around the appointment expressed curiosity as to whether Kaurismäki would accept the title, given his reputation as the socially critical *enfant terrible* of Finnish cinema. For example, an article in *Helsingin Sanomat*, Finland's largest daily newspaper, pointed out that

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<sup>1</sup> "Elokuvaohjaaja Aki Kaurismäestä taiteen akateemikko" [website/press release] *Taiteen keskustoimikunta*, (2008) available from [http://www.taiteenkeskustoimikunta.fi/default.asp?WCI=wciFrame\\_Workspace&strlanguage\\_id=fi&strsub\\_page=all\\_news&strExecution=2008&straction=archive%22%22](http://www.taiteenkeskustoimikunta.fi/default.asp?WCI=wciFrame_Workspace&strlanguage_id=fi&strsub_page=all_news&strExecution=2008&straction=archive%22%22) [cited 23.4.2011]. Repetition retained from original: "Hänen merkityksensä tienavaajana suomalaiselle elokuvalle ja muullekin taiteelle on merkityksellistä ja pitkävaikutteista."

<sup>2</sup> It is worth noting that as my focus is specifically on Aki Kaurismäki and his cinematic style I do not here extend the term 'Kaurismäkian' to also cover the work of the older filmmaking brother, Mika Kaurismäki.

Kaurismäki had famously declared in 1984 that he did not “want to make a contract with society that would lead to [him] getting invited [to the President’s official residence],” and that he would kill himself before accepting such an invitation.<sup>3</sup> President Tarja Halonen’s speech on the occasion of the conferral also made reference to Kaurismäki’s social criticism, making a point of declaring that the title was not intended as a means of restricting or “taming” the director, but as an encouragement for his future endeavours.<sup>4</sup> It was clear that social criticism and iconoclasm were considered important aspects of Kaurismäki’s public profile, and, as the Arts Council’s statement also demonstrates, these aspects of Kaurismäki’s persona were not thought of as inconvenient or embarrassing for the purposes of official recognition.

Kaurismäki’s appointment coincided with a shift in the Arts Council’s expectations of the Academicians’ place in Finnish cultural life. Since 2008 the President and the Arts Council of Finland have worked to reinvigorate the Academician role, assembling all Academicians together for the first time since the 1960s, and seeking to encourage Academicians to participate more actively in public debate and to raise the profile of their respective fields.<sup>5</sup> Although the Academicians’ joint statements are relatively rare, they are widely reported in the national media and sometimes presented as the unified, official position of Finnish culture as a whole: the Arts Council even describes the Academicians as holding “Finland’s highest prestige, covering the entire field of art.”<sup>6</sup> The presidential appointment of Kaurismäki as an Academician of Cinema, combined as it is with an increased expectation of participation in national cultural debate, confirms the transition of a cynical *enfant terrible* of inaccessible Finnish art cinema into someone publically acknowledged as one of Finland’s most significant living cultural figures.

<sup>3</sup> Esa Mäkinen, "Aki Kaurismäki and his carefully crafted public image" [online article] *Helsingin Sanomat - International Edition*, (2008) available from <http://www.hs.fi/english/article/Aki+Kaurism%C3%A4ki+and+his+carefully+crafted+public+image/1135236692119> [cited 31.8.2011].

<sup>4</sup> Teemu Luukka, "Aki Kaurismäki sai akateemikon arvon surutangon tahdissa" [online article] *Helsingin Sanomat*, (2008) available from <http://www.hs.fi/kulttuuri/artikkeli/Aki+Kaurism%C3%A4ki+sai+akateemikon+arvon+surutangon+tahdissa/1135236589896> [cited 29.6. 2009].

<sup>5</sup> Teemu Luukka, "Taiteen akateemikko -instituutiosta halutaan pyyhkiä pölyt pois" [online article] *Helsingin Sanomat*, (2008) available from [http://www.hs.fi/kulttuuri/artikkeli/1135235580019?ref=lk\\_hs\\_ku\\_1](http://www.hs.fi/kulttuuri/artikkeli/1135235580019?ref=lk_hs_ku_1) [cited 18.4.2011].

<sup>6</sup> The original reads: “Taiteen akateemikkojen käsissä on korkein suomalainen, koko taiteen kentän kattava arvovalta.” “Akateemikot: Alueellisten taidetoimikuntien nimittäminen pidettävä opetusministeriöllä” [website/press release] *Taiteen keskustoimikunta*, (2009) available from [http://www.taiteenkeskustoimikunta.fi/default.asp?WCI=wciFrame\\_Workspace&strlanguage\\_id=fi&strsub\\_page=all\\_news&strExecution=2009&straction=archive%22%22](http://www.taiteenkeskustoimikunta.fi/default.asp?WCI=wciFrame_Workspace&strlanguage_id=fi&strsub_page=all_news&strExecution=2009&straction=archive%22%22) [cited 23.4.2011].

As the Arts Council statement makes clear, the term ‘Kaurismäkian’ has come to refer not only to Kaurismäki’s particular style and cinematic world, but also to a cultural phenomenon. In this thesis I seek to understand how this kind of ‘Kaurismäkianness’ and ‘Finnishness’ are interlinked in Finland. To this end it becomes important to understand, first, the way in which Kaurismäki’s films engage with national themes; and second, the way in which this Kaurismäkian take on Finnishness is received and further appropriated in Finland. I explore this nexus between Kaurismäkianness and Finnishness in and around three of Kaurismäki’s later films, generally referred to as the ‘Finland’ trilogy: *Drifting Clouds* (*Kauas pilvet karkaavat*, 1996), *The Man Without A Past* (*Mies vailla menneisyyttä*, 2002) and *Lights in the Dusk* (*Laitakaupungin valot*, 2006). I have chosen to focus on these three films in part due to their particular relationship to time and place. They are all set in Helsinki and the ostensible ‘now’, the time of their filming. The making and setting of the trilogy coincides with Finland’s years of Europeanisation, beginning with Finland’s accession to the European Union in 1995, and the process of Europeanisation provides a useful frame of reference for examining the films’ national themes. This time is also witness to a significant shift in the Kaurismäkian oeuvre from a very critical view of society in the films of the 1980s and early 1990s to the much more nostalgic and stylised cinema of the European years. Kaurismäki’s public persona was also already well established by the time of the films’ release, and they were thus able to draw on an extensive existing repertoire of Kaurismäkian films and narratives.

The labelling of these three films as the ‘Finland’ trilogy is in itself indicative of the interconnectedness of ‘Kaurismäkianness’ and ‘Finnishness’. The trilogy does not have an official name: Kaurismäki has referred to both this and his earlier trilogy [*Shadows in Paradise* (*Varjoja paratiisissa*, 1986), *Ariel* (1988) and *The Match Factory Girl* (*Tulitikkutehtaan tyttö*, 1990)] interchangeably as either the Losers’ or Workers’ trilogy, and so while the name ‘Finland trilogy’ has considerable currency in film criticism and journalism, it is not a formal title. The latter trilogy is certainly much more nostalgic and positive in its approach to national culture, compared to the earlier trilogy’s relative pessimism and even cynicism regarding Finnish society; however, the prevalence of the ‘Finland’-title is even more telling of the media’s desire to think of Kaurismäki in national terms than it is of the films’ inherent Finnishness.

I approach this national mode of interpreting Aki Kaurismäki’s films in the context of current debates about the cinematic auteur and about contemporary cultural nationalism. In some respects this thesis builds on the work of Pietari Kääpä and Andrew Nestingen, both of whom have

in recent years challenged common perceptions of Kaurismäki's films as expressing an innate Finnishness. Nestingen argues that the films "ironize national conventions", that their depiction of space and time are best understood in terms of globalisation rather than national culture and that ultimately "while Aki Kaurismäki's films appear in many ways to be national, they in fact dismantle the assumptions that have supported national culture in Finland."<sup>7</sup> Nestingen has also considered Kaurismäki's public performances as contributing to the films' transnational or "contrarian" qualities.<sup>8</sup> Kääpä has discussed the filmmaking career of both Kaurismäki brothers, Aki and Mika, from 1981 to 1995, arguing that "the films attempt to negotiate a space between reclusive nationalism and expansive globalism, whilst remaining opposed to the homogenous implications of these two cultural and political imaginaries."<sup>9</sup>

There is certainly merit to these arguments, but, as Aki Kaurismäki's appointment as Academician of Cinema demonstrates, the international aspects of the films and their unique way of depicting society also form an important part of Finland's national cultural strategy. I do not suggest that Kaurismäkianness and Finnishness have become mutually constitutive in recent years, or that the interpretations offered here represent any absolute truths. However, I do argue that a discussion of the relationship between Kaurismäkian cinema and Finnish national culture should take into account the way in which Kaurismäkian cinema is interpreted as a kind of interface between Finnish national culture and the wider world. I will discuss the work of both Nestingen and Kääpä in more detail in the course of this thesis, but for now it will suffice to state how my work differs from theirs and how my thesis is original.

For the most part Kääpä and Nestingen have focused on Kaurismäki's earlier work, while my study is the first to focus on the Finland trilogy. As such my analysis necessarily involves a different context both in terms of Kaurismäki's own public profile and the broader debates around national identity that have followed Finland's accession to the European Union. Given the widely-acknowledged shift in tone from Kaurismäki's earlier films to the Finland trilogy this thesis does not simply update Kääpä's and Nestingen's critiques, but seeks to understand how Kaurismäkian

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<sup>7</sup> Andrew Nestingen, *Why nation? Globalization and national culture in Finland, 1980-2001* (PhD thesis [unpublished manuscript], University of Washington, 2001), 133.

<sup>8</sup> Andrew Nestingen, "Aki Kaurismäki and Nation: The Contrarian Cinema," *WiderScreen*, no. 2 (2007).

<sup>9</sup> Pietari Kääpä, *The National and Beyond. The Globalisation of Finnish Cinema in the Films of Aki and Mika Kaurismäki* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2010), 262.



auteurship and issues of Finnish national representation have come to be interlinked during Finland's years of Europeanisation.

### Thesis structure

The intersections of national and Kaurismäkian narratives lie at the core of my analysis. In order to come to an understanding of the dynamic relationship between the auteurial and national dimensions of Kaurismäkian cinema I provide a textual analysis of each of the focus films, paying particular attention to their national aspects and their references to Kaurismäki's other films. I combine this close analysis of the film texts with discussion of the context of the films, their media presence and 'afterlife', for example the discourses surrounding the films after their initial release or the ways in which their 'Kaurismäkianness' has been appropriated by others for specifically national purposes. In each case I focus on a particular theme that connects the film text with extra-cinematic 'Kaurismäkianness': intertextuality in Chapter Three, nostalgia in Chapter Four and place in Chapter Five. Complementing the study of 'Finnishness in Kaurismäkian film' with 'Kaurismäkianness in Finland' allows for a more thorough understanding of the way film functions in contemporary processes of national imagining.

In the first two chapters I chart the relevant literature on the auteur and the nation, arriving at a framework which enables the critical examination of the intersections of the Finnish national and Kaurismäkian auteurial narratives. Chapter One begins with an overview of auteur theory and the historical role of the film director. I then take my cue from the critiques of Roland Barthes<sup>10</sup> and Michel Foucault<sup>11</sup> to develop a theoretical framework for analysing a filmic author. I do not subscribe to these writers' theories of the 'death of the author' or of the 'author-function' in their strictest sense, but they do inform my approach to film auteurship. I draw in particular on Adrian Wilson's critique of Foucault in understanding the author function not as an *abstract* network of meanings, but as a set of meanings *personified* in one individual, the author-persona.<sup>12</sup> In appropriating Wilson's argument for a specifically cinematic context I refer to the *auteur*-persona rather than the author-persona, hoping that the shift in terminology will assist in keeping in mind the particularities of film production that should inform considerations of a cinematic auteurship.

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<sup>10</sup> Roland Barthes, *Image Music Text* (London: Fontana Press, 1977).

<sup>11</sup> Michel Foucault, "What is an Author?," *Screen* 20, no. 1 (1979).

<sup>12</sup> Adrian Wilson, "Foucault on the 'Question of the Author': A Critical Exegesis," *The Modern Language Review* 99, no. 2 (2004).

Following C. Paul Sellors<sup>13</sup> and Robert L. Carringer,<sup>14</sup> my understanding of a specifically cinematic auteur-persona therefore also includes an understanding of a film text as the product of several individuals. This understanding of a contradictory auteurship, of a valorised auteur-persona that is at the same time dependent on the contribution of many others, ultimately marries with what Timothy Corrigan refers to as a “semi-textual”<sup>15</sup> approach to auteurism, or one that also takes into account a director’s interview performance as part of his or her auteur persona. I broaden Corrigan’s call for including interview material in considerations of auteurship and include other extratextual materials in my analysis in order to arrive at a more holistic view of the narratives that circulate around a particular auteur. The focus is then not only on the messages a particular auteur wants to disseminate, but on the broader *framework* of narratives that contribute to the construction of the auteur persona. The chapter concludes with an overview of the most prominent narratives that circulate around Kaurismäki, including his ambivalent attitude to nationality, his privileged position within the Finnish film industry, his aversion to publicity and his extracinematic ventures, such as the founding of the Midnight Sun Film Festival in Sodankylä and his ownership of a cluster of bars in Helsinki. An awareness of the complex network of narratives that surrounds the director and his oeuvre is essential to understanding the discursive context of the Finland trilogy, and these films’ relationship to Kaurismäki’s earlier work.

Chapter Two charts relevant literature on national identity in a Finnish context. In order to avoid an essentialist view of representations of nationality I appropriate Duncan Bell’s term “mythscape”<sup>16</sup> as an alternative to national ‘collective memory’. Bell’s mythscape refers to a range of narratives constantly in flux that contribute to understandings of a national culture. Having established the centrality of the mythscape to my work I go on to examine some key aspects of the Finnish mythscape, focusing in particular on the conceptualisations of Finland and Finnishness in Finnish historiography and how Kaurismäki has engaged with some of these themes. I pay particular attention to the Cold War and the Europeanisation process of the early 1990s as the immediate historical context of the films treated in the subsequent chapters. I also draw on Jonathan Culler’s recontextualisation of some of the ideas expressed in Benedict Anderson’s

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<sup>13</sup> C. Paul Sellors, "Collective Authorship in Film," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 65, no. 3 (2007).

<sup>14</sup> Robert L. Carringer, "Collaboration and Concepts of Authorship," *PMLA* 116, no. 2 (2001).

<sup>15</sup> Timothy Corrigan, "The Commerce of Auteurism: A Voice without Authority," *New German Critique* 49 (1990): 44, 48.

<sup>16</sup> Duncan Bell, "Mythscape: memory, mythology, and national identity," *British Journal of Sociology* 54, no. 1 (2003): 75.

seminal *Imagined Communities*,<sup>17</sup> and take into consideration the way in which a text addresses its audience and how the process of 'imagining' varies by media. In the case of film, and Kaurismäkian film in particular, the projected national community is one that is aware of an international audience as well: it becomes important to understand Kaurismäkian films as texts which exist on the interface between the national and the international.

Chapters Three to Five, each of which focuses on one of the Finland films, take as their starting point a specific theme within the auteurial-national nexus established in Chapters One and Two. In Chapter Three this nexus is explored through the concept of intertextuality, and specifically Kaurismäkian cinema's self-reflective intertextuality. The chapter focuses on the intertextual relationship between *Drifting Clouds* and Kaurismäki's 1986 film *Shadows in Paradise*. I argue that *Drifting Clouds* emerges as a critical point in the Kaurismäkian oeuvre, one which perpetuates the linkage between Kaurismäki's auteurial status and national significance through its intertextual connections to the 1986 film, which first established Kaurismäki's international credentials as an auteur filmmaker and which saw his public profile significantly increase in Finland. At the same time this intertextual reinforcement of Kaurismäki's privileged status in Finnish cinema finds an unexpected expression in the connections between the film text and the commemoration of the sudden death of Matti Pellonpää, in particular in the release of a set of stamps celebrating the centenary of Finnish cinema. That the same kind of auteurial-national linking that permeates *Drifting Clouds* is appropriated by a formal national institution is both evidence of Kaurismäki's privileged position in Finnish cultural life and an early sign of the national commercial appeal of 'Kaurismäkianness'.

Chapter Four focuses on nostalgia in *The Man Without A Past*. My understanding of nostalgia is informed in particular by Janelle L. Wilson's conceptualisation of nostalgia as an active practice,<sup>18</sup> and Svetlana Boym's differentiation between restorative and reflective nostalgia, where the former aligns with the popular perception of nostalgia as a conservative attitude and a desire to recreate past times and value systems, while the latter refers to a more ironic and knowingly futile form of reminiscence.<sup>19</sup> I also take into consideration Paul Grainge's distinction between the

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<sup>17</sup> Jonathan Culler, "Anderson and the Novel," *Diacritics* 29, no. 4 (1999).

<sup>18</sup> Janelle L. Wilson, *Nostalgia. Sanctuary of Meaning* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2005), 25.

<sup>19</sup> Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia* (New York: Basic Books, 2001), xviii.

nostalgic mood and mode in cinema,<sup>20</sup> keeping in mind that while some viewers, primarily Finns, might recognise the nationally nostalgic referents in the film, others may experience a different kind of nostalgia in viewing the film, one triggered by the films' Technicolor aesthetics and mournful music, for example. I proceed with an analysis of the nostalgic referents of *The Man Without A Past*, drawing in part on Christine Sprengler's suggestions for considering elements as disparate as narrative structure and individual props or actors as able to elicit nostalgic sentiments in viewers.<sup>21</sup> I then consider the role of Kaurismäkian nostalgia more broadly in the Kaurismäkian auteur narrative, drawing on Andrew Nestingen's typology of the nostalgic discourses around Kaurismäkian film.<sup>22</sup> Finally, I argue that the concerns voiced over Kaurismäki's depiction of Finland at the time of the festival successes of *The Man Without A Past* demonstrate the progression of Kaurismäki's public profile from someone who personified Finnish art cinema within Finland at the time of *Drifting Clouds* to someone who had suddenly become much more influential over outsider perceptions of Finland and Finnishness, and whose claim on the national mythscape was viewed in conflicted terms in Finland.

Chapter Five takes as its focus place and space in *Lights in the Dusk*. I follow Mark Shiel's distinction between "space in films" and "films in space",<sup>23</sup> seeking to understand how the Kaurismäkian representation of space contributes to the auteurial-national nexus. After contextualising Kaurismäkian depictions of space in relation to Finnish cinema more broadly I explore how the representation of space in *Lights in the Dusk* emphasises a historical perspective and draws on existing perceptions and stereotypes associated with certain parts of the real city. I draw on Andrew Nestingen's conceptualisation of "non-places" in Kaurismäkian film<sup>24</sup> and Pierre Nora's more abstract concept "realms of memory"<sup>25</sup> to argue that, contrary to Nestingen's claims, although their real-life equivalents are disconnected from the national mythscape, Kaurismäkian places cannot be understood as being similarly disconnected since the ritualised quality of Kaurismäkian cinema places a national inflection on the films' settings. Finally I turn my attention

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<sup>20</sup> Paul Grainge, *Monochrome Memories. Nostalgia and Style in Retro America* (Westport and London: Praeger Publishers, 2002), 21.

<sup>21</sup> Christine Sprengler, *Screening Nostalgia: Populux Props and Technicolor Aesthetics in Contemporary American Film* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2009).

<sup>22</sup> Andrew Nestingen, "Sormuksia ja kurioositeetteja: Aki Kaurismäki, tekijyys ja nostalgiaelokuva," *Lähikuva*, no. 2 (2010).

<sup>23</sup> Mark Shiel, "Cinema and the City in History and Theory," in *Cinema and the City. Film and Urban Societies in a Global Context*, eds Mark Shiel and Tony Fitzmaurice (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2001), 5-6.

<sup>24</sup> Nestingen, *Why nation?*, 167.

<sup>25</sup> Pierre Nora, "Between Memory and History: *Les Lieux de Mémoire*," *Representations*, no. 26 (1989): 19.

to 'films in space', and focus on how spatial narratives that form part of the Kaurismäkian auteur framework have in turn been appropriated for marketing purposes in Finland.

The development of the Kaurismäkian auteur framework over Finland's years of Europeanisation provides a case study of the ways in which auteurism and national engagement are embedded in one another in contemporary European cinema. In exploring the nexus between the auteur and nation in Aki Kaurismäki's cinema my thesis contributes to existing scholarship on contemporary processes of national imagining and provides an original model for analysing the role of the cinematic author in these processes.

## Chapter One

### The Auteur Framework

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Aki Kaurismäki is frequently referred to as an ‘auteur’ director, or one who has an extraordinarily high level of control over the style and content of the finished film. The term is typically applied to him as a matter of course, as a self-evident fact that distinguishes him from the majority of other filmmakers.<sup>1</sup> Given the prevalence of the term ‘auteur’ in writings about Kaurismäki it becomes necessary to understand the term and its history more fully.

In contemporary film writing, the term auteur<sup>2</sup> is most commonly understood to mean the cinematic artist, the ultimate creator of a film. Different films by the same auteur – as expressions of their creator’s artistic genius – are supposed to share a thematic and aesthetic similarity. Directors are most commonly considered auteurs, although occasionally other agents such as producers and script writers qualify for the distinction as well.<sup>3</sup> The concept of the auteur carries with it connotations of a filmmaker dedicated to art and making personal statements in his or her films: “[m]aking a film thus becomes more like writing a private diary than manufacturing a car, and the camera becomes the instrument for writing rather than a machine for producing.”<sup>4</sup> It is also important to keep in mind that while a film is likely to be attributed as its director’s work, not every director is considered an auteur: the term is most often applied to directors of art, independent or festival circuit cinema.

Thomas Elsaesser notes the tendency of film festivals to favour auteurs who present in “their male protagonists more or less honest self-portraits,” produce trilogies and work with a “steady cast of players.”<sup>5</sup> Kaurismäki fulfils all these criteria. The emphasis on “male protagonists” also highlights the fact that most auteurs are men. An illustrative example of the gendered nature of auteurism is the portmanteau film *Chacun son cinéma (To Each His Own Cinema, 2007)*. The film was made to

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<sup>1</sup> See for example Tiina Forsberg, "Ilkka Mertsola ja Laitakaupungin valot (Haastattelut)" [website] *Film-o-Holic*, (2006) available from <http://www.film-o-holic.com/haastattelut/ilkka-mertsola-laitakaupungin-valot/> [cited 17.4.2011]; "Pohjolan elokuvapalkinto Kaurismäelle," *Helsingin Sanomat*, 30.10. 2002.

<sup>2</sup> I use the term “author” to refer to a general notion of the creator of a text, and “auteur” to refer to a specifically cinematic author.

<sup>3</sup> Juri Nummelin, *Valkoinen hehku: johdatus elokuvan historiaan* (Tampere: Vastapaino, 2005), 16.

<sup>4</sup> Jill Forbes and Sarah Street, "European cinema: an overview," in *European Cinema. An introduction*, eds Jill Forbes and Sarah Street (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire and New York: Palgrave, 2000), 38.

<sup>5</sup> Thomas Elsaesser, *European cinema: face to face with Hollywood* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2005), 49, 136.

celebrate the sixtieth anniversary of the Cannes International Film Festival, and was comprised of thirty-three three-minute short films on the theme of love and cinema, each directed by an established and celebrated auteur director, Kaurismäki among them. Only one of the films was directed by a woman, Jane Campion's *The Lady Bug*. The main prize at the Cannes festival has only once been awarded to a woman (Jane Campion, *The Piano*, 1993; the film tied with Chen Kaige's *Farewell My Concubine*) and only one woman in over eight decades of the Academy Awards has ever won an Oscar for Best Director (Kathryn Bigelow, *The Hurt Locker*, 2009). In order to acknowledge the gender imbalance in auteurism, John Caughie, in his *Theories of Authorship*, chose to use only the masculine pronoun when discussing the abstract concept of the auteur, as "adopt[ing] the 'he/she' form throughout seems to run the risk of masking, with a linguistic equality, an institutional situation that is historically and notoriously unequal."<sup>6</sup> Although it is clearly still true that men are more commonly referred to as auteurs than women are, I use both pronouns so as not to perpetuate the sense of auteurship as an inherently male activity.

Yvonne Tasker points out that the most problematic aspect of writing about the auteur is the fact that the term is "both immensely resonant and yet critically somewhat bereft."<sup>7</sup> The concept of an auteur rests on the assumption that a film, despite the collaborative necessities involved in its production, can still ultimately be the creation of a single individual. The emphasis on the vision of a single auteur stems from traditional European ideas of the artist-genius.<sup>8</sup> As it reduces a film to the artistic expression of one person and implicitly denies the creative contribution of other participants in the film's production, auteurism has rightfully been regarded as a contentious approach to film since first gaining currency in the 1950s. Given the plurality of meaning-makers involved in the production and reception of a film, the concept of the auteur director should not make sense: "the problem with the auteur theory [is that] it doesn't fit the facts of movie production."<sup>9</sup> Despite these misgivings, however, the conceptualisation of the auteur remains an important aspect of how people watch and respond to films, and my project here is to establish a

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<sup>6</sup> John Caughie, *Theories of Authorship* (London, Boston and Henley: Routledge, Kegan Paul & British Film Institute, 1981), 5.

<sup>7</sup> Yvonne Tasker, "Introduction: authorship and contemporary film culture," in *Fifty contemporary filmmakers*, ed. Yvonne Tasker (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), 1.

<sup>8</sup> See for example Catherine Fowler, "Introduction to part three," in *The European Cinema Reader*, ed. Catherine Fowler (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), 89; Veijo Hietala, "Auteurin elämä, kuolema - ja ylösnousemus," *Filmihullu*, no. 1 (1990): 5; Gilberto Perez, *The material ghost: films and their medium* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 7. For an analysis of the early interconnectedness of the concepts of 'author' and 'genius' see "Chapter 3: The Romantic Author" in Andrew Bennett, *The Author* (London and New York: Routledge, 2005).

<sup>9</sup> Perez, *The material ghost*, 7.

framework for approaching Kaurismäkian auteurism in a way that acknowledges the contradictions and ambiguities inherent in the term.

### Origins of the auteur director

The auteur has remained a particularly resonant concept in Western European cinema due to its ability to validate film as art: after all, for film to be an art form it has to have artists.<sup>10</sup> However, in the very early stages of film at the turn of the twentieth century, cinema was a form of entertainment with very few artistic pretensions. Early film screenings generally consisted of a number of brief narratives with a comic or a moralistic tone, documentaries depicting important events such as royal visits and scenes of war, or simply scenes of everyday city life. Enterprising itinerant filmmakers would make a point of shooting some scenes in each town they visited, sometimes even casting local residents in simple fictional narratives, with the hope of attracting large local audiences keen to see familiar faces and places on screen.<sup>11</sup> As the narrative conventions of film were only in the process of being fixed, early film screenings depended on accompanying materials and performers, such as plot outlines and commentators, for the audience to understand what was happening.<sup>12</sup> For example, viewers of the first Finnish fiction film *The Moonshiners* (*Salaviinanpolttajat*, Teuvo Puro and Louis Sparré, 1907) had access to, at the very least, a detailed plot synopsis published in the newspaper and a live commentary by a member of the film theatre's staff.<sup>13</sup> The reliance on extratextual sources created the opportunity for the exhibitors themselves to exert influence over the reception of the film texts, as a talented narrator could greatly enhance the viewing experience. Exhibitors were also able to alter the actual films themselves. It was not unusual for exhibitors to edit intertitles or remove scenes they felt the audience would not appreciate. For example, the Paradis brothers, travelling exhibitors in Québec, routinely self-censored scenes that they felt would not be considered acceptable by their rural Catholic audiences.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Elsaesser, *European cinema: face to face with Hollywood*, 9. See also Hietala, "Auteurin elämä, kuolema - ja ylösnousemus," 5.

<sup>11</sup> See for example Roger Smither, "'Watch the picture carefully, and see if you can identify anyone': recognition in factual film of the First World War period," *Film History* 14 (2002).

<sup>12</sup> See for example Jeffrey Klenotic, "Advertising," in *Encyclopedia of Early Cinema*, ed. Richard Abel (London and New York: Routledge, 2004), 10; André Gaudreault, "Lecturer," in *Encyclopedia of Early Cinema*, ed. Richard Abel (London and New York: Routledge, 2004), 546.

<sup>13</sup> Hannu Salmi, *Kadonnut perintö. Näytelmäelokuvien synty Suomessa 1907-1916* (Helsinki: Suomen elokuva-arkisto & Suomen Kirjallisuuden Seura, 2002), 38.

<sup>14</sup> Pierre Véronneau, "The creation of a film culture by travelling exhibitors in rural Québec prior to World War II," *Film History* 6 (1994): 253.



While the tendency to alter the film material derived from the exhibitors' need to provide what the audience wanted (and authorities approved of) in order to stay in business, it was also made possible by the ambiguous position of film in terms of intellectual property, and its categorisation as mass entertainment rather than art. According to Marjut Salokannel, the fact that film could not be "defined in terms of individuality, uniqueness, scarcity, and freedom from economic determinations" meant that copyright conventions could not apply to film – in fact, it was not until 1948 that films were acknowledged as independent works in international legislation.<sup>15</sup> References to authorship in early cinema were generally made in relation to well-regarded playwrights or authors whose works were being adapted for the screen rather than with regard to the filmmakers themselves, and while in some cases a respected text may have been chosen for cinematic treatment to increase the perception of artistic merit in film, it was more commonly a convenient marketing tool: prestige and profit can never be completely disconnected from one another.<sup>16</sup>

The role of the film director, someone who instructs both the actors and the camera operator, emerged gradually.<sup>17</sup> The director as separate role to that of the camera operator originated in narrative film, as documentary scenes were generally the work of a single filmmaker who decided what to film and then operated the camera him- or herself.<sup>18</sup> Technological developments promoted a division of the roles of people involved in producing a film; the camera operator had to be someone with the specialised skills necessary to operate the equipment, and the scriptwriter's role was also separated in principle from that of the director.<sup>19</sup> This is not to say that one person could not have held several roles, but that the roles began to be conceptualised as separate. The film director was originally seen as similar to a theatrical director: as someone who realises the vision of someone else (the playwright, the script writer), and in the American studio system in particular the director was a contracted technical employee with no claim of ownership over the film text. Gradually directors began to assert their role as authors in the filmmaking process. For example, when D.W. Griffith left Bioscope in 1913, he took out an advertisement retrospectively claiming authorship over hundreds of films he had directed while employed by the

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<sup>15</sup> Marjut Salokannel, "Cinema in Search of its Authors: On the Notion of Film Authorship in Legal Discourse," in *Film and Authorship*, ed. Virginia Wright Wexman (New Brunswick, New Jersey and London: Rutgers University Press, 2003), 161-162.

<sup>16</sup> Markku Varjola, "Tekijäpolitiikan vaiheet," *Filmihullu*, no. 2 (2002): 5.

<sup>17</sup> I would like to thank members of the H-FILM mailing list for suggesting some of the literature discussed here.

<sup>18</sup> Varjola, "Tekijäpolitiikan vaiheet," 5.

<sup>19</sup> Salokannel, "Cinema in Search of its Authors," 157. See also David Bordwell, Janet Staiger, and Kristin Thompson, *The Classical Hollywood Cinema. Film Style & Mode of Production to 1960* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), 116-120.

company, and in the 1930s the newly formed Directors Guild of America promoted the notion of the artist-genius in cinema by demanding only one person be credited as the director of any given film.<sup>20</sup>

Although Markku Varjola points to a 1932 Swedish text that argues that directors are to film history what kings are to national histories,<sup>21</sup> and Richard Koszarski identifies overtly auteurist texts on film from as early as 1915,<sup>22</sup> auteurism as a named and identified approach to analysing film originates from the writings of French film critics in the middle of the twentieth century. In 1948 Alexandre Astruc proposed the term “caméra-stylo”, signifying the use of the camera in the way a writer uses a pen.<sup>23</sup> Astruc’s argument that the cinematic medium should be an art form – a language, even – in its own right influenced some of the film critics writing for the journal *Cahiers du Cinéma* a few years later.<sup>24</sup> The subsequent influence of this *Cahierist* auteurism derived in part from the fact that many of the original critics, such as Jean-Luc Godard and François Truffaut, later emerged as celebrated auteur directors of the French New Wave.

#### The emergence and influence of auteurism

Following Astruc’s call for a cinematic language, the *Cahiers du Cinéma* critics focused on evaluating films according to the artistic merit of their mise-en-scène over other aspects such as narrative, dialogue or ideological stance.<sup>25</sup> Prioritising mise-en-scène above other elements of the final film text made it possible to see value in films otherwise excluded from conceptualisations of worthwhile cinema, such as Hollywood studio productions: the restrictions imposed by the studio system were thought to create an environment where talented directors, limited in their choice of topics, scripts and actors, could still construct filmic images in a way that communicated a unified theme or artistic personality across all of their works. *Cahiers du Cinéma*’s editor André Bazin emphasised the importance of a filmmaker’s oeuvre revealing a unified personality by proclaiming

<sup>20</sup> Tom Gunning, "D.W.Griffith: Historical Figure, Film Director, and Ideological Shadow," in *Film and Authorship*, ed. Virginia Wright Wexman (New Brunswick, New Jersey and London: Rutgers University Press, 2003), 181; Virginia Wright Wexman, "Introduction," in *Film and Authorship*, ed. Virginia Wright Wexman (New Brunswick, New Jersey and London: Rutgers University Press, 2003), 10.

<sup>21</sup> Varjola, "Tekijänpolitiikan vaiheet," 6. Ironically, while the original text sought to emphasise the importance of the vision of a talented director, from a twenty-first century point-of-view the comparison reveals one of the key problems of auteurism.

<sup>22</sup> Richard Koszarski, "Auteurism revisited," *Film History* 7 (1995): 355.

<sup>23</sup> Alexandre Astruc, "Caméra-stylo, elokuvan uusi avantgarde," in *Varjojen valtakunta. Elokuvahistorian uusi lukukirja*, eds Hannu Salmi and Anu Koivunen (Vammala: Turun yliopiston täydennyskoulutuskeskus, 1997), 154.

<sup>24</sup> Cahogue, *Theories of Authorship*, 9. *Cahiers du Cinéma* was first published in 1951.

<sup>25</sup> See for example Thomas Elsaesser, "Two Decades in Another Country: Hollywood and the Cinéphiles," in *Superculture. American Popular Culture and Europe*, ed. C.W.E Bigsby (London: Paul Elek, 1975), 212; Fowler, "Introduction to part three," 89.

a “politique des auteurs”, a politics of auteurs. Bazin defined the auteur director as someone who “is always his own subject matter; [...] he has the same attitude and passes the same moral judgments [in each film].”<sup>26</sup> The reference to ‘moral judgments’ reveals one of the attractions of auteur cinema: it has often been seen as a sophisticated antithesis to an amoral profit-oriented cinema.

Extrapolating from Bazin’s essay title and calling the approaches in *Cahiers du Cinéma* a single “politics”, however, oversimplifies matters. The contributors’ approaches to auteurism changed over the years and contradicted each other, and so cannot be thought of as a single clearly articulated position. For example, where the journal’s contributors of the 1950s prioritised a film’s mise-en-scène and its director’s personal vision in their assessment of a filmmaker’s auteurial status, by the 1960s *Cahiers du Cinéma* had developed a more politically active outlook and began to favour filmmakers who used their art to make political rather than personal statements. Yet as Virginia Wright Wexman states, the directors whose work was valorised by the more politically active *Cahiers* cohort of the 1960s “remained much the same group as those singled out [for praise] by the original auteurist critics.”<sup>27</sup>

The most enduring legacies of *Cahiers du Cinéma* have been, first, its role in perpetuating the now popular perception that the creator of a film is its director, as opposed to its writer, producer or lead actor.<sup>28</sup> Second, *Cahiers du Cinéma*-originated auteurism was the catalyst for separating cinema into what were perceived as mutually exclusive categories: “art” film and “popular” film. Art cinema supposedly expresses the creativity of an artist and eschews commercial success; popular cinema targets large audiences and does not concern itself with aesthetic innovation or politico-moral statements.<sup>29</sup> In practice, of course, such distinctions are hardly tenable. Celebrating artistic directors above all others leads to a commonly criticised aspect of *Cahierist* auteurism: its interconnectedness with elitist canon-building. Not all directors can be auteurs, and those without the necessary vision to be true artists are considered “mere” metteurs-en-scène, executors of the visions of others.<sup>30</sup> Aki and Mika Kaurismäki, for example, have been ascribed these respective

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<sup>26</sup> André Bazin, “La politique des auteurs,” in *Theories of authorship*, ed. John Caughie (London, Boston and Henley: Routledge, Kegan Paul & British Film Institute, 1981), 45.

<sup>27</sup> Wright Wexman, “Introduction,” 5.

<sup>28</sup> Caughie, *Theories of Authorship*, 9.

<sup>29</sup> Nummelin, *Valkoinen hehku*, 226-227.

<sup>30</sup> Caughie, *Theories of Authorship*, 9-10.

roles of auteur and metteur-en-scène, either explicitly or implicitly: critics tend to emphasise the personal motifs of the former and the varying collaborators of the latter.<sup>31</sup>

*Cahiers du Cinéma*-originated auteurism spread to English-speaking contexts through the British journal *Screen* and the translations of the American critic Andrew Sarris, albeit in different forms. Sarris promoted what Janet Staiger calls “Romantic” auteurism, which evaluated films according to “transcendence of time and place, a personal vision of the world, and consistency and coherence of statement.”<sup>32</sup> Sarris is also credited with creating confusion in English-language cinema studies by translating “politique des auteurs” as “auteur theory.” *Screen*, on the other hand, was influenced by the more politically active *Cahiers* collective of the 1960s.<sup>33</sup> For example, *Screen* preferred to approach the idea of authorship in cinema from a psychoanalytic point of view and derided Romantic auteurism.<sup>34</sup>

*Cahiers*-influenced Romantic auteurism became a definitive feature of Finnish cinephilia through the journal *Filmihullu*, “*Film Crazy*”. In his analysis of the discourses in Finnish film studies Manu Haapalainen identifies the long-term editors of and contributors to *Filmihullu*, Peter von Bagh and Sakari Toiviainen, as the central figures in an influential auteurist cinephilia and film criticism, in opposition to academic film analysis.<sup>35</sup> Juri Nummelin’s similar study describes *Filmihullu* as relying on “Bazinian impressionist film criticism” – that is, favouring an evaluative rather than an analytical approach.<sup>36</sup> Indeed, *Filmihullu* sees itself as the Finnish equivalent of *Cahiers du Cinéma*, and it has reprinted several translations of original French articles and reviews since its founding in 1968. While the journal has in recent years included special issues on television and popular cinema, it also regularly publishes polemical articles against academic non-auteurial film studies. These criticisms range from the moderate, manifesting frustration with the perceived paucity of

<sup>31</sup> See for example Peter von Bagh’s foreword in Marja-Leena Hukkanen, *Shadows in Paradise. Photographs from the films of Aki Kaurismäki* (Helsinki: Otava, 1997), 5; Sakari Toiviainen, *Levottomat sukupolvet: uusin suomalainen elokuva* (Helsinki: Suomalaisen kirjallisuuden seura, 2002), 60.

<sup>32</sup> Janet Staiger, “The Politics of Film Canons,” *Cinema Journal* 24, no. 3 (1985): 12.

<sup>33</sup> Wright Wexman, “Introduction,” 6-7.

<sup>34</sup> An article in a recent anniversary issue outlines *Screen*’s history, including its “notorious love affair with psychoanalytic theory.” Annette Kuhn, “*Screen* and screen theorizing today,” *Screen* 50, no. 1 (2009): 3.

<sup>35</sup> Manu Haapalainen, “Elokuvatutkimuksen nykysuunnista. Uusmedian puristuksessa vai nykykulttuurin polttopisteessä?,” in *Taju kankaalle. Uutta suomalaista elokuvaa paikantamassa*, eds Kimmo Ahonen et al. (Turku: Kirja-Aurora, 2003), 31,33.

<sup>36</sup> Nummelin, *Valkoinen hehku*, 374.

cinophilia among film scholar,<sup>37</sup> to the vitriolic. An illustrative example of the latter is an editorial which describes media studies as being the intellectual equivalent of the Holocaust.<sup>38</sup>

*Filmihullu* has played an integral part in validating a Finnish auteurial canon, with Aki Kaurismäki as its most venerated living representative. For example, in a 1991 special issue dedicated to the Kaurismäki brothers one feature presents translations of foreign reviews of Aki Kaurismäki's films under the heading "Our boy out in the world."<sup>39</sup> The "us" implied in the title could refer to both Finns generally or more narrowly to the cinephiles of *Filmihullu*'s readership. Kaurismäki's auteurial status also reinforces *Filmihullu*'s self-identification as the Finnish *Cahiers du Cinéma*, as the director had written film reviews for the journal, just as the French New Wave directors had done for the French journal.

#### The author, pre-text and post-text

Auteurism, and Romantic auteurism in particular, fell out of favour in cinema studies in the 1970s due to its implied "cult of personality."<sup>40</sup> Auteurism was no longer a broadly accepted academic approach to film because meaning was increasingly seen as something "[located] at the point of reception," that is, dependent on the interpretation of the viewer rather than on the intentions of the director.<sup>41</sup> In addition, the veneration of individual genius was rejected as "a false consciousness inculcated by bourgeois ideology."<sup>42</sup> John Caughie explains the totality of the rejection of auteurism as a consequence of embarrassment over its earlier, total acceptance: he suggests the academic shift away from auteurism was equivalent to a "reaction against a teenage romance."<sup>43</sup> The decline in auteurism dates from Roland Barthes' essay "Death of the Author," originally a critique of the idea of literary authors having ownership of the meaning of texts. According to Barthes, "[w]riting is that neutral, composite, oblique space where our subject slips away, the negative where all identity is lost, starting with the very identity of the body writing."<sup>44</sup> For Barthes, foregrounding the reader's (or, in a cinematic context, the spectator's) role in

<sup>37</sup> See for example Sakari Toiviainen, "Mikä maa, mikä valuutta," *Filmihullu*, no. 3 (2005): 3.

<sup>38</sup> Sakari Toiviainen, "Juutalainen kokemus, Godard ja barbaria," *Filmihullu*, no. 6 (2000). The linking of media studies and the Holocaust is made even more callous by the fact that the issue itself was in part themed around Jewishness in cinema.

<sup>39</sup> "Meidän poikamme maailmalla," *Filmihullu*, no. 5 (1991). The word "poika" in Finnish can be translated as either "boy" or "son".

<sup>40</sup> James Naremore, "Authorship and the Cultural politics of Film Criticism," *Film Quarterly* 44, no. 1 (1990): 20.

<sup>41</sup> Sellors, "Collective Authorship in Film," 263.

<sup>42</sup> Perez, *The material ghost*, 4.

<sup>43</sup> Caughie, *Theories of Authorship*, 2.

<sup>44</sup> Barthes, *Image Music Text*, 142.

constructing the meaning of a text renders irrelevant the intentions of the “Author” as well as the explanations of the “Critic.” In effect Barthes presents a dynamic where an Author first creates a text, and a Critic then deciphers the Author in the text for the benefit of the Reader. If the Author is removed from the equation, there is nothing for the Critic to decipher, thus liberating the Reader to understand the text as he or she pleases. It is important to understand these categories – Author, Critic, Reader – not as totalising descriptions of actual individuals, but as abstract functions that can be filled by the same real person at different times in relation to different texts. However, a flaw in the model is still its reliance on neat distinctions, as if the three roles or functions did not influence one another: that in the process of being a Reader a person could not also function as Critic; that in assuming the role of Author, a person could not approach a text also as a Critic and a Reader; and that literary criticism itself would become redundant if recourse to authorial intent no longer existed. In constructing reading as the process that creates meaning, Barthes in effect places the Reader in the position of the Author. In arguing for a plurality of meanings, then, Barthes replaces one Author with another.

The desire to remove authors from the interpretive process remains strong in certain branches of contemporary film studies. For example, Daniel Frampton has proposed the concepts of “film-being” and “film-thinking” to establish a vocabulary for thinking of film as a philosophy in itself. Like Barthes’ pronouncement of the death of the author, film-being and film-thinking (and their associated concepts, the somewhat contrived neologisms “filmind” and “filmosophy”) are intended as ways of understanding film as arising from itself, free from auteurs and originators: “[t]here is no ‘external’ force, no mystical being or invisible other. It is the film that is steering its own (dis)course.”<sup>45</sup> While he claims film-being is not intended as a vehicle for denying the contributions of the actual people involved in filmmaking, Frampton feels that in the first instance it is best to “divorce the creators,” being as they are “simple conduits for film-thinking.”<sup>46</sup> Frampton’s struggle with consolidating an understanding of film as a cognitive framework in its own right with an understanding of how filmmaking actually works highlights the problem of theorising the auteur: to speak of an auteur is to place unnecessary focus on a single individual; to deny the auteur – or filmmakers more generally – is to remove the discussion from the reality of film production and consumption.

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<sup>45</sup> Daniel Frampton, *Filmosophy* (London and New York: Wallflower Press, 2006), 73.

<sup>46</sup> Frampton, *Filmosophy*, 75.

Writing around the same time as Barthes, Michel Foucault also argued against textual interpretations which rely on understandings of authorial intent. For Foucault the actual existing person of the writer was not “dead” quite in the sense that Barthes intended it, but was rather overtaken by the “author-function,” the unifying principle of a writer’s work. According to Barthes it is textuality itself that is the originator of a text; the person writing a text is not an author, but merely a “scriptor” who is entirely irrelevant to the process of reading.<sup>47</sup> For Foucault, a text creates its author: an author is not the all-explaining precondition of a text, but exists nonetheless. Foucault argues that to discover that *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* was written by Sir Francis Bacon, instead of William Shakespeare, would not affect the reading of the play, but it would have significant implications for what we understand by “Bacon” and “Shakespeare”.<sup>48</sup> Foucault’s point applies in particular to fictional works: such a revelation about a text’s real author would have wider-ranging implications in the case of texts which do not purport to be fictional, such as religious tracts or autobiographies.

As Arnaud Bernadet points out, in tying the concept of an oeuvre to a named, identified figure, the author-function retained a structuralist focus that still relied on an individual as an organising principle.<sup>49</sup> In this respect the author-function was in effect close to a *Cahierist* understanding of the auteur: in both cases a unifying theme in a body of work is able to be coded from a particular method of signification – called “filmic language” by Astruc, “discourse” by Foucault – and this unifying theme is attributed to a named individual. The process is to some extent self-perpetuating: to identify the Kiesłowskian or Shakespearean theme or author-function one has to start from texts that have already been attributed to those names, regardless of what other texts might stylistically or thematically ‘fit’ the function. Further, the author-function cannot work as a methodological tool that distinguishes between a named yet impersonal entity and the real person behind that name. As Adrian Wilson argues, “it is precisely as a person that the author-figure is constructed” – that is, a reader or a spectator does not conceptualise the unifying theme of a body of work as an abstract structure of meanings, but as revealing something of the values and preoccupations of a particular individual.<sup>50</sup> For example, although the Helsinki-sequence of Jim

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<sup>47</sup> Barthes, *Image Music Text*, 145.

<sup>48</sup> Foucault, “What is an Author?,” 18.

<sup>49</sup> Arnaud Bernadet, “L’Historicité de l’auteur: une catégorie problématique,” in *Une histoire de la “fonction-auteur” est-elle possible? Actes du colloque organisé par le Centre de recherche LiDiSa (Littérature et Discours du Savoir)*, eds Nicole Jacques-Lefèvre and Frédéric Regard (Saint-Étienne: Université de Saint-Étienne, 2001), 17-18.

<sup>50</sup> Wilson, “Foucault on the ‘Question of the Author’,” 360.

Jarmusch's *Night on Earth* (1991) bears a striking and deliberate similarity to Kaurismäkian films, and indeed on the basis of this segment Sergei Medvedev misidentifies the whole film as being made by the Kaurismäki brothers,<sup>51</sup> it could not be used to create the Aki Kaurismäki author-function for the simple reason that it was not made by the actual, existing Kaurismäki.

One problem involved in examining the author-function of a film auteur is in establishing the auteur's oeuvre, and where it begins and ends. Foucault had already raised this issue in a literary context:

If we wish to publish the complete works of Nietzsche, for example, where do we draw the line? [...] [W]hat if, in a notebook filled with aphorisms, we find a reference, a reminder of an appointment, an address, or a laundry bill, should this be included in his works? Why not?<sup>52</sup>

Foucault's focus is on the point where a text becomes valuable enough to be considered a text: the question here is really what defines art. Some frustrations with auteurism arise from the tendency to view otherwise mediocre films as valuable because they are attributed to an established auteur.<sup>53</sup> An oeuvre is therefore built on the logic that, given an auteur makes worthy films, an auteur's films must be worthy. Art and worth are of course highly subjective concepts, and it is beyond the scope of my project to debate them here. However, defining filmic oeuvres is complicated enough without considerations of artistic merit. For example, Stephen Heath draws attention to the ambiguous position of films where a person who is considered an auteur plays a non-auteurial role.<sup>54</sup> Do the collaborative efforts between Aki and Mika Kaurismäki, for example, count towards the oeuvre of both brothers? Here it is useful to consider the distinction between an oeuvre and a filmography. While both are, in effect, a list of films, the term 'filmography' lacks the value judgments inherent in 'oeuvre'. An oeuvre is closely tied to understandings of the auteur as artist-genius: where a filmography can be read as a particular individual's curriculum vitae, it is the oeuvre that is brought together by the author-function. A complete filmography of Aki Kaurismäki's work, for example, would certainly include the early collaborative efforts of the two

<sup>51</sup> Sergei Medvedev, "Glenn Gould, Russia, Finland and the North," *Theory, Technology and Culture*, no. 1-2 (2000), <http://epe.lac-bac.gc.ca/100/201/300/ctheory/articles/2000/no85.txt>.

<sup>52</sup> Foucault, "What is an Author?," 16.

<sup>53</sup> See for example Timothy Corrigan, "Auteurs and the New Hollywood," in *The New American Cinema*, ed. Jon Lewis (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1998), 43; Ernest Callenbach, "The Auteur Policy," *Film Quarterly* 17, no. 1 (1963): 57.

<sup>54</sup> Stephen Heath, "Comment on 'The idea of authorship'," in *Theories of Authorship*, ed. John Caughie (London, Boston and Henley: Routledge, Kegan Paul & British Film Institute, 1981), 215.



Kaurismäki: *The Liar* (*Valehtelija*, Mika Kaurismäki, 1981), *The Saimaa Gesture* (*Saimaa-ilmiö*, Mika and Aki Kaurismäki, 1981), *Jackpot 2* (Mika Kaurismäki, 1981) and *The Worthless* (*Arvottomat*, Mika Kaurismäki, 1982). Pietari Kääpä calls these four films the brothers' "template films," as they "establish the representational and argumentative basis of much of the Kaurismäki's subsequent work."<sup>55</sup> It is tempting, then, to also include these collaborations, all either scripted or co-directed by the younger Kaurismäki, in his oeuvre as well: implicit in Kääpä's identification of the "representative and argumentative basis" of the films is the author-function, which links the template films to Aki Kaurismäki's later, more clear-cut auteurial cases such as *Hold on to Your Scarf*, *Tatjana* (*Pidä huivista kiinni*, *Tatjana*, 1993), which he directed, wrote, edited and produced.

A complete filmography, however, would also include many other films that would not be attributed to Kaurismäki as an auteur. In the 1980s the Kaurismäki brothers shared the production company Villealfa with another director, Pauli Pentti, and the three had united with Anssi Mänttari and Markku Lehmuskallio to form FilmTotal, an umbrella business that allowed the five directors to pool resources in order to maintain a degree of financial and artistic independence.<sup>56</sup> As a result of this collaboration, after the template films Aki Kaurismäki worked on his brother's directorial film projects *The Clan – A Tale of the Frogs* (*Klaani – Tarina Sammakkoitten suvusta*, 1984) and *Rosso* (1985), and he also worked on several films by Anssi Mänttari, as well as the occasional film directed by Janne Kuusi, Pauli Pentti, Veikko Aaltonen and Marjaana Mykkänen. Often in these projects Kaurismäki worked as an actor but also as co-director, producer or other crew member. Including these films in Kaurismäki's filmography testifies to his ability to function in a range of roles, as a dedicated professional of film, but it would be much more difficult to justify including all of them in his oeuvre as an auteur.

While both Barthes' and Foucault's reconfigurations of authorship have their flaws, they have been influential in de-centering the assumed creator of a work from the interpretation process itself. If we accept that the author is now as removed as he or she is likely to be from the reader's or spectator's engagement with a text, it becomes important to try to ascertain to what extent and how the author *is* present in the interpretive process. The authorial presence is particularly interesting in film spectatorship: if everyone knows that no film project can have only one

<sup>55</sup> Kääpä, *The National and Beyond*, 9.

<sup>56</sup> Nina Viander, "Aki Kaurismäki," [Dissertation [unpublished manuscript]] (Työväen Akatemia 1991), 13.

originator (bar extremely small-scale projects such as those readily available on YouTube), then why do we still insist on grouping films according to their directors? Why and how does knowledge of a director's past works or personal life seep into our readings of films? It becomes more productive to move beyond debates about the author as either a precondition or a "retrojection"<sup>57</sup> of the text, and to understand the auteur instead as an extratextual function, a construct that neither defines nor is restricted to the meaning of a text.

### The auteur reconsidered

Despite the individualist biases inherent in the concept of an auteur, and the continuing relevance of reception studies, the belief in the director as the creator of a film continues to have broad appeal.<sup>58</sup> Indeed, auteurism itself can now be seen as a class-conscious approach to film analysis: Gilberto Perez argues that while "a critique of individualism" was perhaps a way of "bucking the establishment" in the 1970s, the same approach now "[suits] the [reigning] corporate capitalism."<sup>59</sup> In Perez' view, venerating individual genius can be seen as denying creative agency to production and marketing companies. On the other hand, Robert L. Carringer argues that the rehabilitation of the auteur into academic analysis is partly due to "the emergence of disciplines such as queer, women's, and postcolonial studies, which required authorial canons for self-legitimation."<sup>60</sup> The implicit hypocrisy of the development emphasises the fact that while one way of constructing a canon may lose credibility, the practice of canon-building itself remains.

Current debates do not focus so much on whether the auteur exists, but on how the auteur could best be used as an analytical category. For example, C. Paul Sellors argues that identifying an auteur or auteurs for a cinematic work is of ethical importance, and that to overcome the problems in reconciling the artist-genius with the collective mode of film production, authorship should be viewed as "a social practice" rather than as "an instance of solitary genius."<sup>61</sup> Sellors evokes the Durkheimian view that "creation is largely, perhaps wholly, rooted in collective phenomena,"<sup>62</sup> a view which is increasingly articulated in terms of global creative networks. A key point in Sellors' argument is that one cannot declare outright who should be seen as the auteur in

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<sup>57</sup> Bennett, *The Author*, 71.

<sup>58</sup> Koszarski, "Auteurism revisited," 356.

<sup>59</sup> Perez, *The material ghost*, 6-7.

<sup>60</sup> Carringer, "Collaboration and Concepts of Authorship," 371.

<sup>61</sup> Sellors, "Collective Authorship in Film," 268.

<sup>62</sup> Lewis A. Coser, "Introduction: Maurice Halbwachs 1877-1945," in *On Collective Memory*, ed. Lewis A. Coser (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 25.

the broad field of 'cinema', but that the allocation of auteur status to either a person or a collective would have to depend on the production context of each individual film. In this view, it becomes the moral obligation of someone, singular or plural, to take responsibility for the film text. Robert L. Carringer proposes instead "collaboration analysis," which similarly requires an understanding of the specific production context of a film, but ultimately "the primary author is reinscribed within what is now established as an institutional context of authorship."<sup>63</sup> My appropriation of the author-persona as a specifically cinematic auteur-persona relies on a similar understanding of Kaurismäki as the primary author, but one whose authorship in real terms is built from collaborative processes.

Aki Kaurismäki is remarkably close in some films to being a 'pure' auteur: he is not only the director but also the writer of each of the films studied here, and in addition he has produced and/or edited some of them.<sup>64</sup> He undoubtedly has ultimate creative control over the films, yet the aesthetic consistency of the films relies on factors other than the identity of the writer-director alone. Where the Kaurismäkian auteur-function may draw from the familiar aesthetic and expected narrative elements of films directed by Kaurismäki, the consistency that results from the multiple artistic control by the writer-director in several films is further emphasised by the continuing participation of other collaborators, such as the cinematographer Timo Salminen. Salminen has been the cinematographer of all of Kaurismäki's films, excluding the made-for-television Jean-Paul Sartre adaptation *Dirty Hands* (*Likaiset kädet*, 1989), and so is responsible for the distinctive visual style of the Kaurismäkian oeuvre.<sup>65</sup> Responsible for sound, editing and set design respectively, Jouko Lumme, Timo Linnasalo and Markku Pätilä have also "become part and parcel of the Kaurismäki team,"<sup>66</sup> and play an important part in creating the Kaurismäkian aesthetic. While these other filmmakers are often mentioned as Kaurismäki's long-term collaborators, so far there has been no significant critical interest in debating their possible auteurial status. Their case is illustrative of the lack of agency and authority attributed to people such as cinematographers and designers, who are acknowledged as instrumental in creating some aspect of the finished film, but who do not have enough control over the finished product to be

<sup>63</sup> Carringer, "Collaboration and Concepts of Authorship," 377.

<sup>64</sup> In addition to writing the script for and directing the three focus films, Kaurismäki edited *Lights in the Dusk* and *Drifting Clouds* and produced *Drifting Clouds*. "Aki Kaurismäki" [website] *Elonet*, (2006) available from <http://www.elonet.fi/name/he25cq/> [cited 17.7.2008].

<sup>65</sup> "Timo Salminen" [website] *Elonet*, (2006) available from <http://www.elonet.fi/name/he25cr/> [cited 17.7. 2008].

<sup>66</sup> Helena Ylänen, "BACKGROUND: An ungifted child joins the world's movie brotherhood" [online article] *Helsingin Sanomat - International Edition*, (2002) available from <http://www2.hs.fi/english/archive/news.asp?id=20020528IE14> [cited 29.6. 2009].

considered auteurs. Ironically, the original *Cahierist* drive to understand Hollywood directors as artists operating under the pressure of the studio system could now be applied to thinking of cinematographers and other agents such as lighting and costume designers as artists struggling in a director-focused film economy. Indeed, some recent work has sought to better understand the contributions of these other roles as a means to “challenge auteur theories that over-concentrate on the creative contribution of the director”.<sup>67</sup> My focus on auteurial consistency marries the idea of the author-function with an understanding of the collectivity of film production: Kaurismäki may have the greatest control over the content and style of the film, but the aesthetic consistency of Kaurismäkian films is also a product of collective authorship.

It may be useful to compare the auteurist label in this cinematically consistent mode as roughly equivalent to genre. Sakari Toiviainen describes genre as an “agreement between the filmmakers and the audience,” or a mutual expectation to produce and receive particular styles and types of films.<sup>68</sup> This agreement could also be said to be in place between an auteur and the audience as well. Thomas Elsaesser, however, differentiates between genre’s “[codification] of shared expectations” and the auteur’s “[creation of] shared knowledge [and his or her oeuvre’s] own memory.”<sup>69</sup> I see Elsaesser’s distinction being not between *what* is produced (expectations or memory), but *when* that something is produced (before or after watching the film). One’s expectations of a type of film – whether “Kaurismäkian”, a musical, a thriller or “Almódovarian” – are coloured by past experiences of films under the same label. Future expectations of the same will draw on the ‘shared knowledge’ or ‘oeuvre memory’ to which each film contributes. Ultimately, whether one regards the director as the creator of a work or not, a Kaurismäkian film has certain expectations placed on it in terms of aesthetic consistency and narrative content. In order to appreciate ‘Kaurismäkianness’ as a broader cultural phenomenon it is first important to understand the style and content of Aki Kaurismäki’s films, or what it means to be Kaurismäkian.

### Aki Kaurismäki’s cinema

The protagonists in Kaurismäkian films generally occupy positions of low social status: when not in prison or unemployed they are industrial butchers, garbage collectors, dish washers. Some are utterly friendless. Kaurismäki has stated that he has no interest in the lives of the well-to-do, and

<sup>67</sup> Tim Bergfelder, Sue Harris, and Sarah Street, *Film Architecture and the Transnational Imagination. Set Design in 1930s European Cinema* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2007), 27.

<sup>68</sup> Toiviainen, *Levottomat sukupolvet*, 196.

<sup>69</sup> Elsaesser, *European cinema: face to face with Hollywood*, 52.

is dedicated to telling stories about the “losers” of society.<sup>70</sup> These losers operate within the norms of society to the best of their abilities, often thwarted in their efforts by unfortunate personal circumstances that lead them into violence and consequently further into the margins of society. In the cases of Nikander and Taisto, the respective protagonists of *Shadows in Paradise* and *Ariel* (1988), the violence is sudden and impulsive. For Rahikainen of *Crime and Punishment* (*Rikos ja rangaistus*, 1983) and Iris of *The Match Factory Girl* (*Tulitikkutehtaan tyttö*, 1990), the step into crime is premeditated, an exercise in control over their environment. Death, suicide, shame and loneliness are recurring themes, and protagonists’ efforts at improving their social standing usually fail or are aborted: the proposed new garbage collection business in *Shadows in Paradise* never eventuates; a building contractor takes to desperate measures following his bankruptcy in *The Man Without A Past*. The comparative ‘winners’ of society provide telling juxtaposition, and appear most commonly in supporting roles such as Ilona’s unctuous employers in *Shadows in Paradise* or Iris’ callous lover in *The Match Factory Girl*. *Hamlet Goes Business* (*Hamlet liikemaailmassa*, 1987) is a rare example of a film in which main characters have high social standing and are surrounded by material wealth, and Mrs Sjöholm in *Drifting Clouds* is an equally rare example of a sympathetic wealthy character. Despite the gloomy elements in the films, they also have a heightened sense of the ridiculous: from the temperamental canopy of Taisto’s white Cadillac to the epic journey across Helsinki in *Calamari Union* (1985) that sees fourteen Franks and one Pekka succumb to either death or marriage, a muted sense of humour marks the work.

The dialogue in the Kaurismäkian films is highly stylised and archaic, and often also lends a subtle humour to the narrative. The marriage of short and functional phrases with old-fashioned, even romantic imagery draws deliberate attention to the way characters communicate with each other and creates a sense of whimsy and nostalgia. Silence is important in Kaurismäkian expression: Stephen Holden refers to the films’ “deadpan expressionistic mode”, arguing that “the distance between *Juha* [the 1999 black and white silent film] and [Kaurismäki’s] talking films isn’t that great.”<sup>71</sup> The acting style in Kaurismäkian film is also distinctive in its minimalism. It accommodates long pauses and resists expressions of emotion. Kaurismäki has explained that his approach to acting is consciously similar to Bertolt Brecht’s: he too believes “that ‘acting’ should be avoided in films” and that “the actor should regard himself as a narrator who only *quotes* the character he is playing.”<sup>72</sup>

<sup>70</sup> See for example Timo Forss, “Väsnynt susi,” *Voima* 2005, 17. “Kaurismäki Puts Finnish Film on the Map,” *Christian Science Monitor*, 6.11. 1990, 13.

<sup>71</sup> Stephen Holden, “Making an Old Story New With the Purity of a Silent,” *New York Times*, 2.10. 1999, B14.

<sup>72</sup> Bert Cardullo, “Finnish Character,” *Film Quarterly* 59, no. 4 (2006): 7.

Music also plays an important part in Kaurismäkian films, with lyrics often standing in for dialogue or providing an ironic counterpoint to the action on screen.<sup>73</sup> Leena Lepistö has analysed the use of music in Kaurismäkian film, and notes that certain performers and pieces of music recur throughout the oeuvre. For example, extracts of Pyotr Tchaikovsky's "Sinfonie Pathétique" feature in no fewer than seven films, while performances by the iconic tango singer Olavi Virta are used twelve times.<sup>74</sup> Music in Kaurismäkian films also tends to be diegetic, with characters listening to appropriate music on the radio or attending live performances.

The socially marginal status of the characters is emphasised by the films' spatial and temporal defamiliarisation as well. For example, while Kaurismäkian films are predominately urban, their cityscape has few obvious landmarks that would indicate where the action takes place. Henry Bacon argues that while in some ways the city is identifiable as Helsinki – at least to its residents – at the same time the way Helsinki is depicted creates a sense of "strangeness."<sup>75</sup> According to Bacon, Helsinki itself is out of place, contributing to and reflecting the protagonists' estrangement from society.<sup>76</sup> Drawing on Bacon's analysis, Pietari Kääpä similarly refers to Kaurismäki's Helsinki as an "impressionistic snapshot" of the city, while Sirpa Tani argues that the films' aesthetics transform the city: according to Tani the diegetic city does not refer to a physical reality, but to an imagined past.<sup>77</sup> Indeed, the films' nostalgia complicates the sense of past and present in the films: while the problems faced by the protagonists reflect the time in which the films were made, the settings and visual style of the films recall a range of past time periods. The concurrent representation of several time periods foregrounds the continual changes in Finnish society: Tytti Soila describes Kaurismäkian cinema as reflecting a Finnish national identity in "limbo between the demolished worldview of the former Soviet Union and an onrushing Euro-Americanism," and

<sup>73</sup> Leena Lepistö, "'Sä et kyyneltä nää" – musiikki Aki Kaurismäen elokuvissa" [website] *Aki Kaurismäki Orimattilan kirjaston esittelyssä*, (2006) available from <http://www.orimattilankirjasto.fi/aki-kaurismaki/nakokulmia-elokuviin/46-lepisto-leena-qa-et-kyynelta-naaq-musiikki-aki-kaurismaen-elokuvissa> [cited 3.3.2012].

<sup>74</sup> Lepistö, "Sä et kyyneltä nää". Lepistö did not consider Kaurismäki's short films or the Leningrad Cowboy films in her study, nor is Kaurismäki's most recent film *Le Havre* included in the data.

<sup>75</sup> Henry Bacon, "Aki Kaurismäen sijoiltaan olon poetiikka," in *Taju Kankaalle. Uutta Suomalaista Elokuvaa Paikantamassa*, eds Kimmo Ahonen et al. (Turku: Kirja-Aurora, 2003), 92.

<sup>76</sup> Bacon, "Aki Kaurismäen sijoiltaan olon poetiikka," 92.

<sup>77</sup> Pietari Kääpä, "Displaced souls lost in Finland: the Kaurismäkis' films as cinema of the marginalised," *WiderScreen 2* (2006): 2-3; Sirpa Tani, "The Aesthetics of Backyards: Spaces and Places in Aki Kaurismäki's Films" [website] *Orimattila Town Library*, (2007) available from [http://www.orimattila.fi/kirjasto/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=196&Itemid=94](http://www.orimattila.fi/kirjasto/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=196&Itemid=94) [cited 1.1.2011].

Henry Bacon views Kaurismäkian nostalgia as a deliberate, “poetic” distancing from the present.<sup>78</sup> This nostalgia, while evident in the films, is also an important part of Kaurismäki’s public persona. The director is variously quoted as having a love-hate relationship with Finnishness, reacting against what he considers to be the destruction of Finnish society, or claiming that the only way to love one’s homeland is to leave it.<sup>79</sup>

### The ‘Kaurismäkian’ style

The Kaurismäkian defamiliarisation of time, place and dialogue has become a recognisable technique, and the style of the films has been appropriated by other artists as well. For example, the Helsinki-sequence of Jim Jarmusch’s *Night on Earth* is a deliberate play on Kaurismäkian conventions: it makes use of familiar faces from Kaurismäkian films such as Sakari Kuosmanen and Matti Pellonpää, and to emphasise the connection two of the characters in the sequence are even called Aki and Mika, after the filmmaking brothers. The darkly comic *Aaltra* (Gustave de Kervern and Benoît Delépine, 2004) also perpetuates a Kaurismäkian aesthetic, and there is distinct cinephilic pleasure in recognising the references: towards the end of the film Kaurismäki even appears in a small role as the head of a company that manufactures faulty agricultural machinery.

The Kaurismäkian influence reaches beyond cinema as well. For example, many Kaurismäkian films have been adapted for the stage, mainly in Germany but also in Finland.<sup>80</sup> Kaurismäkian films, themselves often compared to the paintings of Edward Hopper with their “flat colors, a cold sun, long shadows, a sky that looks dull even when a brilliant blue,”<sup>81</sup> have also inspired paintings.

<sup>78</sup> Tytti Soila, "The face of a sad rat: The cinematic universe of the Kaurismäki brothers," in *Fifty contemporary filmmakers*, ed. Yvonne Tasker (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), 197; Bacon, "Aki Kaurismäen sijoiltaan olon poetiikka," 95-96.

<sup>79</sup> See for example Guy Girard, *Cinéma de notre temps - Aki Kaurismäki* (France and Finland: AMIP, Arte France, INA, Sputnik OY & YLE TV1, 2001), [DVD]; Kristina Alapuro, "Aki ja Alfa," *Suomen Kuvalehti* 1983; Ilmo Keskimäki, "Aki Kaurismäki - suomalainen sankari," *Contacto* 1982.

<sup>80</sup> See for example Rolf Bamberg, "Aki Kaurismäen filmikäsikirjoitukset kiinnostavat saksalaisia teattereita," *Uutispäivä Demari*, 9.8. 2007, 16; "Varjoja Neuköllnin paratiisissa," *Helsingin Sanomat*, 13.6. 2001; Jukka Kajava, "Murheen laaksosta iloon ja onneen" [online article] *Helsingin Sanomat*, (2005) available from <http://www.hs.fi/kulttuuri/artikkeli/Murheen+laaksostailoon+ja+onneen/HS20050127SI1KU02unm> [cited 19.4. 2010]. and Leena Becker, "Nuket kertovat kaurismäkeläisen sadun," *Helsingin Sanomat*, 4.5. 2008, n.p.

<sup>81</sup> Vincent Canby, "When the Inside of the Outside Proves Empty," *New York Times*, 10.10. 1990, C13. See also Satu Kyösola and Nathalie Nezick, "Petit entretien avec Elina Salo," *Contre Bande*, no. 5 (2000): 39.



Timo Jakola, a Finnish artist, spent six years first preparing, and then working on paintings to complement Kaurismäki's oeuvre.<sup>82</sup> The "Bohemian Nights" (Boheemit yöt) collection includes dozens of impressionistic works that mainly depict dark, rainy city streets, lone cars and distant figures huddling by the side of the road (Figure 1). When the paintings depict facial features, they tend to suggest the actor Matti Pellonpää's distinctive moustache. Gloomier as a whole than the films that inspired it, the "Bohemian Nights" collection carries with it a certain auteurial seal of approval, as Jakola states he held off

**Figure 1. "36" (c) Timo Jakola** from starting the project before he had Kaurismäki's permission to proceed, and when completed the collection was displayed at the Kaurismäki's Andorra cinema and Corona bar.<sup>83</sup>



The Australian designer Kristy Barber has also drawn inspiration from Kaurismäki for her Kuwaii fashion label. The description of her "Shadows in Paradise" collection presents a highly aestheticised appropriation of the Kaurismäkian visual style:

The collection is inspired by lonely factory lunchrooms, drab urban landscapes and "white nights and black days" of the stylised films of Finnish director and style auteur Aki Kaurismäki. In Kaurismäki's films, the intensity of emotion is suppressed into silence; chemically pure red and blue stand out starkly from drab landscapes. Elements of military tailoring precision and Eastern European aesthetic combine with pattern making techniques researched from Japan to make Shadows in Paradise a collection, like Kaurismäki's [sic] films, which is loose, unstylised, minimal, and subtly poetic.<sup>84</sup>

Barber's translation of the Kaurismäkian oeuvre into subtly feminine fashion pieces (Figure 2) does of course draw from other influences and conventions as well, but it also demonstrates the extent of the influence of

**Figure 2. "Factory girl" dress and "Helsinki" dress (c) Kuwaii** the Kaurismäkian style. The vitality of the Kaurismäkian aesthetic is due in

<sup>82</sup> Timo Jakola, "Les Nuits de Bohème - Boheemit Yöt" [website/gallery] *Ateljeegalleria Vanha Paloasema*, (2001) available from <http://www.phnet.fi/public/vanhapaloasema/jakola/targ2.html> [cited 2.1.2011].

<sup>83</sup> Jakola, "Les Nuits de Bohème - Boheemit Yöt".

<sup>84</sup> "Collection: Shadows in Paradise AW09" [website] *Kuwaii*, (2009) available from <http://www.kuwaii.com.au/> [cited 31.3.2010]. I am grateful to Danica van de Velde for bringing the collection to my attention.



part to the intensity with which the Kaurismäkian oeuvre perpetuates itself: the films repeat aspects such as story lines, character names, actors and props from earlier films, creating an intricately interwoven cinematic world.

In some respects the appropriation of the Kaurismäkian style by other artists resembles what Peter Brooker has referred to as the “purely aestheticised” proliferation of Bertolt Brecht’s defamiliarisation techniques in popular culture, or the separation of the techniques from their original social and political agenda,<sup>85</sup> a development which Thomas Elsaesser refers to as “[rather than inheriting] his questions, [copying] his answers.”<sup>86</sup> In fact, Brecht himself had anticipated such a development, expecting defamiliarising techniques to become accepted and “bourgeois” over time.<sup>87</sup> These critiques of the ‘purely aestheticised’ appropriation of Brechtian technique refer specifically to other people imitating a distinctive method, and the substantive changes that inevitably follow. However, Kaurismäkian techniques and styles become ‘aestheticised’ also within the context of the Kaurismäkian oeuvre through their recurring use and the fetishisation of Kaurismäki as an auteur. Where a typical Kaurismäkian touch, such as depicting a band as the diegetic source of music, may elicit criticisms of the loss of a “tango culture laden with Finnish values,”<sup>88</sup> such touches also cause pleasure in those viewers who expect them in Kaurismäkian cinema: social criticism is accompanied by a cinephilic sense of satisfaction.

As the above examples demonstrate, ‘Kaurismäkianness’ has become a cultural phenomenon, with the Kaurismäkian influence extending beyond cinema to painting and even fashion. In Chapters Three and Five in particular I examine similar instances of Kaurismäkianness in other media. However, instead of studying the aesthetic links between Kaurismäki’s films and the works of other independent artists, I focus on the national appropriation of Kaurismäki and his cinematic world by organisations such as the Finnish Post and the Helsinki Tourism and Convention Bureau.

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<sup>85</sup> Peter Brooker, "Key words in Brecht's theory and practice of theatre," in *The Cambridge companion to Brecht*, eds Peter Thomson and Glendyr Sacks (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 218.

<sup>86</sup> Thomas Elsaesser, "From anti-illusionism to hyper-realism: Bertolt Brecht and contemporary film," in *Re-interpreting Brecht: his influence on contemporary drama and film*, eds Pia Kleber and Colin Visser (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 171-172. For similar criticisms of formalist Brechtian theatre and cinema see for example Kimmo Laine, "Brecht ja poliittisen elokuvan teoria," *Lähikuva*, no. 4 (1987): 142. and Ralf Långbacka, *Muun muassa Brechtistä. Tekstejä teatterista*, trans. Kalevi Haikara (Helsinki: Tammi, 1982), 210.

<sup>87</sup> Brooker, "Key words in Brecht's theory and practice of theatre," 218.

<sup>88</sup> Kaarina Naski, "Kesät kuumat on pois," *Etelä-Suomi*, 18.3. 1985, n.p.

The (inter)national auteur

In recent years the auteur has been reintroduced into academia through an emphasis on his or her national context.<sup>89</sup> Where traditional auteurist writing has been accused of being non-historical,<sup>90</sup> the auteur-in-nation approach reads a director's work as an expression of a specific historical and cultural time and place. The approach is in effect a compromise between romantic and poststructuralist understandings of an auteur, positing that films do have authors, but that these authors are conduits for a particular kind of textuality – that is, national identity. The auteur-function becomes understood as a nationally limited construction, and it follows that the auteur-persona is similarly viewed as operating in a national mode. Examples of studies that focus on a specifically national textuality in a director's work include Erik Hedling's reading of the critique of the welfare state in Ingmar Bergman's work,<sup>91</sup> Charles Lindholm and John A. Hall's discussion of political action and civic participation in Frank Capra's films<sup>92</sup> and, in an inversion of typical readings of auteurs commenting on their native national contexts, Barton Byg's work on Germanness in the films of Danièle Huillet and Jean-Marie Straub.<sup>93</sup> Cecilia Sayad also shows that 'auteurism' itself has different meanings in different national contexts, and that certain directors "self-reflexively construct their auteur image through a dialogue with national conceptions of authorship".<sup>94</sup>

Though the union of the auteur and national cinema may have helped to revive the former as a critical category, the latter does not remain an unproblematic concept. Andrew Higson's often-cited typology of national film identifies four different ways to define the term: as domestic film industry; as the films watched within a particular nation-state; as films that "[offer] projections of the national character"; and as films accepted into the national critical canon.<sup>95</sup> Higson argues that

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<sup>89</sup> Fowler, "Introduction to part three," 91.

<sup>90</sup> See for example Nummelin, *Valkoinen hehku*, 18. and Mike Wayne, "Introduction: Marxism, Film and Film Studies," in *Understanding Film. Marxist perspectives*, ed. Mike Wayne (London and Ann Arbor: Pluto Press, 2005), 21.

<sup>91</sup> Erik Hedling, "The welfare state depicted: Post-utopian landscapes in Ingmar Bergman's films," in *Ingmar Bergman revisited. Performance, cinema and the arts*, ed. Maaret Koskinen (London and New York: Wallflower Press, 2008).

<sup>92</sup> Charles Lindholm and John A. Hall, "Frank Capra meets John Doe: anti-politics in American national identity," in *Cinema & Nation*, eds Mette Hjort and Scott MacKenzie (London: Routledge, 2000).

<sup>93</sup> Barton Byg, *Landscapes of Resistance. The German Films of Danièle Huillet and Jean-Marie Straub* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1995).

<sup>94</sup> Cecilia Sayad, *Self-Staging Auteurs in Search of a Cinema: Jean-Luc Godard, Woody Allen and Eduard Coutinho* (PhD thesis [unpublished manuscript], New York University, 2007), 11.

<sup>95</sup> Andrew Higson, "The concept of national cinema," in *The European cinema reader*, ed. Catherine Fowler (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), 132-133.

the concept of national cinema is more often than not used as a “[fetishising] taxonomic labeling device”<sup>96</sup> and that “[identifying a national cinema is] invariably a hegemonising, mythologising process.”<sup>97</sup> Mervi Pantti, for example, shows how the definition of “national cinema” in Finland has changed over time according to specific social and political issues. In the 1950s, only “noncommercial art film” counted as national enough for government financial support, and nationally funded films of the 1970s also had to be “socially critical.” More recently the definition has officially come full circle, and “normative claims concerning the content of national cinema seem to have diminished.”<sup>98</sup> In this particular definition of national cinema as roughly equivalent to the domestic film industry, ‘Finnish’ films could be said to not necessarily have a Finnish national identity, but a Finnish citizenship. Higson also points out that in addition to the difficulties associated with identifying a national cinema, the ‘nation’ at the core of such a category is rarely “pure and stable”<sup>99</sup> either: this is a point I will return to in Chapter Two.

In addition to being understood as arising out of their national contexts, auteurs are increasingly acknowledged as being embedded in global markets and the pursuit of profit: for example, Sarah Street and Jill Forbes identify the importance of a film being sold by the director’s name as part of their description of an auteur, and Timothy Corrigan describes the auteur as being marketed particularly from the 1970s onward “as a kind of brand-name vision whose aesthetic meanings and values have already been determined.”<sup>100</sup> The auteur-as-brand in the strictly commercial sense becomes more important with the invention and proliferation of VCR and DVD systems. Although the name of a particular director had for a long time ‘sold’ a film, the selling power of the brand became more important when a consumer could literally own a film, not just as a nostalgic memory or personal experience of a text, but as an actual object. An understanding of the auteur as a marketable commodity underlines the problem of thinking about “popular” cinema and “art” cinema as separate categories on opposing ends of a commercial continuum: in reality the terms ultimately describe films aimed at different markets.

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<sup>96</sup> Andrew Higson, "The limiting imagination of national cinema," in *Cinema and nation*, eds Mette Hjort and Scott MacKenzie (London: Routledge, 2000), 64.

<sup>97</sup> Higson, "The concept of national cinema," 133.

<sup>98</sup> Mervi Pantti, "Art or industry? Battles over Finnish cinema during the 1990s," in *Transnational Cinema in a Global North: Nordic Cinema in Transition*, eds Andrew Nestingen and Trevor G. Elkington (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2005), 187-188. See also Hannu Salmi, "Nousukausi. Katse kotimaisen elokuvan menestyksen tekijöihin," in *Taju kankaalle. Uutta suomalaista elokuvaa paikantamassa*, eds Kimmo Ahonen et al. (Turku: Kirja-Aurora, 2003), 15.

<sup>99</sup> Higson, "The limiting imagination of national cinema," 61.

<sup>100</sup> Forbes and Street, "European cinema: an overview," 38; Corrigan, "Auteurs and the New Hollywood," 40.

In this juncture between auteurs, nations and commerce it becomes useful to consider the significance of the international film festival circuit. Film festivals are proudly auteurist sites of cinephilia that also produce particular narratives of national identity, but combine these modes with an equally clearly articulated commercial drive. Although both auteur and national cinema have been defined in terms of lesser commercial success or even lesser commercial *motivation* (both auteur cinema and national cinema supposedly have “higher” ambitions than financial profit), the film festival is an event whose explicit commercial dimensions do not jettison nationality or auteurship – indeed, the three are interdependent. The Cannes International Film Festival is a particularly good example of this dynamic: on the one hand its official competition selection is known for “overwhelmingly favour[ing] films by critically respectable auteurs who’ve been there before, a usual-suspects group of largely non-commercial film-makers”, yet the event itself incorporates a very large official film market, where the rights to hundreds of films are on sale.<sup>101</sup> Kaurismäki commented on the commercial significance of the Cannes festival in 2011, when his most recent film *Le Havre* (2011) was shown in competition: “Prizes do not matter. Cannes is a market place and I try to sell the film everywhere [i.e. as widely as possible],” noting that he attended the festival not as the director or writer of the film, but as its producer.<sup>102</sup>

Janet Harbord identifies four main discourses operating within film festivals: those of independence, spectacle and controversy, purchase and copyright, and finally tourism.<sup>103</sup> The discourses are inherently contradictory, but the very repetition and cyclical nature of the film festival as a regular media event reinforces these discourses and “gives rise to a certain naturalization of oppositions” such as the national-Hollywood and art-entertainment binaries.<sup>104</sup> Although the first film festival was established in 1932 in Venice, the film festival as an international phenomenon did not develop until after the Second World War. As a result the older festivals such as those in Cannes (established 1946) and Berlin (established 1951) have from their beginnings been entangled with processes of national recovery and nation building.<sup>105</sup> Even today, although film festivals tend to specify that they have an international scope, they remain firmly

<sup>101</sup> Kenneth Turan, *Sundance to Sarajevo. Film Festivals and the World They Made* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 2002), 27-28, 14.

<sup>102</sup> Veli-Pekka Lehtonen, "Menevätkö Cannesin palkinnot uudelle sukupolvelle?," *Helsingin Sanomat*, 22.5. 2011, n.p. Brackets added.

<sup>103</sup> Janet Harbord, *Film cultures* (London, Thousand Oaks and New Delhi: Sage Publications, 200), 60.

<sup>104</sup> Harbord, *Film cultures*, 61.

<sup>105</sup> Harbord, *Film cultures*, 64. The Cannes festival was originally scheduled for 1939, but was delayed by the Second World War. See also Turan, *Sundance to Sarajevo*, 18-19.

embedded in narratives of nationhood in two ways. First, the festivals promote a particular understanding of national culture and their own place within it: they depend on state funding and political goodwill to operate in the locations and on the scale that they do, and they contribute to national economies both directly and indirectly. Second, the films that are screened in festivals are labelled according to their auteurs and their countries of origin: the auteur is the “*international face of the national*.”<sup>106</sup> As Thomas Elsaesser argues, the practice can lead to totalising understandings of a national film culture: “one new author is a ‘discovery’, two are the auspicious signs that announce a ‘new wave’, and three new authors from the same country amount to ‘a new national cinema.’”<sup>107</sup> Even a single auteur can become identified not only *with* but *as* a national cinema, particularly in the cases of filmmakers from countries that tend to be underrepresented at international film festivals: this conflation has at times been applied to Kaurismäki. As Trevor G. Elkington and Andrew Nestingen argue, this identification is a far too limiting one for both the auteur and the national cinema in question.<sup>108</sup> Indeed, increasingly the nationally limited auteur-function is being supplemented with a transnationally delineated one. Hamid Naficy’s work on exilic filmmakers, for example, brings the biographical person of the auteur back into film analysis, and reads this person’s work in the context of global mobility and the contradictions inherent in national belonging and exclusion.<sup>109</sup> Still, as Mary Wood points out, even within their home countries certain auteurs “attain the status of national treasures – such as Manoel de Oliveira in Portugal, Theo Angelopolous in Greece, Ingmar Bergman in Sweden”.<sup>110</sup> A country’s own discourses around its film culture are often not prone to prioritising one individual, seemingly paradoxically enough, until the person in question has achieved critical success abroad. This is certainly the case with Kaurismäki: although his films had been critically well-received in Finland from the start, their national significance has depended in part on their international mobility and ability to express a particular view of ‘Finnishness’ for a large international audience. The relationship between international film festival success and a film’s national profile has been particularly clear in the case of *The Man Without A Past*, and will be discussed further in Chapter Four.

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<sup>106</sup> David Martin-Jones, *Deleuze, Cinema and National Identity. Narrative Time in National Contexts* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006), 42. Emphasis in original.

<sup>107</sup> Elsaesser, *European cinema: face to face with Hollywood*, 99.

<sup>108</sup> Trevor G. Elkington and Andrew Nestingen, "Introduction: Transnational Nordic Cinema," in *Transnational Cinema in a Global North: Nordic Cinema in Transition*, eds Andrew Nestingen and Trevor G. Elkington (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2005), 20.

<sup>109</sup> Hamid Naficy, *An accented cinema: exilic and diasporic filmmaking* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001).

<sup>110</sup> Mary Wood, *Contemporary European Cinema* (London: Hodder Arnold, 2007), 28.

The semi-, para- and extratextual auteur

It is in the context of the auteur as a brand name that Adrian Wilson's description of the author-function understood as a real person becomes particularly important. If, as Wilson believes, on reading a text the reader conceptualises the author-function as a real person, it makes sense then to consider what extratextual material also contributes to that persona. Timothy Corrigan has discussed the interview performance of Alexander Kluge, and argues for a "semi-textual" understanding of auteurism, as studying interviews in particular can provide a good understanding of how auteurs "strategically embrace the more promising possibilities of the auteur as a commercial presence."<sup>111</sup> Andrew Sarris, however, argues for focusing on a director's cinematic work, and not on interviews or other extratextual material, on the basis that "a director's formal utterances (his films) tell us more about his artistic personality than do his informal utterances (his conversations)."<sup>112</sup> In some respects this is of course true: whether and how a director wishes his or her neighbour a happy birthday, for example, in all likelihood has little to do with his or her public artistic persona. However, I do not agree that an interview would be an "informal" utterance – in the process of granting an interview and conducting him- or herself in a particular way a director *does* tell us about his or her artistic personality, albeit in a different way than in the process of making a film. The public nature of an interview, even if the particular public is imagined as a very limited one, marks the interview and the director's performance in it as formal. Further, as Corrigan points out, it is also very useful to understand how an auteur might want to use interviews strategically to influence the perception of a particular film or his or her oeuvre as a whole. This added dimension of publicity allows us to further consider the problems of defining an oeuvre in the case of auteurs whose artistic expression is not limited to the film medium. For example, Kaurismäki has also written scripts, reviews and short stories, and while these texts may not reflect on a strictly cinematically constructed auteur-function, the fact that they are public, available, or simply known to exist will influence perceptions of his auteur-persona.

It is in this sense of complex textual relations that the auteur can be understood as a narrative structure that depends on the interconnectedness of a range of texts, performances and events across different media. Opening auteurist analyses to include such material also involves taking into account what Gérard Genette refers to in a literary context as "paratexts", or elements of a

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<sup>111</sup> Corrigan, "The Commerce of Auteurism: A Voice without Authority," 44, 48.

<sup>112</sup> Andrew Sarris, "The Auteur Theory Revisited," in *Film and Authorship*, ed. Virginia Wright Wexman (New Brunswick, New Jersey and London: Rutgers University Press, 2003), 24. Brackets in original.

novel such as prefaces, typesetting, illustrations and jacket copy which are not part of the core text itself, but guide its reception and are part of its presentation. In the cinematic context paratexts would include film posters, advertising, press releases, DVD jackets and special features such as commentary tracks and behind-the-scenes featurettes, trailers and official websites. For Genette, paratexts involve an implicit authorial intent and responsibility: “by definition, something is not a paratext unless the author or one of his associates accepts responsibility for it, although the degree of responsibility may vary.”<sup>113</sup> The reference to an author’s ‘associates’ reveals the difficulty of fixing the boundaries of authorship even in literature, a task which is clearly more challenging with regard to film. Genette’s subsequent distinction between “official” and “unofficial” or “semiofficial” paratexts attempts to come to terms with the limits of authorial responsibility: official paratextuality refers to any “message openly accepted by the author or publisher or both – a message for which [they] cannot evade responsibility” while unofficial paratexts include interviews and other authorial statements “responsibility for which the author can always more or less disclaim [for example with accusations of being misquoted]”.<sup>114</sup> The division into ‘official’ and ‘unofficial’ paratextuality is in some respects moot, particularly given Genette’s own acknowledgement of the influence of “factual paratexts” which do not involve a message from the author but refer instead to a fact, such as the author’s age or sex, which “if known to the public, provides some commentary on the text and influences how the text is received.”<sup>115</sup> Biographical details cannot be “intended” by an author, even if he or she can try to influence the ways in which particular details are discussed and emphasised, and so the emphasis should not be on what extratextual material is sanctioned by the author (or his or her ‘associates’), but simply what extratextual material there *is*.

Not all publicly available material is equal: information disclosed in an interview with a regional newspaper may take some time to filter into more widely read publications; that something is said does not mean it is believed; the way a person is depicted in the media in one language or national context may be very different from their public profile in another; and all public personalities are subject to a range of contradictory narratives at any given time. The extratextual material that influences perceptions of an auteur-persona includes a vast range of sources, such as interviews, rumours, reports of awards, reviews – and academic writing. Academic film analysis is no different

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<sup>113</sup> Gérard Genette, *Paratexts. Thresholds of interpretation*, trans. Jane E. Lewin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 9.

<sup>114</sup> Genette, *Paratexts*, 10. Brackets added.

<sup>115</sup> Genette, *Paratexts*, 7.

from any other writing on the subject. Certainly, its intended (or rather, realistic) readership is often much smaller than that of most other types of writing, but it is important in constructing a discourse about an auteur-persona. Some filmmakers are particularly interested in the academic drive to build auteur narratives, and seek to be active participants in the process. Marsha Kinder describes an intriguing experience at the academic conference that coincided with the opening of the Centre for Almodóvar Studies in La Mancha. Pedro Almodóvar and some of the actors from his films made regular appearances throughout the conference, and some academics had even been promised small roles in an upcoming film as a reward for their participation in the event. According to Kinder,

[w]hat was most fascinating about the conference was the way Almodóvar and his production company were blatantly controlling the auteurist discourse surrounding his films. This conference revealed their masterful negotiation of a complex network of local, regional, national, and international relations within the changing global film scene and the several ironies this mastery generates.<sup>116</sup>

Kinder's article includes a photograph of the conference participants together with the director, who holds a sign for a street named after him.<sup>117</sup> The image reveals a group of people aware of their complicated role as interpreters of and participants in an artistic-commercial-intellectual phenomenon: some appear amused, some perplexed or troubled by their complicity in the process. Almodóvar may be exceptional in the level of influence he and his representatives strive to have on academic discourse, but it is important to remember that in pursuing its own 'authority' over film, academia also plays its part in shaping these discourses.

### The Kaurismäkian auteur-persona

Given the importance of "public discourse [and] [fetishist] marketing"<sup>118</sup> to the continued salience of the auteur, it is important to understand what meanings are associated with an auteur's name, or the auteur-persona. Here it is again necessary to clarify the distinction between the "Aki Kaurismäki" auteur-function and the "Aki Kaurismäki" auteur-persona. To a certain degree they are one and the same – both communicate a certain style of film, a unifying principle of an oeuvre. However, where Foucault's conceptualisation of the author-function involves the reader or viewer creating an image of an abstract author based on the oeuvre, and in my appropriation of the term

<sup>116</sup> Marsha Kinder, "Reinventing the Motherland. Almodóvar's Brain-Dead Trilogy," *Film Quarterly* 58, no. 2 (2005): 10.

<sup>117</sup> Kinder, "Reinventing the Motherland," 25.

<sup>118</sup> Mary Wood, *Contemporary European Cinema* (London: Hodder Arnold, 2007), 41.



the auteur-function necessarily involves an understanding of collectivity, the auteur-persona is, following Wilson, the identification of the auteur-function as an individual. The auteur-persona draws on deliberate commercial strategies that aim to influence the viewing process itself: the auteur is used as a brand name to guide the viewers in what auteur-function they are to create, and in fact informs the viewers that there is a function to create in the first place. These commercial brand name strategies can be employed by the auteur himself as well as by production and distribution companies, film festivals and cinemas. In many cases it may be difficult to identify where a commercial strategy ends: in whatever way news of an award or new film is eventually reported, the information most likely originated in a press release from a government funding body or the production company. The auteur-persona, however, is built also of a much wider range of narratives, including reviews, interviews, rumours and news items. The auteur-persona is an extratextual force, and one that complicates or renders entirely impossible the prospect of the auteur-function in its strictest sense, as something that only exists post-text.

The Kaurismäkian auteur-persona incorporates a range of narratives that are emphasised at different times and by different people. However, in the continual construction of the auteur-persona some themes are more prevalent than others. Tytti Soila points out that the director “has painstakingly worked on creating a public persona in line with his cinematic universe,”<sup>119</sup> and James Caryn notes the similarity between Kaurismäki’s public persona and the characters of his films, describing the director as “the prototypical Kaurismäki character: a droll personality stingy with words yet offering vast irony through his impassive presence.”<sup>120</sup> There are very few details available about Kaurismäki’s personal life, aside from the fact that he is the brother of Mika Kaurismäki. His wife Paula Oinonen is known to have painted many of the artworks seen in the background of Kaurismäkian films, and she is occasionally credited as part of the cast and crew in Kaurismäkian films: her involvement ranges from small on-screen roles to assistant producer, training of the films’ canine performers and catering.<sup>121</sup> There does not appear to be any evidence to suggest Kaurismäki has particularly had to protect his privacy – unless his migration to Portugal is seen in part as such a move – as the public interest in his personal life is minimal. However, there do seem to be some subtle differences between Kaurismäki’s interview performances in different countries and the information he is willing to disclose in this regard: for example, in 2002

<sup>119</sup> Soila, "The face of a sad rat," 195. See also Tytti Soila, "The landscape of memories in the films of the Kaurismäki bros.," *Film International* 3 (2003).

<sup>120</sup> Caryn James, "A Finn's Films Start Morosely But End in Cockeyed Drollery," *New York Times*, 3.10. 1990, C13.

<sup>121</sup> Elonet, "Paula Oinonen" [website] available from <http://www.elonet.fi/name/hefapj/> [cited 25.3.2011].

in an interview with *Le Nouvel Observateur*, Kaurismäki mentioned that both his father and grandfather had committed suicide,<sup>122</sup> while no such mention has been made in the Finnish media as far as I have been able to ascertain. The father's death was discretely touched on in an interview with *Filmihullu*, when the director briefly acknowledged the fact that he and his brother had both dedicated films to the memory of their father on his passing in the early 1990s, without going into any further details.<sup>123</sup> Many of Kaurismäki's films include characters who commit, attempt or allude to suicide, often as a response to social injustices: for example, Taisto's father shoots himself soon after the local mine is closed down in *Ariel*; Henri attempts suicide following his perfunctory dismissal in *I Hired a Contract Killer* (1990); and having been victimised by international business dealings an old bank manager and a bankrupted builder both take their own lives in *The Man Without A Past*. Were the Kaurismäki family history more widely known, it is plausible that the films' references to suicide would be interpreted not only as evidence of the filmmaker's social criticism as they currently are, but also as Kaurismäki's attempts to come to terms with a personal tragedy.

Crucial to Kaurismäki's persona is the image of a reluctant interviewee, a would-be hermit. For example, an article in *Christian Science Monitor* describes Kaurismäki as "a quiet man who apparently cares little about promoting his work."<sup>124</sup> Esa Mäkinen notes the paradox inherent in Kaurismäki's public profile: despite the hundreds of interviews the director has given over the years, the popular perception of him is as a man who avoids publicity at all cost.<sup>125</sup> Indeed, when in 2007 *Helsingin Sanomat* published an article on celebrity culture, an accompanying illustration that compared public figures with respect to their approaches to popularity and fame depicted Kaurismäki as someone who trades on his knowledge and know-how and who at the same time avoids publicity.<sup>126</sup> The image of a reluctant celebrity combines with that of a hard-drinking and -smoking bad-tempered *enfant terrible*: already in 1986 the tabloid *Ilta-lehti* described "bad behaviour" as Kaurismäki's "trade mark".<sup>127</sup> The performance is also mischievous, and the director frequently parodies his own public persona. In her 2003 interview Leslie Felperin notes that

<sup>122</sup> Pascal Mériegeau, "Vin blanc, bière, calva et cinéma. A la santé d'Aki!," *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 31.10.2002, n.p.

<sup>123</sup> Peter von Bagh et al., "Suomipojan itsetunto," *Filmihullu*, no. 6 (1995): 43.

<sup>124</sup> "Kaurismäki Puts Finnish Film on the Map," C13.

<sup>125</sup> Mäkinen, "Aki Kaurismäki and his carefully crafted public image".

<sup>126</sup> Tommi Nieminen, "Katsokaa meitä," *Helsingin Sanomat*, 4.3. 2007, D1-2.

<sup>127</sup> "Kaikki tiedossa!," *Ilta-lehti*, 22.3. 1986, n.p. See also Suvi Ruotsi and Heikki Kempainen, "Pirullinen sivullinen. Aki Kaurismäki," *Leffa* 1987, 22.

Kaurismäki clearly likes playing the sad-eyed clown, even for an audience of one, gleefully fulfilling the stereotype of the morose, depressive Nordic artist. But the frequent little snickers at his own epigrams ('I'm not the man I used to be; I don't even know if I used to be the man I used to be,') suggest he doesn't take the schtick all that seriously.<sup>128</sup>

In a similar vein Helena Ylänen, the film writer for *Helsingin Sanomat*, laments in a 2002 current affairs program that when Kaurismäki and the cinematographer Salminen discuss their filmmaking practice in press conferences in all earnestness, the audience invariably thinks they are joking and does not take them seriously. Ylänen concedes with some amusement that the response is only to be expected: "it is a problem Aki has created for himself".<sup>129</sup>

Kaurismäki's cinephilia is also a significant part of his public profile. His films' cinematic intertextuality is often mentioned, particularly abroad, where references to him generally only appear in the context of a new film being released, typically on the pages of specialist film journals. For example, Jay Carr of the *Boston Globe* states that Kaurismäki could be described as a "cross between Jean-Luc Godard and Jim Jarmusch," his films as "a collision between Bergman, Beckett and Buster Keaton."<sup>130</sup> *Variety's* Todd McCarthy refers to the "Hitchcockian pacing"<sup>131</sup> of *Dogs Have No Hell*, while *The New York Times's* A.O. Carr describes *The Man Without A Past* as a film that "suggests Charlie Chaplin without the sleeve-tugging sentimentality, or Frank Capra without the weakness for speechifying."<sup>132</sup> Similar cinephilic references are made in some Finnish publications as well, but as Kaurismäki is a much more visible public figure in his native country, other narratives dominate. In fact, in Finland Kaurismäki's cinephilia is often associated with his ancillary ventures rather than with his films. For example, the Kaurismäki brothers founded the formality-free Midnight Sun Film Festival in a small town north of the Arctic Circle in 1986. The festival is known for its round-the-clock screenings and the Kaurismäkis' ability to attract well-regarded filmmakers to the event,<sup>133</sup> from Samuel Fuller in its inaugural year to Atom Egoyan in 2011.<sup>134</sup> Kaurismäki's business activities as a cinema owner and distributor of film also contribute to this aspect of his public profile.

<sup>128</sup> Leslie Felperin, "Finnish Lines," *The Big Issue*, 20.1. 2003, 22.

<sup>129</sup> Olli Kangassalo, "Kaurismäen haastattelu ja tunnelmia Cannesista" [video] *YLE. Elävä arkisto*, (2002) available from <http://www.yle.fi/elavaarkisto/?s=s&g=4&ag=22&t=&a=10285> [cited 20.5. 2011].

<sup>130</sup> Jay Carr, "A Finnish newcomer asserts himself," *Boston Globe*, 9.11. 1990, 40; Jay Carr, "Cool, alienated *Match Factory Girl*," *Boston Globe*, 19.2. 1993, 28.

<sup>131</sup> Todd McCarthy, "Ten Minutes Older: The Trumpet," *Variety*, 27.5. - 2.6. 2002, 30.

<sup>132</sup> A.O. Scott, "Losing Memories But Gaining a Life," *New York Times*, 2.10. 2002, E1.

<sup>133</sup> Turan, *Sundance to Sarajevo*, 111.

<sup>134</sup> The official website of the film festival is <http://www.msfilmmfestival.fi/fpage.php>

Finnish Kaurismäki narratives typically involve debates about the national identity of his films, and his role within the Finnish film industry. Due to the close collaboration between Mika and Aki Kaurismäki throughout the 1980s and the resulting aesthetic and thematic similarity between some of their films, the “brothers Kaurismäki” have often been referred to as a single filmmaking unit. Even where their separate careers are acknowledged, the brothers are jointly considered a “phenomenon” due to their impact on the Finnish film industry.<sup>135</sup> The Finnish term *ilmiö* (phenomenon) has been appropriated from the brothers’ joint directorial venture *Saimaa-ilmiö*. As the film follows popular rock and punk musicians on a pastiche tour of the Finnish countryside, the term “Kaurismäki-ilmiö” contains an implicit reference to a similar ironic identity quest. The Kaurismäkis and their collaborators have also been called “the Kaurismäki clan,” again a reference to an early Mika Kaurismäki film, *The Clan*. The “clan”, however, is generally a pejorative rather than a positive assessment of the brothers’ unique position in the Finnish film industry, as it refers to the maintenance of a privileged clique.

From the beginning of his directorial career, Kaurismäki’s films were well received by film critics. In her dissertation on the critical reception of *Shadows in Paradise* Giedrė Andreikėnaitė describes the film as an incomparable phenomenon of Finnish cinema, one that both baffled and pleased critics with its mix of fantasy, realism, national content and understanding of international cinematic aesthetics.<sup>136</sup> The overwhelming critical success of Kaurismäki’s films has also met with some vocal resistance, what Sakari Toiviainen refers to as an “obligatory opposition” to the mainstream.<sup>137</sup> Among the popular criticisms of Kaurismäki’s “clan” were references to the unwavering support of Helena Ylänen and her potential influence over funding decisions; speculation whether older brother Mika’s connections from the Munich Film School had helped Kaurismäki’s film career along, and dismay at Kaurismäki’s success in receiving Finnish Film

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<sup>135</sup> See for example, Toiviainen, *Levottomat sukupolvet*, 57. In the French context Kartik Singh shows that over time Aki has eclipsed Mika in his public profile: now the older brother is simply “la frère d’Aki”. Kartik Singh, “L’accueil critique des films d’Aki Kaurismäki dans la presse nationale et hebdomadaire,” *Contre Bande*, no. 5 (2000): 140.

<sup>136</sup> Giedrė Andreikėnaitė, *Aki Kaurismäen elokuvan Varjoja paratiisissa lehdistövastaanotto Suomessa* (Masters dissertation [unpublished manuscript], University of Turku, 2003), 5-6. I thank Ms Andreikėnaitė for making her dissertation available to me.

<sup>137</sup> Sakari Toiviainen, “Kaurismäki-ilmiö Arielin valossa,” in *Elokuva ja analyysi. Katsauksia elävän kuvan erittelyyn ja tulkintaan*, eds Raimo Kinisjärvi, Tarmo Malmberg and Jukka Sihvonen (Helsinki: Suomen elokuva-arkisto, 1994), 159-160.

Foundation funding and other government bursaries.<sup>138</sup> Indeed, Kaurismäki has been among the more successful of the Foundation's funding applicants, and in 1999 the head of the Foundation Erkki Astala admitted that both Mika and Aki Kaurismäki's critical successes abroad led to more lenient criteria being applied to their funding applications.<sup>139</sup> More recently the Finnish national broadcaster YLE granted funding towards Kaurismäki's film *Le Havre*, despite the broadcaster's funding operations being otherwise suspended due to budget uncertainties.<sup>140</sup>

Kaurismäki's privileged position in the Finnish film industry has been at odds with the taste of the broader Finnish cinema-going public. As Pietari Kääpä points out, Kaurismäki's films up to *Take Care of Your Scarf Tatjana* were released only to a very limited number of screens, with typically around half a dozen prints in circulation.<sup>141</sup> Since then even *The Man Without A Past* was only released in Finland on ten prints.<sup>142</sup> In practice the small number of prints limited even the potential audience of the films to patrons of small cinemas in the capital city and a few other larger towns: the films certainly did not aim for a national audience. However, Kaurismäki's films reach a much larger domestic audience through television than they do during their initial theatrical releases.<sup>143</sup> As Kääpä argues, the films eventually find their way into the "national cinematic canon."<sup>144</sup> In this context Kääpä uses the term 'canon' to refer specifically to a more popular acceptance rather than an elitist view of national art: Kaurismäki's films have from the beginning been considered by cinephiles and film critics as canonical in this latter sense. In a similar vein Ari Honka-Hallila, Kimmo Laine and Mervi Pantti refer to the televised reincarnations of films as their opportunities to enter the "national shared memory" despite poor cinematic audience figures, citing Kaurismäki's *Match Factory Girl* as an example.<sup>145</sup> While the trend no doubt partly reflects the fact that on their original release the films were available to only very small audiences and so most people only have a chance to see Kaurismäki's films on television, the

<sup>138</sup> See for example Martti Savo, "Kaurismäki-syndrooma," *Kinolehti* 1985, 3. Eero Hyvönen, "Aki suuri," *City* 1990, 23. Helevi Pouta, "Aki Kaurismäen tie Oscar-ehdokkaaksi. Mies ja hänen menneisyytensä," *Apu* 2003, 41.

<sup>139</sup> Tuomas Arolainen, "Elokuvan tukiraha kasautuu," *Helsingin Sanomat*, 24.4. 1999.

<sup>140</sup> "YLE rahoittaa Kaurismäen ja Saarelan elokuvia," *Helsingin Sanomat*, 5.3. 2010. YLE also chose to approve funding towards Olli Saarela's *The Priest of Evil (Harjunpää ja pahan pappi, 2010)*.

<sup>141</sup> Kääpä, *The National and Beyond*, 34-40.

<sup>142</sup> "Mies vailla menneisyyttä. Tarkastuspäivät," [cited 18.12. 2008 at KAVA], available at [http://195.156.15.97/tenho/filmogra/filmo\\_ta.htx?ekid=1043868](http://195.156.15.97/tenho/filmogra/filmo_ta.htx?ekid=1043868).

<sup>143</sup> Andrew Nestingen, "Aki Kaurismäki's crossroads: national cinema and the road movie," in *Transnational Cinema in a Global North: Nordic Cinema in Transition*, eds Andrew Nestingen and Trevor G. Elkington (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2005), 283.

<sup>144</sup> Kääpä, *The National and Beyond*, 40.

<sup>145</sup> Ari Honka-Hallila, Kimmo Laine, and Mervi Pantti, eds., *Markan tähden. Yli sata vuotta suomalaista elokuvahistoriaa* (Turku: Turun yliopiston täydennyskoulutuskeskus, 1995), 221-222.

vibrant televisual afterlife of Kaurismäki's films is likely also influenced by Kaurismäki's media presence. For example, while *Drifting Clouds* reached 55 015 people in theatrical screenings in Finland, in its subsequent three screenings on national television in 1997, 1998 and 2002 it reached an audience of 596 000, 357 000 and 624 000 respectively.<sup>146</sup> While the relatively modest size of the audience in 1998 is most likely due to the fact that the film was screened on Christmas Eve, the very popular 2002 broadcast no doubt benefited from the media momentum of *The Man Without A Past*, which had won the Grand Prix at the Cannes International Film Festival only a week earlier.

### The auteur-national nexus

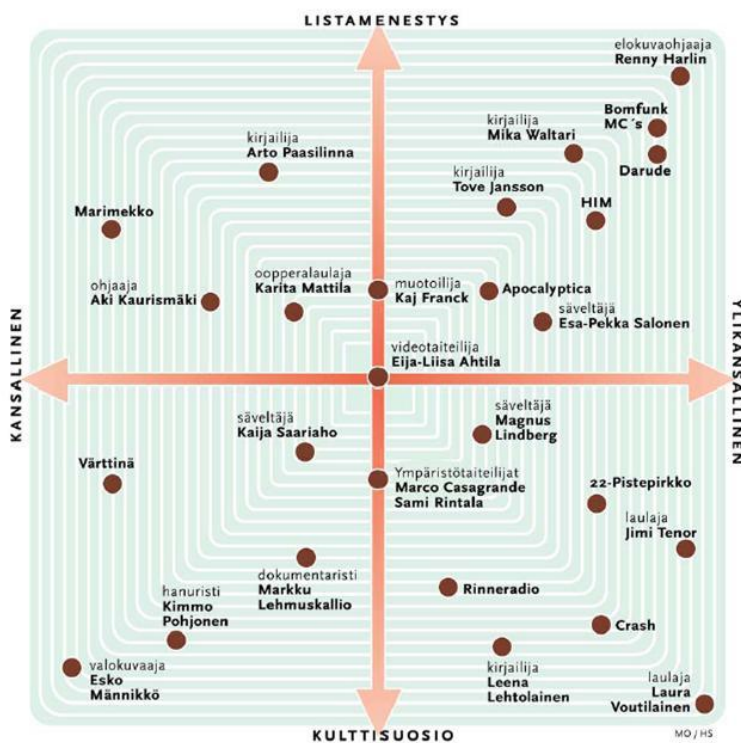


Figure 3. "Marrasvaloista parrasvaloihin" illustration (c) *Helsingin Sanomat*

In recent years Kaurismäki's public profile has increased, and he has become further identified as a national figure. An illustrative example is a diagram accompanying an article on celebrity in *Helsingin Sanomat* in 2002, just as *The Man Without A Past's* international festival successes were making headlines. The diagram placed notable Finns between "national" and "transnational" (left to right) on the x axis, and "chart success" and "cult popularity" (top to bottom) on the y axis (Figure 3).

Aki Kaurismäki was placed well on the "national" side of the grid with a slight inclination towards "chart success".<sup>147</sup> The director's "chart success" is clearly due to the international triumphs of *The Man Without A Past*, as Kaurismäki's films had until then been seen as being aimed at a very narrow niche audience. The emphasis put on Kaurismäki's 'national' value

<sup>146</sup> Audience numbers cited on 18.12.2008 from the Tenho database at the National Audiovisual Archives in Helsinki.

<sup>147</sup> Miska Rantanen, "Marrasvaloista parrasvaloihin," *Helsingin Sanomat*, 2.6. 2002, n.p. I thank Maija Orava of *Helsingin Sanomat* for making the image available in an electronic format.

is less striking, as Kaurismäki had developed a significant public profile in the Finnish art world in the years leading up to *The Man Without Past*: for example, Kaurismäki's national profile is evident in the fact that he was selected to award Finland's most prestigious literary prize, the Finlandia, in 1996.<sup>148</sup>

In addition to the national aspects of Kaurismäki's public profile, the filmmaker has also gained some notoriety with high-profile political protests. For example, he declined to attend the New York Film Festival in 2002 as a protest following the denial of a visa to Iranian director Abbas Kiarostami by the United States.<sup>149</sup> Kaurismäki also boycotted the 2003 Oscar gala, even though *The Man Without A Past* had been nominated as Best Foreign Language Film, because of the United States' foreign policy.<sup>150</sup> For the same reason Kaurismäki refused to submit *Lights in the Dusk* for consideration for the Academy Awards after it had been selected as the Finnish candidate for Best Foreign Language Film.<sup>151</sup> The protests have been carried out in keeping with his public image, on the one hand highlighting his concern for social injustices, on the other retaining a mischievous element in his statements: when he cancelled his appearance at the New York Film Festival Kaurismäki stated that he would "like to invite US Secretary of Defence Donald Rumsfeld to a visit to Finland. We could take a walk in the woods and pick mushrooms. That might calm him down."<sup>152</sup>

<sup>148</sup> See for example "Aki Kaurismäki päättää Finlandia-palkinnosta," *Ilta-Sanomat*, 8.6. 1996; Leeni Peltonen, "Voitto kymmenen vuoden työstä," *Suomen kuvalehti* 1996; "Aki Kaurismäestä akateemikko" [online article] *Suomen kuvalehti*, (2008) available from <http://suomenkuvalehti.fi/jutut/kulttuuri/aki-kaurismaesta-akateemikko> [cited 29.6. 2009]; Luukka, "Aki Kaurismäki sai akateemikon arvon surutangon tahdissa".

<sup>149</sup> See for example Markus Tiittula, "Aki Kaurismäen yllätysboikotti New Yorkissa," *Ilta-Sanomat*, 1.10. 2002.; Hans Sundström, "Kaurismäki boikotter New York," *Hufvudstadsblatten*, 2.10. 2002. "Kaurismäki boycotts NY festival after Kiarostami snub" [online article] *The Guardian*, (2002) available from <http://www.guardian.co.uk/film/2002/oct/01/news> [cited 29.6.2009]; Celestine Bohlen, "One Visa Problem Costs a Festival Two Filmmakers," *New York Times*, 1.10. 2002. See also Matti Jäppinen, "Iranilaisohjaaja anoi viisumia Yhdysvaltoihin liian myöhään. Protestoiko Kaurismäki turhan päiten?," *Etelä Suomen Sanomat*, 4.10. 2002, n.p.

<sup>150</sup> See for example Marianne Riiali, "Aki Kaurismäki ja Kati Outinen jäävät pois Oscar-juhlista. Raju protesti sotaa vastaan," *Ilta-Sanomat*, 20.3. 2003.; "Emme ole juhlatuulella," *Demari*, 20.3. 2003.

<sup>151</sup> "Aki Kaurismäki refuses to allow Oscar nomination" [online article] *Helsingin Sanomat - International edition*, (2006) available from <http://www.hs.fi/english/article/Aki+Kaurism%C3%A4ki+refuses+to+allow+Oscar+nomination/1135222426518> [cited 29.6.2009]; "Kaurismäki kieltäytyy Oscar-ehdokkuudesta" [online article] *YLE*, (2006) available from [http://yle.fi/uutiset/kulttuuri/2006/10/kaurismaki\\_kieltaytyy\\_oscar-ehdokkuudesta\\_219471.html](http://yle.fi/uutiset/kulttuuri/2006/10/kaurismaki_kieltaytyy_oscar-ehdokkuudesta_219471.html) [cited 29.6.2009].

<sup>152</sup> "Aki Kaurismäki's Full Statement" [website] *FilmFestivals.com*, (2002) available from [http://www.filmfestivals.com/cgi-bin/fest\\_content/festivals.pl?debug=&channelbar=&fest=nyff2002&year=2002&lang=en&page=daily&partner=&date=2002/10/3](http://www.filmfestivals.com/cgi-bin/fest_content/festivals.pl?debug=&channelbar=&fest=nyff2002&year=2002&lang=en&page=daily&partner=&date=2002/10/3) [cited 25.3.2011].

Andrew Nestingen proposes approaching Kaurismäki's controversial public statements as contributing to his "contrarian cinema," taking into account what Nestingen sees as Kaurismäki's resistance to being categorised as either national or an auteur.<sup>153</sup> While it is important to study the director's public performance as a constitutive element of his auteur-persona, at present the popular perception of Kaurismäki as a polemical auteur of Finnish film eclipses any attempts by Kaurismäki to resist the categorisation – indeed, many of Kaurismäki's 'contrarian' performances even affirm this particular aspect of his auteur persona. As a result of the director's particular public profile "Kaurismäkian" has come to denote not only a specific aesthetic and narrative content, but also national authorship.

This perception of Kaurismäki as a national auteur derives from what John Hutchinson identifies as the tendency of "cultural nationalists" to anoint as "great artists [...] those who create out of the collective experience of the people as preserved in its historical legends and who reshape their lessons for the present."<sup>154</sup> This kind of nationally-loaded conceptualisation of artistic creativity is common in popular understandings of film, even where the idea of the nation might be otherwise problematised: for example, David Martin-Jones argues that while the post-Second World War cinemas of Italy and France were conceptualised as "new" and involving a break with "the old national past," the auteur director as artist-genius was also seen as representing a direct continuum with historical national artists.<sup>155</sup> The case is similar with Kaurismäki: *Filmihullu's* promotion of Kaurismäki as a Finnish auteur (albeit with 'universal' appeal), the celebration of *The Man Without A Past's* Cannes successes as national victories, and the presidential appointment of Kaurismäki as the Academician of Cinema all emphasise the repeated affirmation of the "Finnish" identity of Kaurismäkian films. Even those Kaurismäkian films whose narrative Finnishness is non-existent – the English and French language films *I Hired A Contract Killer*, *La Vie de Bohème* (1992) and *Le Havre* and the Portuguese-set short film *Bico* – find themselves bearing at least an ambiguous Finnishness due to the conflation of the Kaurismäkian and the national labels. For example, Peter von Bagh states that "*I Hired a Contract Killer* and *La Vie de Bohème* stand out from the rest of his oeuvre, since when they were made 'Kaurismäkiland' was created on foreign soil – but they are still genuinely Finnish."<sup>156</sup> In the course of my thesis I refer to the films as

<sup>153</sup> Nestingen, "Aki Kaurismäki and Nation."

<sup>154</sup> John Hutchinson, *Modern Nationalism* (London: FontanaPress, 1994), 45.

<sup>155</sup> Martin-Jones, *Deleuze, Cinema and National Identity*, 77-78.

<sup>156</sup> Peter von Bagh's foreword in Hukkanen, *Shadows in Paradise*, 6. See also Pietari Kääpä, "'The working class has no fatherland': Aki Kaurismäki's films and the transcending of national specificity," in *In search of*



Kaurismäkian, understanding that the label carries the aesthetic, narrative and national connotations outlined above. Where I do quote Kaurismäki my intention is not to overemphasise the authority of the filmmaker with regard to the ultimate meaning of the films, but to understand the discourses that shape expectations and understanding of both the individual films and the Kaurismäkian label itself.

In focusing on the nexus between the auteurial and national narratives that circulate around Kaurismäki I do not wish to imply that other narratives would be insignificant. Indeed, as Nestingen argues, the film texts and Kaurismäki's own public performances create a "clash of codes"<sup>157</sup> which can be interpreted in a variety of ways. In the course of my work I will not be able to consider in any great detail the cinephilic, class and gender politics that also contribute to the Kaurismäkian auteur narrative. However, I feel that Nestingen may be too hasty in interpreting Kaurismäki's "subversive" performances as attempts to "reject nationhood".<sup>158</sup> In my view Kaurismäki's critical commentary about national politics or culture serves instead as evidence of the filmmaker's willing participation in debates and redefinitions of contemporary Finnish nationality, rather than as a jettisoning of the national category altogether. Indeed, the fact that the director often makes polemical statements about Finland and Finnish identity clearly signals a desire to be seen and heard commenting on national culture. While Kaurismäki's comments about Finland and Finnishness and his films' engagement with national themes do not present an essentialist view of national identity, nationality is still an integral and deliberate part of his auteur narrative. I would therefore argue that further consideration should be given to the interrogation of national themes in Kaurismäkian films and auteurial performances and, crucially, to the kinds of responses they elicit and how they operate within broader considerations of national identity.

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*Aki Kaurismäki: aesthetics and contexts*, ed. Andrew Nestingen, *Special issue of Journal of Finnish Studies* (Ontario: Aspasia books, 2004), 92-93.

<sup>157</sup> Nestingen, "Aki Kaurismäki and Nation."

<sup>158</sup> Nestingen, "Aki Kaurismäki and Nation."

## Chapter Two

### The National Mythscape

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Like the auteur, nation and national identity are problematic terms. The literature around the concepts is expansive, with several journals dedicated specifically to the investigation of the origins, spread and relevance of nations and national identity.<sup>1</sup> Contemporary debates tend to involve an understanding of the malleability of national identities and the socially constructed quality of national 'memory', as opposed to their innate and essential existence. One of the most influential texts on the spread of nationalism has been Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities*. Anderson argues that the development of print and the codification of vernacular languages were essential catalysts for people beginning to 'imagine' themselves as members of a national community. For Anderson each individual's ability to imagine a sense of common belonging between themselves and unknown members of the nation through the consumption of a ubiquitous item such as the newspaper is a constitutive element of national identity.<sup>2</sup> Anderson considers the newspaper a potent narrator of identity, as it addresses the nation as self-evident. The limited shelf-life of newspapers also gave national narration a dynamic character. Anderson's approach has since been criticised for its focus on the "supply side of print marketing" and for examining the nation-state as the only forum for national belonging.<sup>3</sup> Michel Bouchard also points out that many of Anderson's assumptions about the emergence of nationalism only apply in a Western European context, as the practices of Orthodox Christianity allowed for national consciousness to arise much earlier than the advent of print: "[i]n the East, the historical record is quite clear – Christianity promoted nationhood".<sup>4</sup> In fact, Bouchard argues that the development of print worked to raise Church Slavonic to a hegemonic role it had not had before, to the detriment of vernacular languages.<sup>5</sup> Still, the concept of an 'imagined community' remains powerful as it foregrounds the abstract and subjective nature of national identification. Further,

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<sup>1</sup> See for example *Nations and Nationalism, Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism, Nationalism and Ethnic Politics*.

<sup>2</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined communities: reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism*, Revised and extended ed. (London and New York: Verso, 1991), 34-36.

<sup>3</sup> Michael Lessnoff in Mark Hamilton, "New Imaginings: The Legacy of Benedict Anderson and Alternative Engagements of Nationalism," *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism* 6, no. 3 (2006): 79. See also Chris Berry, "From National Cinema to Cinema and the National. Chinese-language Cinema and Hou Hsiao-hsien's 'Taiwan Trilogy'," in *Theorising National Cinema*, eds Valentina Vitali and Paul Willemen (London: BFI Publishing, 2006), 154. Michael Herzfeld, *Cultural Intimacy. Social Poetics in the Nation-State*, Second ed. (New York and London: Routledge, 2005), 6.

<sup>4</sup> Michel Bouchard, "A critical reappraisal of the concept of the 'Imagined Community' and the presumed sacred languages of the medieval period," *National Identities* 6, no. 1 (2004): 6.

<sup>5</sup> Bouchard, "A critical reappraisal of the concept of the 'Imagined Community'," 17.

Anderson's realisation of the importance of media and communication for the maintenance of a sense of national belonging makes the idea of an 'imagined community' particularly useful in the context of studies of cinema. Later in this chapter I apply Jonathan Culler's refocusing of Anderson's argument to consider the specific ways in which different kinds of cultural products, such as novels or films, are able to engage in the process of national 'imagining'. I also consider the role artists and so-called elites play in the process of 'imagining' a nation, in order to establish the discursive framework in which Kaurismäki's engagement with Finnish national society operates.

In what follows I begin with an outline of certain theories of nations and nationalism, particularly in the context of the post-Cold War Europeanisation process and debates about the effect of globalisation on national identities. Understanding the influence of globalisation on national identities is highly relevant to Kaurismäki's films, given that the films' national prestige derives in part from their presence on the international film festival circuit and that the film texts themselves often reference international exchange and mobility. I also draw on Duncan Bell's refinement of ethnosymbolic terminology and go on to examine the development of the Finnish 'mythscape', or the way in which Finnish national identity has been imagined historically. This historical overview establishes some of the key tropes of 'Finnishness' that Kaurismäkian film has frequently engaged with, and provides a deepened understanding of the ways in which Kaurismäkian cinema has both challenged and contributed to the iconography of Finnishness. I dedicate particular attention to narratives of Finnishness during and since the Cold War, in order to provide the immediate historical context of the films analysed in chapters Three to Five.

### Terms and conditions

Writing about nations and nationalism is notoriously mired in terminological problems, with 'nation' and 'state' frequently conflated in common usage, and even in academic writing adjectival forms (national, French, Finnish) extend to cover qualities pertaining to 'nation' and 'nation state', with 'nationalism' used varyingly in neutral or emotive terms. I define 'nation' along the same lines as Anthony D. Smith as

a named and self-defined human community whose members cultivate shared myths, memories, symbols, values and traditions, reside in and identify with a historic

homeland, create and disseminate a distinct public culture, and observe shared customs and common laws.<sup>6</sup>

I follow John Hutchinson in distinguishing, in principle, between cultural and political nationalism.<sup>7</sup> Political nationalism is an ideology that considers the nation as the ideal premise for a sovereign state, and in this sense it is an underlying, if often unacknowledged, principle of modern political systems. As a more dynamic phenomenon political nationalism involves the active efforts of people to establish or secure the political self-determination of a national group. By contrast, the primary concern of cultural nationalism is not political independence but the rhetoric and imagery with which people express their national identity. Where political nationalism is concerned with the relationships of a nation with others, cultural nationalism seeks to maintain internal cohesion. In reality culture and politics cannot be separated quite so easily, and cultural and political nationalism do bleed into and influence each other: one of the issues to be addressed over the course of the thesis is the role of Kaurismäkian film as the interface between the 'inside' and the 'outside', of an internally and externally oriented mode of national imagining.

For the sake of clarity and to avoid conflating 'nation' and 'state' in the adjectival form it would perhaps be advisable to distinguish between national and civic Finnishness. However, in the Finnish case this conflation may be to some degree justified, given the relative cultural homogeneity of the citizens of Finland,<sup>8</sup> and the importance of the state in the development of Finnish national identity: while I accept an ethnosymbolist understanding of the development of national identities, I think it is likely that a Finnish *national* identity did not form until Finland as an *administrative* entity was established within the Russian realm following the Napoleonic wars at the start of the nineteenth century. Even in the case of the existence of a (proto)national Finnish identity prior to this time, for example as a result of the Reformation, it would in all likelihood have developed with the support and sanction of the crown, and as such had an institutional quality to it. Given the extent to which the civic and national are implicated in each other both historically and in contemporary Finland, and with the understanding that while this is not an ideal solution further terminological demarcation may indicate neat distinctions where none exist, I have elected to use the single adjective 'Finnish' to refer to aspects pertaining to Finland, Finns and Finlanders.

<sup>6</sup> Anthony D. Smith, *The Cultural Foundations of Nations. Hierarchy, Covenant and Republic* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2008), 19.

<sup>7</sup> Hutchison, *Modern Nationalism*, 40-41.

<sup>8</sup> Simo Häyrynen, "Partisans of Nation-States: Comparing the Role of Minority Identities in New Zealand and Finland," *National Identities* 8, no. 2 (2006): 152-153.

### The persistence of nations

National narration is necessarily selective: already in 1882 Ernest Renan observed that the process requires forgetting, even “historical error,” since underlying divisions within a nation must be ignored in order to impose unity on the group.<sup>9</sup> It is this homogenising tendency in discourses of national identity that has been criticised particularly since the Second World War. Following the horrors of the Second World War, nationalism as a whole has been seen as a destructive force, and many commentators have either predicted or wished for the obsolescence of the concept. For example, Robert Ellwood describes the nationalism of nation states in particular as “more of an idea than a reality” and expects the salience of nationalism to disappear by the end of the twenty-first century, while Thomas Elsaesser hopes that “the very notion of national identity will fade from our vocabulary.”<sup>10</sup> While Ellwood’s assessment deals specifically with the kind of nationalism that has as its aim the political self-governance of a nation, Elsaesser is ill at ease even with an individual’s feeling of belonging in the kinship-sense that Benedict Anderson hoped to rehabilitate the term to.

In addition to the moral objections to nationalism that were raised by the Second World War, over the past couple of decades the increased mobility of people, information and capital across state borders has led to a tendency to argue that nations and nationalisms are on the wane as other identifications overtake the national. For example, in *Modernity at Large* Arjun Appadurai refers to having “the benefit of hindsight [...] with respect to the global journey of the idea of the nation”<sup>11</sup> and argues that “[w]e have to think ourselves beyond the nation.”<sup>12</sup> Eric Hobsbawm argues that, while nationalism still holds some sway in the world, it has ceased to be “a global political

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<sup>9</sup> Ernest Renan, “What is a nation?,” in *Nation and Narration*, ed. Homi K. Bhabha (London: Routledge, 1990), 11. David Lowenthal points out, however, that given the examples Renan uses the issue is not so much of ‘forgetting’ certain events but of not celebrating them. David Lowenthal, “Memory and Oblivion,” *Museum Management and Curatorship* 12 (1993): 177-178. See also Anderson, *Imagined communities*, 199-201.

<sup>10</sup> Robert Ellwood, “Keynote Address. Conference on oppositional religion in Finland,” in *Beyond the mainstream: the emergence of religious pluralism in Finland, Estonia, and Russia*, ed. Jeffrey Kaplan (Helsinki: SKS, 2000), 39; Elsaesser, *European cinema: face to face with Hollywood*, 109. Curiously, Ellwood expects religious identification to flourish under the same globalising pressures that he predicts will destroy nationalism.

<sup>11</sup> Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large. Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 22.

<sup>12</sup> Appadurai, *Modernity at Large*, 158.

programme” and had in the second half of the twentieth century become “at most a complicating factor, or a catalyst for other developments.”<sup>13</sup>

These “postnational” formulations derive from broad and interconnected assumptions about the role of the state in relation to individuals and on a global scale. First, postnationalism holds that as rights are increasingly inscribed in an inherent “personhood” and recognised globally, membership of a state (i.e. citizenship) becomes less relevant to individuals.<sup>14</sup> Second, postnationalists note that the global transfer of capital and information and the ease of international travel has lessened the state’s role in individuals’ lives, and made it easier and more likely for people to imagine themselves as members of a transnational community of people with shared interest rather than as members of a nation-state. Postnational arguments, then, tend to be based on a close linking of the state and the nation, arguing that as the institutions of the former weaken, so does the appeal of the latter.

Randall Hansen convincingly argues that the first position, regarding the role of citizenship, does not withstand close scrutiny. Hansen raises examples often used to make postnational arguments, such as EU citizenship superseding national citizenship and an individual’s ability to take a state to the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR), pointing out that the nation-state is indelibly inscribed into these institutions: one cannot be a citizen of the EU without also being a citizen of an EU member country, and the ECHR is only open to those who have exhausted their legal options in their home countries.<sup>15</sup> Hansen also suggests that academics who celebrate the prospect of the disappearance of citizenship are blinded by their own privilege, and fail to grasp the crucial role citizenship plays in people’s rights and their abilities to fully participate in society: “[t]hose, historically and today, whose circumstances have left them less advantaged lack the luxury of such indifference.”<sup>16</sup>

On the role of the state in global interactions, Joan Ramon Resina argues that globalisation is dependent on “popular legitimation” and that this legitimation “is likely to remain national.”<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> E. J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and nationalism since 1780: programme, myth, reality* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 191.

<sup>14</sup> For an overview of the development of this argument, see Randall Hansen, “The poverty of postnationalism: citizenship, immigration, and the new Europe,” *Theory & Society* 38 (2009): 2-5.

<sup>15</sup> Hansen, “The poverty of postnationalism,” 6,8.

<sup>16</sup> Hansen, “The poverty of postnationalism,” 20.

<sup>17</sup> Joan Ramon Resina, “The Scale of the Nation in a Shrinking World,” *Diacritics* 33, no. 3/4 (2003): 70.

John Micklethwait and Adrian Wooldridge also point out that globalisation is not a new development:

Look back 100 years and you discover a world that by many economic measures was more global than it is today: where you could travel without a passport, where the gold standard was an international currency, and where technology (cars, trains, ships, and telephones) was making the world enormously smaller.<sup>18</sup>

This is not to suggest that there would not be fundamental differences between earlier forms of globalisation and those facilitated by contemporary information technologies, but that there is a crucial flaw in studies of nationalism that assume the existence of a 'national past' where outside influences did not exist. Frederick Bueller similarly argues that

[i]n general, both celebratory and dystopian claims about the global economy's borderlessness, as well as claims that the new economy necessarily whittles national sovereignties down to ineffectuality, have been exaggerated.<sup>19</sup>

Bueller writes in the context of the United States, and suggests that instead of causing the dissolution of national identities, globalisation has led to the "reconstitution of U.S. cultural nationalism in an interesting, new, 'postnational' form."<sup>20</sup> The United States may well be unique in its ability to re-imagine globalisation as a "project [which] empower[s]"<sup>21</sup> its national culture, but other national cultures have shown similar resilience in the face of globalisation. For example, drawing on cross-national surveys Marco Antonsich argues that "over the last two decades, the trends for national attachment and national pride in Western Europe do not show any sign of decline."<sup>22</sup> Thomas Hylland Eriksen points to the role of the Internet in facilitating national discussion and providing a site of belonging for non-territorial nations, and argues that "[i]n a 'global era' of movement and deterritorialisation, the Internet is used to strengthen, rather than weaken, national identities."<sup>23</sup> Christopher Browning has also identified a "repackaging" of Finland's state identity since the mid-1990s with the rise of "a new discourse of a networking,

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<sup>18</sup> John Micklethwait and Adrian Wooldridge, "The Globalization Backlash," *Foreign Policy*, no. 126 (2001): 26.

<sup>19</sup> Frederick Buell, "Nationalist Postnationalism: Globalist Discourse in Contemporary American Culture," *American Quarterly* 50, no. 3 (1998): 551.

<sup>20</sup> Buell, "Nationalist Postnationalism," 551.

<sup>21</sup> Buell, "Nationalist Postnationalism," 578.

<sup>22</sup> Marco Antonsich, "National identities in the age of globalisation: The case of Western Europe," *National Identities* 11, no. 3 (2009): 294.

<sup>23</sup> Thomas Hylland Eriksen, "Nationalism and the Internet," *Nations and Nationalism* 13, no. 1 (2007): 1.

innovative and globalising Finland".<sup>24</sup> Instead of diminishing the appeal of national identities, then, globalisation leads to different forms and expressions of nationalisms. This is certainly the case with Kaurismäkian film as well: while processes of globalisation are evident in the films' financing and distribution networks as well as in the film texts themselves, the more recent films in particular also express considerable affection and nostalgia for an idealised Finnishness.

As some of the above examples suggest, the post-Cold War Europeanisation process, and the expansion of the European Union in particular, have provided a valuable test case for the inherent conflicts and contradictions of national and postnational belonging. There is no doubt that the European Union seeks to maintain the structure of the nation-state and the distinction between nations: the many levels on which states specifically are implicated in the Union suggests as much. A 'European' identity, then, would not develop as a substitute but as a corollary to national identities.

Yet it must also be acknowledged that the Europeanisation process has had an impact on the ways in which European nations are imagined. Membership in the EU necessitates some transfer of legislative power to the Union and a commitment to a joint future in close collaboration with other member states. Debates over membership in prospective EU countries have inevitably included a concern over national sovereignty, or the extent to which a country could still be considered independent if certain powers are handed over to the EU. EU membership could then signal a national identity crisis in cases where national identity had been closely aligned with the state. Finnish national identity has traditionally had a highly civic or statist element, and Kari Alho and Mika Widgrén note that in Finland (and the other Nordic countries) the prospective loss of sovereignty that would be occasioned by EU accession had the potential to be conceived of in traumatic terms due to the historically important role social consensus had played in national decision-making, or the extent to which the state and national society had been implicated in one another.<sup>25</sup> Other reasons for the significance of state autonomy for Finnish national identity

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<sup>24</sup> Christopher S. Browning, "Small, Smart and Salient? Rethinking Identity in the Small States Literature," *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 19, no. 4 (2006): 679-680. For an analysis of "the nationalism of global economic competition" see Pauli Kettunen, *Globalisaatio ja kansallinen me. Kansallisen katseen historiallinen kritiikki* (Tampere: Vastapaino, 2008), 209-228.

<sup>25</sup> Kari Alho and Mika Widgrén, "Finland: Economics and Politics of EU Accession," *The World Economy* 17, no. 5 (1994): 709. Pauli Kettunen draws attention to a telling example of this conflation by noting that in Finland the words for state (*valtio*) and society (*yhteiskunta*) have historically often been used synonymously. Kettunen, *Globalisaatio ja kansallinen me*, 138-139.



include the extensive welfare system, Finland's war experience and the relative "youth" of Finnishness.<sup>26</sup>

In order to compensate for the perceived loss of the state's power following EU membership, Finnish national identity became conceived of in more strongly cultural terms than before.<sup>27</sup> Pertti Joenniemi argues that this shift has been made possible by a Hegelian-Herderian duality in Finnish national identity, one that originated during Finland's administrative autonomy under Russian rule:

This situation dictated that the nation could not be conceptualised as the basis for an independent state, and hence the nation had to be seen as located on a level of its own. [...] The nation was to provide space for Finland's subjectivity as a cultural entity, and to do so without fusing into a state, or running into conflict with the statist entities already in place.<sup>28</sup>

Over time, however, "[t]he concept of a nation became increasing [sic] fused to the concept of the state and Finland gained the features of an ordinary state-nation construction."<sup>29</sup> During the Cold War in particular "[t]he country developed a fortress mentality [...] [and] became primarily a *Staatsnation* with increasingly weak features of a *Kulturnation*, although the two conceptualisations continued to co-exist."<sup>30</sup> As a result of this historical duality, once the Hegelian *Staatsnation* became compromised by European integration, it was relatively easy to emphasise the *Kulturnation* instead.<sup>31</sup>

This cultural turn has been evident in a number of areas. For example, Nelli Piattoeva draws attention to the way in which in official Finnish government documents, ranging from committee reports to guidelines on school curricula, "[t]he traditional understanding of the nation in terms of political sovereignty has been exchanged for a cultural one," or, in the words of the 1993 Committee Report on Humanities and Social Science Education, "culture partially replaces the

<sup>26</sup> Laura Kolbe, "Kansallinen kulttuuri ja uusi eliitti," *Kanava* 23, no. 6 (1995): 333.

<sup>27</sup> Petri Ruuska, "Mennyt tulevaisuutena," in *Elävänä Euroopassa. Muuttuva suomalainen identiteetti* eds Pertti Alasuutari and Petri Ruuska (Tampere: Vastapaino, 1998), 283.

<sup>28</sup> Pertti Joenniemi, "Finland in the New Europe. A Herderian or a Hegelian project?," in *European Integration and National Identity. The challenge of the Nordic states*, eds Lene Hansen and Ole Wæver (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), 196.

<sup>29</sup> Joenniemi, "Finland in the New Europe," 197.

<sup>30</sup> Joenniemi, "Finland in the New Europe," 199.

<sup>31</sup> Joenniemi, "Finland in the New Europe," 182.

state as a cohesive force holding the society together, mother tongue surpasses the fatherland.”<sup>32</sup> The popular Finnish ‘film boom’ of the turn of the millennium, when a large number of nationally nostalgic Finnish films gained a strikingly large domestic audience, can be seen as an example of this kind of reorientation towards national culture as well. Kaurismäki has also commented on this kind of turn towards the cultural nation in general terms: in an interview with the magazine *Voima* in 2005 Kaurismäki suggested that national identities became more focalised as they appeared under threat, particularly from the EU.<sup>33</sup> While Kaurismäki was not referring to his own priorities or practices, the national nostalgia and increased sentimentality of his films from *Take Care of Your Scarf*, *Tatjana* onwards can be understood as being part of the same process.

### From national memory to mythscape

The turn towards the cultural nation has been referred to as an appeal to ‘collective’ or ‘national memory’.<sup>34</sup> The term ‘collective memory’ originates in the writing of the sociologist Maurice Halbwachs. Halbwachs distinguished between personal and collective memory, arguing that groups of people had memories of their collective origins and pasts, and that individual, personal memories contributed and gave shape to collective memories.<sup>35</sup> In its strictest sense, collective memory for Halbwachs depends on frequent interpersonal contacts between members of a group, and the group’s concern for each individual member: groups that best fit into this category are families and sets of friends.<sup>36</sup> Although Halbwachs did not consider nations to be small enough communities to engender true collective memories, as “the nation as such can’t be said to be interested in the destiny of each of its members,” and from the point of view of an individual’s daily life the nation is “too remote” to be of much consequence,<sup>37</sup> the term ‘collective memory’ has since been applied in particular in national contexts.

Despite the proliferation of the term ‘collective memory’, a number of theorists of memory caution against using the term ‘memory’ beyond its strictest sense as a fundamentally individual

<sup>32</sup> Nelli Piattoeva, "Citizenship and nationality in changing Europe: a comparative study of the aims of citizenship education in Russian and Finnish national education policy texts," *Journal of Curriculum Studies* 41, no. 6 (2009): 732.

<sup>33</sup> Forss, "Väsnyyt susi."18

<sup>34</sup> See for example Erkki Pennanen, "Talvisodan muistelu arvossaan," *Helsingin Sanomat*, 1.12. 1999, n.p.

<sup>35</sup> Maurice Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory*, trans. Francis J. Ditter and Vida Yazdi Ditter (New York, Cambridge, Hagerstown, Philadelphia, San Francisco, London, Mexico City, Sao Paulo, Sydney: Harper & Row, 1980), 52.

<sup>36</sup> Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory*, 31-32.

<sup>37</sup> Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory*, 77.

property. For example, Wulf Kansteiner considers the use of “psychological and neurological terminology, which misrepresents the social dynamics of collective memory as an effect and extension of individual, autobiographical memory”, a crucial methodological problem of memory studies.<sup>38</sup> Amos Funkenstein, though he proposes defining the term “collective memory” more clearly rather than rejecting it altogether, criticises the attribution of consciousness and memory to communities of people:

This is confusing, as consciousness and memory can only be realized by an individual who acts, is aware, and remembers. Just as a nation cannot eat or dance, neither can it speak or remember.<sup>39</sup>

Duncan Bell proposes a new set of terms to replace ‘memory’ in a collective context. He differentiates between a mythscape, a memory and a governing mythology: a mythscape is the locus of continual creation, reconstruction and transmission of the nation, while the governing mythology is the official narrative of the nation, an attempted homogenisation of the mythscape.<sup>40</sup> In Bell’s terms memory is a strictly personal recollection, one that can contribute to the mythscape but often stands in opposition to or as a denial of the governing mythology: memory can be “a counter-hegemonic site of resistance, a space of political opposition.”<sup>41</sup> Bell proposes the term “mythscape” as a more accurate alternative to “collective memory”: it is “the page upon which the multiple and often conflicting nationalist narratives are (re)written; it is the perpetually mutating repository of the past for the purposes of the present.”<sup>42</sup> For Bell the term ‘collective memory’ obscures the narrative aspect of national identities and so makes it possible to consider people’s relationship to and understanding of core myths of nationality as equivalent to their understanding of actual personal memories. Bell is particularly critical of the conflation of myth and memory in the works of Anthony D. Smith.<sup>43</sup> I appropriate Bell’s ‘mythscape’ here in an effort to keep in mind the continually evolving and imagined nature of national identities.

There exists a range of officially sanctioned moves to guide national mythscapes in particular directions. Examples of this type of activity include Pierre Nora’s work in analysing the French *Lieux de mémoire* – “which some have been kind enough to see not as a ‘history of France’ in the

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<sup>38</sup> Wulf Kansteiner, "Finding Meaning in Memory: A Methodological Critique of Collective Memory Studies," *History and Theory* 41, no. May (2002): 179.

<sup>39</sup> Amos Funkenstein, "Collective Memory and Historical Consciousness," *History and Memory* 1, no. 1 (1989): 6.

<sup>40</sup> Bell, "Mythscape," 75.

<sup>41</sup> Bell, "Mythscape," 66.

<sup>42</sup> Bell, "Mythscape," 65-66. Brackets in original.

<sup>43</sup> Bell, "Mythscape," 70-71.

traditional sense but as *the history that France needs today*<sup>44</sup> – as well as everyday decisions about school curricula, the wording of government media releases and so on. While these examples involve a largely internal drive, or are intended to refine a national group's understanding of itself, there are other examples where the national mythscape is appropriated for external purposes, such as in the Danish "culture canon" project<sup>45</sup> and the commercial nation-branding strategies 'Cool Britannia' and 'Brand Estonia'.<sup>46</sup> A 2010 nation-branding proposal for Finland suggested marketing Finland as an international problem solver particularly of ecological and educational issues.<sup>47</sup> In these external branding projects certain key aspects of the mythscape are harnessed in a way that links their symbolic national significance with their international commercial potential. In the Finnish branding case the project was also described as a national "mission" (*Tehtävä Suomelle*), and included advice for different groups of people, such as school teachers, celebrities and export companies, on how to promote the particular kind of national narrative. The branding project, then, does not have a straightforwardly internal or external motivation, but seeks to define a particular kind of 'Finnishness' for both in-group and out-group consumption. Kaurismäkian cinema has a similar function given its engagement with the national mythscape and its international reach.

Here it is worth returning to the idea of the 'imagined community', and specifically to how cultural products such as novels and films contribute to the process of imagining. Jonathan Culler notes that where Anderson's terminology is appropriated in cultural studies, it is often done with reference only to the content of cultural products, and the role (or otherwise) of texts as "representations of the nation."<sup>48</sup> While Culler notes that the symbols, language and plots of cultural products may tap into particularly 'national' preoccupations, it is unlikely that these elements on their own would create national feeling. Instead, Culler points out that

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<sup>44</sup> Pierre Nora, "General Introduction," in *Rethinking France. Les Lieux de Mémoire. Volume One: The State*, eds Pierre Nora and David P. Jordan (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2001), xviii, emphasis added. For a critique of the national nostalgia in Nora's project, see Hue-Tam Ho Tai, "Remembered Realms: Pierre Nora and French National Memory," *The American Historical Review* 106, no. 3 (2001).

<sup>45</sup> Kulturkontakten editorial team, "Cultural canon. An easy introduction to the Danish cultural heritage" [website] *Kulturministeriet*, available from <http://www.kum.dk/sw37439.asp> [cited 8.4.2010].

<sup>46</sup> For more on nation-branding see Sue Curry Jansen, "Designer nations: Neo-liberal nation branding - Brand Estonia," *Social Identities* 14, no. 1 (2008).

<sup>47</sup> Maabrändivaltuuskunta, "Tehtävä Suomelle! Miten Suomi ratkaisee maailman viheliäisimpiä ongelmia. Consider it solved. Maabrändiraportti 25.11.10.," (2010),

<sup>48</sup> Culler, "Anderson and the Novel," 38.

in Anderson's account what is crucial to the role of fiction in the imagining of nations is not this representation but that the world evoked by the novel include events happening simultaneously, extend beyond the experience of particular individuals, and be conceived as geographically situated or bounded.<sup>49</sup>

In other words, Culler notes that important aspects that are often ignored in studies on national 'imagining' are, first, the way in which the act of reading encourages people to think of themselves in relation to others on an abstract level, and second, the way in which the text addresses its readers. Culler takes up Anderson's example of the newspaper as essential to national imagining, noting that "[f]ew newspapers in the period of nation-building were sufficiently dominant to constitute in themselves a national voice", but that this is hardly the point if focus shifts away from issues of national representation to the community of newspaper readers acting as a conceptual "*model* for the imagined community of a nation".<sup>50</sup> Further, as novels are read in very different ways to newspapers and are not characterised by a similar sense of immediacy and simultaneity, it follows that the kind of national community imagined by readers of novels is very different to that imagined by newspaper readers.<sup>51</sup>

Given the relative ease with which film crosses national boundaries the role of a film in imagining national communities would, more often than not, involve an understanding of the film's existence outside national boundaries as well. For example, it is well known that Kaurismäki's films are released outside Finland, typically to much larger audiences than in Finland, and so this awareness would colour the kind of community imagined by Finnish viewers. Whether a Finnish viewer conceives of the international audience of Kaurismäkian film as fellow cinephiles brought together by an appreciation of auteur cinema, or as foreigners whose gaze on native national culture is either troubling or titillating, the kind of national imagining brought on by Kaurismäkian cinema is predicated on an understanding of the films' position on the interface between the national and the international. Given the proliferation of the international perspective in contemporary societies, I would argue that the 'outside' of the national community is implicated even in the case of films that do not cross national boundaries: in these cases the audience is likely to have an awareness of the *lack* of such an international audience, and depending on the context the more strictly national bounds of a film's viewership may be considered in positive or negative terms.

<sup>49</sup> Culler, "Anderson and the Novel," 23.

<sup>50</sup> Culler, "Anderson and the Novel," 26. Emphasis in original.

<sup>51</sup> Culler, "Anderson and the Novel," 26-27.

The primary imaginary audience addressed in most Kaurismäkian films, and certainly those of the Finland trilogy, is conceived of in national terms, even if the nation itself is understood as open to international interactions. The primacy of the national audience is supported not only by Kaurismäki's claim that despite their greater popularity abroad than in Finland Kaurismäkian films are made primarily for Finns,<sup>52</sup> but also by the subtle examples where some meaning is lost – or additional meanings inferred – if the viewer is not familiar with the film's Finnish context. One such example is a scene in *Shadows in Paradise* where Nikander lies that the flowers he has bought for Ilona are actually intended to celebrate his brother's high school graduation. Melartin responds: "But it is April". To understand that Melartin's response reveals Nikander's bluff to be ludicrously transparent requires the viewer to know high school graduations take place at the end of May or early June in Finland. To shortcut through cultural context, the English subtitling of the scene in Sandrew Metronome's DVD release renders Melartin's response as "But you don't have a brother." The translation reveals Nikander's lie but simultaneously attributes a false level of intimacy to exist between the introverted and silent men, who are hardly likely to engage in genealogical chats during their rounds. Tuomas Kainulainen has studied the French subtitles of Kaurismäkian films, and identified similar shifts in meaning from the Finnish to the French contexts: in *Drifting Clouds* Lauri's use of the phrase "the mighty pines still grow" (*vielä niitä honkia humisee*) in Finnish appropriates the frontier ethos of rugged lumberjacks of the nineteenth century to indicate his optimism about his job search, while the French translation – *les lilas refléuriront*, "the lilacs will bloom again" – replaces the romanticised lumberjack culture with less culturally specific "botanism".<sup>53</sup> Kaurismäki's well-known cinephilia and the frequent diegetic depictions of film theatres in the films also suggest that the intended, ideal audience of Kaurismäkian film is, aside from being Finnish, specifically a cinema-going one.

In analysing the films of the Finland trilogy I explore how the films reflect the cultural turn in Finland's years of Europeanisation and how the films address specifically national issues of the time. However, essential to my analysis of the Kaurismäkian 'imagined community' is also the above described understanding of how an awareness of a wider international audience plays an important part in the process.

<sup>52</sup> Kalle Kirstilä, "Vanha kettu uusilla jäljillä. Aki Kaurismäki uhkuu uutta intoa elokuvantekoon," *Etelä-Suomen Sanomat*, 30.1. 1996, 8.

<sup>53</sup> Tuomas Kainulainen, *Traduction de films: le cas de l'Akilien* (Masters dissertation [unpublished manuscript], University of Turku, 1999), 56.

### Origins of Finnishness

In order to understand the Kaurismäkian engagement with the national mythscape more fully, it is first necessary to be aware of the key themes and tropes of Finnishness itself. The following sections map the development of the Finnish mythscape, drawing out the dominant themes of Finnish national imagining, in terms of both content and audience or readership. The problem with writing about the histories of nations and national identities is the fact that in order to give a full picture of their development it is important to start before they existed. Such an approach necessarily has a teleological tendency to it – to speak of “Finns” or “what is now Finland” in relation to a time when such a nation or state did not exist is problematic. This terminological compromise between historical inaccuracy and conservation of space is one of the reasons that Umut Özkirimli refers to ethnonational theorists in particular as “latterday Romantics who suffer from a deep sense of nostalgia”: any writing about the nation reifies it, and writing the nation where it does not ‘yet’ exist mythifies it.<sup>54</sup> My aim here is to establish how Finland and Finns have historically been imagined and how understandings of Finnish history contribute to the contemporary Finnish mythscape. While I hope I will not give the impression that the emergence of these categories has been an inevitable historical development, it is impossible to escape the fact that the end point of my discussion here is Finnish national identity as it is expressed today, and the way in which Kaurismäkian film engages with it.

What is now modern Finland has been settled for around nine thousand years, although recent archeological research suggests there may have been habitation in certain areas from as long as 125 000 years ago.<sup>55</sup> South-western Finland was settled by the end of the Bronze Age, and during the Iron Age settlement spread from the regions of Häme and Karelia to the north.<sup>56</sup> Christianity arrived in Finland from the eleventh century from the east and the west as part of the colonising missions of Sweden and Novgorod, with the Swedish effort able to establish a lasting and gradually growing presence in what roughly corresponds to modern Finland.<sup>57</sup> The legend of St Henrik is a lingering trace of the Swedish colonisation and Christianisation of Finland. According to the legend

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<sup>54</sup> Umut Özkirimli, "The nation as an artichoke? A critique of ethnosymbolist interpretations of nationalism," *Nations and Nationalism* 9, no. 3 (2003): 340.

<sup>55</sup> Arvo Peltonen, "The Population in Finland" [website] *Virtual Finland* (2002) available from <http://virtual.finland.fi/netcomm/news/showarticle.asp?intNWSAID=25785> [cited 1.8.2007]. "Kristiinankaupungin Susiluola. Paleoliittinen luola-asuinpaikka " [website] *Museovirasto*, (2008) available from <http://www.nba.fi/fi/susiluola> [cited 16.3.2010].

<sup>56</sup> Peltonen, "The Population in Finland".

<sup>57</sup> Juha Pentikäinen, "The Ancient Religion of the Finns" [website] *Virtual Finland*, (2002) available from <http://virtual.finland.fi/netcomm/news/showarticle.asp?intNWSAID=25814> [cited 1.8.2007].

Henrik was the first bishop of Finland, and was murdered by the enraged Lalli who mistakenly thought the bishop had stolen food from his house. Henrik's remains were placed in a sled drawn by an ox, and a church was founded where the ox stopped from exhaustion. In his discussion of Ericus Olai's *Chronicle of the realm of the Goths* (*Chronica regni Gothorum*) from the late fifteenth century Biörn Tjällén shows how the legend of St Henrik worked in tandem with the legend of St Erik, the Swedish martyr king, as "a dualist creed where a secular and an ecclesiastical leader cooperated in their respective roles to the spiritual and material benefit of their subjects."<sup>58</sup> As Erik and Henrik were thought to be contemporaries, even friends, their legends affirmed the unity of church and state in Sweden. Once his legend had become established, Henrik was named the patron saint of Finland. The treatment of the myths of Erik and Henrik demonstrates that Finland was considered a distinct yet integral part of the Swedish realm. This does not suggest that such a thing as Finnish national identity existed at that point, as the distinction of Finland from the rest of Sweden was largely a geographic one. In addition, at the time "Finland" only referred to the southwest corner of modern Finland. For later narratives of Finnish identity, however, the legend of Henrik has had particular relevance: Pertti J. Anttonen argues that the arrival of Henrik in Finland has "[come] to designate the early beginnings of Finland's 'Europeanness' and 'Westernness'," most recently at the time of the "ideological reconstruction" of Finland following the end of the Cold War.<sup>59</sup> Christopher Browning makes a similar point in reference to a particular text that depicts Henrik's crusade and Finland's EU membership as bookending a timeline of Finland's "national mission" of Europeanisation: despite the lack of any contemporary historical evidence to prove Henrik even existed, his alleged crusade to Finland in the twelfth century is often considered the starting point of Finland's *Western* history.<sup>60</sup> Indeed, as Derek Fewster has noted, since the inception of Finnish archeological practice the imagery and ideas associated with medieval and prehistoric Finland have been closely linked with contemporary political debates.<sup>61</sup>

<sup>58</sup> Biörn Tjällén, *Church and nation. The discourse on authority in Ericus Olai's Chronica regni Gothorum (c. 1471)* (PhD thesis [unpublished manuscript], Stockholm University, 2007), 83.

<sup>59</sup> Pertti J. Anttonen, "A Catholic Martyr and Protestant Heritage. A Contested Site of Religiosity and its Representation in Contemporary Finland," in *Creating Diversities. Folklore, Religion and the Politics of Heritage*, eds Anna-Leena Siikala, Barbro Klein and Stein R. Mathisen (Helsinki: SKS, 2004), 191. See also Pertti Anttonen, "Myytin ja todennäköisyyden historiaa. Piispa Henrikin surma viimeaikaisen suomalaisen historiankirjoituksen valossa," in *Historioita ja historiallisia keskusteluita*, eds Sami Louekari and Anna Sivula (Turku: Turun historiallinen yhdistys, 2004), 98.

<sup>60</sup> Christopher S. Browning, "Coming Home or Moving Home? "Westernizing" Narratives in Finnish Foreign Policy and the Reinterpretation of Past Identities," *Cooperation and Conflict* 37, no. 1 (2002): 48.

<sup>61</sup> Derek Fewster, *Visions of Past Glory. Nationalism and the Construction of Early Finnish History* (Helsinki: SKS, 2006).



In her study of the early development of the narration of Finns and Finland, Päivi Kannisto refers to a seventeenth century historical chronicle by Johannes Messenius, which similarly did not define Finns as a single national group, but rather as the inhabitants of a very loosely defined land area.<sup>62</sup> Kannisto contrasts Messenius' conceptualisation of Finns – a once glorious people now the banished inhabitants of a barren hinterland – with a Finnish-language historical booklet written around the same time, which sought to reinforce loyalty to the Swedish crown. Unlike Messenius' Latin chronicle, whose most likely intended audience consisted of academics and nobles, the *Knowledge of the Age of the events and beliefs of Finland (Ajan tieto Suomenmaan menoist ja uscost, 1658)* booklet by Laurentius Petri was intended to be read by and to Finnish peasants. The text followed what were thought to be common patterns of Finnish folk poetry to describe the many unfortunate turns in Finnish history and to praise rulers, clergy and scholars for protecting and providing for the people. The contrast between the narratives aimed at different audiences illustrates the divisions between estates and the different premises of 'imagined communities' in this context: the nobility could draw from the residual glory of the historic Finns whilst lamenting the 'banishment' from courtly society that an appointment or title in Finland equated to, and peasants could remain content in their lot knowing that the king had their interest at heart.<sup>63</sup> It is indicative of different ways of conceptualising Finns as a group that the higher estates could connect themselves to a glorious heritage of a Finnish people defined by territory, while the peasants were, by virtue of the fact that *Knowledge of the Age* was written in Finnish, necessarily addressed on an ethnic basis.

The language of religion of the Swedish empire was Latin until 1527, when Lutheranism was adopted by royal decree. Protestantism was thus instituted in the Swedish empire in a top-down conversion, taking approximately one hundred years to become consolidated.<sup>64</sup> Since one of the main principles of Lutheranism is the idea that everyone should be able to personally interpret the word of God, it was necessary to make the Bible available in local vernacular languages. The first translations of biblical texts into Finnish were undertaken by Mikael Agricola, who also addressed his translation of David's Psalm "To the Finns".<sup>65</sup> The translation of religious texts was accompanied by the spread of a basic level of education, aimed at providing a level of functional

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<sup>62</sup> Päivi Kannisto, *Suolatut säkeet. Suomen ja suomalaisten diskursiivinen muotoutuminen 1600-luvulta Topeliukseen* (Jyväskylä: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura, 1997), 27-29.

<sup>63</sup> Kannisto, *Suolatut säkeet*, 27, 33-48, 55-64.

<sup>64</sup> Anttonen, "A Catholic Martyr and Protestant Heritage," 196.

<sup>65</sup> Jukka Siikala, "The ethnography of Finland," *Annual Review of Anthropology* (2006): 156.

literacy to the wider population. From the mid-seventeenth century onwards anyone who could not pass the curriculum would not be confirmed in the church, and as a consequence would not be allowed to marry. In effect the penalty for not being able to read, even at a low functional level, was the exclusion from society.<sup>66</sup>

In addition to promoting social cohesion, the education project also gave a level of prestige to the Finnish language, even if it was still largely only spoken by a rural peasant population. The formal, officially sanctioned use of an existing ethnic language is cited as the basis of a national identity by several theorists. For example, Ernest Gellner argues that national identification arises as a by-product of industrialisation and its need for a skilled class of clerks and a uniform workforce. For Gellner the systematic use of an ethnic language in education allows for the group identification of a nation to arise.<sup>67</sup> Clearly the sixteenth and seventeenth century Finnish context does not fit the prescribed model of industrial states, but it does provide the opportunity to examine the influence of the formal, state-sanctioned use of a codified vernacular language on the emergence of national identity in a more general sense. It is likely that a sense of Finns as a nation distinct from Swedes began to form as texts such as *Knowledge of the Age* spread and addressed a specifically Finnish constituency, particularly given the already established geographical distinction between Finland and the western half of the kingdom. The new role of Finnish as a liturgical language could also allow people to see themselves as connected to a sacred eternity specifically as Finns. Considering the strong bond between the church and the Swedish state, a sense of Finnish nationhood encouraged through religious means would most likely have incorporated within it an affirmation of Finland's essential position within the Swedish realm.

An early Finnish nationalism within the Swedish realm would have reinforced connections between the geographical territory and the speakers of Finnish, but it would not have been a separatist nationalism. Indeed, an early Finnish national sentiment could have been supported by the state as a useful way of stabilising society. Given that the treaties of Teusina and Stolbova at the turn of the seventeenth century described Sweden as "consisting of Sweden, Finland, and Estonia" and holding power "over distinct nations", a specifically Finnish identity could have drawn

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<sup>66</sup> Kati Niemelä, "Rippikoulu ja Prometheus-leiri aikustumisriitteinä" [website] *Kirkon tutkimuskeskus*, (2002) available from <http://www.evl.fi/kkh/ktk/rippikoul.htm#historia> [cited 16.3.2010].

<sup>67</sup> Ernest Gellner, "Nationalism and Modernization," in *Nationalism*, eds John Hutchison and Anthony D. Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 56.

from and in turn facilitated the administrative needs of the realm.<sup>68</sup> Still, it is important not to overstate the meaning of 'Finland' at this time. It may have been a convenient way of referring to the eastern parts of the realm and its inhabitants may even have thought of themselves as 'Finnish' to some degree, but in reality 'Finland' was a collection of East Swedish provinces and had no central administration or function of its own.<sup>69</sup>

### The emergence of Finnish nationalism

At the turn of the nineteenth century the geographic boundaries of Sweden changed significantly due to the Napoleonic wars. Eastern parts of the empire were ceded to Russia between 1809 and 1814, while Sweden gained western parts of the Scandinavian peninsula – Norway – from Denmark. The ceded eastern regions were joined together with existing parts of Russian Karelia and established as an administrative entity called Finland, an autonomous Grand Duchy of Russia.<sup>70</sup> Swedish remained the official language of the state, and trade relations between Finland and Sweden remained stable.<sup>71</sup> Uffe Østergård argues that for the majority of the population the transfer of loyalty from the Swedish to the Russian crown was an easy process due to the "deep-rooted Lutheran view of society," which prioritised the rule of law and social order.<sup>72</sup>

Although it is possible that some level of ethno-national identification had existed in Finland under Swedish rule, in reality 'Finns' had a state, albeit not an independent one, before they were a nation.<sup>73</sup> Jouni Häkli argues that Finnish national identity came to be formed in a reasonably stable setting, as government administrative structures were relatively unchanged from the time of Swedish rule and the creation of Finland as a distinct political entity reinforced an existing distinct

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<sup>68</sup> Siikala, "The ethnography of Finland," 156.

<sup>69</sup> Matti Klinge, *Kaksi Suomea* (Helsinki: Otava, 1982), 181. See also Vilho Harle and Sami Moisio, *Missä on Suomi? Kansallisen identiteettipolitiikan historia ja geopolitiikka* (Tampere: Vastapaino, 2000), 60.

<sup>70</sup> Tracy X. Karner, "Ideology and nationalism: the Finnish move to independence, 1809-1918," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 14, no. 2 (1991): 157.

<sup>71</sup> Erkki Pihkala, *Suomalaiset maailmantaloudessa keskiajalta EU-Suomeen* (Helsinki: SKS, 2001), 85. See also Timo Myllyntaus, "Vaaran laelta toimiston nurkkaan - taloudellinen kehitys ja elämänmuodon muutokset," in *Suuri muutos - suomalaisen yhteiskunnan kehityspiirteitä*, ed. Marjatta Rahikainen (Helsinki and Lahti: Helsinki University, 1992), 39-40.

<sup>72</sup> Uffe Østergård, "The geopolitics of Nordic identity - from composite states to nation-states," in *The Cultural Construction of Norden*, eds Øystein Sørensen and Bo Stråth (Oslo, Stockholm, Copenhagen, Oxford and Boston: Scandinavian University Press, 1997), 61.

<sup>73</sup> See for example Anssi Paasi, "Geographical perspectives on Finnish national identity," *GeoJournal* 43 (1997): 46.

geographical identity.<sup>74</sup> The demarcation of Finland as a separate administrative entity subsequently led to the pre-1809 Swedish empire being referred to in Finnish historiography as Sweden-Finland. The term implied a stronger national and regional Finnish identity than had existed in reality, and certainly overstated the political and administrative role of Finland during Swedish rule. In response to its border changes Sweden, too, began to be narrated in Sweden as a nation state instead of an empire in flux. Sweden's domain on the eastern part of the Scandinavian peninsula – that is, excluding the ceded Finnish territories and the newly added Norwegian lands – was now referred to as “Sweden proper”.<sup>75</sup>

The creation of the Finnish state led to a wave of cultural nationalism, a move to distinguish ‘Finns’ from Swedes and Russians. Matti Klinge argues that at the time the cultural difference between Finns and Russians was considered large enough to not need particular work, but it was all the more important to establish a convincing Finnish cultural identity separate from a Swedish identity.<sup>76</sup> This cultural nationalist movement became focused on the Finnish language and Finnish folk culture. Despite drawing its inspiration from the culture of the peasant class, Finnish cultural nationalism was a “project of those in power” and not in the least incompatible with loyalty to the tsar – in fact, the development of a Finnish cultural identity at that time served the interests of the Russian empire, as it would make Finns more likely to resist a Swedish revanche.<sup>77</sup>

The development of nineteenth century Finnish cultural nationalism has been well documented. The movement followed the teachings of Adolf Iwar Arwidsson and Henrik Gabriel Porthan, both academics who had researched folk poems. Arwidsson had argued in defence of national languages and in particular had affirmed the unity of language and land:

When the language of its forefathers is lost, a nation, too, is lost and perishes. All speaking the same tongue naturally form an indivisible whole; they are bound together internally by ties of mind and soul, mightier and firmer than every external bond. For language forms the spiritual, and land the material, boundaries of mankind; but the former is the stronger, because the spirit means more than the material.<sup>78</sup>

<sup>74</sup> Jouni Häkli, "Cultures of Demarcation: Territory and National Identity in Finland," in *Nested identities: nationalism, territory, and scale*, eds Guntram Henrik Herb and David H. Kaplan (Maryland and Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield, 1999), 129.

<sup>75</sup> Matti Klinge, *Bernadotten ja Leninin välissä. Tutkielmia kansallisista aiheista* (Porvoo and Helsinki: Werner Söderström Osakeyhtiö, 1975), 11-12. Klinge, *Kaksi Suomea*, 51.

<sup>76</sup> Klinge, *Kaksi Suomea*, 51.

<sup>77</sup> Häkli, "Cultures of Demarcation," 132; Klinge, *Bernadotten ja Leninin välissä*, 16.

<sup>78</sup> Arwidsson cited in Anthony D. Smith, *Chosen peoples. Sacred Sources of National Identity* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 191.

Arwidsson's focus on the unity of land and language draws on the long tradition of considering Finns as a territorially bound linguistic group. Porthan's and Arwidsson's followers at the University of Turku formulated the philosophical basis for collecting folk poems, which further affirmed the importance of the land in creating, and language in expressing, a particular national culture:

People living in varying physical environments can develop differing national cultures. These differences are reflected in the national character or soul. No two nations can share exactly the same environment or historical development and therefore no two nations can have the same soul. [...] The national soul can best be expressed in the form of its unique language and especially in its own folk poetry – the 'loftiest expression' to which language can aspire.<sup>79</sup>

These references to land are not intended as claims on territory, but as calls to understand the link between a people and its natural surroundings. Even the Finnish national anthem, first performed in 1848, emphasises natural phenomena and the toil that binds people to the land. The focus on land and language as sources of national identity was a way to anchor Finnishness in everyday life and to establish Finnish national identity as compatible with Russian rule. The importance placed on the Finnish language led to many Swedish-speakers learning Finnish and specifically seeking to raise the status of the language by creating a romantic literary tradition. Lauri Honko points out that as the divide between the Swedish-speaking educated classes and the Finnish-speaking peasantry had deepened towards the end of the eighteenth century, "[p]robably never before had educated Finns been less prepared to move to Finnish as their main language" – even the Finnish Literature Society had to give up on keeping its minutes in Finnish, as many of its members were not proficient enough in the language.<sup>80</sup>

Finnish cultural nationalism crystallised in the publication of the *Kalevala*, the national epic. Elias Lönnrot, a physician by training, travelled extensively in eastern Finland recording poems, and published the first version of the *Kalevala*, now known as the *Old Kalevala*, in two volumes in 1835 and 1836. An expanded edition followed in 1849, and it is this 50-poem *New Kalevala* that became the canonical text.<sup>81</sup> The poems depict the exploits of heroes from the land of Kaleva, focusing on the eternal sage Väinämöinen. The final poem mimics the Christian myth of virgin birth, and

<sup>79</sup> Karner, "Ideology and nationalism: the Finnish move to independence, 1809-1918," 157-158.

<sup>80</sup> Lauri Honko, "A Hundred Years of Finnish Folklore Research: A Reappraisal," *Folklore* 90, no. 2 (1979): 141.

<sup>81</sup> Siikala, "The ethnography of Finland," 161; John B. Alphonso-Karkala, "Transformation of folk narratives into epic composition in Elias Lönnrot's 'Kalevala'," *Jahrbuch für Volksliedforschung* 31 (1986): 22.

positions the *Kalevala* as the record of the Finns' pre-Christian faith. The *Kalevala* was considered evidence of an ancient Finnish high culture and served as a focal point for Finnish cultural nationalism, inspiring artists such as the composer Jean Sibelius and the painter Akseli Gallén-Kallela.

Although Lönnrot created much of the material of the *Kalevala* himself, many people preferred to believe the *Kalevala* was a faithful reproduction of an existing oral epic. For example, an article in *Helsingin Sanomat* in 1909 somewhat defensively states that the *Kalevala* was not created by one person, but by "the Finnish nation, our forefathers" as an expression of their finest thoughts and feelings.<sup>82</sup> Alan Dundes argues that in reality the truth of the epic's origins did not particularly matter: "what the people believed was – and is – more important than what was true."<sup>83</sup> Although the extent to which the *Kalevala* was created by Lönnrot caused confusion and controversy at times, Lönnrot's role in the epic's creation is now widely acknowledged and understood in very neutral terms.

Finnish nationalism became more political towards the end of the nineteenth century, and consisted of a number of competing movements. For example, where the Fennomen challenged the hegemonic position of the Swedish language in Finland's culture and politics, the Suecomen sought to maintain it.<sup>84</sup> These divisions in Finnish nationalism demonstrate the interlinking of cultural and political nationalism: where a political nationalism seeks to establish the self-rule of a national group, cultural nationalism attempts to establish and affirm the boundaries and definitions of the nation in the first place. It is also clear that there has never been a set, stable definition of what 'Finnishness' is, but that there have always been considerable variations in conceptualisations of Finnishness.

Finland gained its independence in the aftermath of the Russian revolution. Soon after independence in December 1917 Finland underwent a brief but bloody civil war in 1918 between the Whites, or the independent peasantry supported by German troops, and the Reds, industrial

<sup>82</sup> Mikko W. Erich, "Kalevalajuhlia viettämään," *Helsingin Sanomat*, 31.1. 1909, 7.

<sup>83</sup> Alan Dundes, "Nationalistic Inferiority Complexes and the Fabrication of Fakelore: A reconsideration of Ossian, the *Kinder- und Hausmärchen*, the *Kalevala*, and Paul Bunyan," *Journal of Folklore Research* 22, no. 1 (1985): 9-10.

<sup>84</sup> Hannu Syväoja, "Suomen tulevaisuuden näen" *Nationalistinen traditio autonomian ajan historiallisessa romaanissa ja novellissa* (Helsinki: SKS, 1998), 41-42. Harle and Moisio, *Missä on Suomi?*, 77.

and urban workers supported by Russian Bolsheviks.<sup>85</sup> The war ended eventually in White victory, leaving deep divisions in Finnish society: indeed, as Ulla-Maija Peltonen notes, “[t]he truth about the consequences of the War and the War itself were so painful that half a century had to pass before it was even possible to talk about the War from the point of view of the losers.”<sup>86</sup> The Civil War serves as a cogent example of how processes of national narration are in constant flux, working both in officially sanctioned discourses as well as in casual discussions: in Finnish historiography the Civil War has over time been narrated as a war of independence, a mutiny, and a revolution followed by a counter-revolution.<sup>87</sup> Peltonen notes that there are four distinct phases in Civil War remembrance in Finland: in the first phase, which lasted until the 1930s, the White perspective dominated and official accounts of the war downplayed White cruelties and exaggerated those of the Reds.<sup>88</sup> In the second phase, covering the post-World War II period of the 1940s and 1950s, these official interpretations of the war were not challenged, but there began to be moves to publically commemorate those on the losing side of the war as well.<sup>89</sup> There was a marked break with official narratives in the third phase starting in the 1960s, which saw the publication of a number of novels written from the Red perspective, among them the second part of Väinö Linna’s now canonical trilogy *Here under the Northern Star* (*Täällä Pohjantähden alla*, 1959-1962), and academic research began to take into account the social divisions that preceded the conflict.<sup>90</sup> For Peltonen the fourth phase of commemoration began in the 1980s and is ongoing: this phase is characterised by a weakening of emotional interpretations of the war.<sup>91</sup> As there were fewer and fewer survivors of the Civil War in this later phase, it is certainly true that the commemorations of the war did not have a *personal* emotional relevance for most people. However, Risto Alapuro differs slightly in his interpretation of the role of emotion more generally in the Finnish approach to the Civil War following the Cold War: he refers to a host of studies,

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<sup>85</sup> For an overview of the events see Anatole G. Mazour, *Finland. Between East and West* (Princeton, Toronto, New York and London: D. Van Nostrand Company, 1956), 49-55.

<sup>86</sup> Ulla-Maija Peltonen, "Civil War Victims and the Ways of Mourning in Finland in 1918," in *Historical Injustice and Democratic Transition in Eastern Asia and Northern Europe. Ghosts at the table of democracy*, eds Kenneth Christie and Robert Cribb (London and New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2002), 184.

<sup>87</sup> Jari Ehrnrooth, "Heijastuksia kansallisesta minästä," in *Millaisia olemme? Puheenvuoroja suomalaisista mentaliteeteista*, eds Satu Apo and Jari Ehrnrooth, *Polemia* (Vammala: Kunnallisan kehittämissäätiö, 1996), 43. For a brief overview of the events of the Civil War and its cultural legacy see Karen Armstrong, "Ambiguity and Remembrance: Individual and Collective Memory in Finland," *American Ethnologist* 27, no. 3 (2000): 596-598. See also David Kirby, "'The Workers' Cause': Rank-and-File Attitudes and Opinions in the Finnish Social Democratic Party 1905-1918," *Past & Present*, no. 111 (1986).

<sup>88</sup> Peltonen, "Civil War Victims," 191-192.

<sup>89</sup> Peltonen, "Civil War Victims," 192.

<sup>90</sup> Peltonen, "Civil War Victims," 192-193.

<sup>91</sup> Peltonen, "Civil War Victims," 194.

novels, films and plays on the subject published throughout the 1990s, and argues that the often explicitly violent and specifically emotive explorations of the civil war at this time were given greater perspective by the ongoing Balkan wars of secession.<sup>92</sup> In any case, this re-evaluation of the influence the Civil War has had on the process Finnish national imagining is an ongoing project. It would be churlish to draw too strong a parallel between the more balanced contemporary exploration of the Civil War and Finland's process of Europeanisation. However, it is important to acknowledge the connection between the national 'cultural turn' and this willingness to address and understand historical injustices, as both derive from a renewed need to define the boundaries of Finnishness and the latter plays a part in ensuring the former has an inclusivist orientation.

### Independence and international prestige

The interwar years in Finland were a time of national consolidation, of trying to establish an image of Finland as a modern European state. Film was an integral part of the national branding strategy: the first propaganda exercise of the newly independent Finland's foreign ministry was the production of "a six-act film of the land and people of Finland as they are to be depicted to foreigners."<sup>93</sup> Attempts at creating an appropriate image of Finland did not always succeed, and in their book on the creation of the official narrative of Finnishness from independence to the end of the Second World War Pekka Lähteenkorva and Jussi Pekkarinen describe some of the failed efforts. For example, in 1931 a Finnish consul in the United States requested that the foreign ministry refrain from sending photos of small shacks and primitive conditions, arguing that photographs from other countries "present only the most beautiful buildings and scenery as well as expressions of the highest achievements of human existence."<sup>94</sup> Even disseminating knowledge of Finland as an independent country had its challenges. Max Jakobson mentions a 1922 edition of *The Economist*, which published a map of Europe that included Finland as part of the Soviet Union. When the Finnish ambassador complained about the inaccuracy, the editor simply replied that the magazine did not take into account "temporary border changes".<sup>95</sup> There were also persistent theories of the Finns' genetic links to Mongolia, a connection deemed awkward given the Finns' determination to be seen as European. In 1928 Kaarlo Hilden declared that, instead, Finns were

<sup>92</sup> Risto Alapuro, "Coping with the Civil War of 1918 in Twenty-First Century Finland," in *Historical Injustice and Democratic Transition in Eastern Asia and Northern Europe. Ghosts at the table of democracy*, eds Kenneth Christie and Robert Cribb (London and New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2002), 181.

<sup>93</sup> Pekka Lähteenkorva and Jussi Pekkarinen, *Ikuisen poudan maa. Virallinen Suomi-kuva 1918-1945* (Helsinki: WSOY, 2004), 16.

<sup>94</sup> Lähteenkorva and Pekkarinen, *Ikuisen poudan maa*, 70.

<sup>95</sup> Max Jakobson, *Tilinpäätös* (Helsinki: Otava, 2003), 72.



their own independent race and “just as good” as the nations of Western and Central Europe.<sup>96</sup> The desire to be seen as ‘just as good’ as other European countries is connected to the tendency to establish links between national and international culture. For example, artists such as Akseli Gallén-Kallela and Jean Sibelius derived a high level of national prestige even during their lifetime not just because they treated national themes in their work, but also because they had highly-esteemed *European* pedigrees as artists: they had studied in Berlin, Vienna and Paris, exhibited or performed their work internationally and were connected to well-regarded international art movements, from realism to impressionism and symbolism.<sup>97</sup> Kaurismäki’s presence on the international film festival circuit, his international cinephilic influences and his non-Finnish films serve to similarly anchor international prestige in the national cultural sphere.

The desire to establish Finland’s reputation as a modern state stemmed from long held insecurities over national identity: Pia Maria Ahlbäck points to a 1937 Swedish text that describes Finland as a “harsh and frost-hardened land” constantly “in danger of being brought under Russo-Asian influence”.<sup>98</sup> In her subsequent discussion about the place of Nokia in Finnish national identity Ahlbäck argues that “Finnish subjectivity is continually being constructed in response to the 1937 imagery.”<sup>99</sup> Ahlbäck does not mean the particular Swedish text specifically, but rather the general trope of Finland as a peripheral agrarian country only on the brink of modernisation, and in constant danger of slipping further away from civilisation. The theme is a familiar one, dating back to Messenius’ description of a barren land and reprised regularly in Finnish culture: the Finnish self-image has for a long time been dominated by forests and rural peripheries.<sup>100</sup> The trend has been clear even in as modern a medium as the cinema: Pertti Alasuutari argues that while they draw on earlier representations of the capital, the Kaurismäki brothers’ films of the 1980s were the first examples of a consistent urban presence in Finnish cinema.<sup>101</sup> The fact that particularly in the *Workers’* trilogy characters escape their marginal urban condition by seeking happiness

<sup>96</sup> Marjatta Hietala, "Näkemyksiä eri roduista suomenkielisissä yleisen historian ja maantieteen oppikirjoissa 1800-luvun lopussa ja 1900-luvun alussa," in *Wie es eigentlich gewesen. Aira Kemiläiselle omistettu juhlaKirja* (Jyväskylä Jyväskylän yliopisto, 1979), 78.

<sup>97</sup> See for example Joe Martin Hill, "Inventing Finland," *Art in America*, no. March (2007).

<sup>98</sup> Pia Maria Ahlbäck, "Mediating Ideal Finland: Techne on the National Screen," *Scandinavian Studies* 78, no. 1 (2006): 72.

<sup>99</sup> Ahlbäck, "Mediating Ideal Finland," 79.

<sup>100</sup> See for example Matti Peltonen, "Between Landscape and Language: The Finnish National Self-image in Transition," *Scandinavian Journal of History* 25, no. 4 (2000). and Minna Aslama and Mervi Pantti, "Flagging Finnishness: Reproducing National Identity in Reality Television," *Television & New Media* 8 (2007): 57-58.

<sup>101</sup> Pertti Alasuutari, *Toinen tasavalta. Suomi 1946-1994* (Tampere: Vastapaino, 1996), 39. This is not to say that earlier Finnish cinema dealt exclusively with rural themes: see Chapter Five for further discussion on the city in Finnish cinema,

overseas, rather than returning to a romanticised countryside, also breaks with Finnish narrative tradition.<sup>102</sup>

### The Second World War and postwar recovery

The Finnish experience of the Second World War is divided into three separate wars: the Winter War, the Continuation War and the Lapland war. Finland had been allocated to the Russian “zone of influence” in the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact, and so a Soviet attack in 1939 led to the Winter War. Finland was able to hold off the Soviet offensive, but was obliged under the terms of the armistice to cede parts of Finnish Karelia. Over the course of approximately a year of peace widespread discontent at the terms of the armistice gave fuel to the Greater Finland movement, which considered it Finland’s destiny to annex certain Russian territories inhabited by Finnic peoples: according to Henrik Meinander, while the movement was not a determining factor in the commencement of the Continuation War, at the “heights of optimism” Finnish leaders did have specific plans for annexing all of Eastern Karelia and the Kola peninsula.<sup>103</sup> During the armistice Finland also fostered a close relationship with Germany. The cooperation fell short of being a formal political allegiance, but Finland did anticipate requiring German assistance in order to gain back the territory lost to the Soviet Union.<sup>104</sup> In 1941 Finland declared war on the Soviet Union, and crossed the new border. Instead of stopping at the old border and claiming back ceded territory, the Finnish army continued eastwards, with the plan of realising a Greater Finland and placing greater pressure on the Soviet Union as it sought to defend Leningrad from Germany.<sup>105</sup> As the Soviet army began to gain the upper hand in the conflict, Finland accepted the assistance of German troops to help fight in Lapland. The Continuation war came to an end in 1944, and was followed by the Lapland War against the German troops still stationed in Lapland. War reparations were heavy, and included the loss of Karelia to the Soviet Union.<sup>106</sup>

The enormous symbolic significance of the loss of Karelia has overshadowed some of the other losses of the war: for example, final war reparations also included ceding large areas of land from Lapland. However, the loss of the Laplandic territories does not register as a national loss to the extent that Karelia does, and while Karelians occupy an important position in the Finnish national

<sup>102</sup> Tani, "The Aesthetics of Backyards".

<sup>103</sup> Henrik Meinander, *Suomen historia. Linjat, rakenteet ja käännekohtat* (Helsinki: WSOY, 2010), 208.

<sup>104</sup> Meinander, *Suomen historia*, 207-210.

<sup>105</sup> Meinander, *Suomen historia*, 209.

<sup>106</sup> For a summary of the war reparations see Allan A. Kuusisto, "The Paasikivi Line in Finland's Foreign Policy," *The Western Political Quarterly* 12, no. 1 (1959): 42-43.

imaginary, the Sami are continually 'othered'.<sup>107</sup> Netta Böök also points out that 'Karelia' denotes loss to the extent that even though Southern and Northern Karelia were not ceded, "in common speech 'Karelia' very often refers [only] to the ceded territories."<sup>108</sup> Böök states that ceded Karelia "is for Finns a collective, mythical place, loaded with meaning," the mythical attachment deepened by the ban on travel to the region during the Cold War.<sup>109</sup> The symbolic significance of Karelia derives from the fact that it is irrevocably lost: "Karelia is perfect and unchanging, because it no longer exists."<sup>110</sup> Although there are occasional calls for ceded Karelia to be returned to Finland, there has been no serious discussion of the matter: Karelia remains a powerful symbol for Finnish national identity, but in an abstract sense, not as a literal homeland.

Due to the heavy losses incurred by Finland following the wars, and the fact that the Moscow Armistice of 1944 specified that Finland had been the belligerent party, commemoration of the Second World War was tempered in Finland during the Cold War. However, the Winter War in particular was considered a watershed event for Finnish national identity, and the country's relative success against a much larger enemy – 'the miracle of the Winter War', *Talvisodan ihme* – was mythologised as permanently uniting Finns and repairing the damage done by the civil war just over two decades earlier.

The Finnish war experience is, as in many other countries, 'remembered' indirectly through cultural products such as films and television programs. Thomas Elsaesser refers to this phenomenon as "media memory or prosthetic memory". He states that

these moving images from the past are so alive, they exude so much presence, that to call them 'passed' in the traditional sense would not do justice to either their power or their fascination [...]. These images, I would say, whether in the form of historical period material or as restagings and uncanny recreations, have become the undead of history.<sup>111</sup>

The term "prosthetic memory" originates in Alison Landsberg's analysis of *Total Recall* (Paul Verhoeven, 1990) and *Blade Runner* (Ridley Scott, 1982) in 1995, and she expands on the concept

<sup>107</sup> Harle and Moio, *Missä on Suomi?*, 120, 127.

<sup>108</sup> Netta Böök, "Border Karelia through rose-coloured glasses? Gazes upon a ceded territory," *Fennia* 182, no. 1 (2004): 34.

<sup>109</sup> Böök, "Border Karelia through rose-coloured glasses?," 35.

<sup>110</sup> Harle and Moio, *Missä on Suomi?*, 116

<sup>111</sup> Thomas Elsaesser, "Ingmar Bergman's *The Serpent's Egg*: Reflections of reflections on retro-fashion," in *Ingmar Bergman revisited. Performance, cinema and the arts*, ed. Maaret Koskinen (London and New York: Wallflower Press, 2008), 172-173.

in her 2004 book *Prosthetic Memory. The Transformation of American Remembrance in the Age of Mass Culture*. Landsberg describes prosthetic memories as “memories that ‘speak’ to the individual in a personal way *as if* they were actually memories of lived events” and that they “derive from a person’s mass-mediated experience of a traumatic event of the past.”<sup>112</sup> Wulf Kansteiner also refers to the “privileged status of images in memory” and the ability of visual representations of past events to “close, and at times even obliterate, the gap between first-hand experience and secondary witnessing.”<sup>113</sup> In the immediate postwar context many novels and films addressed the Finnish war experience, attempting to come to terms with the changes to the Finnish mythscape. The canonical example of these depictions of war is *The Unknown Soldier* (*Tuntematon sotilas*) by Väinö Linna, published in 1954 and set during the Continuation War. The text drew on Linna’s own experiences at the front, and was both criticised and admired for its realistic rather than glorified account of the war. The popular novel was soon adapted for the screen by Edvin Laine, attracting enormous public interest. With a theatrical audience of almost three million, the 1955 film remains the most watched film in Finnish cinema history.<sup>114</sup> The film’s regular screenings on television over the past decade – always on Independence Day on the sixth of December<sup>115</sup> – have solidified the film’s position in the national canon and are a prime example of an ‘imagined community’ in practice: a large group of people participating in an overtly national ritualised activity at the same time.

Kaurismäkian cinema has not tended to refer to the war experience, foregrounding instead the legacy of the postwar recovery period. However, Kaurismäki has reportedly described his *Calamari Union* as a re-imagining of Linna’s *The Unknown Soldier*, “a kind of allegory of Finland’s Winter War,”<sup>116</sup> and indeed Lauri Timonen has noted that with *Calamari Union*, as with war films, the audience comes to know and sympathise with the protagonists only to see many of them meet a violent death.<sup>117</sup> Kaurismäki’s statement should be taken with a grain of salt, though, as the

<sup>112</sup> Alison Landsberg, *Prosthetic Memory. The Transformation of American Remembrance in the Age of Mass Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 19. Emphasis in the original. Marianne Hirsch proposes the term “postmemory” to refer to the same kind of mediated memory, in the first instance in relation to the descendants of Holocaust survivors. Marianne Hirsch, *Family Frames – Photography, narrative and postmemory* (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: Harvard University Press, 1997), 22.

<sup>113</sup> Kansteiner, “Finding Meaning in Memory,” 191.

<sup>114</sup> “Katsotuimmat kotimaiset” [website] KAVA, available from <http://www.kava.fi/elavan-kuvan-museo/arkiston-aarteet/suomalaisen-elokuvan-historiaa/katsotuimmat-kotimaiset> [cited 8.4.2010].

<sup>115</sup> “Tuntematon sotilas (1955). Esitystiedot” [website] *Elonet*, (2006) available from <http://www.elonet.fi/title/ek2flk/esitys> [cited 8.4.2010].

<sup>116</sup> Kaurismäki cited in Lauri Timonen, *Aki Kaurismäen elokuvat* (Helsinki: Otava, 2006), 68.

<sup>117</sup> Timonen, *Aki Kaurismäen elokuvat*, 69.

connection between the *Calamari Union* and *The Unknown Soldier* is rather opaque. Kaurismäki's claim does however, demonstrate the director's desire to be seen engaging with the national cultural canon, albeit in his typically ironic way. Peter von Bagh has also interpreted the scene in *Drifting Clouds* where Lauri and Melartin rescue the chef Lajunen from alcoholism and life on the streets as representing the kind of national solidarity occasioned by the Winter War.<sup>118</sup> The clearest reference to Finland's war experience in the Kaurismäkian oeuvre is the concert documentary *Total Balalaika Show* (1993), which records a joint concert between The Leningrad Cowboys and the Red Army Chorus and Dance Ensemble. The concert was staged in the historic centre of Helsinki, drawing an audience of tens of thousands. The groups performed mainly Russian folk songs and classic American rock, and the concert was laden with good-humoured satire of the East-West divide – although the concert opened with a much more solemn performance, with the Red Army Chorus singing Jean Sibelius' "Finlandia" with V.A. Koskenniemi's 1941 lyrics, which celebrate Finland's struggle against oppression. The event has been cited as "the most incongruous – and inspired – crosscultural pairing since Nureyev danced with Miss Piggy,"<sup>119</sup> the first in a series of overtly commercial uses of Helsinki's Senate square,<sup>120</sup> and, more significantly, as a turning point in Finns' attitudes towards Russians.<sup>121</sup> Kaurismäki himself has referred to the concert as the moment the "Winter and Continuation War truly ended".<sup>122</sup>

### The great migration and Kekkoslovakia

The loss of territory in Karelia and Lapland led to the need to resettle over 400 000 displaced persons. The resettlement of Karelians and Laplanders contributed to Finland's rapid urbanisation, also brought on by the modernisation necessitated by the Soviet demand for war reparations to be paid mainly in industrial goods. Until the early 1960s Finland was still a largely agrarian country, but by the 1970s over half of Finland's employed population worked in the service sector.<sup>123</sup> Industrial output had increased three and a half fold in two decades, and the proportion of the

<sup>118</sup> Peter von Bagh, *Aki Kaurismäki* (Helsinki: WSOY, 2006), 169.

<sup>119</sup> Lisa Nesselson, "Total Balalaika Show," *Variety Movie Reviews*, 29.3. 1994, 3.

<sup>120</sup> Panu Lehtovuori, "Tapahtuma - toinen paikka?," in *Urbs. Kirja Helsingin kaupunkikulttuurista*, ed. Stadipiiri (Helsinki: Edita, 2000), 112.

<sup>121</sup> Arto Mustajoki, "(Venäjän) kieli keskellä suuta," in *Entäs kun tulee se yhdestoista? Suomettumisen uusi historia*, ed. Johan Bäckman (Helsinki: WSOY, 2001), 440.

<sup>122</sup> von Bagh, *Aki Kaurismäki*, 116.

<sup>123</sup> Harri Melin, "Katosivatko luokat?," in *Mikä Suomessa muuttui? Sosiologinen kuva 1990-luvusta*, ed. Raimo Blom (Helsinki: Gaudeamus & Hanki ja jää, 1999), 25.

rural population had decreased from fifty to fifteen per cent of the workforce in three decades.<sup>124</sup> This rapid structural change in Finnish industry and economy is typically referred to as “the great migration” (*suuri muutto*) or “fleeing from the countryside” (*maaltapako*), the term itself carrying connotations of evacuation and disaster. Many Kaurismäkiian films refer in some way to this social change, for example by depicting characters migrating from the countryside to Helsinki, or through settings and music that evoke the period. As Kaurismäki was born in 1957, the structural change in Finland coincides with his childhood and youth, and so anxiety over changes to the national society combine with a personal nostalgia in Kaurismäkiian films as well as in the director’s public performance. For example, *Ariel* is dedicated to “the memory of Finnish reality,” and Kaurismäki has stated that his films are not set in the present, but in “the land of his memories,” Finland from 1962 to 1979.<sup>125</sup>

Finland’s Cold War-era policies have been referred to as ‘Finlandised’. Finlandisation refers to the influence the threat of Soviet military intervention had on Finnish politics and public discourse during the Cold War. Although isolated mentions of either the term or general meaning of Finlandisation have been identified in a range of publications from as early as the 1950s,<sup>126</sup> the term became widely known through the writings of West German academic Richard Loewenthal in the late 1960s.<sup>127</sup> Loewenthal was strictly speaking not discussing the political climate of Finland as such, but rather referred to Finland’s ambiguous position between blocs in speculating that western détente could lead to the Soviet Union being able to “Finlandise” (*Finnlandisieren*) France or West Germany.<sup>128</sup> The term annoyed Finns, as its uncritical use seemed to validate and in fact take for granted the belief that Finland was not really independent, but a “Soviet Trojan horse;”<sup>129</sup> that the Soviet Union had effective power of veto over Finnish governments; and that Finnish

<sup>124</sup> Antti Karisto, Pentti Takala, and Ilkka Haapola, *Matkalla nykyaikaan. Elintason, elämäntavan ja sosiaalipolitiikan muutos Suomessa* (Porvoo, Helsinki and Juva: WSOY, 1997), 62-63.

<sup>125</sup> Pirkko Lecorre, "Pariisin Kaurismäki-paneeli totesi Akin suomalaiseksi mutta yleispäteväksi," *Helsingin Sanomat*, 20.2.1991, n.p.

<sup>126</sup> See for example Jakobson, *Tilinpäätös*, 94. and Pekka Lähteenkorva and Jussi Pekkarinen, *Idän etuvartio? Suomi-kuva 1945-1981* (Helsinki: WSOY, 2008), 269-270.

<sup>127</sup> Matti Klinge, "Ecce Finnia tridentem! - Tässä Suomi valtiikkasi!," in *Entäs kun tulee se yhdestoista? Suomettumisen uusi historia*, ed. Johan Bäckman (Helsinki: WSOY, 2001), 35. Johan Bäckman, however, credits the popularity of the term to politician Franz Johan Strauss. Johan Bäckman, "Pelkoa ja kiusantekoa - johdatus pehmeään sosialismiin," in *Entäs kun tulee se yhdestoista? Suomettumisen uusi historia*, ed. Johan Bäckman (Helsinki: WSOY, 2001), 12. See also John Lukacs, "Finland Vindicated," *Foreign Affairs* 71, no. 4 (1992): 60-61.

<sup>128</sup> Helena Rytövuori-Apunen, *Unionin ajan idänpolitiikka* (Helsinki: Edita, 2007), 42.

<sup>129</sup> Browning, "Coming Home or Moving Home?," 52.

media were restricted from criticising Soviet society.<sup>130</sup> One of the catalysts for the Finnish obsession with Finlandisation was in fact a slight error of translation. Loewenthal's original text discussed active Soviet influence in another society, which should in Finnish have been translated as *suomettaa*, effectively "to make something Finnish." However, the word was instead translated *suomettua*, or "to become or make oneself Finnish."<sup>131</sup> Some definitions of Finlandisation even ignore the Soviets' active role altogether, distinguishing instead between different kinds of self-inflicted Finlandisation. Mika Hannula for example describes two distinct types of Finlandisation without reference to any Soviet agency:

Finlandization refers first of all to the era in Finland when people tried to please (for their own security and political ends) their Eastern neighbor, for example, by taking into account the interests of the Soviets in Finnish political decisions. The other type refers to the fact that good relations with the Soviets, the so-called Moscow card, was heavily used in internal Finnish political conflicts.<sup>132</sup>

In a similar vein, Jakobson defines Finlandisation as "a verbal phenomenon – what was said and what was left unsaid."<sup>133</sup> In Finnish debates, then, the focus was not so much on what the Soviet Union did to influence Finnish society, but what it did not *need* to do. I will refer to the former, the actions of the Soviet Union, as "active Finlandisation" (*suomettaminen*) and the latter, "making oneself Finnish," as "adaptive Finlandisation" (*suomettuminen*).

Active Finlandisation manifested itself in a number of official letters of complaint and coercion, but is most commonly associated with the Treaty for Friendship, Co-Operation and Mutual Assistance (FCMA), signed in 1948. The FCMA treaty was intended to ensure that Finnish foreign policy remained neutral and that Finland would refrain from assisting in any military action against the Soviet Union. Based on the treaty the Soviet Union claimed the right to criticise and comment on Finnish domestic policies, as these policies would influence Finnish foreign policies and so have

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<sup>130</sup> See for example George H. Quester, "Finlandization as a Problem or an Opportunity?," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 512 (1990): 34.; Timo Vihavainen, *Kansakunta rähmällään. Suomettumisen lyhyt historia* (Helsinki: Otava, 1991), 19-20.

<sup>131</sup> Kullervo Rainio claims credit for launching the Finnish translation, and even states the mistranslation was a deliberate attempt at drawing attention to Finns' own complicity in the process. Lähteenkorva and Pekkarinen, *Idän etuvartio?*, 260-263. See also Bäckman, "Pelkoa ja kiusantekoa," 12.

<sup>132</sup> Mika Hannula, *Self-understanding as a process: understood through the concepts of self-understanding as a narrative form, the third dimension of power, coming to terms with the past, conceptual change and case studies of Finnishness* (PhD thesis [unpublished manuscript], University of Turku, 1997), 125.

<sup>133</sup> Jakobson, *Tilinpäätös*, 163.

direct bearing on Soviet security interests.<sup>134</sup> While there was disagreement over the interpretations of clauses and treaties, the process of active Finlandisation was not openly criticised. As the peace treaty between Finland and the Soviet Union stipulated that Finland had started the armed conflict between the two countries, active Finlandisation was accepted as part of the penalties and reparations associated with “war guilt”.<sup>135</sup>

Following direct Soviet intervention in Finnish politics the anticipation of active Finlandisation turns into adaptive Finlandisation. In adaptive Finlandisation presumptions of Soviet preference and reaction dominate decision making, often manifesting in attempts to improve one’s own political standing. “Going to Tehtaankatu (Factory Street)”, the street in the centre of Helsinki where the Soviet embassy was based, became synonymous with seeking to demonstrate one’s trustworthiness to the Soviet Union.<sup>136</sup> In addition to public figures seeking privilege through their Soviet contacts, adaptive Finlandisation was an integral part of the Finnish public sphere. In 1973 a formal communiqué issued at the end of a state visit included the “press clause,” which required media in both Finland and the Soviet Union to support official foreign policy and refrain from publishing material which might inflame relations between the two countries.<sup>137</sup> As a result adaptive Finlandisation has been described as being present in the atmosphere of the times, as deference and a double think that would be difficult to identify in historical documents.<sup>138</sup> While the 1973 press clause restricted Finnish mainstream media, many journalists and public figures had already internalised the necessities of Finlandisation. The most obvious example was *Tiedonantaja*, the magazine affiliated with the Finnish Communist party, which was quick to call other media out for promoting “imperialist” propaganda. *Tiedonantaja* was regularly cited in the Soviet press, and Soviet officials would even commission articles in the magazine.<sup>139</sup>

Finland’s long-term president Urho Kekkonen is most strongly associated with Soviet Finlandising measures. Kekkonen became president in 1956, and remained in that position until 1981. His

<sup>134</sup> Alasuutari, *Toinen tasavalta*, 167.

<sup>135</sup> Alasuutari, *Toinen tasavalta*, 159.

<sup>136</sup> See for example Alasuutari, *Toinen tasavalta*, 175.

<sup>137</sup> Martti Valkonen, *Suomettaminen jatkuu yhä. Moskovan-kirjeenvaihtajan näkökulma Suomen ja itänaapurin suhteisiin kolmannesvuosisadan ajalta* (Helsinki: Tammi, 1998), back cover. Ambassador Jaakko Iloniemi describes the differences in Finnish and Soviet negotiators’ interpretations of the press clause: Finns saw the press clause as an expression of the will of political leaders but not as binding law, whereas the Soviets did not distinguish between the two. Cited in Valkonen, *Suomettaminen jatkuu yhä*, 96-97.

<sup>138</sup> Bäckman, “Pelkoa ja kiusantekoa,” 14-15.

<sup>139</sup> Vihavainen, *Kansakunta rähmällään*, 92-93; Valkonen, *Suomettaminen jatkuu yhä*, 151.



exceptionally long tenure resulted from the way he was able to use 'the Moscow card' to his advantage in domestic politics. Indeed, most of the crises in Finnish-Soviet relations during the Cold War were resolved in ways that benefited Kekkonen directly. The belief in Kekkonen's unique ability to secure peaceful relations with the Soviet Union guaranteed his political longevity, and his willingness to reinterpret Finnish history to suit Soviet ends made him an ideal ally from the Soviet perspective.<sup>140</sup>

During his long term in office Kekkonen came to personify Finnish-Soviet relations: "[h]ere is a man who toasted and joked with Stalin, who bathed with naked Nikita Khrushchev in a Finnish sauna, who fished and hunted with Leonid Brezhnev."<sup>141</sup> The pejorative term used at times to describe Cold War Finland, "Kekkoslovakia", draws on this personification. The perception of Kekkonen as the only conceivable president at times of crisis continued throughout the 1970s, despite Kekkonen's failing health and memory.<sup>142</sup> The disintegration of the power structures that upheld adaptive Finlandisation began in 1981/1982, when Kekkonen stood down from the presidency for health reasons and new president Mauno Koivisto "resuscitated parliamentary democracy," relinquishing many of the powers invested in the president during Kekkonen's reign.<sup>143</sup> Koivisto had gained popular support for his refusal to resign as prime minister on Kekkonen's demand, reminding the president who had been used to disbanding governments at will over his quarter of a century in power that only the parliament could dismiss a prime minister.<sup>144</sup> Koivisto's victory in the 1982 election was particularly significant as he was not the Soviet Union's preferred candidate, and so his presidency signalled a change in attitudes and a weakening (though not disappearance) of adaptive Finlandisation.<sup>145</sup>

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<sup>140</sup> One of the more famous examples of Kekkonen's historical revisionism was claiming that instead of the Grand Duchy of Finland declaring itself independent in 1917, Finland's independence had been a gift from Lenin. Mikko Uola, *Itsesensuurin kritiikkiä. Tekstejä suomettumisen vuosista Neuvostoliiton hajoamiseen* (Turku: Turku University, 2006), 30-31. For various theories on Kekkonen's complicity in the Note Crisis see Vihavainen, *Kansakunta rähmällään*, 65. Hannu Rautkallio, *Agenda Suomi. Kekkonen-SDP-NKP 1956-66* (Porvoo, Helsinki and Juva: WSOY, 1999), 131-132. Jakobson, *Tilinpäätos*, 211.

<sup>141</sup> Mikko Majander, "Post-Cold War Historiography in Finland," in *The Cold War - and the Nordic Countries. Historiography at a Crossroads*, ed. Thorsten B. Olesen (Odense: University Press of Southern Denmark, 2004), 73.

<sup>142</sup> Vihavainen, *Kansakunta rähmällään*, 115.

<sup>143</sup> Jakobson, *Tilinpäätos*, 242; Klinge, "Ecce Finnia tridentem!," 23.

<sup>144</sup> Martti Häikiö, *Historia ja väärät profeetat. Kirjoituksia Suomen historian kipupisteistä* (Helsinki: Edita, 2003), 294.

<sup>145</sup> See for example Klinge, "Ecce Finnia tridentem!," 45; Aappo Kähönen, "Ulkoisen ja sisäisen liikkumatila," in *Entäs kun tulee se yhdestoista? Suomettumisen uusi historia*, ed. Johan Bäckman (Helsinki: WSOY, 2001), 109. and Uola, *Itsesensuurin kritiikkiä*, 74.

Both active and adaptive Finlandisation officially ended when the active participant, the Soviet Union, collapsed.<sup>146</sup> However, just as adaptive Finlandisation has been compared to other periods of Finnish deference to a foreign power – such as the mutually beneficial relationship between the Fennomen and the Czar in the nineteenth century and between high-ranking officials and the Third Reich during the Second World War<sup>147</sup> – there are also suggestions that adaptive Finlandisation did not end when the Soviet Union broke up. According to some, Finnish deference at the cost of national sovereignty is now directed towards the European Union.<sup>148</sup> Martti Valkonen also makes a convincing case for the continuation of adaptive and even active Finlandisation after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Valkonen cites as examples the editor of *Helsingin Sanomat* removing the name of Russia's wartime foreign minister Molotov from an article discussing the notorious Molotov-Ribbentrop agreement, and a dinner between representatives of the newspaper and Russian diplomats in 1995 where expedient visa arrangements for new correspondents were exchanged for an agreement on favourable reporting.<sup>149</sup>

There are occasional references to Finland's Cold War-era relations with the Eastern bloc in Kaurismäki's films. For example, a portrait of Kekkonen hangs on the wall in a couple of films – in *Ariel* the protagonist Taisto even steals one to place next to a picture of Jesus at the halfway house in which he lodges – and *Calamari Union*, *Shadows in Paradise* and *Take Care of Your Scarf*, *Tatjana* all involve characters seeking happiness in Estonia. The last of these films was made in 1993, after the Cold War, but is set in the 1960s and depicts the formation of the chaste romances between two surly Finnish men and a Russian and an Estonian woman. Pietari Kääpä suggests that the film's valorisation of Soviet and Baltic connections should be read as “an allegorical anti-EU statement, which, in tandem with the nostalgic qualities of the narrative, suggests concrete dissatisfaction with the contemporary moment”.<sup>150</sup> Indeed, at the time there was a tendency to downplay Finland's close relations with the Eastern bloc. Christopher Browning has identified a change in Finnish public discourse in relation to the Cold War in recent years:

<sup>146</sup> Vihavainen, *Kansakunta rähmällään*, 289-290.

<sup>147</sup> Heikki Ylikangas, *Väkivallasta sanan valtaan. Suomalaista menneisyyttä keskiajalta nykypäiviin* (Porvoo, Helsinki and Juva: WSOY, 1999), 354; Olli Ainola, "Suomettumisen esikoulu," in *Entäs kun tulee se yhdestoista? Suomettumisen uusi historia*, ed. Johan Bäckman (Helsinki: WSOY, 2001), 154.

<sup>148</sup> See for example Vihavainen, *Kansakunta rähmällään*, 286-287. Lähteenkorva and Pekkarinen, *Idän etuvartio?*, 341. and Klinge, "Ecce Finnia tridentem!," 39.

<sup>149</sup> Valkonen, *Suomettaminen jatkuu yhä*, 211-213.

<sup>150</sup> Kääpä, *The National and Beyond*, 214.

[once] understood as a period of sagacious and inspiring Finnish statesmanship, during which the Finns managed to establish favourable relations with both the East and the West and to carve out an identity of Finland as a neutral and moral actor in international affairs, the period is now [scathingly attacked].<sup>151</sup>

Browning shows that it is specifically the Finlandisation of this era that is criticised. Meanwhile, Westernness is seen as a natural aspect of Finnish identity that was suppressed during the Cold War and was finally restored to its rightful place following Finland's accession to the European Union in 1995.<sup>152</sup> This view of Finland's 'natural' Westernness is present for example in Marja-Liisa Rönkkö's 1992 description of the feeling of tranquil inevitability at the news of the collapse of the Soviet Union: "a certain historical arc had come to its logical conclusion: Finland had popped back into Europe."<sup>153</sup> In this description Finland does not seek to join the West (i.e. Europe), but naturally appears there when the obstruction to this true identity, the Soviet Union, is no longer present. As in Finland's early years of independence, then, official discourses in the post-Cold War era sought to emphasise Finland's 'Europeanness' and 'Westernness'.

#### Westernisation: the other side of the coin

The dominant trope of Finnish national identity positions the Finns 'in between the East and the West'. The conflict between the East and the West is a foundation myth of modern Finland: for example, Seppo Zetterberg describes the equivalent area of contemporary Finland as a "political vacuum" before the Swedish empire and Novgorod took an interest in it.<sup>154</sup> In a similar vein Sergei Medvedev sees Finnish identity as being forged out of the conflict between the East and the West: he describes the tension in psychoanalytic terms, arguing that the East is Finland's "dark pre-historic and pre-conscious id," while the West is Finland's "normative and institutional" superego, the Father.<sup>155</sup> During the Cold War Finland's 'in-betweenness' was institutionalised in Finland's official neutrality, and the counternarrative to the Finns' political Finlandisation has been that of their cultural Westernisation.

<sup>151</sup> Browning, "Coming Home or Moving Home?," 48.

<sup>152</sup> Browning, "Coming Home or Moving Home?," 47-48.

<sup>153</sup> Marja-Liisa Rönkkö, "Töölönlahden kultalampi," in *Helsinki avoin kaupunki*, eds Antti Karisto and Eero Holstila (Helsinki: Helsingin kaupungin tietokeskus, 1992), 160.

<sup>154</sup> Seppo Zetterberg, "Main outlines of Finnish history" [website] *This is Finland*, (2001) available from <http://finland.fi/public/default.aspx?contentid=160058&contentlan=2&culture=en-US> [cited 8.4.2010].

<sup>155</sup> Sergei Medvedev, *Russia as the Subconsciousness of Finland*, *UPI Working Papers* (Helsinki: Ulkopoliittinen Instituutti - The Finnish Institute of International Affairs, 1998), 12-13. I discuss Medvedev's model in more detail in Chapter Five.

After a period of relative isolation, Finland began to open up to broader international influences in the early 1950s.<sup>156</sup> This internationalisation of Finnish society manifested itself, for example, in the arrival of iconic American products such as Coca-Cola and convertible cars in the 1950s.<sup>157</sup> Jukka Kortti argues that postwar Finland was particularly receptive to American ideals of freedom, heroism and the pioneering spirit.<sup>158</sup> The year 1952 in particular is seen as symbolising “emancipation from the shadow of war” and a reinvigoration of Finnish identity.<sup>159</sup> It was then that Finland completed its war reparation payments to the USSR, the Olympics were held in Helsinki and the Finnish Armi Kuusela was chosen as Miss Universe. The first of these events had great symbolic and material significance in Finland internally, and the latter two events were chances to demonstrate to outsiders how Western Finland was: Armi Kuusela’s success was seen as a good opportunity to prove that Finns were racially European and not Asiatic, and the Olympics strove to showcase Finnish athletic prowess and the modernness of Helsinki. The reinvigoration of the Finnish imagined community in the 1950s, then, depended in part on a foreign audience and the ability to compete – literally – on an equal footing with other countries.

In contrast to the Soviet Union, the United States had shown little interest in Finland economically or politically during the war.<sup>160</sup> However, despite its occasional suspicions about Finland’s political allegiances, the United States sought to maintain Finland in the Western sphere of influence. For example, while Finland’s neutrality prevented it from accepting Marshall Aid, American loans and financing similarly tied Finland to the United States.<sup>161</sup> Finns also had access to an extensive range of American cultural influences, as the majority of foreign-language television programming was American.<sup>162</sup> The Americanisation of Finnish society increased with the deregulation of the Finnish economy during the boom years of the early 1980s. Due to the Middle Eastern oil crisis and the subsequent rise in oil prices in the 1970s, Soviet oil began to attract a greater flow of foreign

<sup>156</sup> See for example Peter von Bagh, *Peili, jolla oli muisti. Elokuvallinen kollaasi kadonneen ajan merkityksien hahmottajana 1895-1970* (Helsinki: SKS, 2003), 289.

<sup>157</sup> Markku Koski and Leo Lindsten, *Armin vuodet* (Helsinki: Love Kirjat, 1982), 112.

<sup>158</sup> Jukka Kortti, "Amerikkalaisen markkinoinnin jalanjäljillä. Television tupakkamainonta ja Suomen sodanjälkeinen amerikkalaistuminen," *Lähikuva*, no. 2 (2005): 7.

<sup>159</sup> Peter von Bagh, *Drifting shadows. A guide to Finnish cinema*, trans. Sue de Nîmes (Helsinki: Otava, 2000), 55. See also Peltonen, "Between Landscape and Language," 277. and Lähteenkorva and Pekkarinen, *Idän etuvartio?*, 201.

<sup>160</sup> Hannu Heikkilä, "Finland's Road from War to Peace, 1944-1947," in *Finns and Hungarians between East and West*, ed. Tenho Takalo (Helsinki: SHS - Societas Historica Finlandie, 1989), 164.

<sup>161</sup> Koski and Lindsten, *Armin vuodet*, 35.

<sup>162</sup> Marja Tuominen, "Todellisuus muuttuu ja tulkinnat niiden mukana," in *Suomen kansallisfilmografia 7 (1962-1970)*, ed. Kari Uusitalo (Helsinki: Edita & Suomen elokuva-arkisto, 1998), 24.

capital, increasing the Soviet Union's ability to purchase goods from Finland.<sup>163</sup> As a result, in Finland in the early 1980s it became much easier to obtain foreign financing, and banks granted loans against little security.<sup>164</sup> The easy access to borrowed funds led people to even take out loans to buy luxury commodities, although Kari Vähätalo argues that Finnish government policies encouraged people to take out large loans also for basic needs such as housing and education.<sup>165</sup> This phase of unrestricted lending and spending was referred to as a "casino economy," and it has generally been seen as an overtly 'American' characteristic. For example, Arto Lahti lays the blame for the casino economy at the feet of US-trained economists and Antti-Pekka Pietilä titles a discussion on economic liberalisation in Finland "American greed."<sup>166</sup> In an interview in 1997 politician Sirpa Pietikäinen claimed that Finns "embraced monetarism and capitalism too quickly." While she did not refer to American influences specifically, Pietikäinen did say that such unrestricted capitalism "is not our way," suggesting that the casino economy did not arise naturally in Finland, but was inherently 'foreign' and had been introduced from elsewhere.<sup>167</sup> The casino economy led to the collapse of the Finnish market in 1991: Markku Kuisma argues that the deregulated "Finnish banking system [...] almost destroyed itself in adapting to its new freedoms."<sup>168</sup> In addition to being seen as counteracting the psychological damage done by Finland's Cold War-era deference to the Soviet Union by realigning Finland with its 'true' Western rather than 'false' Eastern identity, Finland's accession to the European Union in 1995 also marked the official recovery point from the recession. Many of Kaurismäki's films were made during the casino economy and the subsequent recession, and much of the films' social criticism derives from these conditions. I discuss this point further in Chapter Three, when I show how the social criticism of *Drifting Clouds* draws from its intertextual links with *Shadows in Paradise*.

<sup>163</sup> Jeja-Pekka Roos, "Kun Suomi putos puusta: Suomi 1970-luvulla," in *Suomen kansallisfilmografia 8 (1971-1980)*, ed. Kari Uusitalo (Helsinki: Edita & Suomen elokuva-arkisto, 1999), 18.

<sup>164</sup> Karisto, Takala, and Haapola, *Matkalla nykyaikaan*, 92.

<sup>165</sup> Kari Vähätalo, "Suomalainen huono-osaisuuden tutkimus 1980- ja 1990-luvulla," in *Huono-osaisuus ja hyvinvointivaltion muutos*, eds Matti Heikkilä and Kari Vähätalo (Tampere: Gaudeamus, 1994), 19-20.

<sup>166</sup> Arto Lahti, *Kannattaako Suomessa yrittää? Yrittäjäprofessorin ajatuksia kasinotaloudesta, kasvun ajasta ja 2000-luvun murroksesta* (Keuruu: International Network Publishing, 1998), 37. Antti-Pekka Pietilä, *Pankkikirja. Miksi veronmaksajat menettivät miljardinsa?* (Helsinki: Art House Oy, 1995), 96.

<sup>167</sup> Alessandra Stanley, "The Finns, East-West Headwaiters, Feel Ill-Served," *The New York Times*, 19.3. 1997, 4.

<sup>168</sup> Markku Kuisma, "Europe's Woodbasket Transformed. Finnish Economic History in a Long Perspective.," in *Europe's Northern Frontier. Perspectives on Finland's Western Identity*, ed. Tuomas M.S. Lehtonen (Porvoo: PS-Kustannus, 1999), 82. See also Karisto, Takala, and Haapola, *Matkalla nykyaikaan*, 92.

Absolution, blame and the 'elites'

Nikolaj Petersen identifies two broad trends in Finnish Cold War historiography: one that focuses on Finlandisation, and the other on “great men” such as past presidents; Finland’s relations with the Western bloc have not warranted much discussion.<sup>169</sup> Considering the importance of the East-West dichotomy in the Finnish mythscape, and the significance of the casino economy in particular in terms of the subsequent economic collapse, it is surprising that comparatively little material exists on the cultural and economic Westernisation of Finland, whereas dozens of texts have been and continue to be written on Finlandisation. The focus on ‘great men’, particularly in connection to Finlandisation, corresponds with Christopher Browning’s observation that it is precisely individual presidents and political elites who are considered responsible for Finland’s subservience to the USSR.<sup>170</sup>

Finlandisation continues to be a sore point in recent history, as uncovering corruption, KGB contacts or simple ideological naivety could compromise many prominent careers. The influence of (former) doctrinaire communists in Finnish society has been debated, in particular following the publication in February 2000 by the current affairs program *M.O.T.* of the list of Tampere journalism students who had joined a Soviet-backed press organisation – many of these students had since risen to positions of power in Finnish media, business and politics.<sup>171</sup> Another controversy surrounds the so-called ‘Tiitinen list’, which contains the names of eighteen Finnish citizens who were known to have had contact with Stasi agents. There has been speculation that

<sup>169</sup> Nikolaj Petersen, “‘We Now Know’. The Nordic Countries and the Cold War: An Assessment,” in *The Cold War - and the Nordic Countries. Historiography at a Crossroads*, ed. Thorsten B. Olesen (Odense: University Press of Southern Denmark, 2004), 186.

<sup>170</sup> Browning, “Coming Home or Moving Home?,” 54.

<sup>171</sup> The documentary is now available online: “MOT: Mustan laatikon salaisuus”, *YLE Areena* [video] [http://yle.fi/elavaarkisto/artikkelit/mustan\\_laatikon\\_salaisuus\\_-\\_miten\\_neuvostoliitto\\_vaikutti\\_toimittajiin\\_36148.html#media=36155](http://yle.fi/elavaarkisto/artikkelit/mustan_laatikon_salaisuus_-_miten_neuvostoliitto_vaikutti_toimittajiin_36148.html#media=36155) [accessed 6.5.2012].

The list was since briefly suppressed, and it has been difficult to ascertain who was mentioned in the original list. Although he did not complete his degree, Kaurismäki studied journalism at Tampere, and particularly early on in his career he gave a number of interviews to the communist magazine *Tiedonantaja*. In his memoir of the era’s left-wing politics the columnist Ilkka Kylävaara provides an expanded list of members of the press organisation, and this version at least does include Kaurismäki – a fact Kylävaara notes with some glee. However, the list is also prefaced with a statement that some of the people listed had not actually been members of the organisation but were listed as “champions of the cause”. Given Kylävaara’s long-held antagonism with the Kaurismäki brothers (see Chapter 4) it would be worth taking his expanded membership list with a grain of salt. Ilkka Kylävaara, *Taistolaisuuden musta kirja. Muistoja* (Helsinki: Tammi, 2004), 194-196.

certain currently active politicians' names may be included on the list, which has been formally suppressed until 2050.<sup>172</sup>

Contemporary discussions about Finlandisation generally involve apportioning blame for Finland's perceived humiliation due to Finlandised politics, and offering personal excuses, apologies and alibis for instances of adaptive Finlandisation. A recurring theme is the explanation that Finns as a whole were not Finlandised, that 'the people' were fully aware of the actual conditions behind the iron curtain despite the overall positive views presented by mainstream media, and that it was only 'the elites' that were Finlandised. For example Timo Vihavainen states in his 1991 book *Kansakunta rähmällään* (roughly translatable as *A Grovelling Nation*) that he has refrained from discussing his own "sins" of Finlandisation due to his awareness of "the negligible national importance of [his] persona."<sup>173</sup> Vihavainen's statement implies that it is only the Finlandisation of the elite that is of any interest, and that as the possible Finlandisation of non-elites had so little influence on society it is of no particular concern. In 2003 Max Jakobson referred to reviewing the book on its initial publication and agreeing even over ten years later that it had indeed not been the nation, but its "political class" that was implicated in the 'grovelling', citing Western cultural dominance in Finland as evidence that "the great silent majority" were not Finlandised.<sup>174</sup> The essential paradox of contemporary analyses of Finlandisation is the assumption that the broader public was supposedly able to intuitively see through corrupt politics and was not affected by the examples set and the rhetoric used by the much-maligned elites. Similar elitist emphasis appears in the literature on Finland's depression of the early 1990s, where blame for the economic collapse is attributed mainly to unscrupulous bank managers. The emphasis on presidents and bank managers has obscured understanding of how Finns as consumers and voters were active participants in Finlandisation and the casino economy: there is little understanding of how Finns contributed to, challenged and promoted both paradigms of Cold War Finnishness in their everyday lives. This applies to some degree to Kaurismäkian film as well. The films depict the everyday lives of average people, and there are examples of the protagonists participating, or attempting to participate in the economic excesses of the 1980, such as when Nikander in

<sup>172</sup> "Tiitisen lista julki viimeistään 2050" [online article] *Helsingin Sanomat*, (2010) available from <http://www.hs.fi/politiikka/artikkeli/Tiitisen+lista+julki+viimeist%C3%A4%C3%A4n+2050/1135256787384> [cited 12.5.2011]; "Tiitisen listan salassapito saa ankaraa kritiikkiä tutkijoilta" [online article] *Helsingin sanomat*, (2010) available from <http://www.hs.fi/politiikka/artikkeli/Tiitisen+listan+salassapito+saa+ankaraa+kritiikki%C3%A4+tutkijoilta/1135256784857> [cited 12.5.2011].

<sup>173</sup> Vihavainen, *Kansakunta rähmällään*, 16.

<sup>174</sup> Jakobson, *Tilinpäätös*, 162-163. See also Bäckman, "Pelkoa ja kiusantekoa," 16-17.

*Shadows in Paradise* buys a new home entertainment system or his older colleague tries to start his own business. However, the protagonists inevitably fail in their efforts of social mobility, and characters from higher social classes are shown as being inherently better at economic scheming.

#### Aki Kaurismäki as a member of the cultural elite

The distinction between the often poorly-defined categories of ‘the elite’ and ‘the people’ is fairly common particularly in modernist understandings of nationalism. Ernest Gellner, for example, asserts that nationalism is “the general imposition of a high culture on society.”<sup>175</sup> This imposition is what Dimitri Eleftheriotis refers to as the “hypocrisy of the modern nation-state”: the view that “people are sovereign in terms of their political will but unreliable and in need of guidance in terms of their aesthetic orientation.”<sup>176</sup> Michael Herzfeld criticises such “top-down” approaches to theories of national identity that imply “that ordinary people have no impact on the form of their local nationalism: they are only followers.”<sup>177</sup> Effectively, the assumption often is that very limited and privileged groups in society establish the parameters and practices of the nation.

There is, however, some momentum behind studies that seek to understand how ‘the people’ participate in the production of national narratives. For example, Jon E. Fox and Cynthia Miller-Idriss propose studying the perpetuation of national identities through the processes of “talking”, “choosing”, “performing” and “consuming the nation” as the “practical accomplishment of ordinary people engaging in routine activities.”<sup>178</sup> This model of “everyday nationhood” seeks to understand the nation as a framework that structures people’s lives even when they are not engaging in narratives of nationhood in any deliberate or conscious way – in fact, “most of the time” the nation does *not* “[pervade] everyday life”.<sup>179</sup> Fox and Miller-Idriss follow a similar rationale to that of Michael Billig in his *Banal Nationalisms*, prioritising the “ideological habits which enable the established nations [...] to be reproduced.”<sup>180</sup> These ‘banal’ or ‘everyday’ expressions of nationhood draw from and contribute to the national mythscape and cover a vast range of activities from grocery shopping to participating in formal commemorations of war.

<sup>175</sup> Ernest Gellner, *Nations and nationalism* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983), 57.

<sup>176</sup> Dimitri Eleftheriotis, *Popular cinemas of Europe: Studies of texts, contexts and frameworks* (New York and London: Continuum, 2001), 69.

<sup>177</sup> Herzfeld, *Cultural Intimacy*, 6.

<sup>178</sup> Jon E. Fox and Cynthia Miller-Idriss, "Everyday nationhood," *Ethnicities* 8, no. 4 (2008): 537-538.

<sup>179</sup> Fox and Miller-Idriss, "Everyday nationhood," 554.

<sup>180</sup> Michael Billig, *Banal nationalism* (London and Thousand Oaks: Sage, 1995), 6. I have omitted the words “of the West” from the quote, as I understand the ‘established’ identity of a nation to be of greater importance in terms of the banality of nationalism than a nation’s location in Cold War era geopolitics.



Billig's and Fox and Miller-Idriss's studies are among the many that attempt to steer studies of nationalism and construction of nationhood away from a focus on "elites" in favour of "the people". Curiously, while it is increasingly common to criticise 'top-down' approaches to nationalism for assuming a homogenous 'people' even exists, it is still common to assume the existence of a uniform 'elite'. For example, in his criticism of Fox and Miller-Idriss, Anthony Smith states that "we may speak of various non-elites, not simply 'ordinary people'", but does not problematise the concept of 'elites'.<sup>181</sup> It would seem to me that in order to arrive at an understanding of the persistence of national identification it is important to not only be aware of the processes of 'talking, choosing, performing and consuming' that Fox and Miller-Idriss refer to, but to also break down the perception of an antagonistic dualism between a diverse and often victimised 'people' and a homogenous yet ill-defined 'elite'.

In a collection of essays published in 1998, titled *Elävänä Euroopassa* or 'Alive in Europe', a number of writers touch on the role of national 'elites' in the process of imagining the Finnish nation. For example, Pertti Alasuutari considers the role of intellectuals [*älymystö*] in defining the cultural boundaries of the nation. He points out that as there are no specific requirements for being an intellectual in this sense, this particular kind of position can be taken by anyone who publically comments on Finnish national identity, the state of Finnish society and so on. Alasuutari also notes that by engaging in such commentary the speakers invariably position themselves as disinterested observers, either above or outside the object, 'the people'.<sup>182</sup> Alasuutari's point on the theoretical popular availability of the role of the intellectual is interesting, as it foregrounds the kinds of active processes Fox and Miller-Idriss discuss in their model of 'everyday nationalism', and also moves away from an essentialised to a performative understanding of the 'elite'.

Still, it is important to keep in mind that not everyone has equal opportunity to perform as a national intellectual, and that some people, for example by virtue of public office or existing fame, are able to disseminate their views more widely than others. Yet where this kind of privilege exists, it is often obscured by nationalising rhetoric. In discussing the Finnish culture industry Mirja Liikkanen notes that cultural discourses invariably address a unified 'us' or "the great public" [*suuri yleisö*], even if a commentator speaks from a position of significant privilege. Alasuutari's and

<sup>181</sup> Anthony Smith, "The limits of everyday nationhood," *Ethnicities* 8, no. 4 (2008): 565.

<sup>182</sup> Pertti Alasuutari, "Älymystö ja kansakunta," in *Elävänä Euroopassa. Muuttuva suomalainen identiteetti*, eds Pertti Alasuutari and Petri Ruuska (Tampere: Vastapaino, 1998), 157. See also Pasi Saukkonen, "Nationalismi ja intellektuellit," *Politiikka* 35, no. 1 (1993): 3.

Liikkanen's observations suggest that, when someone has chosen to perform as a public intellectual in Finland, he or she is likely to still rhetorically position themselves as a member of or at least an equal to the 'people' or 'great public'.<sup>183</sup> Risto Alapuro also argues that the cultural elite's gravitation towards Europeaness further complicates their national role and leads to their "ambivalent Finnishness".<sup>184</sup> This kind of ambivalence is certainly discernible in Kaurismäki's works and public statements. The director is by virtue of his public engagement with the national mythscape a *de facto* public intellectual (and since the Academician appointment, *de jure*) who resolutely positions himself as speaking for the 'silent majority', yet who does have a privileged position in Finnish cultural circles and whose national prestige derives in large part from his success on the European film festival circuit. Kaurismäki's complex position *within* the national mythscape as well as his relationship *with* it provides a fruitful case for examining the processes of Finnish national imagination in the post-Cold War years of Europeanisation.

### The mythscape through an auteurial lens

Since the early 1980s critics have been fascinated with the depictions of Finns and Finland in Kaurismäkian films. Finnish newspapers report Kaurismäki's achievements at international film festivals as national victories,<sup>185</sup> and foreign perceptions of Kaurismäki's identity are eagerly reported, leading to grand headlines such as "Meeting in France ponders the essence of Aki Kaurismäki: "He is European!"<sup>186</sup> The title of an Italian collection of essays on films by both Aki and Mika Kaurismäki, *Finlandesi probabilmente*, "probably Finnish", expresses the ambiguity inherent in Kaurismäkian cinema when explored in terms of national identity.<sup>187</sup> The first book to attempt to explain Kaurismäki's films – Roger Connah's *K/K: A Couple of Finns and Some Donald Ducks* – analysed them as specifically Finnish artefacts.<sup>188</sup> The author reads Finnish society through the films of Mika and Aki Kaurismäki, and the text was received with curiosity in Finland.<sup>189</sup> Sadly,

<sup>183</sup> Mirja Liikkanen, "Taideyleisöpuhe ja suomalaisuus," in *Elävänä Euroopassa. Muuttuva suomalainen identiteetti*, eds Pertti Alasuutari and Petri Ruuska (Tampere: Vastapaino, 1998), 137.

<sup>184</sup> Risto Alapuro, "Sivistyneistön ambivalentti suomalaisuus," in *Elävänä Euroopassa. Muuttuva suomalainen identiteetti*, eds Pertti Alasuutari and Petri Ruuska (Tampere: Vastapaino, 1998), 178.

<sup>185</sup> See for example Markus Määttänen, "Suomalaisen elokuvan suurin voitto!," *Aamulehti*, 27.5. 2002.

<sup>186</sup> Tuula Koskeniemi, "Aki Kaurismäen olemusta pohtinut kokous Ranskassa: Hän on eurooppalainen!," *Ilta-Sanomat*, 18.2. 1991.

<sup>187</sup> Stefano Boni and Claudia Gianetto, eds., *Finlandesi probabilmente - il cinema di Aki e Mika Kaurismäki, Universale 1* (Torino: Lindau, 1998).

<sup>188</sup> Roger Connah, *K/K. A couple of Finns and some Donald Ducks. Cinema in society* (Helsinki: Valtion painatuskeskus, 1991).

<sup>189</sup> Contemporary reviews express both appreciation of a foreigner's interest in Finnish culture, and bafflement and annoyance at the style of writing. See for example Kati Sinisalo, "Suomi on pelottava

Connah's stream-of-consciousness writing and aversion to verbs renders the text practically unreadable.

The most prolific scholarly authors on Aki Kaurismäki over the past few years, Andrew Nestingen and Pietari Kääpä, approach Kaurismäkian films from transnational and postnational points of view. Nestingen in particular has expressed frustration over many commentators' unreflecting "fixation" on the assumed Finnishness of Kaurismäkian cinema.<sup>190</sup> While Nestingen does not dispute the existence of Finnish markers within Kaurismäki's films, or that there is a level of national specificity in the films, he maintains that "financing, audience reception, and marketing of Kaurismäki's films do not indicate that they ought to be categorized solely as national films", and works to shift the focus of analysis from the film text to the global context of film production.<sup>191</sup> Nestingen argues that even the Finnish cultural or folkloric elements in the films are often ironised, and presented as "self-aware burlesque" in a way that makes fun of national conventions.<sup>192</sup> More recently Nestingen has also shown how a focus on national interpretations of Kaurismäkian films overshadows an understanding of their cinephilic references, citing as an example a key scene in *The Match Factory Girl*. Nestingen argues that while a scene which depicts the protagonist Iris sitting alone in a bar, wanting to dance and listening to the well-known singer Reijo Taipale performing a classic tango, is often interpreted in national terms, it can also be read as a reference to a scene in Robert Bresson's *Mouchette* (1967).<sup>193</sup>

Pietari Kääpä argues that Kaurismäkian films "challenge the homogenous nation and envision Finland as part of a global society."<sup>194</sup> Kääpä sees the national signifiers portrayed in the films as "[taking] on alternative connotations [...], even disruptive meanings" due to both the films' marginal domestic situation, and the characters' existence at the margins of society.<sup>195</sup> Kääpä suggests that the displacement experienced by the characters demonstrates "[a] certain post-national ideology", one that is also evident in Kaurismäki's own participation on the international

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kuultuuri kirjoittamisen kohteeksi," *Uusi Suomi*, 27.7. 1991; Kari Uusitalo, "Kirja Kaurismäki-ilmöstä on jo sinänsä ilmiö," *Hyvinkään Sanomat*, 3.1. 1992. and Tommi Aitio, "Eksyksissä sitaattien ihmemaassa," *Filmihullu*, no. 1 (1992): 49.

<sup>190</sup> Andy Nestingen, "Leaving home: global circulation and Aki Kaurismäki's *Ariel*," in *In search of Aki Kaurismäki: aesthetics and contexts*, ed. Andrew Nestingen, *Special issue of Journal of Finnish Studies* (Ontario: Aspasia books, 2004), 100.

<sup>191</sup> Nestingen, "Aki Kaurismäki's crossroads," 283.

<sup>192</sup> Nestingen, *Why nation?*, 136.

<sup>193</sup> Nestingen, "Aki Kaurismäki and Nation."

<sup>194</sup> Kääpä, "Displaced souls lost in Finland," 13.

<sup>195</sup> Kääpä, "'The working class has no fatherland'," 80.

festival circuit.<sup>196</sup> Kääpä also draws attention to the critical reception of Kaurismäki's films, stating that while critics were divided on whether Kaurismäki's films could be considered nationally romantic or not, even disparate interpretations of Kaurismäkian films were "dominated by the haunting spectre of a historically more stable conception of Finnishness that has now become a thing of the past."<sup>197</sup> While Kääpä acknowledges the tempering of national criticism in Kaurismäki's more recent films, overall he argues that Kaurismäki's films "call for an increasing flexibility and heterogeneity in all aspects of social life, even if this means shattering all previously-held conceptions of social identity."<sup>198</sup>

While I agree to a large extent with these interpretations of Kaurismäkian films' ambivalent Finnishness, I do not agree that the films promote the kind of social 'shattering' Kääpä suggests. If anything, the Finland films turn towards the cultural nation and call for communitarian regeneration. True, the nation is not depicted as an essential or inflexible entity, but Kaurismäki's engagement with the national mythscape is entirely in keeping with the broader processes of national imagination in Finland's years of Europeanisation. What makes the Finland trilogy particularly enticing for study is, first, its interlinking of this renewed national engagement with its self-aware contribution to the Kaurismäkian auteur framework and, second, how this particular auteur-national nexus feeds back into Finnish society.

The following three chapters each examine the self-perpetuation of the Kaurismäkian framework and its interconnectedness with the Finnish mythscape. In Chapter Three we see how the marginal characters of *Shadows in Paradise* come to be commemorated and made central to the auteur narrative in Kaurismäki's 1996 film *Drifting Clouds*, while at the same time they contribute to a perpetuation of a particular critique of contemporary Finland. Chapter Four examines the nostalgic drive of *The Man Without A Past* and the controversies around the film's subject matter in the context of the film's international successes. Finally, Chapter Five explores the representation of place in *Lights in the Dusk* and how Kaurismäkian space has been recreated and appropriated in the 'real' world as well. My contention is that the auteur and the nation are indelibly interlinked in Kaurismäkian cinema, and where the films imagine Finnishness they also build Kaurismäki's profile as an ambivalent member of the cultural elite, the 'international face of the national'.

<sup>196</sup> Kääpä, "'The working class has no fatherland'," 89.

<sup>197</sup> Kääpä, *The National and Beyond*, 128.

<sup>198</sup> Kääpä, *The National and Beyond*, 262.

## Chapter Three

### Still in the *Shadows*:

#### Intertextual loss, the European moment and *Drifting Clouds*

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*Drifting Clouds* tells the story of the sudden unemployment of a couple, Ilona and Lauri, and their attempts to recover their former dignity. At the start of the film Ilona is a head waiter at a restaurant, Dubrovnik, and Lauri is a tram driver. Dubrovnik is bought out by an unscrupulous 'Chain', which leads to Ilona being laid off, and Lauri loses in a draw of cards to decide redundancies. Ilona and Lauri cope with their new situation very differently: Ilona looks to agencies for work in the hospitality industry, steadily lowering her expectations as it becomes clear that she is unlikely to find work appropriate to her level of experience. Lauri refuses to accept government assistance, preferring to use his contacts to find work. Just as he has gained employment as a bus driver he fails a crucial medical test, which bars him from professional driving. As a last resort Lauri gambles the couple's money and loses everything. Towards the end of the film Ilona makes contact with her former employer, Mrs Sjöholm, and the two devise a plan for Ilona to open her own restaurant, one which will give the former staff of the Dubrovnik the opportunity to start afresh: door man Melartin and chef Lajunen have also been left looking for work since the Dubrovnik closed. Finally the new restaurant Work (*Työ*) opens its doors, and with the dinner booking of a 30-strong party of the Helsinki Workers' Wrestlers the clouds drift away and there is the promise of a bright future for the business venture.

*Drifting Clouds* was made in 1995, the year in which Finland joined the European Union and the financial crisis that began in 1991 officially ended: unemployment figures had decreased slightly from their 1994 peak, and the GDP had increased significantly by comparison with the early 1990s.<sup>1</sup> However, the film works to dispel myths of financial recovery and is damning of the effect of global financial networks on individuals. In much of the publicity that surrounded the release of the film, Kaurismäki spoke of the dearth of depictions of the unemployed in contemporary Finnish cinema. Kaurismäki stated that it was the duty of national cinema to engage with social issues,<sup>2</sup> and that as Mikko Niskanen and Risto Jarva, famous for their socially critical cinema, had passed

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<sup>1</sup> "Työmarkkinat" [website] *Tilastokeskus*, (2010) available from [http://www.stat.fi/tup/suoluk/suoluk\\_tyolama.html#tyottomyys](http://www.stat.fi/tup/suoluk/suoluk_tyolama.html#tyottomyys) [cited 13.6.2011]; "Kansantalous" [website] *Tilastokeskus*, (2010) available from [http://www.stat.fi/tup/suoluk/suoluk\\_kansantalous.html](http://www.stat.fi/tup/suoluk/suoluk_kansantalous.html) [cited 27.10.2010].

<sup>2</sup> Kirstilä, "Vanha kettu uusilla jäljillä," 8.

away, the necessary work of depicting Finnish unemployment had fallen to him.<sup>3</sup> The reference to Niskanen and Jarva illustrates Kaurismäki's explicit self-positioning as a mantle-bearer of socially active Finnish cinema. From the outset, then, the film was promoted as having a clearly articulated national mission.

Most analyses of the film explore the film's socially critical aspects and the theme of unemployment, often against the background of this national project. For example, Henry Bacon argues that as the film progresses the protagonists become increasingly associated with anonymous and closed-in spaces, which reflects their changing social position and exclusion from the public sphere.<sup>4</sup> Tarja Laine has analysed the dynamics of shame in the film, arguing that the protagonists' reactions to their unemployment stem from the traditionally high value placed on a person's ability to work in Finnish society,<sup>5</sup> while Kaisa Toivonen argues that unemployment has a devastating influence on Lauri's class and gender identity.<sup>6</sup>

In addition to its national mission *Drifting Clouds* was also intended to reinforce the Kaurismäkian oeuvre, as a sequel to the 1986 film *Shadows in Paradise*. However, to date there have been no analyses of the complex intertextual relationship between *Shadows in Paradise* and *Drifting Clouds*, or of the intertextuality of Kaurismäkian film more broadly. An analysis of the intertextual relationship between *Shadows in Paradise* and *Drifting Clouds* demonstrates that the latter film serves as an opportunity for the director to reinforce his persona as a socially active filmmaker through the connections between the protagonists in both films. In this chapter I begin with the application of theories of intertextuality to the auteur framework, before considering the specific links between *Drifting Clouds* and *Shadows in Paradise*. I argue that *Drifting Clouds*' social criticism is built in part on references to the earlier film, and so the social criticism rearticulates the auteurial oeuvre. I finally show how this intertextual relationship and the commemorative practices around the death of Matti Pellonpää all serve to perpetuate a particular Kaurismäkian

<sup>3</sup> See for example "Tulossa komedia työttömyydestä. Aki Kaurismäki filmaa sittenkin," *Aamulehti*, 10.11.1994, n.p. Kirstilä, "Vanha kettu uusilla jäljillä," 8. Jussi Karjalainen, "Häviäjiä ja dägädäitä," *Helsingin Sanomat*, 23.10.1995. See also von Bagh, *Aki Kaurismäki*, 163-164.

<sup>4</sup> Henry Bacon, "Helsinki," in *Datutop 29. City + Cinema. Essays on the Specificity of Location in Film*, eds Gareth Griffiths and Minna Chudoba (Tampere: Department of Architecture, Tampere University of Technology, 2007), 34-35.

<sup>5</sup> Tarja Laine, *Shame and Desire. Emotion, Intersubjectivity, Cinema*. (Brussels: P.I.E. Peter Lang, 2007), 78-79.

<sup>6</sup> Kaisa Toivonen, "'Ammattimies ei onnea tarvitse' Työväenluokkainen maskuliinisuus ja ruumiillisuus Aki Kaurismäen elokuvissa Kauas pilvet karkaavat ja Mies vailla menneisyyttä," *WiderScreen*, no. 2 (2007).

approach to the national mythscape, and reinforce Kaurismäki's own privileged position as the national auteur.

### Uses of intertextuality

'Intertextuality' has become a frequently used term in critical analysis, often in widely varying definitions. In its original guise, indicating a poststructuralist method of analysis, it is an uneasy fit with the concept of the auteur. My project in this and the following two sections is to establish, first, the history of the term; second, the way the term has been used in film studies; and finally, the role intertextuality plays in the auteur framework.

Intertextuality is a critical approach that understands meaning as "something which exists between a text and all the other texts to which it refers and relates, moving out from the independent text into a network of textual relations."<sup>7</sup> The term was coined by Julia Kristeva in the 1960s, and arises out of the same context as Barthes' and Foucault's critiques of the author discussed in Chapter One. Kristeva draws particularly on the work of the Russian theorist Mikhail Bakhtin and the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure to argue that

any text is constructed as a mosaic of quotations; any text is the absorption and transformation of another. The notion of *intertextuality* replaces that of intersubjectivity, and poetic language is read as at least *double*.<sup>8</sup>

Kristeva suggests that "[o]ne does not begin with the part in order to reach the whole: one begins by infinitizing the totality in order to reach, only later, the finite meaning of each part."<sup>9</sup> Although Kristeva is referring to a specific text, Philippe Sollers' unpunctuated novel *H*, the prioritisation of 'the totality' of the text fits the broader principles of poststructuralist critique.

The poststructuralist conceptualisation of everything being a(n inter)text is very broad, and accordingly the concept has been the subject of much criticism. For example, André Lefevere criticises Kristeva and her contemporary French poststructuralist theorists for their "wilful inattention to detail [and] propensity to trumpet glaring generalizations about 'literature' on the basis of the analysis of one, sometimes two, almost never more than three French texts,"<sup>10</sup> and in

<sup>7</sup> Graham Allen, *Intertextuality* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), 1.

<sup>8</sup> Julia Kristeva, *Desire in Language. A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art.*, trans. Thomas Gora, Alice Jardine and Leon S. Roudiez (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1980), 66. Emphasis in the original.

<sup>9</sup> Kristeva, *Desire in Language*, 175. For more on the origins of the term 'intertextuality' see Allen, *Intertextuality*, 8-60.

<sup>10</sup> André Lefevere, "Review: Intertextuality," *Comparative Literature Studies* 29, no. 2 (1992): 222.

his article "Against intertextuality" William Irwin offers a comprehensive critique of the term in general as well as in its poststructuralist incarnation. To begin, Irwin argues that 'intertextuality' is often used in place of more clearly defined terms such as allusion or influence. Irwin also fundamentally disagrees with the premise of an authorless textuality, arguing that "[a]uthorial intention is unavoidable; intertextual connections are not somehow magically made between inanimate texts but are the products of authorial design."<sup>11</sup> Irwin does not suggest that authorial intent should define the limits of interpretation, but that to assume authors have no influence over a text is illogical. Irwin also criticises the deliberate opacity of Kristeva's and Barthes' writing, which draws from a belief in "communication itself as an evil, used by the power elite to forge consensus for its conservative capitalist agenda".<sup>12</sup> Irwin goes on to call for an ethics in writing, "that we do not write in a way that is easily misunderstood, without good reason for writing in such a way," concluding that intertextuality should be discarded as a critical concept as it is "is at best a rhetorical flourish intended to impress, at worst it is the signifier of an illogical position."<sup>13</sup>

As Irwin's critique makes clear, the term 'intertextuality' is in frequent use, and often used in ways which go entirely against the original poststructuralist conception of an agency-free textuality. For example, Harold Bloom argues that while the relationship between texts is important, all texts are products of a struggle of one author to overcome a canonical forebear: "[p]oetic influence [...] always proceeds by a misreading of the prior poet, an act of creative correction that is actually and necessarily a misinterpretation."<sup>14</sup> Bloom writes specifically about poetry, and the canonical writers that he considers to dominate others are typically Milton or Shakespeare. Jonathan Culler sees in Bloom's approach evidence of the general difficulty of coming to terms with intertextuality:

it is a difficult concept to use because of the vast and undefined discursive space it designates, but when one narrows it so as to make it more usable one either falls into source study of a traditional and positivistic kind (which is what the concept was designed to transcend) or else ends by naming particular texts as the pre-texts on grounds of interpretive convenience.<sup>15</sup>

I understand intertextuality as the links between texts that guide a reader's response to them. In principle this kind of understanding does not specify whether the intertextual links would be

<sup>11</sup> William Irwin, "Against intertextuality," *Philosophy and Literature* 28, no. 2 (2004): n.p.

<sup>12</sup> Irwin, "Against intertextuality," n.p.

<sup>13</sup> Irwin, "Against intertextuality," n.p.

<sup>14</sup> Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence. A Theory of Poetry* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), 30. See also Harold Bloom, *A map of misreading* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975), 3.

<sup>15</sup> Jonathan Culler, "Presupposition and Intertextuality" *MLN* 91, no. 6 (1976): 1388.



references built into the text by its author(s) or connections the reader makes based on their own experience. However, there is clearly a distinction between deliberate intertextuality on the level of the text, such as a film adaptation of a Shakespeare play, a character frequently quoting passages from their favourite book or the text following the conventions of a particular genre, and entirely incidental connections made by the reader, such as watching a classic film while being aware of later parodies of it or noticing similarities between texts from different cultural backgrounds. To avoid unnecessarily broad terminology I will here restrict the term intertextuality to refer to one text's specifically signposted connections to other specific texts. In this sense I follow Gérard Genette's use of the term: for Genette intertextuality encompasses different ways of incorporating one text within another, namely in quotations, allusion and plagiarism.<sup>16</sup> Genette proposes a further distinction to the terminology, and introduces the relationship between hypo- and hypertexts. For Genette a hypertext is one that is "grafted" onto another text, the hypotext, in an explicit way.<sup>17</sup> The relationship between a hypertext and a hypotext is more marked than the more general intertextuality between texts and often refers to rewritings, continuations, sequels or prequels of a story: examples include the relationships of Virgil's *Aeneid* and James Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922) with Homer's *Odyssey*.<sup>18</sup> Genette also distinguishes between autographic and allographic hypertexts, where the former are by the same author as the hypotexts and the latter produced by someone else.<sup>19</sup> Genette points out that hypertexts are characterised by an "ambiguity" that derives from them standing as independent texts, which can be read on their own or with reference to the hypotext.<sup>20</sup> The relationship between *Drifting Clouds* and *Shadows in Paradise* is certainly hypertextual, and the ambiguity of this relationship is heightened by the last-minute changes to the script, which resulted in the reimagination of the 1996 film as a sequel-once-removed of the 1986 film: following the death of a key actor shortly before filming was due to begin the script was changed in ways that disrupted a straightforward linear relationship between the two films.

### Intertextuality and film

While all the theorists discussed so far have formulated their definitions of intertextuality in a largely literary context, there are also certain approaches to intertextuality that take into account

<sup>16</sup> Gérard Genette, *Palimpsests. Literature in the Second Degree*, trans. Channa Newman and Claude Doubinsky (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), 2.

<sup>17</sup> Genette, *Palimpsests*, 5,9.

<sup>18</sup> Genette, *Palimpsests*, 5-7.

<sup>19</sup> Genette, *Palimpsests*, 52-53.

<sup>20</sup> Genette, *Palimpsests*, 397.

audiovisual media as well. For example, John Fiske proposes a model which refines the definition of ‘intertextuality’ to refer to discrete texts, but which is also grounded in an understanding of reception. Fiske draws a distinction between “vertical” and “horizontal” intertextuality, where the former refers to “a primary text [...] and other texts of a different type that refer explicitly to it” and the latter to the relationship “between primary texts that are more or less explicitly linked, usually along the axes of genre, character, or content.”<sup>21</sup> Fiske writes in the context of television studies, and his examples of horizontal intertextuality include television programs whose characters may also appear in films, action figures, comic books, spin-off series and so on. Fiske’s conceptualisation of vertical intertextuality is perhaps more contentious, as he proposes a hierarchy of vertical relationships, from the primary text through “secondary texts such as studio publicity, journalistic features, or criticism” to “tertiary texts produced by the viewers themselves in the form of letters to the press or, more importantly, as gossip and conversation.”<sup>22</sup> Although Fiske emphasises the importance of viewer responses the sense remains that this ‘tertiary’ level of feedback is the end point – “the final, crucial stage”<sup>23</sup> – rather than, say, being equal to ‘secondary’ texts such as professional critiques and able to elicit further intertextual responses, particularly when viewers actively seek to publicise their views. Fiske developed his model in the late 1980s, before the proliferation of the internet and its dramatic influence on non-professional critics’ ability to disseminate their views, so the hierarchical model would not have been too far removed from the realities of media production and consumption at the time. For the purposes of studying the early twenty-first century media landscape, however, the three-tier model of vertical intertextuality is too restrictive. The idea of a horizontal intertextuality that can link together essentially equal texts which share certain codes, on the other hand, can be a useful category for approaching the range of connections between different audiovisual productions. Fiske refers to broad horizontal categories such as genre, but also to more narrowly defined axes of intertextuality such as character, giving as an example the figure B.A. from the television series *The A-Team*:

[he] is also a hero of a cartoon series, and the actor who plays him, Mr. T, not only introduces the cartoon series but also appears on television as a wrestler or a guest on talk shows. The meaning of Mr. T/B.A. (for the character and actor are almost indistinguishable) does not reside in any one of his screen appearances but in the intertextuality which is the aggregate of all and an essential part of the reading of any

<sup>21</sup> John Fiske, *Television Culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 1987), 87.

<sup>22</sup> Fiske, *Television Culture*, 87.

<sup>23</sup> Fiske, *Television Culture*, 94.

one. Of course, different viewers will have different intertextual aggregates of Mr. T/B.A. according to the variation of their intertextual experience of him.<sup>24</sup>

In my analysis of the links between *Shadows in Paradise* and *Drifting Clouds* I refer to this character-level intertextuality, and I will elaborate on the intertextual importance of actors even when their own public profile may not be as closely aligned to the characters they play, as in the case with B.A. and Mr T. It is also worth keeping in mind Fiske's point about the 'different intertextual aggregates': any particular viewer will have their own unique combination of intertextual referents that informs their viewing experience, even if certain referents are more likely than others to be shared by the majority of viewers.

Many broad approaches to cinema, such as analyses of stardom and genre presume an intertextual mode of enquiry, although they are not often explicitly articulated in terms of intertextuality. In film studies intertextuality is explicitly evoked typically with reference to film adaptations of literary works. Explorations of film adaptations' fidelity to their source texts are frequently criticised in adaptation studies, and studies on adaptation tend to acknowledge a film adaptation and its source text(s) as equal in value and arising out of very specific socio-historical contexts. For example, the journal *Adaptation*, established in 2008, has among its primary aims breaking down long-held prejudices against film adaptations and providing a forum for discussing adaptation studies as a discipline in its own right.<sup>25</sup>

Other explicitly intertextual approaches in film studies include understanding a film's links to 'hidden' texts, or how films refer to other films through pastiche, parody or homage. For example, T. Jefferson Kline draws attention to the "conscious and often unconscious" relationship between French New Wave cinema and literature, the filmmakers' "constituted-and-then-repressed authority."<sup>26</sup> In very Bloomian terms Kline argues that the literary references of certain French New Wave films "reveal a text screened (out), figuring ambivalence, misprision, or misrepresentation."<sup>27</sup> Mikhail Lampolski refers to a similar kind of "buried" intertextuality, where links to other texts only become clear once a filmmaker explicitly refers to them in another context. He gives as an example Jean-Luc Godard's *Breathless (A bout de souffle)*, 1960) in which a

<sup>24</sup> Fiske, *Television Culture*, 87.

<sup>25</sup> Deborah Cartmell, Timothy Corrigan, and Imelda Whelehan, "Introduction to *Adaptation*," *Adaptation* 1, no. 1 (2008): 4.

<sup>26</sup> T. Jefferson Kline, *Screening the Text. Intertextuality in New Wave French Cinema* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), 5.

<sup>27</sup> Kline, *Screening the Text*, 5. Brackets in the original.

reference to Samuel Fuller's *Forty Guns* (1957) "is so organically embedded into the film's narrative, so transparent a part of the film's mimetic structure, that we need Godard's own commentary to recognize the Fuller reference".<sup>28</sup> Indeed, Lampolski goes on to suggest that "prior to Godard's commentary, this episode, paradoxically enough, *was not a quote*,"<sup>29</sup> as it could not have been identified as such. Although in this particular example Lampolski notes the director's importance in identifying a reference built into a film, he does not suggest that cinematic intertextuality depends on the intentions of the filmmakers, even if filmmakers' comments on their work and practices can open up new analytical perspectives. Lampolski argues instead that a viewers' awareness of other texts allows them to "creat[e] an intertextual link that exists irrespective of the director's intentions."<sup>30</sup>

Recently Kristen Daly has argued that the intertextuality of contemporary cinema is influenced by new media technologies to the point where films are becoming intertextual in a more interactive sense:

For Cinema 3.0, a movie no longer exists as a cohesive, unchanging art piece but instead participates in a world of cross-media interaction, and this has enabled new forms of narrative requiring, as part of the enjoyment, interaction in the form of user-participation and interpretation.<sup>31</sup>

Daly argues that many contemporary films promote online fan cultures and provide viewers with opportunities to identify vast quantities of references to other films. Daly even uses the term 'viewer' instead of 'viewer' to indicate the more complex interactions a person can have with and around film texts, and goes on to give as examples of this particular cinematic tendency films such as *Pirates of the Caribbean: At World's End* (Gore Verbinski, 2007), *Kill Bill* (Quentin Tarantino, 2003–2004) and *The Royal Tenenbaums* (Wes Anderson, 2001).<sup>32</sup> Although Daly focuses on a specific trend in films of the past few years, it is worth remembering that the pleasure she considers 'viewers' to experience when they identify intertextual references in films applies to more traditionally narrative cinema as well, and is certainly a potential part of the process of watching a Kaurismäkian film.

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<sup>28</sup> Mikhail Lampolski, *The Memory of Tiresias. Intertextuality and Film*, trans. Harsha Ram (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1998), 32.

<sup>29</sup> Lampolski, *The Memory of Tiresias*, 32. Emphasis in the original.

<sup>30</sup> Lampolski, *The Memory of Tiresias*, 35.

<sup>31</sup> Kristen Daly, "Cinema 3.0: The Interactive-Image," *Cinema Journal* 50, no. 1 (2010): 82.

<sup>32</sup> Daly, "Cinema 3.0," 84, 88-89.

### Intertextuality and the auteur

As my formulation of the auteur framework indicates, I depart from the poststructuralist understanding of the author as 'dead' and of an intertextuality without human agency. Instead I view the author as a figure who has great influence over the meaning of the text, even if in the cinematic context the question of identifying an author in the first place can be a complicated matter. This is not to say that I would advocate an approach that prioritises authorial intent in analysing a text, in part because it would be impossible to decipher an author's intent in the first place. In addition, it is perfectly possible for a reader to understand a text without any knowledge about the author. However, the author remains an important figure in the reading process due to the reader's desire to place texts in an appropriate context and, as Adrian Wilson notes, to understand the author as a more fleshed-out persona.<sup>33</sup> In a similar vein Michael Riffaterre refers to the "intertextual drive" which sees the reader want to "fill out the text's gaps" by seeking out intertexts that are signposted in the text with what Riffaterre calls "connectives".<sup>34</sup> Although Riffaterre writes specifically of literary connections between texts, the argument can be applied to the auteur framework as well, and may be used to argue that there is an 'auteurial drive' which compels viewers to 'fill the gaps' of the auteur-persona.

An understanding of the internal links within an auteur's oeuvre is clearly integral to the concept of the auteur function and framework. In analysing the autobiographical writings of Roland Barthes, Nathalie Sarraute and Alain Robbe-Grillet Ann Jefferson suggests the term "sister-text" to refer to the intertextual relationship between the works of the same author, or in Jefferson's terms, texts that are "from the same stable".<sup>35</sup> For Jefferson

[t]hese relations are not actively intertextual in that they don't entail explicit or implied comment on one text by another, nor any transformation through rewriting of one text by another, but it is nevertheless an intertextual relationship that is enormously powerful for readers: one of the first moves in any reading is to place a new text in the intertextual context of the corpus to which it belongs.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>33</sup> Wilson, "Foucault on the 'Question of the Author'," 360.

<sup>34</sup> Michael Riffaterre, "Compulsory reader response: the intertextual drive," in *Intertextuality. Theories and practices*, eds Michael Worton and Judith Still (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1990), 57-58.

<sup>35</sup> Ann Jefferson, "Autobiography as intertext: Barthes, Sarraute, Robbe-Grillet," in *Intertextuality. Theories and practices*, eds Michael Worton and Judith Still (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1990), 111.

<sup>36</sup> Jefferson, "Autobiography as intertext," 110-111.

The reference to a reader's desire to 'place' a text in the right corpus connects with Adrian Wilson's development of the author persona and Riffaterre's 'intertextual drive'. Jefferson goes on to contrast the sister-text relationship with that of the more 'active' hypo/hypertext relationship theorised by Genette.<sup>37</sup> Although the idea of the 'sister-text' is compelling, I think Jefferson's description of the relationship as being 'tacit' and implicitly passive is insufficient. 'Sister-text' may be a suitable way of describing otherwise unconnected works by the same author – that is, texts which are not sequels or rewritings, but simply share the same 'parentage' – but the distinction between active intertextuality and 'sister' intertextuality ignores the relationship between texts by the same author that do not specifically 'comment' on one another but are explicitly intertextually linked nonetheless, for example in the ludic and ironic way Kristen Daly identifies in some of the 'cinema 3.0' films.

In this chapter I focus on a specifically auteurial intertextuality, the self-referential links to an author's own work. Here intertextuality is not limited to a specific text's references to itself, but to other texts within the same oeuvre, that is, texts that share the same 'parentage'. This kind of auteurial intertextuality remains relatively untheorised. Undoubtedly the lack of writing on auteurial intertextuality is due to the vastly different assumptions that underlie it and the poststructuralist origins of intertextuality: in its strictest original sense intertextuality denies the relevance of the author, whereas looking for links and equivalences within the body of work of a particular person clearly privileges the author as a site of meaning, and so depending on one's point of view auteurial intertextuality may be a distraction, an impossibility or so self-evident it would be unnecessary to describe it. This is not to say it is rare to come across studies on the repeated themes in a particular author's work, but that, as in the cases of star and genre studies, they are rarely theorised in terms of intertextuality.

Auteurial intertextuality is a complex phenomenon. Aside from the context and significance of specific intertextual references, in making references to his or her own past work, whether as a structuring intertext or as a passing, playful reference, an auteur clearly expresses an engagement with the idea of the auteur in the first place. The references can be seen as excessively self-obsessed attempts to emphasise the thematic consistency of one's work and to present oneself as an auteur, or as instances of more mischievous or reflective attitudes towards auteurship. As demonstrated in Chapter One, this kind of 'auteurial performance' is an important part of

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<sup>37</sup> Jefferson, "Autobiography as intertext," 111.

Kaurismäki's public persona. So far, however, there has been little interest in how this kind of performance is present in the director's films as well.

The kind of deliberate and playful engagement with the idea of the auteur that characterises Kaurismäki's interview performance is certainly also present in some of his films. For example, Kaurismäki has occasionally appeared in brief cameo roles in his films, including as a motel receptionist in *Shadows in Paradise* and as a sunglasses seller in *I Hired A Contract Killer*. Kaurismäki also subscribes to the norms of festival-circuit auteurism, for example in his production of trilogies and use of a fairly stable set of cast and crew members, and there is certainly an element of self-deprecation and satire in Kaurismäki's public statements about these auteurial tendencies. For example, in an interview with *Positif* Kaurismäki noted that the two thematically related trilogies could be considered a sextet, adding bemusedly that "it all sounds very theoretical and pre-planned, doesn't it?"<sup>38</sup> Despite Kaurismäki's sardonic statement about his 'auteurism', his adaptation to auteurial norms is not an ironic strategy in the way the cameo performances are, but is instead indicative of a creative and commercial strategy that reinforces the Kaurismäkian auteurial brand's festival-circuit credentials.

### The *Shadows of Clouds*

The auteurial brand was set to be reinforced in the mid-1990s with the launch of Kaurismäki's second trilogy, opening with a film that was supposed to revisit the protagonists and socio-economic critique of his 1986 film *Shadows in Paradise*. The protagonists of *Shadows in Paradise* are garbage truck driver Nikander and check-out operator Ilona.<sup>39</sup> Nikander's unnamed older colleague dies of a heart attack just as he is about to start his own garbage collection business. Waking up in jail, following a night of drunken mourning, Nikander befriends Melartin, who soon replaces the deceased colleague as a garbage collector. Ilona has difficulty committing to a relationship with Nikander and finds it similarly challenging to find stable employment. In the final scene Ilona and Nikander decide to go on honeymoon to Estonia, and Melartin chauffeurs them to the ferry in a garbage truck. The film is the first part of what has been referred to as the 'Loser', 'Worker' or 'Proletarian Trilogy', the set of films that marked Aki Kaurismäki's "international

<sup>38</sup> Yann Tobin, "Entretien avec Aki Kaurismäki," *Positif*, no. 548 (2006): 25.

<sup>39</sup> In Kaurismäkian cinema women are typically referred to by their first names (e.g. Ilona, Iris, Irma), men by their surnames (e.g. Nikander, Melartin, Rahikainen). Exceptions include *Drifting Clouds*' Mrs Sjöholm and Lauri.

breakthrough as something of a cult filmmaker."<sup>40</sup> Indeed, *Shadows in Paradise* was featured at the Cannes Directors' Fortnight, the "edgier alternative to the Official Selection" in 1986,<sup>41</sup> the international recognition validating Kaurismäki's auteurial status. It was also *Shadows in Paradise* that launched Kaurismäki as a well-known (albeit not popular) filmmaker in Finland: for example, it won the Finnish national film award Jussi for Best Film and Best Director.<sup>42</sup> In her 2003 dissertation on the film's critical reception in Finland, Giedrė Andreikėnaitė describes *Shadows in Paradise* as an incomparable phenomenon of Finnish cinema, one that both baffled and pleased critics with its mix of fantasy, realism, national content and understanding of international cinematic aesthetics.<sup>43</sup> In many ways, then, while *Shadows in Paradise* was not the director's first film, it was essential in consolidating Kaurismäki's auteurial brand.

Scheduled for filming in the middle of 1995, *Drifting Clouds* was intended to revisit Nikander and Ilona ten years later: the couple would now be married; Ilona would be a homemaker and Nikander a door man at an old-fashioned restaurant.<sup>44</sup> However, two weeks before filming was due to begin, Matti Pellonpää, the actor who played Nikander, died. Instead of recasting the role, Kaurismäki rewrote the script and shifted the narrative focus to Ilona. The intended relationship between *Shadows in Paradise* and *Drifting Clouds* has been well known from the outset, as Pellonpää's passing and its effect on the script was widely reported first at the time of his death in 1995 and subsequently when the film was released early in 1996.<sup>45</sup> Indeed, the film is dedicated to Pellonpää's memory and some of the publicity material for the film even included a synopsis of the film as it would have been made had Pellonpää lived.<sup>46</sup> Although reviews and analyses of *Drifting Clouds* often mention this initial connection with *Shadows in Paradise*, to date there have been no analyses of the complex intertextual relationship between the two films. In the following I first examine the role the actors Matti Pellonpää and Kati Outinen have played in the Kaurismäkian oeuvre, and how the diegetic mourning of the protagonists' child in *Drifting Clouds* is marked as a

<sup>40</sup> Sakari Toiviainen, "The Kaurismäki phenomenon," in *In search of Aki Kaurismäki: aesthetics and contexts*, ed. Andrew Nestingen, *Special issue of Journal of Finnish Studies* (Ontario: Aspasia books, 2004), 27.

<sup>41</sup> Derek Elley, "Case histories. Who launched Whom?," *Variety*, 15.-21.5. 2006, 18.

<sup>42</sup> "Varjoja paratiisissa (1986). Muut tiedot." [website] *Elonet*, (2006) available from <http://www.elonet.fi/title/ek2ar8/muut> [cited 14.8.2008].

<sup>43</sup> Andreikėnaitė, *Aki Kaurismäen elokuvan Varjoja paratiisissa lehdistövastaanotto Suomessa*, 5-6.

<sup>44</sup> Aki Kaurismäki, "Kauas pilvet karkaavat. Elokuvakäsikirjoitus," [script] (Helsinki: 1995),

<sup>45</sup> See for example Helena Ylänen, "Näyttelijä Matti Pellonpää. Näkymättömän virtuoosi," *Helsingin Sanomat*, 16.7. 1995; Minna Joenniemi, "Aki astui pilvistä," *Aviisi*, no. 2 (1996), <http://www.uta.fi/lehdet/aviisi/9602/aki.html> [cited 11.4.2008].

<sup>46</sup> See for example "Sputnik presents *Drifting Clouds*. A film by Aki Kaurismäki," [promotional material] (Sputnik, 1996), KAVA file number KPR152.



commemoration of Pellonpää, creating an intricately linked network of auteurial, diegetic and extracinematic loss in the film. I then discuss some of the intertextual references between *Shadows in Paradise* and *Drifting Clouds* in the context of Finland's European trajectory. Finally, I show that the complex process of mourning that surrounds the film connects with the film's national project, reinforcing the linkage between the auteur and the nation.

### Of actors and auteurs

Conventional narrative films invariably depend on actors to give life to characters and move the story forwards, and for all the artistic merit or auteurial ownership that is commonly attributed to directors, the actors remain the most visible and easily recognisable commodities in film commerce. Fittingly, there is an increasing body of work not only on the craft and practice of film acting, but on the screen presence of particular actors, and the meanings they bring to their successive roles. Lucy Fisher and Marcia Landy point out that the connection between an actor's extracinematic image and his or her screen roles gives rise to questions of "how the star embodies and also alters characteristics associated with questions of political identity, value and attitude."<sup>47</sup> In her analysis of Ingrid Bergman's career Ora Gelley refers to a star's ability to embody and influence such values:

The image of the star that is publicly disseminated outside the cinema feeds into the star's film performances (influencing, for instance, the roles created for her or those for which she is chosen, and her presentation in the films), just as each individual performance contributes to a lesser or greater degree to the transformation of the publicity discourse. This is not to ignore that other "events," such as revelations involving the private life of the star, can also affect the public discourse.<sup>48</sup>

An actor's public profile is in effect built on a complex network of narratives, similar to the auteur framework. A relevant, albeit still rare, subset of star studies is research on the often career-defining collaborations between particular actors and auteurs. As personas of both an actor and an auteur are dependent on being remembered and recognised for particular types of work, such collaborations are processes where two complex personal narrative frameworks come into contact with and invariably become part of one another. It is relatively common for auteurs to work with a stable set of actors. Thomas Elsaesser refers to this stability of collaborators as one of

<sup>47</sup> Lucy Fischer and Marcia Landy, "General introduction: back story," in *Stars. The film reader*, eds Lucy Fischer and Marcia Landy, *In focus: Routledge film readers* (New York and London: Routledge, 2004), 1.

<sup>48</sup> Ora Gelley, "Ingrid Bergman's Star Persona and the Alien Space of Stromboli," *Cinema Journal* 47, no. 2 (2008): 27.

the defining characteristics of contemporary auteurs: “the European ‘auteur’ [...] requires often a ‘trilogy’ or a steady cast of players in order to have his universe recognised as not just personal but belonging to cinema history.”<sup>49</sup> Often such trusted actors reprise roles, or types of roles, “[t]he repetition of roles reinforc[ing] the illusion of a unified persona.”<sup>50</sup> A familiar actor performs as a visual code, clearly linking together different films and affirming the unity and cohesion of the auteur’s oeuvre. Examples of such close collaborations between actors and directors include Ingmar Bergman’s work with Liv Ullman, Pedro Almodóvar’s work with Carmen Maura, and Jean-Pierre Léaud playing the same character in five films by François Truffaut.

Actors who have figured frequently in Kaurismäkian film, often in small but significant roles, include Outi Mäenpää, Silu Seppälä and Marja Packalén. Elina Salo and Esko Nikkari, both respected veteran actors in Finland, have also featured regularly, and often in larger roles. Salo has appeared for example as a flawed mother to the protagonists of *Hamlet Goes Business* and *The Match Factory Girl*, weary administrator or worker in *Hold on to Your Scarf*, *Tatjana [Pidä huivista kiinni, Tatjana, 1994]* and *The Man Without A Past* and the sympathetic Mrs Sjöholm in *Drifting Clouds*. Nikkari’s roles have included Iris’ abusive stepfather in *The Match Factory Girl*, an honourable but unlucky workman in *Shadows in Paradise* and *The Man Without A Past* and the gruff restaurateur in *Drifting Clouds*. Salo’s and Nikkari’s Kaurismäkian characters have sometimes drawn on the actors’ existing personas. For example, Salo is a prominent figure in Finland’s Swedish-language theatre community, so her portrayal of the Finlandsswede Mrs Sjöholm in *Drifting Clouds* references her real-life persona. Nikkari, who died in 2006, had been known for his portrayals of gruff, particularly Ostrobothnian men, and so it is fitting that his character in *The Man Without A Past* would explain his desperate means of paying his workers by saying “I am from Ostrobothnia. We don’t leave our debts unpaid.” In her analysis of the dialogue of the film Ilona Manninen notes that Nikkari’s character is the only one to depart from Kaurismäki’s stylised and formal language to use a regional (Ostrobothnian) expression, one that was not written in the script but which was subsequently reproduced in the DVD release’s Finnish subtitling.<sup>51</sup> In the case of Kaurismäki’s repeat actors, then, their existing profiles and past performances inform and influence their Kaurismäkian roles.

<sup>49</sup> Elsaesser, *European cinema: face to face with Hollywood*, 136.

<sup>50</sup> Danae Clark, “The subject of acting,” in *Stars. The film reader*, eds Lucy Fischer and Marcia Landy, *In focus: Routledge film readers* (New York and London: Routledge, 2004), 17.

<sup>51</sup> Ilona Manninen, *Dialogin tyylit elokuvassa Mies vailla menneisyyttä* (University of Helsinki, 2005), 23.

The actors most commonly associated with the Kaurismäkian oeuvre are Kati Outinen and Matti Pellonpää. The two have played major roles in eight and ten Kaurismäkian films respectively, along with smaller parts and roles in short films as well, appearing opposite each other in *Shadows in Paradise*, *Take Care of Your Scarf*, *Tatjana* and *Dirty Hands*. Despite their extensive careers with other film directors, as well as in the theatre and the radio, Outinen and Pellonpää have come to be seen as specifically “Kaurismäkian” actors, the latter even as the director’s alter ego. Commenting on the friendship and working relationship between Kaurismäki and Pellonpää, Laurent Aknin suggests that not only did Pellonpää fulfil the role of the alter ego, but through the subtlety of his acting practice also had an influence over the films’ cinematic style.<sup>52</sup> My intention here is to explore how the presence of key actors such as Pellonpää and Outinen has influenced the Kaurismäkian oeuvre, and how their personas contribute to the auteurial-national nexus. My contention is that *Drifting Clouds* makes use of the established Kaurismäkian personas of Outinen and the deceased Pellonpää, referring in particular to their performances in *Shadows in Paradise*, in order to perpetuate the aesthetic and thematic continuity of the auteurial oeuvre in a way that incorporates the process of mourning for Pellonpää into the auteur framework. I do not intend to imply that this would have been done in a callous or insensitive way, but that the end result of commemorating Pellonpää within a text already marked by its self-reflective ‘Kaurismäkianness’ further embeds the actor within the Kaurismäkian auteur framework.

#### Metaphor and repetition in Akilandia

Matti Pellonpää was born in 1951, and appeared regularly on radio as early as 1962 in the children’s program Lastenradio.<sup>53</sup> Pellonpää studied at the Theatre School (now Theatre Academy of Helsinki), and had a prolific theatrical career throughout the 1970s. He performed in and wrote many spoken word plays for the radio, among the more popular of which were his Winnie-the-Pooh audio plays with Kari Väänänen. He performed in several films, often in small roles, before securing his first lead role in Mika Kaurismäki’s *The Worthless*. Pellonpää considered his brief training as a cameraman useful for his subsequent acting work, as he understood how to adapt his acting practice to the needs of the particular technique or lens being used by the cinematographer.<sup>54</sup>

<sup>52</sup> Laurent Aknin, "Aki Kaurismäki: La Lettre Volée," *L'Avant Scène Cinéma* 530 (2004): 6.

<sup>53</sup> Lauri Timonen, *Lähikuvassa Matti Pellonpää* (Helsinki: Otava, 2009), 40-41.

<sup>54</sup> "Peltsi-info" [website] *Peltsi: Tietokanta näyttelijä Matti Pellonpäästä*, available from [http://www.info.uta.fi/kurssit/a9/peltsi/peltsi\\_info.html#m](http://www.info.uta.fi/kurssit/a9/peltsi/peltsi_info.html#m) [cited 25.10.2010].

In addition to being considered a consummate professional of theatre and cinema – albeit ill-suited to lengthy theatrical contracts – Pellonpää is often described as a bohemian spirit, and Lauri Timonen’s affectionate character study of 2009 makes frequent mention of the actor’s alcohol consumption and nomadic lifestyle.<sup>55</sup> An early documentary on the actor, Eero Tuomikoski’s *Se minun töistäni* (1984), also worked on building the bohemian persona: for example, in a memorable scene Pellonpää undresses for a bath, describing the donation history of each item of clothing. The documentary has been made available on the “Living Archive” website of the Finnish National Broadcasting company (YLE), and the synopsis on the site describes Pellonpää as a “vagabond whose possessions fit into a single shoe box, although there is no firm evidence a shoe box ever existed.”<sup>56</sup> Clearly, the narrative of Pellonpää or ‘Peltsi’ as a bohemian traveller contains an element of satire and self-deprecation.

By all accounts the stable group of cast and crew members that formed around Aki and Mika Kaurismäki constituted a close-knit group of friends, whose idiosyncrasies and inside jokes often made their way into the films themselves. One example of the camaraderie of the Kaurismäkian clique is the acronym ‘SHS’, found after some names in the credits of certain early films. The acronym at least nominally stands for “Suomen hönöseura”, loosely translatable as Finland’s Buffoon Society. According to one definition those who qualified for the acronym were all-round film professionals whose role in the film could not be reduced to their official title: an actor might help set up lighting, the set designer might volunteer to drive a car in the background of a scene.<sup>57</sup> Another interpretation of the significance of SHS was given by actor Vesa Vierikko in the radio program *Kaurismäen kääntöpiiri*.<sup>58</sup> Vierikko, who rather sheepishly admits to having never qualified as a member of the SHS, suggests the group name was an inside joke referring to those cast and crew members who spent most time sharing drinks together after shooting. In any case, friendship and filmmaking are firmly connected in the Kaurismäkian framework, and Pellonpää certainly personified this juncture.

<sup>55</sup> Timonen, *Lähikuvassa Matti Pellonpää*.

<sup>56</sup> “Se minun töistäni - Matti Pellonpää (1984)” [website] *YLE Elävä arkisto*, (2007) available from <http://www.yle.fi/elavaarkisto/?s=s&g=4&ag=25&t=143&a=3540> [cited 8.9.2010].

<sup>57</sup> See “Peltsi-info”.

<sup>58</sup> Jukka Kuosmanen et al., *Kaurismäen kääntöpiiri* (2007), The original Finnish title is a pun on ‘kauriin kääntöpiiri’, the Tropic of Capricorn.

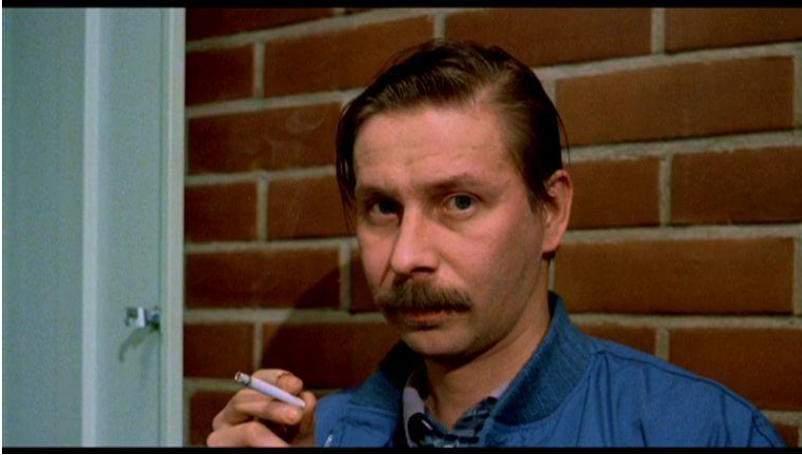


Figure 4. Pellonpää as Nikander in *Shadows in Paradise*

Through his frequent appearances in the director's films, Pellonpää came to be known as Aki Kaurismäki's alter ego, particularly in the character of Nikander (Figure 4). Nikander first appeared in *Crime and Punishment*, Kaurismäki's first solo directorial venture, as a

friend of the Raskolnikov-figure Rahikainen, and was the protagonist in *Shadows in Paradise*. In *Shadows in Paradise* Nikander even refers to information given about him in the earlier film, such as having worked in an abattoir and having a sister who used to go to university in Stockholm. Kaurismäki calls Nikander the shared alter ego of himself and Pellonpää, and names Pellonpää's roles as Mikkonen in *Ariel* and Rodolfo in *La Vie de Bohème* as continuations of the character, albeit not in name.<sup>59</sup> What is clear is that Nikander is an intertextual figure, moving fluidly within the Kaurismäkian oeuvre.

*Drifting Clouds* would have been the third instalment in Nikander's own trilogy, but Pellonpää's sudden death in 1995 brought an end to the character's development. The resulting script changes gave further prominence to Kati Outinen, who had already become profiled as the central actress in Kaurismäki's oeuvre. Outinen was born in 1961, and entered the prestigious Theatre Academy of Helsinki after completing high school. She trained under the infamous Jouko Turkka, known for his controversial performances and his emphasis on the physicality of an actor's work.<sup>60</sup> Early in her studies she appeared in *Right on, Man! (Täältä tullaan elämä)*, the 1980 film by Tapio Suominen that announced a Finnish 'new new wave' with its focus on disenfranchised teenagers in Helsinki. Subsequently Outinen appeared in several film, theatre and radio productions, and she

<sup>59</sup> von Bagh, *Aki Kaurismäki*, 30.

<sup>60</sup> Auli Räsänen, "Artistic profile," in *The World Encyclopedia of Contemporary Theatre*, eds Peter Nagy, Phillippe Rouyer and Don Rubin (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), 261.

remains an active performer today.<sup>61</sup> In 2002 she was appointed Professor of Acting at the Theatre Academy of Helsinki, where she is currently serving her second five-year term.<sup>62</sup>



Figure 5. Outinen as Ilona in *Drifting Clouds*

Outinen (Figure 5) first worked with Kaurismäki on *Shadows in Paradise*, and since then has played Ofelia in Kaurismäki's *Hamlet Goes Business*, Jessica in *Dirty Hands*, Iris in *The Match Factory Girl*, Tatjana in *Take Care of Your Scarf*, Tatjana, Ilona in *Drifting Clouds*, Marja in *Juha*, Irma in *The*

*Man Without A Past* and Ilona in *Lights in the Dusk*. Outinen won the Best Actress prize at Cannes for her work in *The Man Without A Past*. She is best known abroad for her Kaurismäkian acting – as “la Kati d’Aki”<sup>63</sup> – and her Kaurismäkian roles are well known and to a degree defining in Finland as well. For example, a profile of her on the Theatre Academy of Helsinki website describes her as personifying her generation in her Kaurismäkian roles.<sup>64</sup> All of Outinen’s Jussi awards have also been for her roles in Kaurismäkian films (*The Match Factory Girl*, *Drifting Clouds* and *The Man Without A Past*).

Although the loss of Pellonpää prevented *Shadows in Paradise* and *Drifting Clouds* from being connected in a clear-cut, linear way, there are nonetheless several elements in the latter film that serve as connectives to the 1986 film. The repetition of a protagonist called Ilona, played by the same actor, clearly indicates a level of continuity between the films. There is even a scene in both films where Ilona bandages a cut while at work: in *Shadows in Paradise* she interrupts the

<sup>61</sup> "Kati Outinen" [website] TEAK, available from <http://www2.teak.fi/i ihmiset/outinen/lista.htm> [cited 3.1.2011].

<sup>62</sup> "Kati Outinen. Näyttelijäntöy professori" [website] TEAK, available from [http://www.teak.fi/kati\\_outinen](http://www.teak.fi/kati_outinen) [cited 22.4.2010].

<sup>63</sup> "Portrait: La Kati d'Aki" *Elle* 4.11. 2002, n.p.

<sup>64</sup> Marita Vento, "Tyhmyttäkin täytyy käsitellä älykkäästi" [website] TEAK, available from <http://www2.teak.fi/teak/Teak202/5c.html> [cited 22.4.2010].



Figure 6. Ilona dresses wounds in *Shadows in Paradise* (top) and *Drifting Clouds* (bottom)

transaction at the checkout when she notices Nikander is bleeding and offers him a plaster, and in *Drifting Clouds* Ilona assists Melartin after he has been cut by the chef Lajunen (Figure 6).

However, the script update following Pellonpää's death has a significant effect on the character dynamics in the film, and so while Kati Outinen plays the character in both films, Ilona Koponen of *Drifting Clouds* is not Ilona Rajamäki of *Shadows in Paradise*, revisited ten years

later. Ilona Koponen is much more self-sufficient, moti-

ated and able to care for herself than Ilona Rajamäki. Where Ilona Rajamäki attaches herself to men, such as her successive employers and Nikander, in search of momentum for her life, Ilona Koponen moves effortlessly from reprimanding a knife-wielding alcoholic at work to an affectionate home life with her husband Lauri. Even allowing for the intervening years, a transformation of Rajamäki into Koponen would not ring true. The shift in character perspective focuses the film on social context rather than personal development: the two Ilonas are different women coping with similar problems in the same city, separated by a decade's worth of geopolitical change.

In another instance of naming repetition between the films, Sakari Kuosmanen again plays a character called Melartin: the alcoholic garbage collector of *Shadows in Paradise* has transformed into an etiquette-conscious restaurant doorman, friend and second-in-command to Ilona. As with Ilona, the Melartin of *Shadows in Paradise* is different from the Melartin of *Drifting Clouds*. Though

both characters have a gentle demeanour and demonstrate a loyal friendship to Nikander in the 1986 film and to Ilona in 1996, the latter Melartin is more formal in both address and appearance, and clearly more tied to his professional identity than the Melartin of the earlier film: where the Melartin of *Shadows in Paradise* happily takes up a job as a garbage collector and views the work as something that simply needs to be done rather than as an integral part of his identity, the Melartin of *Drifting Clouds* identifies distinctly as a doorman and appears lost when faced with the prospect of not finding similar work after the closure of the Dubrovnik. Even when he finds work as a cobbler he makes it clear to Ilona that he does not belong there, and needs her to open a restaurant so he will again have somewhere to fulfil an important part of his selfhood.

The intertextual character variations of Ilona and Melartin are connections in a metaphorical rather than a literal sense. The metaphorical meaning is connected to Paul Ricoeur's definition of a third order mimesis, "the intersection of the world of the text and the world of the hearer or reader [in this case the viewer]."<sup>65</sup> If first order mimesis is "pre-understanding of the world of action,"<sup>66</sup> and second order mimesis is the diegetic coherence of a text,<sup>67</sup> third order mimesis collapses together the film text and its broader social context, calling out the contradictions and connections between the two. The significance of Ilona in *Drifting Clouds* is not limited to her diegetic character in the film, but draws also on the distance between *Drifting Clouds*-Ilona and *Shadows in Paradise*-Ilona. It is this distance, this metaphorical shift, which recalls and rearticulates the links within the Kaurismäkian oeuvre. Here it is worth recalling Jonathan Fiske's idea about the 'horizontal intertextuality' that connects characters that appear in different films, and how such a character's 'meaning' is an 'intertextual aggregate'. In the case of Ilona (and to a lesser degree Melartin) the aggregate meaning incorporates a great sense of loss and foregrounds the disparity, rather than the similarity, between the characters in the two films. *Shadows in Paradise* and *Drifting Clouds* are clearly intended to be seen as linked, albeit in an ambiguous and non-linear way, and these horizontal intertextual connections between the two films' characters indicates as much to the viewer.

<sup>65</sup> Paul Ricoeur, "Mimesis and Representation," in *A Ricoeur Reader: Reflection and Imagination*, ed. Mario J. Valdés (New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991), 148.

<sup>66</sup> Ricoeur, "Mimesis and Representation," 142-143.

<sup>67</sup> Ricoeur, "Mimesis and Representation," 144.





Figure 7. Ilona mourns her child

The disparity between the Ilona of *Drifting Clouds* and the Ilona of *Shadows in Paradise* is brought into sudden, melancholy focus when Ilona quietly mourns the loss of her child, a contented toddler looking out of a black-and-white photo on the bookshelf (Figure 7). The picture is a

childhood photograph of the recently-deceased Pellonpää. The photo is a trace, “a present thing which stands for [vaut] an absent past”.<sup>68</sup> In this case the photo is not only a trace of an absent past, but also a trace of an absent present: what could have been, but is not. The photograph, and Ilona’s moment of mourning beside it, allow the audience to imagine what the film would have been like had Pellonpää lived.

The existence of Ilona and Lauri’s child is once mentioned explicitly, when a prospective employer correctly guesses Ilona’s past career trajectory: “qualified as a hairdresser, six months on the job before you got pregnant?” The couple’s loss is further alluded to in several scenes: a single Russian nesting doll sits in their sparse book case, the smaller ones hidden and out of sight; Ilona visits a cemetery and places flowers on a grave (in reality Pellonpää’s); Lauri looks wistfully at children’s toys in a shop window. The couple’s day-to-day lives are thus marked by the loss of their child, with specific items triggering first spontaneous memories, which then turn to reminiscence.

The death of a child was part of the original script as well, and not written into the text only following Pellonpää’s death. In the original version Ilona had not returned to work since the loss of their child, and was now planning to return to the workforce following Nikander’s sudden unemployment.<sup>69</sup> The decision to ‘cast’ Pellonpää as the dead child, however, clearly signals that the recurring mourning in the film should be read as a mourning of him specifically.

<sup>68</sup> Paul Ricoeur, “Narrated Time,” in *A Ricoeur Reader: Reflection and Imagination*, ed. Mario J. Valdés (New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991), 345. Square brackets in original.

<sup>69</sup> Kaurismäki, “Kauas pilvet karkaavat. Elokvakäsikirjoitus,” 26.

Hanna Laakso has argued that Kati Outinen’s characters in Kaurismäkian films are not properly individualised: the characters are used to depict broad social trends and situations, revealing little in the way of internal, personal motivations. However, Laakso argues that *Drifting Clouds* introduces a change to Outinen’s performance, as Ilona’s expressions and gestures communicate more of her emotions and internal world than in earlier films.<sup>70</sup> I propose that, instead of fully individualising Ilona, the relative potency of specifically melancholic emotions in the film serves to communicate a mourning of an “absent present”: on a diegetic level the character Ilona mourns her child; in real life the actor mourns the extra-cinematic loss of her colleague. In effect, Ilona’s moment of mourning beside the child’s photo brings to light not only a diegetic and a real-life death, but also the intertextual loss suffered by the Kaurismäkian oeuvre with the passing of the auteur’s alter ego.



Figure 8. Rubber ducks in a shop window

The rubber ducks that elicit Lauri’s memories of their child have a similar function (Figure 8). The ducks are an intertextual reference, Riffaterre’s ‘connective’, indicating a link to Kaurismäki’s *Hamlet Goes Business*, where the family business comes close to abandoning

important national industries in favour of rubber duck manufacture. The connection serves as an example of the insufficiency of Ann Jefferson’s distinction between an ‘active’ hypotext and a more passive ‘sister-text’: the rubber ducks are a distinct intertextual reference to *Hamlet Goes Business*, and while it is certainly possible to see a connection between the corrupt business practices depicted in both films, the latter film does not comment on or reimagine the earlier film. *Hamlet Goes Business* simply appears as an intertext reminding the viewer of a wider Kaurismäkian oeuvre. This instance of auteurial repetition is made all the more effective in being linked to a moment of intense diegetic, extra-cinematic and intertextual mourning.

<sup>70</sup> Hanna Laakso, *'Blank Faces': kohti kriittistä näyttelijäsuoritusta - Kati Outisen näyttelijäsuoritus Aki Kaurismäen elokuvissa* (Masters dissertation [unpublished manuscript], Turku University, 2000), 32.

This intertextual mourning reappears in later films as well: for example, Kati Outinen has a brief cameo appearance as another Ilona in *Lights in the Dusk*, this time in a variant closer to the original role in *Shadows in Paradise*. She is a surly, middle-aged check-out operator, having perhaps spent the past twenty years shuffling from check-out to check-out: another sign of the stagnation of Akilandia following the loss of Pellonpää, but also an indictment of contemporary Finnish society. Peter von Bagh describes the shock and dismay caused by the intertextual reference: “Is this what life was? Gone is the fairy tale quality [of *Shadows in Paradise*], gone is the chance that a supermarket cashier would tend to a customer’s bleeding hand and get him a plaster.”<sup>71</sup> Von Bagh refers to the start of Ilona’s and Nikander’s relationship in the 1986 film: Nikander tries to ignore his injury, but as he arrives to pay for his purchases at the counter Ilona interrupts the transaction to tend to his hand. Von Bagh suggests that the trace of human kindness – the fairytale quality – that existed in 1986 has long-since been purged from society, so that only the commercial transaction continues. The sudden appearance of Ilona in *Lights in the Dusk* reinforces a sense of social decline brought on by commercial efficiency: what could have been but is not.

#### The legacy of the casino economy

Given the emphasis placed on the social criticism of *Drifting Clouds* and Kaurismäki’s self-appointed role as a chronicler of national injustices, it becomes important to understand the extent to which the film’s social criticism is built on intertextual references to *Shadows in Paradise*. Approaching the links between the films in the context of Kaurismäki’s self-proclaimed national mission – that in the absence of Jarva and Niskanen it was up to him to take on the necessary task of depicting the unemployment crisis – reveals the extent to which Kaurismäki’s national social commentary is simultaneously used to reinforce the Kaurismäkian auteur narrative.

The historical context of *Shadows in Paradise* is the commercial liberalisation of the late Cold War, and the film features several references to the deregulation of the Finnish economy. For example, when Nikander approaches Melartin for a loan when he wants to take Ilona out, Melartin breaks into his child’s globe-shaped money box to help his friend. The scene is sometimes interpreted as a straight-forward example of a man helping out his friend in any way he can.<sup>72</sup> However, Satu Kyösola has identified this image of a small ‘world’ full of coins and notes as coding money and

<sup>71</sup> von Bagh, *Aki Kaurismäki*, 207.

<sup>72</sup> See for example Connah, *K/K. A couple of Finns and some Donald Ducks. Cinema in society*, 301.

commerce as the essential, constitutive elements of the world.<sup>73</sup> Similarly Nikander's appreciation of bingo can be read as a satirical reference to people participating in the boom-time economy: the fact that bingo is a game whose result is beyond the control of the players emphasises the uncertainty inherent in the economic scheming of the 1980s.

Nikander impulsively purchases a new video recorder and music system. He then tries to hawk his video recorder to Melartin, who already owns one: Nikander suggests setting up the extra machine in the kitchen so Mrs Melartin can watch television while cooking. Nikander's insistence on the sale, and his attempt to create a need for a second video recorder in the Melartin household, highlights the acceptance of consumerist ideals. The episode also suggests the uncritical involvement of Finns in the casino economy. In 1993, at the height of the recession, Kaurismäki claimed in an interview that a "dose of financial crisis can only benefit Finns. At least they'll learn to buy a video recorder only every other week, and not every week as they have been doing so far."<sup>74</sup> The reference to video recorders alludes to Nikander's active participation in the free market, first as a purchaser and then as a seller. The proliferation of the video recorder in Finland in the 1980s also coincides with the decline of cinemas and traditional cinema-going culture.<sup>75</sup> The video recorder, then, symbolises both uncritical consumerism and the commoditisation of culture.

The economic scheming of the boom years is also represented by Ilona's work first as a cashier and then as a shop assistant. The effortless transfer from one job to another represents the potential for social mobility caused by the increased circulation of capital. At the same time Ilona's past experiences of unjustified dismissals, facilitated by the same flow of capital, suggest that the opportunities provided by the boom time economy are temporary: it is precisely because of the flexibility of the economy that Ilona has not been able to forge a stable identity or even find a fixed abode. The most explicit reference to the increased lending and financial optimism of the 1980s, however, is Nikander's older colleague's plan to start his own rubbish disposal business. He asserts that "the state and the banks support businesses," describing the economic climate of the time, and at the same time implying that the individual is not supported by the state. The colleague's sudden death underscores the destructive effect of the casino economy. Pietari Kääpä even

<sup>73</sup> Satu Kyösola, *Shadows in Paradise de Aki Kaurismäki - Un film, un style* (Masters dissertation [unpublished manuscript], Université de la Sorbonne Nouvelle, 1993), 24.

<sup>74</sup> Ritva Viertola-Cavallari, "Myytti kylmästä Pohjolasta ei sula," *Turun Sanomat*, 2.4. 1993, n.p.

<sup>75</sup> Sakari Toiviainen, "Elokuvan 80-luku oli videon ja Kaurismäkien," *Ilta-Sanomat*, 30.12. 1989, 37.

suggests that “it is almost as if Nikander’s co-worker is punished for his aspirations at capitalist success”.<sup>76</sup> Appropriately, it is the colleague’s heart that cannot cope with conforming to the demands of a liberalised market economy: the system is by implication ‘heartless’ (*sydämetön*).

These socio-economic exchanges – starting a business, looking for work, purchasing new technology – are repeated with some variation in *Drifting Clouds*. Where Nikander buys an unnecessary video recorder, Lauri brings home a new colour television, tying the couple to yet another instalment purchase. Ilona Koponen’s difficulty in finding a new job after the closure of Dubrovnik contrasts with the ease with which Ilona Rajamäki of the earlier film moved from one job to another following dismissal. Similarly Lauri’s inability to profit from his ‘connections’ brings into focus how effortlessly Nikander is able to arrange work for Melartin. Ilona discusses her career prospects with an older, unnamed restaurateur, played by Esko Nikkari, who also played the older garbage collector in *Shadows in Paradise*. He alludes to his earlier character’s fate by warning the unemployed Ilona that at thirty-eight years of age she would be a liability to any employer, as she could “drop dead any minute.”

The fact that both Ilona and Lauri lose their jobs at a point when economic recovery had officially taken place draws attention to the inability of the Europeanisation process to resolve structural social problems. The chain that buys out Dubrovnik drives out the restaurant’s small dedicated community of staff and clients with the help of an unscrupulous bank manager. The bank is no longer a promising ally of the entrepreneur, as it was in *Shadows in Paradise*. Still, Ilona clings to the same pre-recession faith in banks displayed by the old garbage collector as she visits her bank manager to arrange a loan for her proposed restaurant business. Her sympathetic but weary bank manager cannot help, even with Melartin offering to act as a guarantor: the system that was ‘heartless’ in *Shadows in Paradise* has its hands tied in *Drifting Clouds*.

There are further references to the relationship between small businesses and banks in the subsequent instalments of the Finland trilogy, *The Man Without A Past* and *Lights in the Dusk*. In *The Man Without A Past* the amnesiac protagonist M witnesses a bank robbery, and after being questioned by the police over his potential involvement in the crime is approached by the bank robber in a bar. The bank robber explains to M that he lost his business and ability to pay his employees due to the unscrupulous behaviour of banks. The bank robber’s phrase “as you know”

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<sup>76</sup> Kääpä, *The National and Beyond*, 105.

emphasises the sense of his experiences being representative of broader, well-known trends in recent history. The scene includes a clear reference to *Shadows in Paradise*: the robber is played by Esko Nikkari, the old garbage collector in *Shadows in Paradise*, and there is a picture of Matti Pellonpää on the wall of the bar behind M and the bank robber. In these films the presence of Nikkari in a similar role and the reference to Pellonpää underscores the continuity of themes from one film to the next.

In *Lights in the Dusk* the protagonist Koistinen also wants to run his own business. He talks of starting his own security company, and says friends who have been through bankruptcies themselves have advised him not to have the business in his own name: Koistinen does not understand the legal implications of the warning, but rather interprets the friends' recommendation to mean the business should not be named after him. The development of the characters' approaches to financial advancement from *Shadows in Paradise* through *Drifting Clouds* and *The Man Without A Past* to *Lights in the Dusk* – and Koistinen's lapse in particular – suggests that the lessons learned from the bankruptcies following the excesses of the casino economy have not necessarily been the right ones.

#### Dubrovnik, Finland and the European Union

Finland applied for European Union membership in early 1992. At the time the Finnish economy was in crisis – unemployment stood at 11.7%, rising quickly to 16.3% the following year<sup>77</sup> – and in some quarters EU membership was seen as a way to alleviate the financial troubles.<sup>78</sup> The collapse of the Soviet Union also meant Finland was now formally free of the requirements of the FCMA treaty and Finlandisation measures, and could seek overt ties with Western organisations. Indeed, as Sami Moisio argues, despite the potential for economic rationalisations for EU membership, debates about the EU in Finland were dominated by discussions about identity politics and Finland's role 'in between the East and the West'.<sup>79</sup> By the time the Finnish referendum on EU membership was held in October 1994, the EU had come to stand for 'the West'. Iina Hellsten

<sup>77</sup> "Työmarkkinat".

<sup>78</sup> See for example Christian Westerback, "Suomen talous vilkastuu," *Helsingin Sanomat*, 11.8.1994, n.p.; Päivi Repo, "Tutkija: EU ei uhkaa sosiaaliturvaa. Euroopan unioniin liittymisestä olisi pitkällä aikavälillä ilmeisesti hyötyä," *Helsingin Sanomat*, 9.9.1994, n.p. Alho and Widgrén, "Finland: Economics and Politics of EU Accession," 701-702.

<sup>79</sup> Moisio also refers to other, less dominant narratives around the debate for Finnish EU membership, such as women's rights and the status of the welfare state in the EU compared to Finland. Sami Moisio, "Competing Geographies of Sovereignty, Regionality and Globalisation: The Politics of EU Resistance in Finland 1991-1994," *Geopolitics* 11, no. 3 (2006): 448-449.

argues that in Finnish mainstream media Finland's EU membership was often viewed as an inevitable development, a natural progression, even if Eurosceptic voices saw parallels between Soviet-era Finlandisation and the concentration of power in Brussels.<sup>80</sup>

As Christopher Browning has argued, EU membership was seen as retrospectively justifying Finland's Cold War politics and identifying Finland as having been 'Western' from the start:

Of particular emotive appeal has been the notion that after the historical parenthesis of the Cold War Finland has finally *come home* to the West, the most concrete and symbolic manifestation of which has been Finland's membership in the EU.<sup>81</sup>

In this 'homecoming' view, Finlandisation had been a necessary tool to maintain non-aggressive relations with the Soviet Union, while Finns in reality had maintained Western sympathies all along. The timing of Finland's accession to the EU was also crucial for this Westernising narrative: in order to 'prove' Finland's underlying Westernness it was imperative to join the EU before the former socialist states of Central and Eastern Europe were able to do so.<sup>82</sup> David Arter hints at a potential alternative identity narrative, pointing out that had Finland chosen to remain outside the EU, it could have retrospectively justified its Cold War neutrality, rather than its essential but temporarily hidden Westernness: "It was ironic that Finland sought to abandon its neutrality at the very time when, after nearly 50 years, there was the possibility of giving it real substance and credibility."<sup>83</sup>

Europeanisation processes are not explicitly referred to in *Drifting Clouds* and the film is not an overt statement of protest against Finland's EU-membership, even though Kaurismäki was a well known Eurosceptic at the time: in a characteristically polemical statement published just days before the 1994 referendum, Kaurismäki explained his opposition to EU membership by stating that Finland had not striven towards national independence for "three thousand years" in order to become nothing but a "market area" for a "huckster."<sup>84</sup> However, on a metaphoric level the

<sup>80</sup> Iina Hellsten, "Ovi Eurooppaan vai etuvartio Venäjälle? EU-metaforiikkaa Helsingin Sanomissa ja televisiossa," in *Kansa euromyllyssä. Journalismi, kampanjat ja kansalaisten mediamaisemat Suomen EU-jäsenyyssprosessissa*, eds Leif Åberg et al. (Helsinki: Yliopistopaino - Helsinki University Press, 1996), 201.

<sup>81</sup> Browning, "Coming Home or Moving Home?," 47. Emphasis in the original.

<sup>82</sup> Sami Moisio, "Finlandisation Versus Westernisation: Political Recognition and Finland's EU Membership Debate," *National Identities* 10, no. 1 (2008).

<sup>83</sup> David Arter, "The EU Referendum in Finland on 16 October 1994: A Vote for the West, not for Maastricht," *Journal of Common Market Studies* 33, no. 3 (1995): 372.

<sup>84</sup> In Finnish the statement reads "Suomi ei sitä varten 3000:a vuotta tavoitellut itsenäisyyttä, että sen saatuaan antaisi myydä itsensä markkina-alueeksi jollekin helppoheikille – niin että vielä itse maksamme

protagonists' failing attempts to remain in their comfort zones reflect the threat of the unknown and the challenges to national communities occasioned by the European Union. In the film the protagonists are first shown secure and comfortable in a contained space, safe from outside influence. The safe space is destroyed through unfortunate circumstance or outright corruption, leaving the protagonists to forge a new role for themselves in a hostile society.



Figure 9. Ilona and Lauri's tram ride

For example, when Ilona leaves work at the end of the day, she waits along Lauri's tram route to be picked up. The two travel together in comfortable silence, cocooned in the tram car, the steady pace and predetermined route of the tram reflecting the well-established comfortable

routine of their life together (Figure 9): this after-hours tram ride is their home away from home. Later, the hopelessness of Ilona's job search is emphasised by a tram that rattles past her, highlighting the absence of the security and happiness her tram rides with Lauri used to bring. The loss of the contained world of the tram car is the first in a series: soon Ilona hears of her own impending unemployment, Lauri has to sell his car and eventually the Koponens are also evicted from their apartment.

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kauppahinnan." "Miksi Pekka Rätty sanoo EU:lle "kyllä" ja Aki Kaurismäki "ei"?,*" Ilta-Sanomat*, 13.10. 1994, n.p. See also "Pohjoismaisilta EU-vastustajilta yhteinen vetoomus," *Helsingin Sanomat*, 13.10. 1994; "Yli 100 taiteen ja tieteen edustajaa sanoo ei EU:lle. Mukana nimiä Aki Kaurismäestä Remu Aaltoseen," *Helsingin Sanomat*, 8.10. 1994.





Figure 10. The chef Lajunen wields a knife

The clearest representation in the film of the Finnish identity crisis occasioned by Finland's EU membership is in the demise and eventual resurrection of the Dubrovnik. An idealised and nostalgic representation of Finland, the Dubrovnik is a restaurant whose aging clientele can no longer

“drink as much as they used to.” It is a fortress of old-fashioned etiquette, where stability and peace reigns. At the start of the film, just as the amicable atmosphere of the restaurant welcoming its familiar customers has been set, a timid kitchen hand informs Ilona that the chef has had another ‘episode’. An overtly melodramatic scene awaits in the downstairs kitchen: the chef holds a bottle of liquor at an exaggerated, almost comical angle above his head, drinking as if possessed (Figure 10). The kitchen staff watches in silence. As Ilona and the doorman Melartin appear, the chef grabs a knife and waves it in their direction. Melartin advances, leading the chef off-screen only to soon reappear, retreating cautiously, holding his cut wrist. Having had enough, Ilona advances to confront the chef, again off-screen. An audible slap, and she storms back into the frame, holding both the bottle and the knife. The chef follows her sheepishly. She instructs the silent kitchen staff to return to their duties, even the chef. She hands his knife back to him, but withholds the bottle. In this Finnish microcosm it is alcohol, not the knife, that is the problem.

Andrew Nestingen analyses the same introductory scene as “self-aware burlesque” that “plays on conventional depictions of Finnish drinking and violence”.<sup>85</sup> Indeed, knife-fighting and alcoholism feature widely in the Finnish national mythscape, and Kaurismäki's send-up of the pathos with which these topics are usually handled “clearly indicates the film's ironic relation to national culture.”<sup>86</sup> If the dining room of the Dubrovnik with its contented clientele can be seen as an idealised, nostalgic representation of Finnish society, then the activity in the kitchen suggests tensions beneath the surface. Alcohol features in several other scenes of the film as well: Lauri

<sup>85</sup> Nestingen, *Why nation?*, 136.

<sup>86</sup> Nestingen, *Why nation?*, 137.



Figure 11. Ilona and Mrs Sjöholm inspect the drinks menu

breaks the news of his unemployment to Ilona over a drink at a bar, on their last day the staff of the Dubrovnik raise a final toast together (the chef, Lajunen, is offered only juice), Ilona and Mrs Sjöholm discuss their new business venture while sampling exotic cocktails (Figure 11), and the

second customer to enter the new restaurant Work misinterprets Ilona's meal recommendation and orders a bottle of vodka instead. Excessive consumption of alcohol, or drunkenness specifically, is not limited to Lajunen's episode, but affects most characters following unemployment – Lajunen slips further into his alcoholism following the closure of the Dubrovnik, Lauri collapses in the hallway having gone out drinking after a day of unsuccessful job searching, Ilona and Melartin get inebriated together as neither has anywhere in particular to be in the morning. Even as its mythological status is lampooned, the myth of Finnish alcoholic excess is difficult for the protagonists to resist.

Stereotypical Finnish alcoholism is also an integral part of the director's public persona as "a heavy-drinking scoundrel".<sup>87</sup> For example, a 1995 article on the habitual alcohol use by Finnish artists begins with a depiction of "[t]he foremost of Finnish male directors, Aki and Mika Kaurismäki and Markku Pölönen" having been seen together "making fools of themselves, drunk out of their minds."<sup>88</sup> When referring to the process of changing the script of *Drifting Clouds* after Pellonpää's death, Kaurismäki stated that it took "two months to sober up, two days to write."<sup>89</sup> Reviews and interviews also often refer to the director's alcohol use: for example, Jonathan Romney states that for Kaurismäki filmmaking "offer[s] a healthy distraction from his prodigious

<sup>87</sup> Soila, "The face of a sad rat," 196.

<sup>88</sup> The original text is much more evocative: "Suomen mieselokuvaohjaajien eturivi, Aki ja Mika Kaurismäki sekä Markku Pölönen, söhläsivät ja sönnkäsivät ympäröissään. Lärvit rutussa, perseet olalla, niin naamat että Sodankylässä asti haisi viina." Heikki Aittokoski, "Dokauskultti," *Helsingin Sanomat*, 15.8. 1995, n.p.

<sup>89</sup> Joenniemi, "Aki astui pilvistä."

intake of alcohol and tobacco.”<sup>90</sup> A column in a Finnish regional newspaper in 1986 discussed the relationship Finns have traditionally had with alcohol in relation to a Kaurismäki-owned cinema:

Mika and Aki Kaurismäki own the old, two-screen Adams in Helsinki. In true central European style they would like to serve alcohol there. [...] One can only wonder whether a backward people that has only recently trudged out of the woods into a motel could behave itself appropriately or whether the seats would be filled by drunken oafs? Perhaps [liquor licensing] will be limited to cinemas that are dedicated to screening quality films in the capital city, and won't reach the provincial friends of Turhapuro [a character in popular farces].<sup>91</sup>

The article is not entirely serious in tone, but it does reveal the perceived connection between the uncontrolled consumption of alcohol and Finnishness: the Europeans – in this context Finns are implicitly *not* Europeans, even if Helsinki-dwelling cinephiles have learnt to imitate them – may well know how to casually sip wine whilst watching a continental art film, but Finns do not have that skill, as they are destined to drunkenness. The article demonstrates that from very early on in his public life, Kaurismäki was associated with real and imagined practices of Finnish alcohol consumption. In discussing how the frequent depictions of alcohol in *Drifting Clouds* draw on a particular Finnish stereotype it is important, then, to also be aware of the stereotype's auteurial-national nexus: how the director himself in his public performance and in his past work has explored and even contributed to the same stereotype.

It soon becomes clear that Mrs Sjöholm will be forced to sell the Dubrovnik to cover her debts. There is little doubt that her bank and the “Chain” making the purchase have conspired to bring about the bankruptcy. In reality the restaurant does not cease to operate as a restaurant; instead, it is reinvented as one of the many restaurants operated by the Chain. It is not difficult to see a parallel between the Dubrovnik as part of a restaurant chain and Finland as part of a supranational union: the concern is that Finland, too, will lose its familiar idiosyncrasies and unique character. Appropriately for a microcosm of the Kaurismäkian nation-state, the Dubrovnik closes to the strains of melancholy tangos.

The staff of the Dubrovnik have little chance of finding work with the Chain, and have to find employment elsewhere. The doorman Melartin notices that his profession no longer exists outside

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<sup>90</sup> Jonathan Romney, "Last Exit to Helsinki," *Film Comment* 39, no. 2 (2003): n.p. See also James, "A Finn's Films Start Morosely But End in Cockeyed Drollery," C13.

<sup>91</sup> "Filmejä ja viiniä," *Savon Sanomat*, 15.11. 1986, n.p.

the confines of the Dubrovnik, and he laments the erosion of standards, painting a rather grotesque image of what passes for contemporary restaurant culture: anyone can come and go as they please, scruffy minors hang around vomiting over each other. The contrast between the outside world and the refinement and camaraderie of the staff and clientele of the Dubrovnik serves as an instance of wistful nostalgic longing.



Figure 12. Ilona meets with an older restaurateur

Armed with her references, Ilona seeks advice from an older restaurateur (Figure 12). He recites unemployment statistics and reminds Ilona that working at the Dubrovnik, which had been considered a fine restaurant in the postwar years, would no longer impress anyone.

The restaurateur's dismissal of the Dubrovnik is also a dismissal of Ilona: she is too closely associated with postwar era rebuilding to be a credible agent in the new European era. The implication for Finland's new relationship with the EU is clear: identity politics that were desirable 'after the war' have become hopelessly outdated as 'the in-between' no longer exists. The similarities between Ilona and the Dubrovnik add another dimension to considerations of metaphor and variation in Kaurismäkian films: both are thirty-eight years old; the restaurateur suggests Ilona could die any minute, as the Dubrovnik just has; and the moment Ilona – often seen wearing her deep red overcoat – leaves the Dubrovnik for the last time, renovators aggressively tear out the deep red curtains of the once-iconic restaurant.

In the context of European expansion, the Dubrovnik also comes to signify a much more specific, political commentary. The name of the restaurant invites a discussion about the Yugoslav wars of secession, ongoing at the time *Drifting Clouds* was being filmed, and the hypocrisies of celebrating a 'unified' Europe at a time of war and genocide. Dubrovnik is a walled city on the Adriatic, in what is now Croatia. Long considered a haven for artists, travellers and bohemians, Dubrovnik has been

described as a “masterpiece of human creative genius” by UNESCO.<sup>92</sup> Dubrovnik was shelled and badly damaged by the Serbian military in the early 1990s, and Joseph Pearson cites *Telegraph* correspondent Alex Russel describing the potency of Dubrovnik as a symbol of the horrors of war: “this was an incredibly old, beautiful, historic city that people knew of, and even if they hadn’t visited it, it was and is an architectural gem.”<sup>93</sup> For *The Times* “Dubrovnik’s art treasures were decidedly European and worth saving.”<sup>94</sup> In *Helsingin Sanomat* the journalist Jyrki Palo described Dubrovnik as “a paradise where hell was let loose”, a “unique pearl of the Adriatic” and “a living cultural monument”.<sup>95</sup> In 1995 the newspaper’s reporting referred to Dubrovnik’s medieval past, its historical worth and the collapse of the city’s tourist economy in the wake of the wars.<sup>96</sup> The name of the restaurant in *Drifting Clouds*, then, brings to mind the contrast between an idealised past and the ongoing violence in the present, connecting the fate of the former Yugoslav city to that of the restaurant, and by implication the national present when subjected to the Europeanisation process.



Figure 13. Ilona and Mrs Sjöholm with the remains of the Dubrovnik

In an interview with a French journal the actress Elina Salo refers to her character Mrs Sjöholm at the end of the film presenting the new restaurant Work with linen from the old Dubrovnik (Figure 13). She points out that the white sheets were reminiscent of the funerary sheets shown almost on a

92 UNESCO’s Intergovernmental Committee for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention, cited in Joseph Pearson, “Dubrovnik’s Artistic Patrimony, and its Role in War Reporting (1991),” *European History Quarterly* 40, no. 2 (2010): 198.

<sup>93</sup> Pearson, “Dubrovnik’s Artistic Patrimony,” 203.

<sup>94</sup> Pearson, “Dubrovnik’s Artistic Patrimony,” 207.

<sup>95</sup> Jyrki Palo, “Kuin helveti olisi irti paratiisissa,” *Helsingin Sanomat*, 22.12. 1991, n.p.; Jyrki Palo, “Dubrovnik koettaa toipua hävityksestään,” *Helsingin Sanomat*, 20.12 1991, n.p.

<sup>96</sup> Tomi Ervamaa, “Dubrovnik pelkää serbien tykkejä,” *Helsingin Sanomat*, 22.8. 1995, n.p.; “Serbijoukkojen tykistökeskitys syytti rajuja maastopaloja lähellä Dubrovnikin keskustaa,” *Helsingin Sanomat*, 18.8. 1995, n.p.; Leo Pugin, “Dubrovnikin talous romahti täydellisesti,” *Helsingin Sanomat*, 1.6. 1995 n.p. Note that these articles appeared in print shortly before the filming of *Drifting Clouds* began.

daily basis on television as the fighting in the Balkans intensified.<sup>97</sup> Although the connection between the linen and the funerary sheets may only have been realised incidentally, the fact that Mrs Sjöholm describes the sheets as “all that were left of the Dubrovnik” indicates an explicit critique of the wars in the film.



Figure 14. Elisabeth Rehn (c) International Criminal Court

Mrs Sjöholm’s dedication to the Dubrovnik also suggests a specific connection between Finnish society and the Balkan wars of secession. Mrs Sjöholm’s appearance and her Finlandsswedish identity – referred to in the film when a hairdresser recognises her and speaks to her in Swedish and emphasised further by the casting of Elina Salo – brings to mind a Finlandsswedish politician, Elisabeth Rehn (Figure 14). Rehn had been Finland’s Defence Minister and ran for president in 1994, losing to Martti Ahtisaari in the second round. In September 1995, shortly before the filming of *Drifting Clouds* began, Rehn was appointed as the UN’s Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in the Balkans.<sup>98</sup> I do not wish to suggest that the

similarity between these two figures would necessarily have been a conscious choice by the filmmakers or an explicitly party political statement (indeed, the latter prospect in particular is highly unlikely). However, when the film is examined in the context of the broader media landscape of the time of its production the Dubrovnik and the characters associated with it, can be seen to represent a complex linking of the critiques of the financial crisis, the national challenges associated with the Europeanisation process and the ongoing violence in the Balkans.

Invoking the legacy and fractured present of Dubrovnik and, by implication, the wars of the 1990s more broadly, gives rise to a critique of what Stjepan Meštrović calls “postemotionalism”: the practices “found in Western societies in which the culture industry markets and manipulates dead *emotions* from history that are selectively and synthetically attached to current events.”<sup>99</sup> These

<sup>97</sup> Michel Boujut and Marilyne Letertre, “Entretien avec Elina Salo,” *L’Avant Scène Cinéma* 530 (2004): 9.

<sup>98</sup> “Vuosi ’95,” *Helsingin Sanomat*, 31.12. 1995, n.p; “Elisabeth Rehn CV” [website] available from <http://www.elisabethrehn.com/cv.htm> [cited 3.4.2011].

<sup>99</sup> Stjepan Meštrović, “Introduction,” in *Genocide after Emotion. The Postemotional Balkan War*, ed. Stjepan G. Meštrović (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), 11. Emphasis in the original. For more on Meštrović’s use of the term see Jeremy R. Carrette, “Religion and Mestrovic’s postemotional society: the manufacturing of religious emotion,” *Religion* 34 (2004).

'dead' emotions "obfuscate the present"<sup>100</sup> and lead to passivity: perpetrators are not appropriately condemned and no decisive action is taken because the conflict is seen to have such firm historical roots that it would be futile to intervene. Meštrović also argues that this postemotional dynamic is fundamentally hypocritical: he states that Western societies' flawed approaches to the Balkan crisis were influenced by their own conflicted histories, such as the Vichy regime and the Vietnam War, and an implicit acceptance of "collective guilt" in the present deriving from past atrocities.<sup>101</sup> The Western failure to react in the Balkan wars of secession has often been criticised. According to Philip J. Cohen, the inability and unwillingness of the United States and the European Community/Union in particular to intervene in the conflicts led to a "power vacuum" in the region and, in the words of Bosnian Foreign Minister Haris Silajdžić, "sent 'a very clear message to other small nations that they cannot count on principles" and that they "should forget democracy and the free market, and arm themselves first."<sup>102</sup>

In a similar vein Svetlana Boym draws attention to the European Union's self-congratulatory celebrations of European integration and unity, and how these specifically Western celebrations overshadowed much less positive events in Central, Eastern and South Eastern Europe. Boym argues that

the Easterners had a bad sense of historical timing. Just around the time of the Treaty of Rome, which developed some principles of economic interpretation of the Western European countries, the Hungarian rebellion against Soviet domination was brutally crushed; in 1968, as the barricades were being erected in Paris, Soviet tanks moved into Prague; in 1991 [sic] as the Treaty of Maastricht was signed, Sarajevo was under siege; and in 1999, just a few months after the introduction of the euro in selected countries of Western Europe, assault on Kosovo and the NATO airwar took place.<sup>103</sup>

Aleš Debeljak argues that subsequently 'the EU's shameful passivity in the wars of Yugoslav secession [was a] sign of the EU member nations' distrust of the terra incognita of Europe, the Balkans, the dark continent within a continent'.<sup>104</sup> That *Drifting Clouds* brings 'the dark continent' from the neglected edges of Europe and re-imagines it as the Dubrovnik, an object of intense fondness and a space intricately tied to Finnish national nostalgia, emerges as a critique of European inaction and moral stagnation in the face of the continuing wars in former Yugoslavia.

<sup>100</sup> Meštrović, "Introduction," 17.

<sup>101</sup> Meštrović, "Introduction," 17-22.

<sup>102</sup> Philip J. Cohen, "Ending the War and Securing Peace in Former Yugoslavia," in *Genocide after Emotion. The Postemotional Balkan War*, ed. Stjepan Meštrović (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), 32-33.

<sup>103</sup> Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*, 227.

<sup>104</sup> Aleš Debeljak, "European Forms of Belonging," *East European Politics and Societies* 17 (2003): 154.

Reading references to the Dubrovnik through these wars also complicates the analysis of certain other scenes in the film, for example when the older restaurateur comments that the Dubrovnik had been a worthy establishment “after the war”. The reference is no longer just to the years of Finnish national rebuilding and recovery following the Second World War, but also to the fact that in the same European space, another war continues. The Dubrovnik, then, functions as a critique of European expansion and integration on two levels: first, as representing an idealised national space denied to the protagonists through unethical business practices and property speculation; and second, as a condemnation of the European Union’s hypocrisy in celebrating unity and integration whilst a war was taking place. The Dubrovnik is a reminder of the failings of Europe.

### Afterlives of *Clouds*

*Drifting Clouds* premiered in Finland on the 26th of January 1996, with a press screening three days earlier.<sup>105</sup> The film was sold to over twenty countries and shown at more than forty film festivals: in Europe it was seen by over 500 000 people.<sup>106</sup> This theatrical run, however, is not the full the reach of *Drifting Clouds*. Since its initial release *Drifting Clouds* has continued to build on the Kaurismäkian auteur-national nexus, its many ‘afterlives’ revealing further connections between the national mythscape and auteurial framework. *Drifting Clouds* has been seen on Finnish television three times: in April 1997, December 1998 and June 2002.<sup>107</sup> Already the 1998 screening demonstrates the level of national significance afforded to the film, as it was shown on Christmas Eve, the focus of Finnish Christmas celebrations and traditionally a quiet day spent at home with close family. The 2002 screening, in turn, benefited from and contributed to media interest in Kaurismäki at the time of *The Man Without A Past*’s international successes. In 2003 Kaurismäki allowed Salla Salo, a political candidate for the Finnish Left Alliance, to use *Drifting Clouds* in her campaigning and fundraising efforts.<sup>108</sup> This act quite explicitly ties the film to real-life issues and politics, and also reinforces Kaurismäki’s own profile as a left-leaning artist with a keen interest in social justice.

Around the time of the making of the film and its initial release, *Drifting Clouds* and the Kaurismäkian auteur framework more broadly were closely interlinked with the mourning of Matti

<sup>105</sup> Invitation to press screening, KAVA file number KPR152.

<sup>106</sup> "Kauas pilvet karkaavat. Huomautukset," [cited 18.12.2008 at KAVA], available at <http://195.156.15.97/tenho/filmogra/sinayta.htx?ekid=165103&otsikko=Huomautukset>.

<sup>107</sup> "Kauas pilvet karkaavat. Esitystiedot" [website] *Elonet*, (2006) available from <http://www.elonet.fi/title/ek3je7/esitys> [cited 10.7.2010].

<sup>108</sup> Tuomas Näveri, "Kaurismäki-leffa tukee ehdokasta," *Ilta-Sanomat*, 1.3. 2003, n.p.



Pellonpää's sudden death in July 1995. Aspects of the commemoration of the actor's life were also tied to the film's critique of European inaction in the Balkan wars of secession. After Pellonpää's death his friends organised a memorial concert in his honour in August. Performers included some of the best-known Finnish rock and punk bands of the 1980s, such as Juice Leskinen Grand Slam, Popeda and Eppu Normaali. The Leningrad Cowboys were also featured, as was Pellonpää's band from his Theatre School days, Johan Lewis & Korjaa Boys. The profits from the concert were donated to the Finnish Red Cross' aid work in Bosnia.<sup>109</sup> The concert was also filmed and shown two months later simultaneously on television and in a small cinema in Helsinki: again, donations were collected at the latter for Bosnian aid.<sup>110</sup> The broadcast and fundraising screening of the memorial concert took place in the same week as filming of *Drifting Clouds* began, reinforcing the connection between the real world events and the film's complex network of mourning and social critique.



Figure 15. Cover booklet design (c) Itella Posti Oy

In March 1996 Matti Pellonpää and the Kaurismäki myth-scape were given formal national recognition. In celebration of the centennial of Finnish film Finland's Post released a series of stamps

dedicated to Finnish cinema. Finland's Post had been commercialised in 1990, and while stamp images retained a nationally narrative function, subsequent stamp issues had a more commercial drive than before. Pauliina Raento and Stanley D. Brunn also note that as a result of the financial crisis "Finnish stamps of the early 1990s [...] took the tone of encouragement and entertainment," and that the stamps of the decade also reflect "a continuously broadening understanding of what constitutes Finnish art and culture [...] expand[ing] to include previously overlooked forms of art

<sup>109</sup> Ilkka Mattila, "Ystävät ja ihailijat muistivat Matti Pellonpäää Tavastialla. Pellonpään ja vanhan rockin muistojuhla," *Helsingin Sanomat*, 10.8. 1995, n.p.

<sup>110</sup> Ilkka Mattila, "Pellonpää-konsertti näkyy televisiossa ja elokuvissa," *Helsingin Sanomat*, 7.10. 1995, n.p.



Figure 16. Stamp set design (c) Itella Posti Oy

national cultural image. The cover design for the booklet of eight stamps includes images from Kaurismäki's *Leningrad Cowboys Go America* (1989) (Figure 15). One of the stamps shows Pellonpää as Nikander in *Shadows in Paradise*, looking out onto the street, eating his dinner in silence (Figure 16).<sup>112</sup> Other stamp images are from Finland's second sound film, Valentin Vaala's *Laveata tietä* (1931); Vaala's *Kaikki rakastavat* (1935), starring the golden couple of classic Finnish cinema, Ansa Ikonen and Tauno Palo; the adaptation of Juhani Aho's novel *Juha* by Nyrki Tapiovaara (1937), whose short but promising career was cut short by his disappearance and presumed death behind enemy lines at the end of the Winter War; Erik Blomberg's *The White Reindeer* (*Valkoinen peura*, 1952), the first Finnish film to have been nominated for an Oscar; Edvin Laine's canonical *The Unknown Soldier* (*Tuntematon sotilas*, 1955); Risto Jarva's *The Year of the Hare* (*Jäniksen vuosi*, 1977); and the earliest known image of a film screening in Finland.

That *Shadows in Paradise* was selected to complement this catalogue of historically significant Finnish film shows that by 1996 Kaurismäki had established his reputation as a filmmaker of national importance. The selection of a scene focused entirely on Pellonpää at a time already marked by public mourning of his loss positions the stamp as part of that same process. That this process was appropriated and encouraged by a formal national institution is evidence of the interconnection of the Kaurismäkian framework and the national mythscape, and of how a

<sup>111</sup> Pauliina Raento and Stanley D. Brunn, "Picturing a nation: Finland on postage stamps, 1917-2000," *National Identities* 10, no. 1 (2008): 67.

<sup>112</sup> See also Eero Hellsten, "Suomalaisen elokuvan historiaa ilmestyy postimerkkivihkossa ja neljässä maksimikortissa," *Helsingin Sanomat*, 30.3. 1996, n.p. I thank Pirjo Mattila of the Finnish Postal Museum for making the stamp and cover images available.

character marked and clearly defined by his marginality on screen can become promoted as a nationally nostalgic image in another context. The stamps also demonstrate a curious temporal compression: although the set was released to celebrate the centenary of Finnish film from 1896 to 1996, there are no stamps dedicated to films released in the preceding ten years: *Shadows in Paradise* is the most recent of the films. Given that the commemoration of Pellonpää took place on the heels of the release of *Drifting Clouds*, the design and timing of the stamps reinforced the connection between *Shadows in Paradise* and *Drifting Clouds*, and even lent further national significance to the latter film as a continuation of a national tradition: the stamp set visually confirms Kaurismäki's self-proclaimed status as a chronicler of social injustice in the tradition of filmmakers such as Jarva, whose *The Year of The Hare* is the next most recent film, after *Shadows in Paradise*, to be depicted in the set. That the cover of the stamp booklet includes images from another Kaurismäki film further suggests that 'Kaurismäkian film' and 'national film' were by 1996 to some extent conflated with one another.

The linking of auteurial intertextuality and Kaurismäki's critical 'national project' in *Drifting Clouds* demonstrates that by the mid-1990s Kaurismäki had taken on the role of a national intellectual, speaking 'for' the people and against increasingly dominant Europeanising narratives. In doing so Kaurismäki roughly conforms to the model of members of the national cultural elite I formulated in Chapter Two on the basis of Pertti Alasuutari's and Mirja Liikkanen's analyses. As the inclusion and celebration of Kaurismäki's films in the stamp set demonstrates, *Drifting Clouds* also marks a point when the Kaurismäkian depiction of Finnish society began to be appropriated by formal national institutions for popular consumption.

## Chapter Four The Elephant Man: Nostalgia, Cultural Intimacy and *The Man Without A Past*

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There is a joke, told in many variations, of the initial reactions and thoughts of a handful of people from different countries when they first encounter an elephant. The Frenchman looks at the animal and wonders how it makes love. The American considers how best to turn a profit on the strange creature. The German writes a seven-volume text titled *A Brief Introduction to the Elephant*. The Finn, the joke goes, looks intently at the elephant and wonders “what does it think of *me?*” The joke plays on stereotypes of poor Finnish self-esteem and problems with communication: what concerns the Finn is that the elephant might direct towards him the same interpretive zeal as the Frenchman, the American and German do to the animal, and that the elephant might not approve of what it finds.

In this chapter I want to draw attention to this concern over outsiders’ perceptions of Finns and the problems of national representation, focusing specifically on *The Man Without A Past*. I begin by exploring the film’s nostalgia, and argue that while *The Man Without A Past* is not as overtly linked with other Kaurismäkian films as *Drifting Clouds* is, the film’s self-reflective nostalgia foregrounds the practice of national narration, simultaneously reiterating the film’s links to past Kaurismäki films and further connecting the Kaurismäkian oeuvre to the national mythscape.

I then draw on Andrew Nestingen’s analysis of the ‘nostalgia narratives’ in critiques of Kaurismäkian cinema to examine the Finnish reception of the international success of *The Man Without A Past*. While in some respects commentators were proud of the film’s international traction, the responses also revealed the same kind of concern the Finn of the joke has about the elephant, the breach of what anthropologist Michael Herzfeld has termed “cultural intimacy,” or the realisation that outsiders may have access to intimate, embarrassing details. Ultimately, the Finnish reception of the international successes of *The Man Without A Past* reveals the exceptional level of influence Kaurismäkian cinema has, or is at least perceived to have, over Finland’s international image.

### *The Man Without A Past* and the nostalgic market

In *The Man Without A Past* an anonymous man, credited as M, arrives by train in Helsinki and is badly beaten on arrival. Having been declared dead in hospital, he suddenly awakens and leaves.

He is taken in by a family living in a village of disused shipping containers, and begins to forge a place for himself in this marginal society, unable to remember his name or anything about his past life. He becomes involved with the Salvation Army as a manager for the group's musicians, and he begins a cautious romance with Irma, one of the officers. M's witnessing of a bank robbery acts as a catalyst for officialdom to discover his true identity, and eventually M does learn his real name and some details about his past, for example the fact that he had recently been divorced. Having reached some level of knowledge of his past life and a sense of closure, M returns to the shanty town village in Helsinki to commit to a life with Irma.

Although on the margins of society and disconnected from the 'governing national mythology', M's twenty-first century search for identity occurs firmly within the national mythscape. There are frequent references to different periods of national challenge, linking M's wanderings on the margins of society to broader narratives of Finnish nationhood. For example, some scenes recall specific paintings from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, others suggest the postwar era of rebuilding, and others remind the viewer of more recent events, such as the financial crisis of the 1990s. The film also features cameo appearances by high-profile Finns, for example the singer Annikki Tähti, whose public personas enhance the sense of national negotiation in the film text.

Such negotiation is also present in the reception of and commentary on the film itself. *The Man Without A Past* is the most successful of Kaurismäki's films: it won the Palme d'Or at the Cannes International Film Festival and was nominated for a foreign-language Oscar. It was distributed in over fifty countries, and was seen by over 700 000 people in France, over 360 000 in Germany and almost 300 000 in Italy, with its global audience exceeding two million.<sup>1</sup> In Finland the film attracted a cinematic audience of just over 176 000 cumulatively in 2002 and 2003.<sup>2</sup> While the film was not as popular in Finland as the most watched film of its release year, *The Lord of the Rings:*

<sup>1</sup> "Mies vailla menneisyyttä" [website/database] *Lumiere. Database on admissions of films released in Europe*, available from [http://lumiere.obs.coe.int/web/film\\_info/?id=18716](http://lumiere.obs.coe.int/web/film_info/?id=18716) [cited 4.12.2010]; "Box office / business for *The Man Without a Past* (2002)" [website] *IMDB*, available from <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0311519/business> [cited 4.12.2010]; "Release dates for *The Man Without a Past* (2002)" [website] *International Movie Database*, available from <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0311519/releaseinfo> [cited 4.12.2010]; Maria Sainio, *Suomalaisen elokuvan kansanvälistyminen* (Master's dissertation [unpublished manuscript], Turun kauppakorkeakoulu, 2009), 8.

<sup>2</sup> "Kotimaiset elokuvateatterielokuvat 1995-2003" [report] *SES*, available from <http://www.ses.fi/dokumentit/kotim95-03.pdf> [cited 4.12.2010]. Helena Ylänen points out that had it not been for the film's Cannes success in the middle of the year, audience figures for *The Man Without A Past* could well have stagnated at around 50 000. Helena Ylänen, "Haaveiden kehä ei voi saada parhaan elokuvan Jussia," *Helsingin Sanomat*, 18.12. 2002.

*The Fellowship of the Ring* (Peter Jackson, 2001; 548 384 viewers), or even the most popular domestic film *Rolli (Rölli ja metsänhenki)*, Olli Saarela, 2001; 259 524), the figures were a big improvement on *Juha's* very modest audience of 10 000 in 1999 and *Drifting Clouds'* close to 50 000 viewers in 1996, and meant *The Man Without A Past* had similar appeal for theatrical audiences in its initial year of screening (142 026 viewers) as *Monsters Inc.* (Pete Docket, 2001; 156 402), *Lilo & Stitch* (Chris Sanders & Dean DeBlois, 2002; 139 757) and *Amélie (Le Fabuleux Destin d'Amélie Poulain)*, Jean-Pierre Jeunet, 2001; 137 843).<sup>3</sup> In effect, where *Shadows in Paradise* launched Kaurismäki as a cult filmmaker in 1986, *The Man Without A Past* brought to the fore his popularity among international cinephiles and similarly raised his profile among domestic cinemagoers as well: the editors of *Taju kankaalle* identify the success of *The Man Without A Past* as the point where even popular opinion came to treat Kaurismäki as "our Aki", and not just a difficult director whose films were inaccessible to the general public.<sup>4</sup>

The success of *The Man Without A Past* followed on from the nostalgia 'boom' in Finnish cinema that began in 1999. Following a restructuring of the Finnish Film Foundation's funding priorities, in that year film production peaked in terms of quality and quantity of films as well as domestic audience numbers.<sup>5</sup> In 1999 domestic film attracted 1.8 million viewers to the cinema, when only five years earlier the figure had been 200 000: a leap from a four per cent market share to twenty-five per cent.<sup>6</sup> Since then the popularity of Finnish cinema has remained relatively stable, with Finnish film retaining somewhere between 15% and 25% of the market share each year.<sup>7</sup>

A striking characteristic of many of the "boom" films was their nostalgia: they revisited the logger or lumberjack film genre of the 1940s and 50s [*A Summer by the River (Kuningasjätkä)*, Markku Pölönen, 1998]), depicted events from Finland's Second World War experience [*Ambush (Rukajärven tie)*, Olli Saarela, 1999]) and explored the disintegration of particular local cultures [*The*

<sup>3</sup> "Katsotuimmat elokuvat 2002" [website] SES, (2003) available from <http://www.ses.fi/fi/katsotuimmat02.asp> [cited 4.12.2010].

<sup>4</sup> Kimmo Ahonen et al., "Saatteeksi," in *Taju kankaalle. Uutta suomalaista elokuvaa paikantamassa*, eds Kimmo Ahonen et al. (Turku: Kirja-Aurora, 2003), 7.

<sup>5</sup> Salmi, "Nousukausi," 14-15. See also Toiviainen, *Levottomat sukupolvet*, 24.

<sup>6</sup> Pantti, "Art or industry?," 174-175.

<sup>7</sup> Suomen elokuväsäätiö, Reetta Hautamäki, and Petri Kemppinen, "Elokuvavuosi 2009. Elokuvasäätiön tilastoja" [website] SES, (2010) available from <http://www.ses.fi/dokumentit/Elokuvavuosi%202009.pdf> [cited 13.5.2011]. The exception to the pattern was 2001, when domestic films counted for a relatively modest 10% of all cinema tickets purchased that year. In 2010 domestic films claimed a record-breaking 27% of the market share. Suomen elokuväsäätiö, Reetta Hautamäki, and Petri Kemppinen, "Elokuvavuosi 2010. Facts & Figures" [website] SES, (2011) available from <http://www.ses.fi/dokumentit/Elokuvavuosi%202010%20Facts%20&%20Figures.pdf> [cited 19.9.2011].

*Tough Ones* (Häijyt, Aleksi Mäkelä, 1999)]. The films' treatment of specifically national nostalgic themes is typically understood as a reflection of Finland's changing orientation towards Europe in the 1990s, expressed either as a concern that national specificity might in some way be compromised by Finland's participation in the European Union or simply as a desire to re-examine myths and narratives of national identity.<sup>8</sup> However, as Anu Koivunen notes, nostalgia discourses had been thoroughly commercialised and popularised in television and advertising by the end of the 1990s,<sup>9</sup> so the nostalgia films of the boom years should also be seen in relation to this longer-term trend. In any case, in addition to engaging with a discussion on Finnish national identity, the film boom also heralded a new era of positive attitudes towards Finnish cinema: Mervi Pantti argues that "for the first time since the 1960s, the Finnish Film Foundation and the national cinema received mainly positive publicity."<sup>10</sup> While Kaurismäki's 1999 black-and-white silent film *Juha* was certainly nostalgic already in form, it sat uneasily alongside the more marketable nostalgia films of the same year, and had very modest domestic box-office success. However, three years later *The Man Without A Past* reinforced the themes of boom films and was able to consolidate increased domestic acceptance and even popular enthusiasm for Finnish films with international critical and commercial success. In the following sections I examine how *The Man Without A Past's* nostalgia explores and further connects the national mythscape to the Kaurismäkian framework before going on to discuss the concern over cultural intimacy in the film's domestic reception.

### The development of nostalgia

Nostalgia is a particular mood of memory: not so much a recollection as a longing for a past. Originally nostalgia was considered a medical, physiological condition, literally a longing for home, an affliction facing Swiss soldiers in the seventeenth century. Cures for nostalgia have included "[I]eeches, warm hypnotic emulsions, opium and a return to the Alps," "public ridicule" and even

<sup>8</sup> See for example Veijo Hietala, "Romantiikkaa ja Rukajärven häyjä. Suomalaisen elokuvan ihmevuosi 1999," in *Taju kankaalle. Uutta suomalaista elokuvaa paikantamassa*, eds Kimmo Ahonen et al. (Turku: Kirja-Aurora, 2003), 27-29; Salmi, "Nousukausi," 18; Andrew Nestingen, "Nostalgias and Their Publics: The Finnish Film Boom, 1999-2001," *Scandinavian Studies* 75, no. 4 (2003): 563-564.

<sup>9</sup> Anu Koivunen, "Takaisin kotiin? Nostalgiaselityksen lumo ja ongelmallisuus," in *Populaarin Lumo - mediat ja arki*, eds Anu Koivunen, Susanna Paasonen and Mari Pajala (Turku: Turku University Press & Mediatutkimus, 2000), 326-331.

<sup>10</sup> Pantti, "Art or industry?," 179.

live burial: “[t]he punishment was reported to be carried out on two or three occasions, which happily cured the Russian army [in 1733] of complaints of nostalgia.”<sup>11</sup>

Since these early medical approaches to nostalgia the term has evolved to mean a longing for a different time. Nostalgia is a way of experiencing the present as much as it is oriented toward the past, as the failures of the present are what gild the memories of the past: “nostalgia uses *the past* – falsely, accurately, or [...] in specially reconstructed ways – but it is not the product thereof.”<sup>12</sup> Although nostalgia does have a very definite relationship with the past, Svetlana Boym argues that “[t]he nostalgic directs his gaze not only backward but sideways,” suggesting a displacement in all of the nostalgic person’s reference points: spatial, temporal and social.<sup>13</sup> In a similar vein Satu Kyösola argues that

[t]he nostalgic person is neither in his place nor in the space that welcomes his body, nor in the present to which he is subordinate. Other places and other times haunt him and his effective existence resembles the movement of a sleepwalker or a specter.<sup>14</sup>

My understanding of nostalgia draws on this ‘displaced’ and ‘sideways’ orientation in time. However, I depart from Kyösola’s understanding of the nostalgic as a ‘sleepwalker’ in that I approach nostalgia not just as a mood or reminiscence that may occasionally come to ‘haunt’ a person, but also as an activity, a conscious practice that can be as ironic as it can be wistful. In this sense I follow Janelle L. Wilson’s understanding of nostalgia as “extend[ing] beyond sentimentality”. Wilson argues that nostalgia is not a passive practice, as “[e]xpressing and experiencing nostalgia require active reconstruction of the past – active selection of what to remember and how to remember it,” even if the process of selection is often subconscious.<sup>15</sup>

Peter Fritzsche argues that nostalgia as a cultural phenomenon is “a fundamentally modern phenomenon because it depend[s] on the notion of historical process as the continual production

<sup>11</sup> Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*, 4-6. See also Robert Hemmings, *Modern Nostalgia: Siegfried Sassoon, Trauma and the Second World War* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008), 6-8.

<sup>12</sup> Fred Davis, *Yearning for Yesterday. A Sociology of Nostalgia* (New York and London: The Free Press, 1979), 10-11. Emphasis in the original.

<sup>13</sup> Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*, 13.

<sup>14</sup> Satu Kyösola, “The archivist’s nostalgia,” in *In search of Aki Kaurismäki: aesthetics and contexts*, ed. Andrew Nestingen, *Special issue of the Journal of Finnish Studies* (Ontario: Aspasia books, 2004), 55.

<sup>15</sup> Wilson, *Nostalgia*, 25.



of the new,"<sup>16</sup> and the editors of *The imagined past: history and nostalgia* propose three conditions for the existence of nostalgia: "a secular and linear sense of time, an apprehension of the failings of the present, and the availability of evidences of the past".<sup>17</sup> Crucial to nostalgic longing is an understanding that the object (place or time) of longing can never be recreated or re-experienced, but that there is pleasure in the longing nonetheless: Susan Stewart states that "nostalgia is the desire for desire."<sup>18</sup> Rosalind Galt stresses that in nostalgia this 'desire for desire', or the pleasure of looking back to a more positive time, "overrides any friction evoked by historical loss."<sup>19</sup> It is this perceived uncritical pleasure that has led to nostalgia often being described in pejorative terms as a naïve belief in a golden age of youth or as stagnation, an impediment to progress. For example, in 1988 Timo Laiho argued that Finland was now gradually beginning to open itself up to Europe, and that its European trajectory had been stalled first by war, and then by American economic influence and a pervasive agrarian nostalgia, itself brought on by rapid urbanisation.<sup>20</sup> Nostalgia, effectively, is described as both a product of and an obstacle to progress. Understood in these terms, nostalgia often comes full circle with its medical origins. For example, Umut Özkirimli argues that "ethnosymbolists are latterday Romantics who suffer from a deep sense of nostalgia."<sup>21</sup> That nostalgia is described as something that is 'suffered' emphasises its status as a disorder, and Susan Stewart describes it outright as a "social disease."<sup>22</sup>

As it valorises a past time, nostalgia is typically considered reactionary and politically conservative. For example, John J. Su refers to Lynne Huffer's point that nostalgia is by definition sexist: "[s]ince patriarchy is an undeniable historical reality, the longing to restore an idealized past will only reassert sexist social relations."<sup>23</sup> Writing specifically on left-wing radical approaches to nostalgia, Alastair Bonnet states that for early socialists

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<sup>16</sup> Peter Fritzsche, "Specters of History: On Nostalgia, Exile, and Modernity," *The American Historical Review* 106, no. 5 (2001): 1589.

<sup>17</sup> Malcolm Chase and Christopher Shaw, "The dimensions of nostalgia," in *The imagined past: history and nostalgia*, eds Christopher Shaw and Malcolm Chase (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1989), 4.

<sup>18</sup> Susan Stewart, *On Longing. Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984), 23.

<sup>19</sup> Rosalind Galt, *The new European cinema: redrawing the map* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 243 [endnote].

<sup>20</sup> Timo Laiho, "Elokuvan mahdollisuksia. Kaurismäet avaamassa Suomea Eurooppaan ja Eurooppaa Suomeen," *Demari*, 14.9. 1988, 25.

<sup>21</sup> Özkirimli, "The nation as an artichoke?," 340.

<sup>22</sup> Stewart, *On Longing*, ix.

<sup>23</sup> John J. Su, *Ethics and Nostalgia in the Contemporary Novel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 8.

yearning for the past was doubly suspect and doubly deluded. Not only did it lead the revolutionary classes away from the task of creating a new society but also, where it did provoke people to action, it diverted their energies into the bourgeois delusion of nationalism.<sup>24</sup>

Bonnett goes on to state that “nostalgia is still routinely reviled as a lie, as the essence of reaction.”<sup>25</sup> Despite the negative connotations often associated with the term, it is common for people individually to feel a nostalgic attachment to their childhood or other past time, whether personally experienced or imagined. Bonnett provides an amusing, personal example of the “disjunction” of public disavowal of nostalgia and the private pleasure of it:

A little while ago I bumped into an academic colleague in one of those publicly owned stately homes and gardens that draw in the weekend crowds across England. Our awkwardness was palpable and mutual. I think we both would have liked to find a loophole; to make a few disparaging remarks about the tweekness and the suspect nationalism of it all. Perhaps we could pretend we had been dragged along. Just observing the crowds. But some lies are too obvious to appear polite. So then what? Could we admit to have travelled miles from the brutal and noisy city to enjoy walking around the beautiful old gardens of a long departed gentry? Not that either. The shame would be too much. We were left with a mutually indulgent set of nods and smirks, registering not simply the humour that we could find in the situation but the fact, thankfully, that *off duty*, our nostalgia was forgivable.<sup>26</sup>

Bonnett’s anecdote shows how nostalgia is experienced and practiced in spite of oneself, as an emotion and fact of life, despite the associated ‘shame’ of revealing oneself to be an illogical, sentimental being if caught out.

There is some momentum behind repositioning nostalgia as an analytical tool, or at the very least acknowledging and understanding this “deeply flawed, unlovable but human”<sup>27</sup> approach to the past. For example, John J. Su argues that nostalgia can, in fact, “[represent] a necessary and often productive form of confronting loss and displacement”, that nostalgia can have an ethical function.<sup>28</sup> Pam Cook proposes an understanding of the interconnectedness of memory, history and nostalgia, and particularly disagrees with definitions of nostalgia that disproportionately valorise history:

<sup>24</sup> Alastair Bonnett, *Left in the Past: Radicalism and the Politics of Nostalgia* (London: Continuum, 2010), 24.

<sup>25</sup> Bonnett, *Left in the Past*, 2.

<sup>26</sup> Bonnett, *Left in the Past*, 6. Emphasis in the original.

<sup>27</sup> Bonnett, *Left in the Past*, 4.

<sup>28</sup> Su, *Ethics and Nostalgia in the Contemporary Novel*, 12.

where history suppresses the element of disavowal or fantasy in its re-presentation of the past, nostalgia foregrounds those elements, and in effect lays bare the processes at the heart of remembrance [...] [W]hile not necessarily progressive in itself, nostalgia can form part of a transition to progress and modernity.<sup>29</sup>

Where Su sees nostalgia as a useful, even necessary way of coming to terms with change, for Cook nostalgia is a part of the change itself: indeed, even in rehabilitating nostalgia into critical analysis Cook valorises ‘progress’ as an eventual end point, where nostalgia presumably becomes redundant.

Svetlana Boym distinguishes between two different types of nostalgia, reflective and restorative. Restorative nostalgia is a literal desire to replicate and re-experience the past: it “stresses *nostos* and [...] does not think of itself as nostalgia, but rather as truth and tradition,” while reflective nostalgia “thrives in *algia*, the longing itself, and delays the homecoming – wistfully, ironically, desperately”.<sup>30</sup> Reflective nostalgia is comic, tragic and self-aware: the reflective nostalgic understands that the longing itself is based on a false logic; that the object of longing never really existed in the first place.

Boym also identifies a key aspect of nostalgia that is often ignored: its specific relevance to national identities. Although the original medical definition referred to a longing for a homeland, the most common references to nostalgia tend to focus on strictly temporal or personal rather than national or ethnic longing. Yet as Boym argues, “nostalgia is about the relationship between individual biography and the biography of groups of nations, between personal and collective memory.”<sup>31</sup> Indeed, while nostalgia is both a personal feeling – strictly speaking, one can only really feel nostalgic for “a personally experienced past”<sup>32</sup> – it is also a cultural phenomenon, with past time periods frequently evoked for aesthetic and entertainment purposes. I am interested in nostalgia particularly in this latter sense, and specifically in its function in cinema.

<sup>29</sup> Pam Cook, *Screening the Past. Memory and Nostalgia in Cinema* (London and New York: Routledge, 2005), 3-4.

<sup>30</sup> Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*, xviii. Emphasis in original.

<sup>31</sup> Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*, xvi.

<sup>32</sup> Davis, *Yearning for Yesterday*, 8.

Nostalgia in cinema

'Nostalgia film' is typically seen as a subset of 'historical film', or films set at least in part in a past time. Among the best known are films such as *American Graffiti* (George Lucas, 1973), *Grease* (Randal Kleiser, 1978) and *Back to the Future* (Robert Zemeckis, 1985): these could be called 'generational nostalgia' films that look back only twenty or thirty years and bring the nostalgic referents of one generation into broader popular cultural use, but also address a perceived deficiency in the present. For example, Christine Sprengler suggests that the nostalgia for the 1950s (or rather, an aestheticised 'Fifties') in America in the 1970s arose in part as a reaction against the flawed present of the Vietnam War and President Nixon's corruption.<sup>33</sup> In recent years nostalgia's neological offspring *Ostalgie*, the "widespread cultural fascination with the former German Democratic Republic,"<sup>34</sup> has arisen in response to the harsh realities of postunification Germany.<sup>35</sup> These nostalgias draw from very specific contexts, but both tap into preoccupations in their respective societies about a fundamentally different era in the recent past.

Films that look further back in time and establish a kind of 'historical nostalgia' include the British "heritage films" such as Merchant/Ivory adaptations *Howard's End* (James Ivory, 1992) and *A Room With A View* (James Ivory, 1985), which constructed Edwardian society as a potent frame of reference with "a familiar, soft-focus, nostalgic irony which refreshe[d] its object without transgressing it."<sup>36</sup> Phil Powrie builds on Andrew Higson's work on British heritage film and defines 'nostalgia film' as "an attempt to return to a golden age, where all the trappings of high culture [...] are shackled to cinematographic conservatism."<sup>37</sup> This is not to say the films would necessarily be *politically* conservative, but rather that the meticulous recreation of a past era on screen is generally done within the norms of conventional cinema, with little to no experimental camerawork, for example. Instead, as Higson points out, in some cases the films' "[t]emporal

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<sup>33</sup> Sprengler, *Screening Nostalgia*, 46-47.

<sup>34</sup> Anthony Enns, "The politics of *Ostalgie*: post-socialist nostalgia in recent German film," *Screen* 48, no. 4 (2007): 475.

<sup>35</sup> For an analysis of *Ostalgie* in film see the chapter "'Productive' Hybridity: Nostalgia and the GDR on Film" in Paul Cooke, *Representing East Germany since Unification: From Colonization to Nostalgia* (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2005), 103-140.

<sup>36</sup> John Caughie, "Becoming European. Art Cinema, Irony and Identity," in *Screening Europe. Image and Identity in Contemporary European Cinema*, ed. Duncan Petrie (London: British Film Institute, 1992), 38-39. See also Forbes and Street, "European cinema: an overview," 40.

<sup>37</sup> Phil Powrie, *French cinema in the 1980s: nostalgia and the crisis of masculinity* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 23.

displacement and cultural respectability licence the exploration of difficult or taboo subjects” including issues of sexuality, gender and class.<sup>38</sup>

Nostalgia is, however, a much more complex phenomenon than simply the recreation of the past, and so it is problematic to think of ‘nostalgia film’ in the relatively limited set-in-the-past sense, as there is then a danger of considering all excursions into the past as ‘nostalgia film’.<sup>39</sup> Christine Sprengler expresses other reservations about the term: in *Screening Nostalgia* Sprengler hesitantly titles one chapter “The Nostalgia Film”. Her hesitation derives from the fact that the term would seem to imply a kind of genre, “[making] it difficult to include the seemingly marginal yet compelling uses of a single prop or specific actor for engaging and evoking nostalgia.”<sup>40</sup> Indeed, while many nostalgic films are set at least in part in the longed-for time and place and so overlap in some ways with historical film, in other instances a film’s nostalgia hinges on foregrounding the *absence* of the past. I am even inclined to believe these ‘non-historical’ nostalgia films are, in principle, better able to explore the concept of nostalgia, as they do not attempt to recreate a splendid past on screen, but instead elicit nostalgic feeling in the audience through the use of old photos, broken down buildings, the soundtrack and so on.

With the exception of *Take Care of Your Scarf, Tatjana!*, which is ostensibly set in the 1960s, Kaurismäki’s films have a nostalgic quality without being set in the past as such. Instead, Kaurismäkian nostalgia is built on a range of features, such as old cars, distinctive colour schemes, music and dated language. There is an element of pastness to the films, and all depict their protagonists as out of place in their surroundings, and their surroundings as out of sync with history: Ilpo Helén describes the films as being outside history, that in them the past is experienced as if it were the present and the present is made to look like the past.<sup>41</sup> Henry Bacon argues that the potency of the Kaurismäkian brand of nostalgia derives from the fact that there is no one specific object of longing, but that nostalgia is a filter, a deliberate distancing that renders life in contemporary society bearable.<sup>42</sup> Kaurismäkian nostalgia is also concerned with the national mythscape: the director is frequently described as being a compulsive collector and

<sup>38</sup> Andrew Higson, *English Heritage, English Cinema. Costume Drama since 1980* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 28.

<sup>39</sup> Fred Davis raised similar concerns about the inflation of the term ‘nostalgia’ more broadly. Davis, *Yearning for Yesterday*, 8.

<sup>40</sup> Sprengler, *Screening Nostalgia*, 67.

<sup>41</sup> Ilpo Helén, “Ajan läpi?,” *Filmihullu* 5 (1991): 14.

<sup>42</sup> Bacon, “Aki Kaurismäen sijoiltaan olon poetiikka,” 95-96.

desiring a return to the Finland of his childhood, before the structural change that saw Finnish society urbanise extraordinarily quickly in the middle of the twentieth century.<sup>43</sup> At the same time, Kaurismäkian nostalgia has a mischievous, self-aware quality to it: it is built on parody, irony and social criticism.<sup>44</sup> Satu Kyösola also points out that

Kaurismäki's films are replete with objects, furniture, radios, and dated American cars, in their own way unable to evoke other times and other places whose apparition troubles the diegesis. The films display vestiges of the past, enclose them and exhibit them, redoubling their charm while marking their loss by the artifice of the maneuver that displays them.<sup>45</sup>

In effect, while the revived past is treated with fondness and humour in the films, it is also foregrounded as a chimera.

Jochen Werner rightly points out that Kaurismäkian nostalgia is concerned with film history and cinematic expression:

Kaurismäki has developed a form of stylistic exhibition that allows him to recall the achievements of cinema and to integrate the diction of the masters of the medium into the textures of his own films. Kaurismäki's attitude is one of a cinephile connoisseur who takes his viewers by the hand and shows them through the realm of filmmaking: "Look here," he seems to say, "that was a good form of cinematic presentation." Or: "Remember this! Cinema had once more to offer than talking heads."<sup>46</sup>

Andrew Nestingen also draws attention to the cinematic nostalgia of Kaurismäkian film, focusing specifically on *Ariel*. Nestingen points out that the colour schemes, measured pace and the static camera of the film all recall European and American studio films from the 1920s through to the 1940s.<sup>47</sup> Adrian Martin similarly draws attention to Kaurismäki's evocation of cinema's past in relation to *I Hired a Contract Killer*:

It's set in the present day, but it comes across as a slightly off-key tribute to the British films of a previous era: part Ealing studios, part documentary realism, part poignant

<sup>43</sup> See for example Naski, "Kesät kuumat on pois," n.p. Lecorre, "Pariisin Kaurismäki-paneeli totesi Akin suomalaiseksi mutta yleispäteväksi," n.p. Antti Lindqvist, "Katse, sen varaan minä rakennan," *Katso!* 1996, 14.

<sup>44</sup> Johanna Grönqvist, *Längtan hem. Det nostalgiska begreppet i filmer av Aki Kaurismäki och Markku Pölönen* (Masters dissertation [unpublished manuscript], University of Turku, 2000), 20.

<sup>45</sup> Kyösola, "The archivist's nostalgia," 54.

<sup>46</sup> Jochen Werner, "Talking without words: Aki Kaurismäki's rediscovery of the virtues of cinema," in *In search of Aki Kaurismäki: aesthetics and contexts*, ed. Andrew Nestingen, *Special Issue of Journal of Finnish Studies* (Ontario: Aspasia books, 2004), 64.

<sup>47</sup> Nestingen, "Sormuksia ja kurioositeetteja," 48-49, see also 59-60.

kitchen sink drama of the early 1960s. Kaurismäki invents actions, scenes and gestures — such as the dreary life of an office worker — and unerringly finds locations for these actions that stir, somewhere in our cinematic memories, these past times of British cinema.<sup>48</sup>

While I follow Svetlana Boym's lead in exploring nostalgia from a national perspective, it is important to keep in mind that such cinephilic nostalgia runs through Kaurismäki's work as well. In fact, the distinction between reflective and restorative nostalgia is by no means clear in cinephilic filmmaking, if the finished product is its own object of longing. For example, while textually Kaurismäkian nostalgia is ironic, wistful and clearly reflective, Kaurismäki's cinematic *practice* is restoratively nostalgic, in that he edits the film stock by hand rather than digitally, and the camera itself, the 35 mm Arriflex BL II, used to belong to Ingmar Bergman and is as such a part of cinema history itself.<sup>49</sup> In any case, as much as Kaurismäkian nostalgia expresses a knowingly futile yet pleasurable longing for the past, it is also an element of style, a recognisable homage and contribution to classic cinema.

Here it is useful to remember Fredric Jameson's misgivings about "nostalgia film". Jameson's concern is not over the accuracy of any implied genre as it is with Sprengler, but is more in line with Davis' concern that nostalgia "will in time acquire connotations that extend its meaning to any sort of positive feeling towards anything past, no matter how remote or historical".<sup>50</sup> Jameson observes that the term 'nostalgia film' implies a very different kind of nostalgia to that which Hofer first identified, or even the kind of longing the term has since evolved to signify in common use. Jameson states that

the fashion-plate, historicist films [which the term 'nostalgia film'] designates are in no way to be grasped as passionate expressions of that older longing once called nostalgia but rather quite the opposite; they are a depersonalized visual curiosity [...] 'without affect'.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Adrian Martin, "Poetic Realism and a Few Drinks" [website] *Orimattila Town Library*, (2009) available from [http://www.orimattila.fi/kirjasto/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=245&Itemid=94](http://www.orimattila.fi/kirjasto/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=245&Itemid=94) [cited 1.1.2011].

<sup>49</sup> von Bagh, *Aki Kaurismäki*, 156-157. Kartik Singh discusses the "mythology" that has built around the camera and its origins over the years in Singh, "L'accueil critique des films d'Aki Kaurismäki dans la presse nationale et hebdomadaire," 146.

<sup>50</sup> Davis, *Yearning for Yesterday*, 8.

<sup>51</sup> Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (London and New York: Verso, 1991), xvii.

Again the focus is on historical films, but Jameson limits ‘nostalgia’ in film further to refer to an aestheticisation of the past without any real sense of loss or longing: in a similar vein he describes architecture as “cannibaliz[ing] all the architectural styles of the past and combin[ing] them in overstimulating ensembles.”<sup>52</sup> The view may well be too reductive, but it does bring to the fore the importance of a nostalgic ‘look’, the allure and commoditisation of “*la mode rétro*”.<sup>53</sup> Paul Grainge builds on Jameson’s view of nostalgia, distinguishing between nostalgia as a “mood” tinged with loss, and nostalgia as a “mode”, a style and aesthetic.<sup>54</sup> For Grainge “the commodification and aestheticisation of nostalgia” cannot be explained solely by a “master narrative” of actual loss and social change, but depends on a variety of other factors, including the influence technological advances can have on codes of communication.<sup>55</sup> He goes on to explore the use of black-and-white imagery in a range of media to show how the technique can imbue subjects with “historical gravitas” and elicit “nostalgia without memory”: that is, give the impression of a fondly-held generic pastness that has no real sense of loss attached to it.<sup>56</sup> Grainge does not intend the nostalgic mood and mode to be understood as opposites, but rather offers the distinction in order to come to a better understanding of the range of ways in which nostalgia operates.

Kaurismäki’s films exemplify both the mood and mode of nostalgia, as they do elicit a sense of loss and longing, albeit in a ‘reflective’ sense, but they also express a heightened, aestheticised nostalgia. While this nostalgic mode enhances the mood, it is also possible that the very aestheticisation of nostalgia itself elicits the mood ‘without memory’. For example, a viewer might recognise and revel in the Technicolor nostalgia of *The Man Without A Past* without having any understanding of the peculiarities of the film’s national references. Similarly the mournful music that accompanies certain scenes, such as when M receives unexpected kindness from a café-owner, will convey a nostalgic sense of affection, even if it is only the Finnish-speaking audience that understands the lyrics of the song, or recognises the specific postwar values associated with its singer Tapio Rautavaara. For an audience familiar with the Finnish national mythscape, however, *The Man Without A Past* is very clearly demarcated in terms of Finnish national nostalgia and the socio-cultural challenges of the recent past, even if the nostalgia itself is of a reflective kind.

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<sup>52</sup> Jameson, *Postmodernism*, 19.

<sup>53</sup> Jameson, *Postmodernism*, 19.

<sup>54</sup> Grainge, *Monochrome Memories*, 21.

<sup>55</sup> Grainge, *Monochrome Memories*, 51.

<sup>56</sup> Grainge, *Monochrome Memories*, 73, 112.



The national parameters of *The Man Without A Past*

In wanting to move beyond an understanding of nostalgia film as a kind of genre, Christine Sprengler examines the many ways films can evoke and make use of nostalgia. For example, she argues that the tripartite “Eden-loss-retrieval” or “equilibrium-disequilibrium-equilibrium” narrative structure is in itself a nostalgic project:

the original state of equilibrium is akin to nostalgia’s object. When lost or altered, both inspire searches for and attempts to regain times and places thought to be superior to the present. And in both instances, when retrieval is finally acknowledged to be impossible, the goal shifts to reestablishing the stability and certainty thought to reside in the past.<sup>57</sup>

*The Man Without A Past* certainly follows a similar classic narrative structure, with M choosing his shanty-town existence and relationship with Irma instead of trying to become his past self again. Sprengler also refers to metanostalgic plot developments, such as characters directly revisiting or reminiscing in flashback about their childhood homes or other significant locations. Characters generally come to understand that the past cannot be recaptured, but that “the memory of [the past] can function as a utopian model for the future.”<sup>58</sup> Here *The Man Without A Past* departs from the model: while M does return to the countryside to visit his ex-wife to find out more about his past life, this ‘closure’ of sorts does not see him regain his lost memories or experience a cathartic consolidation of his identity. Instead, he finds out just enough to know he is free to move on, that there is nothing, even memory, tying him to his past: although he comes to know certain facts about his past life, he experiences no real memory of the tee-totalling Jaakko Antero Lujanen who gambled away his record collection.

The protagonist is never addressed by name, and although he discovers his name towards the end of the film, in the credits he is referred to as M. In the script Kaurismäki states that he chose the letter M because it is the letter with which most Finnish interrogative words begin.<sup>59</sup> Identifying M with words such as *mikä* (what), *minne* (where to) and *milloin* (when) underscores the uncertainty inherent in his identity. There is one notable interrogative word in Finnish that does not begin with the letter M: *kuka* (who). The fact that M is not connected with the one word indicating uncertainty of individual identity, but is rather identified with questions of locality and time,

<sup>57</sup> Sprengler, *Screening Nostalgia*, 72-73.

<sup>58</sup> Sprengler, *Screening Nostalgia*, 74.

<sup>59</sup> Aki Kaurismäki, *Mies vailla menneisyyttä. Elokvakäsikirjoitus* (Helsinki: WSOY, 2003), 17.

emphasises the sense of his search for identity as representing broader issues of belonging, such as national and social marginalisation. The national mode of M's identity search is made explicit when he is taken into police custody and interrogated following the bank robbery: he is not questioned as a suspect of the robbery, but as a person whose inability to remember his name seems profoundly suspicious. The police officers consider his amnesia profoundly un-Finnish and worthy of further investigation, and one of them justifies the jailing simply with "You could be a foreigner." When M points out that he does speak Finnish, the officer does not change course: "You people are fast learners." M's attempt to ascertain his identity and retrieve his memories is thus linked with a need to define and prove his Finnishness.

Sakari Toiviainen argues that although Kaurismäki's characters live in the liminal spaces outside society, they are not separated from society itself, and "many of the societal processes and value conflicts are concentrated in them."<sup>60</sup> Indeed, this 'concentration' applies to the film even on a temporal level, as it contains allusions to several different historical time periods. The simultaneous representation of different eras suggests a connection between them, linking M's twenty-first century search for identity with earlier developments in the Finnish national mythscape.



Figure 17. The unconscious M

In an early scene of *The Man Without A Past* there are two striking references to well-known Finnish paintings: Akseli Gallén-Kallela's *Kalevala*-themed "Mother of Lemminkäinen" (1897) and Hugo Simberg's "The Wounded Angel" (1903). The new life M began after being declared

dead in the hospital has turned out to be a false start. M lies on the rocky shore next to a small road leading to the shanty town community. Still heavily bandaged, his pose is reminiscent of the crucified Christ (Figure 17).

<sup>60</sup> Toiviainen, "The Kaurismäki phenomenon," 22.



Figure 18. "The Mother of Lemminkäinen"

However, the surrounding water and rocky ground also evoke "The Mother of Lemminkäinen", in which the folk hero's body has been salvaged from the river Tuonela by his grieving mother – itself suggestive of pietà-images of the Virgin Mary tending to her son's body (Figure 18). The dead Lemminkäinen's face is partly covered, as is M's, and both subjects are seen from a high angle, emphasising their helplessness. The reference to "The Mother of Lemminkäinen" elicits

memories of other Kalevalaic images, and anchors the film to the established, iconic imagery of the Finnish mythscape.

The visual reference to Lemminkäinen also suggests the possibility of rebirth. In poem fifteen of the *Kalevala* Lemminkäinen's mother raises him from the dead. She collects the pieces of his body from the river Tuonela, and performs incantations to bring him back to life.<sup>61</sup> In the film the image is undercut by replacing the grieving mother of the painting with a passing tramp who swaps his worn shoes for M's sturdy boots. However, M's mother figure is not far away, and the following scene already shows him being cared for by Kaisa Nieminen. M's discovery of his identity reflects Lemminkäinen's resurrection in that just as Lemminkäinen's mother could not find her son's body intact from the stream, neither does M come to remember his past life, but rather has to create it anew. The fact that Lemminkäinen is raised from the dead through song is also reflected in M's self-discovery, as it is through the musical preferences of his former self and his influence on the performances of the Salvation Army band that M comes to forge a role in society for himself.<sup>62</sup>

<sup>61</sup> "Kalevala. Viidestoista runo" [website] SKS, available from <http://www.finlit.fi/kalevala/index.php?s=59&m=1&l=1> [cited 6.12.2010].

<sup>62</sup> There is also a connection between M's recovery of his metalworking skills and the role of the smith Ilmarinen, who in the same poem forges a tool suitable for recovering Lemminkäinen's body from the stream, although this connection is more opaque.



Figure 19. The boys carrying a water canister

As the tramp walks away in M's shoes, he crosses paths with the two Nieminen children. The boys approach the bandaged M, carrying a water canister between them (Figure 19). The image is reminiscent of Hugo Simberg's symbolist painting "The Wounded Angel"



Figure 20. "The Wounded Angel"

in which two young boys carry an angel on stretchers (Figure 20). Kaurismäki even alludes to the painting in the film script, suggesting the boys carry their burden as dutifully as if they were supporting an angel instead of a water canister.<sup>63</sup> The painting is among the best-known and loved paintings in Finland: in 2006 "The Wounded Angel" was selected as the 'Painting of Our Land' (*Maamme Taulu*) in a poll organised by the Finnish National

Art Gallery Ateneum.<sup>64</sup> The overt national significance of the selection was emphasised by the Finnish name of the poll, "Maamme Taulu", which is reminiscent of the Finnish national anthem, "Maamme Laulu" (Song of Our Land), and the fact that the results were released shortly before Finnish Independence Day on the sixth of December.

Symbolic rebirth is already implied in the figure of Lemminkäinen, but the arrival of the boys fulfils the promise of resurrection. They restore M from death, as their appearance introduces life into the frame. Instead of the dead Lemminkäinen, M is now visually connected to Simberg's angel: wounded indeed, but not mortally so. M's physical appearance reinforces the connection, as his

<sup>63</sup> Kaurismäki, *Mies vailla menneisyyttä. Elokvakäsikirjoitus*, 23.

<sup>64</sup> Marja-Terttu Kivirinta, "Haavoittunut enkeli voitti äänestyksen Ateneumin Maamme-aulusta " [online article] *Helsingin Sanomat*, (2006) available from <http://www.hs.fi/kulttuuri/artikkeli/Haavoittunut+enkeli+voitti+%C3%A4%C3%A4nestyksen+Ateneumin+Maamme-aulusta/1135223402699> [cited 27.11.2010].

bandages are an inversion of the angel's. While all of M's face apart from his eyes is covered, the angel's eyes are blindfolded with a bandage.<sup>65</sup> The boys' life-affirming role as carriers of the water and symbolic angel is accentuated when they pronounce M alive. The sequence of death and rebirth in the images suggests the possibility of recovery after crisis. The triumph of life over death in the appearance of the two boys in particular tints M's nationally coded self-discovery as cautiously optimistic.

The references to the two paintings in these early scenes are not straightforwardly nostalgic. Although they may cause a certain pleasure in the viewer who recognises them, the images serve mainly to foreground the film's engagement with national themes. This national engagement is self-reflective and certainly has an ironic quality, such as the tramp replacing the mourning mother and the boys being seen from M's perspective in an exaggeratedly 'national' blue wash. In these early scenes, then, the film establishes itself as part of a tradition of national narration, while also indicating a desire to maintain ironic distance from the process.

#### Traces of postwar recovery

Kaurismäki's films feature characters trying to subsist "in the pressure between modernity and postmodernity,"<sup>66</sup> negotiating contemporary economic trauma and urban alienation in nostalgic settings. The threat of unemployment and urban marginalisation in the films is symptomatic of economic changes in Finland since the 1980s, while the settings recall a phase of large-scale migration from the countryside to the cities following the Second World War. By the end of the Second World War, Finland had lost the Continuation War fought against the Soviet Union, and large areas of land along the border had to be ceded to the victor. The most significant loss from the national imaginary point of view was that of the Karelia region, considered the traditional homeland of the Finns and the source of the national epic *Kalevala*. From a more practical point of view, the loss of Karelia also had great economic implications. Aside from the loss of agricultural land, the influx of refugees stretched the resources of the newly diminished Finland.<sup>67</sup> The welfare state was formed as a way to ameliorate living conditions under such societal strain and, over the

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<sup>65</sup> For more on the painting's function in coding M as a "postmodernist angel" see Brian McHale, "What Was Postmodernism? or, The Last of the Angels," in *The Shock of the Other: Situating Alterities*, eds Silke Horstkotte and Esther Peeren (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2007), 51-54.

<sup>66</sup> Liisa Aalto, *Akilandian utopia - Aki Kaurismäen 'yhteiskunta' ja tyyli kolmen työläisrepresentaation kautta tarkasteltuna* (Masters dissertation [unpublished manuscript], University of Turku, 2004), 13.

<sup>67</sup> Fred Singleton, "The Myth of 'Finlandisation'," *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-)* 57, no. 2 (1981): 271.

following couple of decades, “the most radical structural change in the whole of Europe” took place, with the population shifting from predominantly agrarian to urban.<sup>68</sup>

Due to the losses incurred at the end of the war, Finland had to negotiate a new national identity that took into account both the psychological and the economic impact of its diminished territory. The variety of products required for the payment of war reparations exceeded Finland’s immediate postwar production capacity, and so Finland’s industrial sector was forced to develop rapidly.<sup>69</sup> As a result, by the time the final war reparations had been paid the Finnish economy had shifted in focus from primary production to secondary industry. Large-scale urbanisation followed in the 1960s, again accompanied by shifts in Finnish national identity.<sup>70</sup> The first generation urban population moved from the traditional closely-knit rural communities with distinct regional identities to the cities and industrial centres, creating a sense of displacement. Susan Sundback sees this displacement as being partly due to the clearer separation between society and religion in the city compared to rural areas.<sup>71</sup> Antti Karisto, Pentti Takala and Ilkka Haapola, however, believe that the city-bound migrations threatened people’s national identity in part due to the abrupt change in scenery. They argue that for a long time “[a lacking sense of] historicity had been replaced by natural landscapes” as a source of national identification in Finland, a connection that was necessarily lost during the structural change.<sup>72</sup> When people became increasingly detached from natural landscapes, man-made landscapes such as the “ubiquitous and pleasantly anonymous” bars replaced them as sources of identification.<sup>73</sup> As similar bars were established throughout the country, regional differences were diluted and there was a level of uniformity across bars in Finland.<sup>74</sup> Although the bars were more common in smaller semi-rural communities than in the cities, they were a typical location for socialising throughout the country for the first postwar generation.

In *The Man Without A Past* such archetypal 1960s establishments serve as settings for everyday delights for the main characters, and they also form a middle ground between the cold

<sup>68</sup> von Bagh, *Drifting shadows*, 74.

<sup>69</sup> Karisto, Takala, and Haapola, *Matkalla nykyaikaan*, 57.

<sup>70</sup> Karisto, Takala, and Haapola, *Matkalla nykyaikaan*, 67.

<sup>71</sup> Susan Sundback, "Tradition and change in the Nordic countries," in *The post-war generation and establishment religion. Cross-cultural perspectives*, eds Wade Clark Roof, Jackson W. Carroll and David A. Roozen (Boulder, San Fransisco and Oxford: Westview Press, 1995), 110.

<sup>72</sup> Karisto, Takala, and Haapola, *Matkalla nykyaikaan*, 144.

<sup>73</sup> Soila, "The face of a sad rat," 196.

<sup>74</sup> Karisto, Takala, and Haapola, *Matkalla nykyaikaan*, 67.

bureaucratic structures of society and the compassionate homeless community. The first bar scene takes place early in the film, after M and Nieminen have first visited the Salvation Army soup kitchen. While the two men share a pint, Nieminen tests M's vocabulary, sense of humour and mathematical skills, believing the answers might trigger some memory of his past life. Still, Nieminen shares his wife's unconcerned attitude to M's memory loss, explaining that in the end "life moves forwards, not backwards". Nieminen's comment emphasises the necessity to build one's own identity rather than rely on the past to provide one.

M enters a bar for the second time after he has been turned away from the employment agency. The bar is called "Alman saluuna", or "Alma's saloon". As the scene unfolds, the soundtrack plays "Älä unhoita minua" (Do not forget me), sung by the legendary postwar era singer-actor-Olympian Tapio Rautavaara. The lyrics of the song alone draw attention to the importance of memory, the experience of loss and a desire for human contact, while Rautavaara's voice imbues M with the melancholy masculinity associated with the performer.<sup>75</sup>



Figure 21. M receives food from Alma

M asks the woman at the counter, presumably Alma, for a cup of hot water. He sits down at a small table, produces a used teabag from a match box and proceeds to make himself a cup of tea. Alma watches M prepare his drink, clearly sympathetic to his poverty, and points him out to the

cook. Soon she comes to M's table and brings him a plate of food, stating that he looks hungry (Figure 21). M objects, saying he cannot pay for a meal. Alma replies that the meal consists of lunch-time leftovers that will go to waste if he does not eat them, and offers him a glass of milk.

<sup>75</sup> Some aspects of M's experiences as an injured man confronted with uncaring authorities even correlate with the details of Rautavaara's tragic death: the singer reportedly slipped and hit his head while out swimming, but the local hospital turned away the bandaged man, assuming him to be drunk and exaggerating his injuries. Rautavaara died of a brain haemorrhage the following day. Tommi Palmen, "Just a Vagabond" [website] [tapiorautavaara.net](http://www.tapiorautavaara.net), available from [http://www.tapiorautavaara.net/tapio\\_rautavaara\\_eng.pdf](http://www.tapiorautavaara.net/tapio_rautavaara_eng.pdf) [cited 16.12.2010].

Her kindness counterbalances the cold and disrespectful treatment he received at the employment agency, and the donation of food connects her kind gesture with the necessary charitable work of the Salvation Army in the film. The contrast suggests that although bureaucracies are unable or even unwilling to help the truly needy, understanding still exists in the community and is not limited to the dispossessed inhabitants of the margins. It is possible to see Alma's comment about the food otherwise going to waste if M does not eat it as a reference to the continuing impact of wartime-initiated rationing, which lasted during the war and into the fifties, and which ensconced in the population the idea of food as a scarce and valuable resource. By referring to the prospect of 'waste' Alma emphasises the fact that she is not giving M charity or pitying him. Instead, she codes the offering of food as an opportunity for M to help her avoid the disrespectful act of throwing food away.

Food is treated with reverence in Kaurismäkian cinema: Jarmo Valkola describes food in Kaurismäkian film as a "stabilizing factor between characters", something that allows them to stop and reflect on their lives.<sup>76</sup> Sharing and providing meals in *The Man Without A Past* is depicted as a profoundly social act, as an activity that provides opportunities for interaction, despite the fact that characters rarely exchange words while they eat: Finnish food culture has tended to discourage talking during meals, in particular among the working classes and between men.<sup>77</sup> As if to emphasise their alien quality, when mealtime conversations occur in the films they are quite literally absurd. For example, when M prepares a disastrous meal for Ilona (only the tinned peas are edible) the two talk quite casually about his recent trip to the Moon: "There weren't many people there; after all it was a Sunday".

In addition to the lingering traces of rationing and the prominence of bars, the post-Second World War rebuilding phase is also present in the film in the appearance of the Salvation Army. After the Second World War many Finns were forced to accept a lowered standard of living due to war reparations, rationing and rebuilding efforts. The extensive welfare system had not yet been created in Finland, and people could not necessarily rely on material help from friends or family, as they were most likely struggling in equal measure. As a result many were dependent on charitable

<sup>76</sup> Jarmo Valkola, "Minimalist Eating under the Shadow of a Kaurismäki Food Paradise," in *The Culture of Food. The Dialectic of Material Conditions, Art, and Leisure*, eds Matti Itkonen et al. (Jyväskylä: University of Jyväskylä, Department of Teacher Education, 2006), 239.

<sup>77</sup> Maarit Knuuttila, "Keittiönostalgiaa," in *Hei, muistatkos...? Pirjo Korhokankaalle omistettu 60-vuotisjuhlakirja 10.7.2007*, eds Maarit Knuuttila et al. (Helsinki and Vaasa: Ethnos, 2007), 150-151.



organisations, such as the Salvation Army. The important role played by the Salvation Army in the film elicits ideas of compassion and community in relation to real historical experiences. The appearance of the Salvation Army also evokes Finnish cinema from the same era. Due to the national significance of charity in the 1940s and 1950s, at the time many Finnish films featured the Salvation Army as an agent for social justice: Anu Koivunen gives as a specific example *Soot and Gold* (*Nokea ja kultaa*, Edvin Laine, 1945), in which a female Salvation Army officer is also instrumental in rehabilitating a man into society.<sup>78</sup>



Figure 22. Annikki Tähti sings “Do You Remember Monrépos?”

While the Salvation Army on its own is linked to Finland’s postwar trauma, in *The Man Without A Past* the connection is made even more explicit with what Christine Sprengler in a different context has referred to as “period casting”.<sup>79</sup> Sprengler’s examples involve evoking a

particular time period by casting actors who, due to previous performances in films depicting the same period, have become associated with it: ‘period casting’ is, in effect, a variant of Fiske’s ‘horizontal intertextuality’ and draws on the kinds of complex networks of meaning that build around actors’ screen and real-life personas, as discussed in Chapter Three. Sprengler gives as an example George Clooney, who “actively pursues film projects that are set in, or allude to the styles of, the postwar past [and who] has also made a concerted attempt to model his star persona on the leading men of the 1950s”.<sup>80</sup> In *The Man Without A Past*, however, period casting is more literal and involves using performers whose previous performances not only *allude* to a past time, but are *of* that past time. The clearest example is the casting of Annikki Tähti as the manager of the Salvation Army flea market, and the figure of authority in the organisation (Figure 22). Tähti

<sup>78</sup> Anu Koivunen, “Do you remember Monrépos? Melancholia, modernity and working-class masculinity in *The Man Without A Past*,” in *Northern constellations: new readings in Nordic cinema*, ed. C.Claire Thomson (Norwich: Norvik Press, 2006), 140.

<sup>79</sup> Sprengler, *Screening Nostalgia*, 80.

<sup>80</sup> Sprengler, *Screening Nostalgia*, 81.

was a popular singer in the 1950s, and she even sings her two best known songs in the film, “Little Heart” and “Do You Remember Monrépos?”. While the former tells of the depth of human emotions, the latter song is a mournful ballad referring to a park in Vyborg, located in the ceded Karelia region. The song describes the singer’s longing for the park in Vyborg, and by extrapolation for the lost Karelia region as a whole. The sight of Tähti as the manager of the Salvation Army singing her own nostalgic postwar hit bestows the closing scene of the film with a heightened sense of nostalgia, as the song’s lament for Vyborg and the “wondrous land” of youth combines with the sight of Tähti’s aged, weathered face and the sound of her weakened voice. There is a similar nostalgic effect in casting Anneli Sauli, a popular actor famous for her sensual roles in post-Second World War film, as the sympathetic Alma earlier on in the film.

Although the Salvation Army plays an important role in the film, and there are occasional references to God or the Bible, the organisation’s religious role is downplayed in the film. For example, the musical performances by the Salvation Army band reinforce the film’s social message, national themes and auteurial consistency. Even the group’s first performance at the soup kitchen, the hymn “I found a friend” by Herbert Booth, is reappropriated in the film to introduce characters and foreshadow future developments rather than to emphasise religious themes. The hymn begins to play non-diegetically while M and Nieminen leave the container village and the camera momentarily lingers on the Nieminens’ container home while the lyrics “I found a friend, oh joy!” from the following scene’s diegesis underscore the men’s new friendship. From the beginning the religious song is used to highlight a secular theme, and it continues to be used in this way throughout the scene. Later, after M and Nieminen have both received their soup, the two find a place to sit. They do not need to talk to each other: the choir singing “my friend does not care about appearances/ He does not see the way people do” emphasises their common understanding and unsentimental bond. The reference to a friend seeing past one’s appearance also contrasts with the reactions of passers-by when an assaulted M first stumbled into the central train station in Helsinki.

The choir continues to sing, the lines “He comforts me when the road is rough/ my Saviour is close by” coinciding with Irma ladling soup for the customers of the mobile kitchen. Although in the English translation the lyrics appear straightforward from a religious point of view, in Finnish the lyrics of the song diminish the religious relevance of the hymn. As the Finnish language has only one third person singular pronoun used for people – the non-gendered *hän* – the translation could

just as easily read “*she comforts me*”. Therefore the combination of the lyrics and the focus on the organisation’s social work introduce Irma’s, and the Salvation Army’s, function as providing secular and material comfort to the city’s fringe-dwellers. The head of the Salvation Army flea market and a younger officer are briefly featured giving away bread while the choir sings “I don’t feel misery or sorrow”, introducing a sentiment familiar from previous Kaurismäki films: though the characters may experience misfortune, they will not succumb to self-pity.



Figure 23. M and Irma’s eye contact coincides with the words “endless love”

After introducing the officers who tend to the soup kitchen, Kaurismäki focuses on the homeless men progressing in the queue while the choir repeats the line “He is faithful”. The song describes the men as good and honest people, who have not deserved their unfor-

fortunate situation. When it is M’s turn to receive soup from Irma, their eye contact coincides with the choir singing the words “endless love” (Figure 23). Although the hymn itself refers to a religious love, the phrase is quite explicitly used to foreshadow M and Irma’s relationship and the film’s eventual happy ending. In essence, already in the first musical performance the overt religious meaning of the hymn is destabilised through the song’s function in emphasising the internal cohesion of the Kaurismäkian oeuvre and in foreshadowing plot developments. Subsequent performances by the group further highlight the songs’ secular and social aspects, and culminate in the nationally nostalgic “Muistatko Mon Repos’n”.<sup>81</sup>

The emphasis of the final song on memories of a lost place also corresponds with the film’s focus on the loss of memory altogether. The fact that M returns to Irma and the shanty town to the accompaniment of a song so laden with national memory suggests that his search for identity finds its fulfilment in his relationship with Irma. Although *The Man Without A Past* differs from many

<sup>81</sup> See Sanna Peden, “Soup, soap and national reawakening – the ambiguous role of the Salvation Army in *The Man Without A Past*,” *WiderScreen*, no. 2 (2007).

other Kaurismäki films in that the protagonist does not escape Finland, M's conscious decision to return to Irma marks a new beginning nonetheless. He may not have his memory, but he does have a sense of self and the bureaucratic tools necessary to integrate into society: a name, a social security number and a date of birth. M's ability to now take part in society does, however, move his future experiences out of the realm of the container village. M and Irma cross the rail track together just before a freight train drives past, acting as a final curtain for the couple.

In one sense the appearance of the train recalls the beginning of the film, which itself involves a train journey. However, as Anu Koivunen argues, the earlier trains in the film carried passengers instead of cargo, linking them with internal migrations and urbanisation:

Since the early years of the twentieth century, the image of an arrival to Helsinki by train has condensed the affective and political complexities of the modernization narrative. On the one hand, it implies a lack of choice, the economic necessity of leaving one's home region, whether agrarian or industrial, in search of work. On the other hand, it suggests a new start, a possibility of social and cultural mobility.<sup>82</sup>

The freight train has a different significance altogether: it recalls the trains that carried war reparations to the Soviet Union in the 1940s and 1950s. The connection is emphasised with the final bars of "Do You Remember Mon Répos?" playing over the image. The final war reparations train crossed the border to the Soviet Union in September 1952, three years before the song was recorded, relieving Finland of its duty for further financial compensation.<sup>83</sup> The liberating potential of the border-crossing freight train is therefore tied to the same period of national reconciliation as the song. The image of the returning train, then, restores the song not as a lament for a lost past, but as an acceptance of having to move on, and having the ability to do so. By setting the protagonist's search for identity in the visual and musical framework of this earlier historical phase of national re-imagining, Kaurismäki draws parallels between the country's postwar nation-building and other (re)negotiations of national identity, such as the romantic nationalist period, the recession in the 1990s and Finland's membership of the EU. The protagonist M links the era of postwar national rebuilding and the original romantic nationalist ideas of the nation. As the man who represented Lemminkäinen and the wounded angel, M also acts as a representative for the war wounded and the displaced attempting to find a place in the geographically diminished Finland. The

<sup>82</sup> Koivunen, "Do you remember Monrépos?," 135.

<sup>83</sup> Karisto, Takala, and Haapola, *Matkalla nykyaikaan*, 57.

freight train also brings the film full circle, as its appearance coincides with M's return to the shipping container village that had become his home.

The nostalgia in *The Man Without A Past* wistfully recalls life during the postwar rebuilding and restructuring phase through its depiction of iconic locations such as the bars, popular entertainers Sauli and Tähti and the classic cinema of the time. However, as affectionately as the past is treated, the film remains nostalgic in a reflective sense, and recognises the past as a necessary construct for coming to terms with the present: when at the end of *The Man Without A Past* M tells Anttila he wishes to go 'home', he does not refer to a childhood home or even a specific location, but the social space he has been able to make his own.

#### The financial crisis continued

Although *The Man Without A Past* includes visual and musical references to many earlier, historical periods of national re-imagining, the action itself takes place in 1996 and in 2001. The two conflicting dates appear briefly on screen: M's payment summary from the Salvation Army is dated tenth of July 2001, while the tabloid announcing his nameless state is dated sixth of August 1996. The dates are not integral to the plot, the character development or the chronological order of the film, but are there to symbolically anchor M's journey into two specific points in time. The reference to 1996 connects the film to *Drifting Clouds*, the first instalment of the Finland trilogy, while the year 2001 – particularly as it is connected to payment – refers to the last year of circulation for the Finnish markka, which was replaced by the euro on the first of January in 2002.

The markka had been the official currency of Finland longer than the country had been independent and as such was an important part of the Finnish mythscape. The replacement of the markka with the Euro was therefore symbolic of the perceived challenge to national sovereignty posed by membership of the European Union. Now-defunct markka notes feature frequently in the film, for example when Kaisa asks Nieminen to do some shopping, when M is paid by the Salvation Army and when he in turn pays his rent to Anttila. Satu Kyösölä has identified an "archival" tendency in Kaurismäki's films, stating the director shows recently lost aspects of Finnish society in order to demonstrate their continuing "[saliency] in the identity of [the] people."<sup>84</sup> The 'archiving' of the markka on screen is certainly an example of this tendency, but it can also be read as a defiantly Eurosceptic move, a reflectively nostalgic way of making the old

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<sup>84</sup> Kyösola, "The archivist's nostalgia," 49.

currency into a marker of a time of national transition, equivalent in this sense to the bars and the soup kitchens.

The date of the tabloid newspaper situates M's search for identity in the same temporal framework as Ilona's and Lauri's search for employment in *Drifting Clouds*. The tabloid date strengthens the connection between employment and personal identification typical of Kaurismäki's characters by placing the question of M's identity in the same time period as the director's earlier examination of unemployment. The link also reinforces the connection between the two films as parts of the same trilogy: the reference to 1996 allows the film to 'skip over' *Juha* and reaffirms the thematic consistency of the Finland trilogy. There is a similar connection in M's name, Jaakko Antero Lujanen. In one of the early scenes the recently-assaulted M collapses in the men's toilets at the central train station. A bathroom attendant calls for help, saying "Lajunen. We have a dead man here [*Lajunen. Meillä on täällä kuollut mies*]." The bathroom attendant's name, then, is an inversion of M's real surname, Lujanen, and foreshadows the discovery of his true identity. As Lajunen was also the name of the chef in *Drifting Clouds* – and was played by the same actor who plays M, Markku Peltola – the name suggests a connection between the two films.

The connection to the 1990s recession and Kaurismäki's own previous films is emphasised in another scene set in a bar immediately after M has been released by the police. Just as M is about to have a drink, he notices the bank robber sitting next to him. The robber, a bankrupted builder, explains he took money from his own frozen account in order to pay the wages he owes to former workers. He describes his bankruptcy as a result of unscrupulous banks exploiting small business owners, finishing his tale with "as you know" (*tehän tiedätte*). The comment both implies that the builder's situation is a typical one, recalling the large-scale economic crisis of the 1990s, and also positions the audience as part of the same in-group as M and the builder.



Figure 24. M and the bank robber meet in Moskva

The scene was filmed in the Kaurismäki-owned Moskva-bar, which is furnished with items the director has collected over the years for his film sets. As a result the Moskva is constructed as a self-aware pastiche of 1960s bars as well as of earlier Kaurismäki films. The setting of the scene itself therefore

treats Kaurismäki's own films as another object of longing in *The Man Without A Past*, and foregrounds the construction of an intertextual auteurial-national mythscape. The scene also emphasises the internal consistency within Kaurismäki's films by including a tribute to a deceased former cast member. On the wall behind M and the bankrupted builder, played by Esko Nikkari, is a picture of Matti Pellonpää, with a similar moustache as the builder (Figure 24). The similarity of Pellonpää's and Nikkari's moustaches visually connects the two characters, and recalls in particular the first film of Kaurismäki's proletarian trilogy. In *Shadows in Paradise* the same two men play garbage truck drivers about to start their own business. Nikkari's character in *Shadows in Paradise* states that starting a company should not be too difficult. He announces that the government supports businesses, and "it's easy to get a loan", something that has since the recession been identified as one of the causes for the economic downturn in the 1990s. The tribute to Pellonpää, then, highlights the continuing causal relationship between the economic boom of the 1980s, the crisis of unemployment in the 1990s and Kaurismäki's more contemporary critique of European integration. The Pellonpää- and *Shadows in Paradise*-references also elevate the Kaurismäkian oeuvre as its own object of longing: the mourning for Pellonpää that so profoundly marked *Drifting Clouds* is here employed again in an instance of auteurial nostalgia.

During the financial crisis of the 1990s, as in the postwar period, the state's capacity to provide welfare assistance was stretched to its limits. Once again people had to turn to charities such as the Salvation Army or the "Surprise Market", where groceries past their expiration date were

handed out to those in need.<sup>85</sup> The Salvation Army was featured prominently in national and even international news due to the increasing length of its bread queues in Helsinki, and the media attention assisted in the organisation being seen as embodying compassion, succeeding where the welfare state had failed.<sup>86</sup> The appearance of the Salvation Army, then, ties together the postwar era rebuilding and the more recent experience of large-scale hardship.



Figure 25. An impromptu dance at the soup kitchen

In *The Man Without A Past* the Salvation Army provides M with food, clothes and employment, but the organisation's most significant role is in creating an opportunity for the inhabitants of the shanty town community to socialise. Early in M's recovery process, Niemi-

nen – having first showered using an ingenious hot water solution – emerges from his container home wearing a suit and proudly fixing a tie, pointing out that since it is a Friday, they should “go out for dinner.” Nieminen's attire and reference to “going out” show that the fringe dwelling community does not view attending the weekly Salvation Army soup kitchen simply as receiving charity, but as a *soirée* where one has the opportunity to dress well, relax and meet friends. When for the first time at such a *soirée* the band plays a Finnish tango rather than a hymn, many set their food aside and take advantage of the rare opportunity to dance (Figure 25). The Salvation Army's capacity to treat the poor and hungry with dignity certainly helps in building a sense of community among its customers. The importance of the social dimension of the Salvation Army also underscores the fact that while the unemployment crisis of the 1990s led to bread queues, in the twenty-first century the legacy of the recession continues in the alienation of the urban marginalised.

<sup>85</sup> Sirpa Mustonen, "Ruokapankkeja Suomessa yhä noin 150" [website] available from <http://elisa.net/ruokajaviini/uutiset/2546.html> [cited 11.2.2007]. See also Karisto, Takala, and Haapola, *Matkalla nykyaikaan*, 106.

<sup>86</sup> Koivunen, "Do you remember Monrépos?," 140.



By situating the action of the film simultaneously in 1996 and 2001 the film underscores the continuing effects of the mass unemployment of the 1990s. Kaurismäki's "history from below"<sup>87</sup> challenges the notion that once the economy had begun to recover and Finland had joined the European Union, unemployment and alienation ceased to be a problem. At the same time, staging this social critique against the nostalgic backdrop of the already completed post-World War II national rebuilding project indicates the possibility of a successful national resolution for the twenty-first century as well.

#### One of you? One of us: 'Coming Home' to Europe

When Finland joined the European Union, many people saw membership as compromising national sovereignty. However, European Union membership was also seen as "a historical opportunity to return 'home', to the West, from the dark Russian East towards which Finland had slid during the Cold War".<sup>88</sup> In essence, while opponents of Finland's European Union membership viewed the organisation as diminishing Finland's sovereignty and threatening its national identity, supporters of the membership bid saw it as a way to restore Finland to the West, and to correct an earlier "wrong" identification with the East.

M's search for identity involves the same elements as the challenges to Finnish national identity in the 1990s, since M also has to choose between a past identification and a new future. Specifically, M's choice between his life as Jaakko Antero Lujanen from Nurmes and as the self that was formed through his experiences in the city is symbolic of the shift in national identification caused by Finland's European Union membership. Nurmes is in Eastern Finland, so a return to Helsinki would indeed on a metaphoric level suggest a rejection of an East-leaning identity. However, in the film M's return is not simply an endorsement of the late twentieth century changes to national identity, as some aspects of his former self have resurfaced in M's amnesiac explorations. For example, his wife recalls him being a teetotaler who gambled away his precious collection of records. Although it is not clear what type of music Jaakko Antero Lujanen enjoyed, his lost record collection is symbolically reconstructed in M's jukebox. M is also able to prove himself as a welder and a successful small-scale hobby farmer: again, there is no indication that he would remember these abilities in any conscious way; instead, the implication is that his trade and rural origins are such an important part of him that they do not even need to be remembered in order to have an

<sup>87</sup> Toiviainen, "The Kaurismäki phenomenon," 40.

<sup>88</sup> Moisio, "Finlandisation Versus Westernisation," 87. See also Browning, "Coming Home or Moving Home?," 47-48.

influence on him. Indeed, Nieminen interprets M's body as that of a manual labourer, as his calloused hands give him away and he does not "appear to be the reading type". The resurfacing of these aspects of M's identity suggests that while his identity is built on his experiences in the shanty town in Helsinki, he cannot entirely renounce his past, either.



Figure 26. M enjoys a serve of sushi on the train

M's return to Helsinki is an optimistic one, and holds the promise of belonging and successful adaptation. On the train back to Helsinki M is served a plate of sushi and some sake, which he calmly consumes as a Japanese song plays in the background (Figure 26).

Although the food and music are foreign, they do not indicate a threat to M's Finnishness. Instead, M's aptitude at using chopsticks suggests he has been able to adapt to new challenges, and can take advantage of signs of globalisation for his own needs. The attendant's polite way of addressing M, even referring to him as "good sir" (*hyvä herra*), indicates that M has become an accepted and integrated part of society. Although he is returning to Helsinki to the life he created in his nameless state, the discovery of some aspects of his past has restored him as a respectable member of the public.

When he arrives in Helsinki M tries to call the Salvation Army store and the dormitory. When no one answers the phone, he heads towards his container home. On the way the same gang who attacked him earlier recognise him, and prepare to kill him. At the same time a group of homeless men appear from behind M and proceed to chase the attackers. The sudden display of solidarity in the community emphasises a sense of continuity between M's nameless state and his new, socially more acceptable identity: although he is a "good sir" to the train staff, the homeless community still considers him one of them. The bridging of different identifications is made more explicit with the arrival of the guard Anttila. Anttila tells M that the three have beaten up "many of us" (*useita meikäläisiä*). M seems surprised, asking "Many of you?" (*Teikäläisiä?*), assuming Anttila means security guards. Anttila corrects him by repeating "many of us" (*Meikäläisiä*), indicating he

considers M and himself to belong to the same group of people. As Anttila has earlier in the film asserted himself as an unsympathetic authority figure of the community, his acceptance of M and the other homeless men as equals signifies a shift in identity. M has been able to bring a new sense of unity into the marginal community by merging his official bureaucratic identity and his self-made shanty town persona. M and Anttila's negotiation of their shared in-group together with M's desire to go 'home' also suggest an engagement with the homecoming narrative built around Finland's EU membership.

The film's temporal compression and M's role in representing figures from different periods of Finnish national challenge epitomises Boym's point about nostalgia being an exploration of the relationship "between personal and collective memory."<sup>89</sup> The film also drew from a media environment where the nostalgic mode had been prevalent for some years, and contributed to an ongoing nostalgically-coded reimagining of the Finnish mythscape following Finland's EU membership and financial recovery. In the remainder of this chapter I consider the conflicted ways in which nostalgia is embedded in the Kaurismäkian auteur framework, and how this is reflected in the domestic response to the international successes of *The Man Without A Past*. In the context of the international reach of auteurial film, the reflective nostalgia of *The Man Without A Past* came to be seen as problematic due to its influence in perpetuating a very specific image of Finland abroad.

#### Moral choices and nostalgia in Kaurismäki's cinema

In a famous parody of nostalgic reminiscence, popularised by *Monty Python's Flying Circus* but performed first by Tim Brooke-Taylor, John Cleese, Graham Chapman and Marty Feldman for the *At Last the 1948 Show*, "The Four Yorkshiremen" relax in lounge suits, drink wine and compete by telling the most dreadful details of their childhoods.<sup>90</sup> Each man is desperate to make it clear he has been much worse off, much poorer and much more violently treated than the others. They take considerable pleasure in inventing increasingly elaborate miseries for themselves, while agreeing passionately that at least they had been happy: "...although we were poor! –*Because we were poor!*" The men idealise the horrors of these concocted childhoods: for them, it would be more deplorable to admit they had grown up in a house rather than a "hole in t' road" or "septic

<sup>89</sup> Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*, xvi.

<sup>90</sup> The original sketch is available online: "Original 4 Yorkshiremen Sketch" [website/video] *YouTube*, available from <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-eDaSvRO9xA> [cited 6.12.2010].

tank". The implied logic is that their rise through society has been due to their own hard work rather than existing class privilege, and that their original poverty carried certain moral qualities.

There are similar links between marginality and morality in the Kaurismäkian nostalgic worldview. A recurring thread in discussions about Kaurismäkian cinema is its supposed moral quality, that by depicting impoverished characters in the margins of society the films are socially critical, and that the nostalgic referents recall a more communitarian time unimpeded by global commerce. For example, Pasi Väliäho describes the shipping container village in *The Man Without A Past* as an "antithesis" to modern "moral amnesia", and claims that for foregrounding compassion and community spirit the film's nostalgia is an "ethical and political weapon."<sup>91</sup> While such comments clearly deviate from broader perceptions of nostalgia itself as socially and politically conservative, they represent one of the dominant narratives around Kaurismäkian cinema.

This focus on nostalgia as a form of social commentary is close to what Andrew Nestingen calls "the narrative of the 'foolish folk'" in critiques of Kaurismäkian cinema.<sup>92</sup> Nestingen refers to the idea that 'the people' are not able to properly represent themselves, and therefore need an artist, a member of 'the elite', to represent them: in essence the 'top-down' view of national identity formation discussed in Chapter Two. Nestingen sees many commentators on Kaurismäkian film as idealising Kaurismäki, and by implication themselves as his supporters, as someone able to speak on behalf of 'the people', to reveal the modern welfare state to be an anti-humanitarian dystopia, someone whose valorisation of past times is a moral antidote to contemporary social ills.<sup>93</sup>

Although the 'foolish folk'-narrative draws on the contradiction of a member of 'the elite' criticising 'the elite' through his depictions of a nostalgically presented working class, the narrative of Kaurismäki representing a morally superior lower class depends in part on the perception of him having once been in the same situation. Kaurismäki has stated that his father was a sales manager for a textile company, and so the family moved frequently around Finland and had a relatively comfortable middle-class life.<sup>94</sup> However, according to Kaurismäki his early adulthood

<sup>91</sup> Pasi Väliäho, "Siirtymävaiheen amnesia: Mies vailla menneisyyttä," in *Taju Kankaalle. Uutta Suomalaista Elokuva Paikantamassa*, eds Kimmo Ahonen et al. (Turku: Kirja-Aurora, 2003), 104.

<sup>92</sup> Nestingen, "Sormuksia ja kurioositeetteja," 52-53.

<sup>93</sup> Nestingen, "Sormuksia ja kurioositeetteja," 54-55.

<sup>94</sup> Anna-Liisa Hämäläinen, "Elokuvaohjaaja Aki Kaurismäki: Elämän perusarvoille pitää nauraa," *Seura*, 1.6.1984 1984, 52.

was characterised by a host of menial jobs, as well as periods of homelessness.<sup>95</sup> Kaurismäki has reportedly gone so far as to claim he had come “straight out of the gutter” to start his filmmaking career.<sup>96</sup> Such statements draw attention to the similarity between his own experiences and those of his protagonists.<sup>97</sup> It is unclear to what extent the claims are factual (although there is no counter-evidence to suggest they are not), but what is certain is that they are intended to contribute to perceptions of the films as being grounded in lived experience, and perhaps also to lend the director the working-class credibility denied him through his middle-class upbringing. A good example of the positioning of Kaurismäki as an artisanal filmmaker whose working-class sensibilities arise out of proletarian experience is the 1991 interview with Peter von Bagh published in *Filmihullu*, the title of which translates simply as ‘Portrait of a Workman’.<sup>98</sup>

There is a clear contradiction in the perception of Kaurismäki as a champion of the marginalised while he himself remains a “[darling] of the system”.<sup>99</sup> Indeed, the contrast between Kaurismäki’s criticisms of Finnish society and his privileged position within it has drawn condemnation over the years: in 1990 Eero Hyvönen pointed out that Kaurismäki was in receipt of a three-year bursary from “the state he so maligns”<sup>100</sup> and Esa Mäkinen states that for all his supposed antagonism towards the wealthy, Kaurismäki does have several profitable business interests in Finland and also owns a vineyard in Portugal: “it would be rather unusual if the equivalent of five million euros in film subsidies and two decades of continuous artist’s bursaries had left him empty-handed.”<sup>101</sup> The assessment is in some respects unfair, as the film funding to which Mäkinen refers was not granted to Kaurismäki as a personal salary, but as assistance to cover the costs of making and marketing his films. Still, it is clear that as much as some commentators might like to see Kaurismäki as nobly representing and arising out of the poor and marginalised ‘people’, there is a counter-trend that considers that same narrative to be either naïve or hypocritical.

<sup>95</sup> See for example Felperin, “Finnish Lines,” 23. Emmanuèle Frois, “Aki Kaurismäki, le coeur en partage,” *Le Figaro*, 6.11. 2002, 27.

<sup>96</sup> Lehtola, “Mä en ky ala,” *Iltalehti*, 13.1. 2006, n.p.

<sup>97</sup> See also Kyösola, *Shadows in Paradise de Aki Kaurismäki*, 13-14.

<sup>98</sup> Peter von Bagh, “Työmiehen muotokuva,” *Filmihullu* 5 (1991).

<sup>99</sup> Peter Schepelern, “The element of crime and punishment: Aki Kaurismäki, Lars von Trier and the traditions of Nordic cinema,” *Journal of Scandinavian Cinema* 1, no. 1 (2010): 89. In the original the term is in the plural, as Schepelern writes about Kaurismäki as well as Lars von Trier.

<sup>100</sup> Hyvönen, “Aki suuri,” 25.

<sup>101</sup> Esa Mäkinen, “Akateemikko Kaurismäki, surumielinen anarkisti,” *Helsingin Sanomat*, 23.5. 2008, n.p.

The importance of a modest background for such a socially critical artist is evident in the exchanges that have taken place around Aki and Mika Kaurismäki and the journalist Ilkka Kylävaara. In 1988 Kylävaara rather aggressively misrepresented some aspects of the Kaurismäkis' background in his column. For example, Kylävaara argued that both brothers had studied film abroad (in reality only Mika had), alleged that the brothers engaged in fraudulent accounting practices, and implied Aki Kaurismäki's critical success was due to a close relationship, even affair, with Helena Ylänen, the film reviewer for *Helsingin Sanomat*.<sup>102</sup> Following the publication of the column, Kylävaara and the Kaurismäkis happened to be in the same bar one evening, and the brothers challenged Kylävaara on some of the details in his column. The situation escalated, with Kylävaara hitting Mika Kaurismäki with a wine carafe, and eventually being charged with assault. At the time it was reported that the Kaurismäkis had particularly taken issue with Kylävaara misrepresenting their parents: Kylävaara had stated that their father had been not an employee but a millionaire owner of a textile company.<sup>103</sup> Giving the impression that the filmmakers' father was wealthier and more influential than he really was could be seen to have been detrimental to the brothers' image as spokespeople of the poor, although some of Kylävaara's other claims and his tone were certainly offensive enough even outside considerations of such class and identity politics.

More than twenty years later, in 2009, Kylävaara wrote another article, reasserting some of his original claims, including that the filmmakers' father Jorma Kaurismäki had been the managing director and owner of the textile company. This article elicited an impassioned response, not from either Kaurismäki, but from filmmaker and journalist Mikko Piela, the son of the man who *had* been the managing director of the company. Piela defended Jorma Kaurismäki against the claim, stating that "under no circumstances" had he been the managing director or the owner. Piela then went on to assert that his own father had been a "self-made man", who first worked in the warehouse and gradually rose through the ranks to his management role.<sup>104</sup> As with "The Four Yorkshiremen" the implication clearly is that without a solid working-class background or past experience of manual labour, wealth and high status are morally suspect.

<sup>102</sup> See for example Ilkka Kylävaara, "Aki Kaurismäki," *Kosken Kaupunkilehti*, 24.7. 1988, n.p.

<sup>103</sup> Manu Paajanen, "Sanasota johti tappeluun. Kulttuurillista käsikähmästä pahoinpitelysyyte," *Iltalehti*, 11.1. 1989, n.p.

<sup>104</sup> Mikko Piela, "Kylävaara sepittää" [online article] *Uusi Suomi*, (2009) available from <http://mikkopiela.puheenvuoro.uusisuomi.fi/42611-kylavaara-sepittaa> [cited 19.12.2010].

It is striking that for all the common denunciations of nostalgia more broadly speaking as a politically conservative ‘social disease’, in commentary on Kaurismäkiian film the dominant view is that Kaurismäki’s nostalgia is radical and leftist. However, there is also some doubt as to whether the aesthetisation of poverty, unemployment and homelessness might be counter-productive in its nostalgically-tinged social criticism. Following the success of *The Man Without A Past* at Cannes, Putte Wilhelmsson argued that instead of presenting any kind of realistic depiction of the lives of manual labourers and the unemployed, Kaurismäki provided a sanitised view of the world that would cause the least stress to the “café-philosophising of the intellectual set in Helsinki or Paris.” For Wilhelmsson films such as *Drifting Clouds* and *The Man Without A Past* relieve middle-class guilt over social injustices by promoting self-employment in the former and poverty as a moral virtue in the latter.<sup>105</sup> In a similar vein Pertti Avola dismisses “Aki Kaurismäki’s nostalgic images of Workers’ Finland” as ineffective in their social criticism.<sup>106</sup> Indeed, where for some the nostalgic referents in Kaurismäki’s films demonstrate a politically and socially active view of contemporary society, the fact that the films’ nostalgia hinges on a specifically Kaurismäkiian auteurial aesthetic can also render the injustices and social marginalisation on screen as fantastical as the protagonists’ lunar dinner conversations: not to be taken seriously or realistically, but as whimsical artistry.

Marginality and poverty clearly have their compensations in the Kaurismäkiian mythscape: the well-to-do characters are generally unlikeable whereas true compassion and solidarity exists among the fringe-dwellers. Andrew Nestingen also draws attention to what he calls the textual instances of “ethical nostalgia”, or the deus ex machina-moments where the films’ marginal protagonists are miraculously rescued by the intervention of a minor character, as with Mrs Sjöholm agreeing to fund the new restaurant in *Drifting Clouds*, or the celebrated human rights attorney Matti Wuori arriving to negotiate M’s release from police custody in *The Man Without A Past*.<sup>107</sup> Although Nestingen describes such scenes as almost Brechtian moments that encourage the audience to “imagine moral and ethical alternatives to the existing social order”,<sup>108</sup> the fact that the marginalised protagonists are unable to advance their own cause and are dependent on the assistance and proactivity of ‘the elites’ would seem to confirm Wilhelmsson’s and Avola’s critiques.

<sup>105</sup> Putte Wilhelmsson, "Aki Kaurismäki älymystön lemmikinä," *Turun Sanomien Extra-viikkoliite*, 1.6. 2002, n.p.

<sup>106</sup> Pertti Avola, "Työmiehen päiväkirjasta Kaurismäki-Suomeen," *Helsingin Sanomat*, 26.3. 2003. See also Olli Löytty, "Suomeksi kerrottu kansakunta," in *Suomi toisin sanoen*, eds Mikko Lehtonen, Olli Löytty and Petri Ruuska (Tampere: Vastapaino, 2004), 105.

<sup>107</sup> Nestingen, "Sormuksia ja kurioositeetteja," 61.

<sup>108</sup> Nestingen, "Sormuksia ja kurioositeetteja," 61.

It is also worth considering the extent to which *The Man Without A Past* had a socially critical effect, for example in raising the profile of homelessness in the media. The film did provoke debate over social marginalisation and homelessness in Finland, with a number of newspaper articles examining the issue following the film's release and making specific mention of the film.<sup>109</sup> It is also possible that the film generated long-term interest in the topic more broadly, although this is of course difficult to establish with any certainty. Homelessness had been a public issue in Finland for several years, with regular updates published on the estimated numbers of homeless people in the wake of the financial crisis, as well as interviews with support workers and humanising articles on specific homeless people, particularly around Christmas and during the colder part of the year.<sup>110</sup> In 2001 even the Prime Minister Paavo Lipponen referred to homelessness as a "national shame", proposing a "solidarity project" that would bring financial support to local councils and the national government to establish more housing and services for the homeless, particularly in and around Helsinki.<sup>111</sup> In effect, *The Man Without A Past* drew from a media culture where homelessness had been a regular, if seasonal, feature for many years. This is not to say that the film's sympathetic depiction of homelessness or the critique of the callousness of the authorities is insincere or redundant. However, Wilhelmsson's argument about the conservatism of Kaurismäkian cinema is correct insofar as the film would not have particularly challenged the worldview of its audience, homelessness having already been a subject of middle-class 'café philosophising' as well as genuine social action for some time.

#### Our latest export: cultural intimacy and *The Man Without A Past*

*The Man Without A Past* won numerous awards all over the world, most famously the Grand Prix at the Cannes International Film Festival in 2002, where Kati Outinen also won the Best Actress award and the dog Tähti won the unofficial "Palme Dog" award for Best Canine Performance. In Finland the film won in most categories at the national film awards in 2003.<sup>112</sup> Since its release *The*

<sup>109</sup> See for example Sanni Jokinen, "Kun katu on koti," *Areena*, 1.-15.3. 2002; "Tuhansia ihmisiä elää rapuissa ja kaverien nurkissa," *Helsingin Sanomat*, 3.6. 2002.

<sup>110</sup> See for example Riitta Rimmi, "Asunnottomien määrä kääntymässä taas kasvuun Suomessa. Ruotsissa asunnoton myös vanhempien luona asuva 18-vuotias. Euroopassa jopa yli viisi miljoonaa ihmistä vailla kotia," *Helsingin Sanomat*, 15.11. 1994; Riitta Rimmi, "Suurimpien kaupunkien asunnottomuus on kasvussa. Häätöjä puolet enemmän kuin kaksi vuotta sitten," *Helsingin Sanomat*, 18.10. 1995; "Tuula haaveilee pikku yksiöstä," *Helsingin Sanomat*, 13.10. 1999; "Sydänyön kirkko yksinäisille," *Helsingin Sanomat*, 29.12. 2000; "Koditon Helsingissä" [online article] *City*, (2001) available from <http://www.city.fi/artikkeli/Koditon+Helsingiss%E4/113/> [cited 20.12.2010].

<sup>111</sup> "Lipponen vetoaa pääkaupunkiseutuun asunnottomien puolesta," *Helsingin Sanomat*, 18.12. 2001, n.p.

<sup>112</sup> For details of more awards see "Mies vailla menneisyyttä. Muut tiedot" [website] *Elonet*, (2006) available from <http://www.elonet.fi/title/ekmdgc/muut> [cited 10.7.2010].



*Man Without A Past* has reached a cinematic audience of over 2 200 000 in Europe alone,<sup>113</sup> with subsequent television screenings around the world further increasing the film's reach. *The Man Without A Past* is, without question, an exceptionally well-known Finnish film.

Mari Pajala has shown that the domestic reporting of *The Man Without A Past's* international success was overwhelmingly framed in terms of its national significance: the film was seen as a collective property, its success as a promise of further foreign interest in Finland and its film industry.<sup>114</sup> Pajala also draws attention to the desire to interpret the Kaurismäkian stylised diegesis as realistic, suggesting that it is specifically the film's *national* significance – in terms of the reception of its international success and its badging as a part of the “Finland” trilogy – that elicits an expectation of realism.<sup>115</sup>

There has been a striking preoccupation with ambiguous notions of national ‘reality’ and ‘truth’ in much of the criticism of Kaurismäkian film. For example, while Kaisa Rastimo criticises *Ariel* for not being “true” to the conditions of Finnish workers,<sup>116</sup> Peter von Bagh sees the same film as being governed by a “total logic of reality.”<sup>117</sup> In a 1986 review of *Shadows in Paradise* Esa Illi refers to Ilona and Nikander as representatives of “the true majority,” arguing that only national self-deception could lead to the protagonists being seen as marginal rather than accurate reflections of Finnishness.<sup>118</sup> Conversely in 2002 Antti Selkokari laments that a Kaurismäkian preoccupation with the poor working class has prevented Finnish cinema from telling the “truth about Finnish society.”<sup>119</sup> In turn Markku Koski describes the Kaurismäkian diegesis as alternatively “realism with a personal tint”<sup>120</sup> or “reality filtered through cinema.”<sup>121</sup> Simopekka Virkkula of *Aamulehti* goes so far as to apply a semblance of anthropological enquiry to his assessment of Kaurismäkian realism. Virkkula invited an unemployed couple, who had only recently found a stable residence, to join him at the press screening of *The Man Without A Past* and give their “expert opinion” of the film.

<sup>113</sup> "Mies vailla menneisyyttä".

<sup>114</sup> Mari Pajala, "Suomalainen voittaa aina," *Lähikuva*, no. 3 (2003): 3-4.

<sup>115</sup> Pajala, "Suomalainen voittaa aina," 5.

<sup>116</sup> Kaisa Rastimo, "Kaurismäen veljekset eivät ole neroja," *Uusi Suomi*, 27.10. 1988, n.p.

<sup>117</sup> Peter von Bagh, *Suomalaisen elokuvan uusi kultainen kirja* (Helsinki: Otava, 2005), 350.

<sup>118</sup> Esa Illi, "Todellinen enemmistö ilmestyy peiliin," *Pohjolan Sanomat*, 8.12.1986, n.p.

<sup>119</sup> Antti Selkokari, "Tutkijankammiosta kajahtaa," *Aamulehti*, 5.7.2002, B23.

<sup>120</sup> Markku Koski, "Aki Kaurismäen nostalgian politiikka " [website] *Aki Kaurismäki Orimattilan kirjaston esittelyssä*, (2006) available from [http://www.orimattila.fi/kirjasto/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=104&Itemid=88](http://www.orimattila.fi/kirjasto/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=104&Itemid=88) [cited 11.8.2007].

<sup>121</sup> Markku Koski, "Romantiikkaa, nostalgiaa vai melankoliaa," *Filmihullu*, no. 2 (2002): 31.

The couple's verdict, unsurprisingly, was that the film gave an anachronistic, romanticised view of life on the streets, but that the film was no doubt "well-intentioned".<sup>122</sup> Wilhelmsson's and Avola's critiques of the Kaurismäkian world view – as 'conservative' or 'ineffective' in its social commentary – draw in part on the fact that the films do not follow norms of conventional realism. The debates over Kaurismäki's background and the degree to which his films might draw on personal experiences are also part of this wider issue of realism. The range of these points of view suggests not only that 'realism' is a very fluid concept, but that, regardless of its definition, for many people 'realistic' is what nationally coded cinema *should* be.

In the Finnish context this expectation of realism can also be read through what Jari Ehrnrooth refers to as Finland's "low context culture".<sup>123</sup> Ehrnrooth explains that in conversations between Finns, speakers tend to assume agreement and a shared similarity, and as a result generally do not engage in explanations of context and interpretation. The expectation of realism in films specifically coded as national, then, would draw on the assumption that what one Finn says to another does not need to be analysed or examined for allegorical meanings. That Kaurismäkian films clearly lack a straightforwardly realistic aesthetic, but are at the same time grounded in familiar representations of Finnish national identity, causes some anxiety when the films are exhibited abroad, particularly given that Kaurismäkian films do reach an exceptionally large foreign audience by Finnish standards and that his films are thus influential in shaping images of Finland.

There are many examples of people expressing this anxiety about the dominance of the Kaurismäkian view of Finland. In a dialogue with Mika Hannula advertiser Liisa Vähäkylä first establishes her credentials as a cinephile who followed Kaurismäki's work before his breakthrough with *Shadows in Paradise*, before going on to say that she would prefer other kinds of depictions of Finland to circulate as broadly to avoid foreigners getting all their information about Finland from Kaurismäkian films.<sup>124</sup> Janne Mäkelä refers to the frustrations of the Finnish band Poverty Stinks, who found German media were repeatedly drawn to comparing their positive pop sound with Kaurismäki's gloomier outlook: the group's lyricist Jarmo Laine mentions needing to "correct" journalists' preconceptions by telling them that "fiction is fiction, the truth is the truth, and you

<sup>122</sup> Simopekka Virkkula, "Helsinkiä ilman kotia," *Aamulehti*, 24.2. 2002, 19. On seeing the finished product the film's homeless extras, hired through notices at a real Salvation Army soup kitchen, gave a similar assessment. "Aki Kaurismäki palkkasi asunnottomia avustajiksi Pelastusarmeijan ruokalasta," *Helsingin Sanomat*, 3.6. 2002.

<sup>123</sup> Ehrnrooth, "Heijastuksia kansallisesta minästä," 39.

<sup>124</sup> Mika Hannula, *Suomi, suomalaisuus, olla suomalainen* (Helsinki: Like, 1997), 275.

shouldn't believe everything you see in the movies."<sup>125</sup> The proliferation of the Kaurismäkian image of Finland has also been considered detrimental to the Finnish film industry more broadly. The influential producer Markus Selin argues that as Finnish cinema has not produced a non-Kaurismäkian international success that could emphasise the diversity of Finnish cinema, foreign viewers tend to be disappointed by Finnish films that do not follow Kaurismäkian conventions.<sup>126</sup> Tuomas Kainulainen also claims that foreign viewers and critics may and do confuse the Kaurismäkian aesthetic with Finnish reality, citing as an example French film critic Max Tessier's Kaurismäki-influenced realisation that Finland is no welfare paradise after all. Kainulainen also appears to express some concern over the fact that foreign filmmakers such as Jim Jarmusch and Julio Medem treat "Kaurismäki-Finland as the *truth*" and in some way perpetuate this vision of the country in their own films.<sup>127</sup> In these comments the concern is that the image foreigners have of Finland is one-dimensional, drawn from a limited range of mutually reinforcing sources. However, rather than one-sidedness being seen as a problem in itself, what concerns most people is the content of the Kaurismäkian worldview: the downtrodden characters, the rundown environments and the archaic technology on display.

The anxieties expressed over the reach of the Kaurismäkian mythscape reflect what Michael Herzfeld refers to as "cultural intimacy," or "the sharing of known and recognizable traits that not only define insiderhood but are also felt to be disapproved [of] by powerful outsiders."<sup>128</sup> Herzfeld refers to the innate understanding that not all nationally significant things are positive, and argues that instead of viewing national identities as depending upon an unquestioning pride in the nation, it is important to acknowledge that national identities in fact incorporate a degree of shame and embarrassment. After all, to be included in the national narrative is to know of the counter narratives, to understand the evidence against the governing mythology. In referring to this 'intimacy' Herzfeld emphasises the similarity between national identity and familial relations: to be part of a family means to know its closeted skeletons. Andrew Shryock builds on Herzfeld's work in discussing his own role working for an Arab-American cultural centre in Detroit:

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<sup>125</sup> Janne Mäkelä, "Ääniä Pohjolasta. Suomalaisen populaarimusiikin menestys Euroopassa," *Lähikuva*, no. 3 (2006): 85.

<sup>126</sup> Selin interviewed in Sainio, *Suomalaisen elokuvan kansanvälistyminen*, 47-48. Later Petra Theman and Tero Kaukomaa suggest that the 2008 animation *The Flight Before Christmas (Niko – lentäjän poika*, Michael Hegner and Kari Juusonen) was on the cusp of providing such an alternative image of Finnish cinema (p.51). More recently another Christmas-themed film, *Rare Exports – A Christmas Tale* (Jalmari Helander, 2010), has also had considerable global success.

<sup>127</sup> Tuomas Kainulainen, "Akin kieli puhuttelee ranskalaisia," *Turun Sanomat*, 2.6. 2002, 29. Emphasis added.

<sup>128</sup> Herzfeld, *Cultural Intimacy*, 132. *Cultural Intimacy* was first published in 1997: my references are to the expanded and updated second edition.

I quickly learned that the quality of cultural representation is judged not by how effectively they enable non-Arabs to 'understand' what is peculiar or distinctive about Arabs in America. Instead, an effective representation is one that, in the simplest terms, 'our community can be proud of'.<sup>129</sup>

It is this desire for a cultural representation of which 'we' can be proud that colours much of the reaction to Kaurismäki's international successes. Herzfeld himself cites reactions to popular cinema as an example of cultural intimacy in action. He draws attention to the Greek reception of films such as *Zorba the Greek* (Mihalis Kakogiannis, 1964) and *Never on Sunday* (*Pote tin Kyriaki*, Jules Dassin, 1960): the films were denounced in Greece because their focus on "sexuality and revenge" was considered "demeaning to the Greek image abroad."<sup>130</sup> As films travel across borders with relative ease, they are fraught with issues of meanings lost and gained in translation. That Kaurismäki's films, and *The Man Without A Past* in particular, reach such large audiences globally causes concern among Finns, who are aware that most foreigners will only ever know very little of Finland, and would prefer this knowledge to be of Nokia and know-how, rather than an image of a stoic, silent man unable to communicate, whose feelings must instead be expressed by decidedly un-fashionable postwar ballads. Thomas Elsaesser refers to this kind of cinematic representation as "impersonation," or the "self-conscious, ironic or self-mocking display of clichés and prejudices" that is common in contemporary European cinema.<sup>131</sup> What is crucial to cultural intimacy is that certain attributes, practices and stereotypes are not seen as inaccurate as such, but rather as inappropriate for outsiders to know.

There are, in fact, two separate, albeit related, degrees of cultural intimacy exposed by *The Man Without A Past*. The first is the familiar Kaurismäkian depiction of the world in general: the old-fashioned aesthetic, the excessive silence and stylised dialogue, the hard working and humble protagonists. The second is the specific social commentary of *The Man Without A Past*, and the depiction of homelessness and poverty. Maria Décoster-Taivalkoski, collaborator and French translator of Kaurismäki, touches on the first of these by asserting that the clichés which Kaurismäki uses in his films are the same ones Finns tend to use of themselves: "silence,

<sup>129</sup> Andrew Shryock, "Other Conscious/Self Aware: First Thoughts on Cultural Intimacy and Mass Mediation," in *Off Stage/On Display. Intimacy and Ethnography in the Age of Public Culture*, ed. Andrew Shryock (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), 16.

<sup>130</sup> Herzfeld, *Cultural Intimacy*, 135.

<sup>131</sup> Elsaesser, *European cinema: face to face with Hollywood*, 61.

individualism, the need for solitude, timidity, laconicism and lack of self-confidence.”<sup>132</sup> Décoster-Taivalkoski’s perception tallies with Tarja Laine’s description of the Finnish “national self-image” as “exceptionally belittling” and dominated by “negative stereotypes supposedly attributed to them by other Europeans.”<sup>133</sup> Laine’s focus on the self-Othering practice of Finns connects to what Herzfeld argues has often been absent in analyses of cultural intimacy, and that is the awareness that cultural intimacy is “a product of a fundamentally colonial relationship with powerful Western ‘protectors’”.<sup>134</sup> Here the concept of cultural intimacy can be broadened to include the perceived reactions of any cultural hegemon. The frustration over the proliferation of the Kaurismäkian image of Finnishness, then, hinges on the knowledge or suspicion that the foreigner – the elephant of the joke – *already knows* the dreadful details of Finnishness, and that it would be better to give him something positive to think about instead.

The second degree of cultural intimacy, the depiction of homelessness and poverty as a contemporary problem in Finland, strikes a rawer nerve than the first, given that there is no doubt that homelessness is a symptom of much broader social and institutional failures. As regular as criticism of and commentary on these issues had been in the national media, and despite the positive associations with *The Man Without A Past*’s festival successes, the thought of the debate about Finnish social injustices spilling over into the international arena made many people profoundly uncomfortable. A striking example is a comment by Marjatta Vehkaoja, the head of a parliamentary committee on health and social services: “[w]hen this film starts to conquer the world, bread queues will become our latest export.”<sup>135</sup> In the same interview Vehkaoja goes on to suggest that instead of queuing up for food at soup kitchens, the poor should have food stamps mailed to them so they could then buy food in supermarkets without the stigma of receiving charity. Although framed in terms of concern for the people in need of food assistance, the suggestion is really more about making the problem less visible, and ignores the problems of organising postal deliveries to people who are without a stable address in the first place. An editorial in *Helsingin Sanomat* expressed similar concerns over the public evidence of poverty in Finland in 1995, when Finland had applied for and received EU food relief. The editorial argued that in a welfare state bread queues should never be allowed to form, but if they did all assistance

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<sup>132</sup> Marianne Decoster-Taivalkoski, "Une gestuelle empreinte de phénomènes culturels," *Contre Bande*, no. 5 (2000): 90.

<sup>133</sup> Laine, *Shame and Desire*, 68.

<sup>134</sup> Herzfeld, *Cultural Intimacy*, 67.

<sup>135</sup> "Kaurismäen elokuva vie Suomen ruokajonot taas maailmalle," *Kaleva*, 2.3. 2002, n.p.

should be organised internally, without relying on outside help.<sup>136</sup> As the editorial and Vehkaoja's later comments demonstrate, homelessness and poverty sit uncomfortably in Finland's post-Cold War Westernising narratives.

The worldwide success of *The Man Without A Past* received much attention in the Finnish media, with commentators framing the achievements in national terms and expecting them to translate into greater interest in Finnish film more broadly. However, the film's perpetuation of the Kaurismäkian mythscape on such a popular scale also drew criticism for being *too* influential in contrast to other narratives and images of the nation. The film's depiction of homelessness in particular gave many critics the sense that Kaurismäki was exposing social injustices that would be better discussed 'internally', without outside scrutiny. The interconnectedness of realism, morality and nostalgia in the responses to *The Man Without A Past* and its festival triumphs also demonstrates that Kaurismäkian film was acknowledged as engaging in an extraordinarily influential negotiation of national narratives and imagery. While Finnish media had shown interest in foreign perceptions of Kaurismäki's films for a long time, the success of *The Man Without A Past* brought to the fore the anxiety over the way in which Kaurismäki's films would be interpreted abroad: would the elephant understand, or would it understand too much?

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<sup>136</sup> "Suomen köyhäinapu," *Helsingin Sanomat*, 9.10. 1995, n.p.

## Chapter Five

### Sites of Memory, Sights of Progress: The Kaurismäkian City and *Lights in the Dusk*

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In February 2006 Kaurismäki's production company Sputnik Oy released the final instalment of the Finland trilogy, *Lights in the Dusk*. A much gloomier film than its predecessors, *Lights in the Dusk* centres on Koistinen, a friendless security guard whose ambition for bigger and better things causes him to overlook the quiet affections of a kiosk owner, Aila, and be set up as an accomplice in a burglary. Koistinen realises he has been taken advantage of, but resigns himself to a prison sentence instead of even trying to defend himself. Upon his release from prison Koistinen finally attempts revenge on the gangster responsible for his downfall, but ends up badly beaten: he survives only because the gangster insists on being "a businessman, not a murderer". In the final scene the badly damaged Koistinen takes Aila's hand and asserts, not entirely convincingly, that he will survive.

As *Lights in the Dusk* lacked the optimism that characterised *Drifting Clouds* and *The Man Without A Past*, it was perhaps unsurprising that the final instalment of the trilogy enjoyed less commercial success: it was seen by just over 38 000 viewers in Finland and fewer than 64 000 viewers in France, traditionally the main market for Kaurismäkian film: the film's largest audience, with over 80 000 viewers, was in Italy, when the film opened there in 2007.<sup>1</sup> The film won three Jussis (best film, cinematography and set design), but while it was nominated for a few awards at film festivals, it won no international prizes.

*Lights in the Dusk* is about place. The significance of place is more explicit in the film's original Finnish title, *Laitakaupungin valot*, 'The Lights of the Outskirts of the City', a sense more closely retained in the film's French and German titles: *Les lumières du faubourg* and *Lichter der Vorstadt*. In the Finnish publicity much was made of the fact that the film depicted distinctly un-Kaurismäkian territory: the glass and steel commercial complexes of Helsinki's suburb of Ruoholahti instead of the more traditionally working class areas of Kallio and Hakaniemi, which had frequently been the settings of Kaurismäki's earlier films.<sup>2</sup> Kaurismäki had also commented that "it took effort to find suitable backdrops for drama in Ruoholahti, but I've already filmed

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<sup>1</sup> "Laitakaupungin valot" [website/database] *Lumiere. Database on admissions of films released in Europe*, available from [http://lumiere.obs.coe.int/web/film\\_info/?id=25837](http://lumiere.obs.coe.int/web/film_info/?id=25837) [cited 30.12.2010].

<sup>2</sup> See for example Jussi Karjalainen, "Tarina teknobulevardien varjosta," *Helsingin Sanomat*, 29.12. 2008.

Helsinki inside-out”,<sup>3</sup> suggesting that the geographical scope of his past works in some respect forced him to film in Ruoholahti.

In this chapter I consider how best to approach the Kaurismäkian depiction of Helsinki. While I focus on the representation of space in *Lights in the Dusk* I also consider the depiction of space in Kaurismäkian cinema more broadly. I draw primarily on Alan Bonnett’s ideas of nostalgic psychogeography as well as Pietari Kääpä’s and Andrew Nestingen’s analyses of Kaurismäkian ‘heterotopias’ and ‘non-places’ respectively. I argue that instead of being straightforwardly critical, either of societal problems or of national identification, Kaurismäkian films express a nostalgic desire to fix the city in time. In addition, the repetition of familiar kinds of places and themes from earlier Kaurismäkian films sees their prominence increase on a national scale. This connection between repetition and marginality gives rise to considerations of how Kaurismäki’s cinematic representation of the capital informs both the director’s efforts in influencing the real, existing cityscape and how the Kaurismäkian image of the city is in turn appropriated in the official marketing of Helsinki for tourism purposes.

### The spatial turn

The past few decades have seen a “spatial turn” in academia, or the increasing prominence of theorising space in a range of disciplines. In their introduction to *The Spatial Turn* Barney Warf and Santa Arias outline the “fall and rise” of spatiality in modern thought, starting with the increasing focus on time at the expense of space. This development began at the time of the industrial revolution and was promoted further by teleological histories and theories “that paid little attention to space, human consciousness, or the contingency of social life.”<sup>4</sup> Warf and Arias locate the roots of the rise of spatiality in earnest in the 1960s, with the work of Henri Lefebvre and Michel Foucault, but also point out that

[t]he spatial turn is hardly the product of a few ivory tower intellectuals. Rather, this shift in social thought reflects much broader transformations in the economy, politics, and culture of the contemporary world.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Hannu Marttila, “Mihinkäs vuodet tästä välistä ovat menneet?” *Helsingin Sanomat*, 29.1. 2006, C1.

<sup>4</sup> Barney Warf and Santa Arias, “Introduction: the reinsertion of space into the social sciences and humanities,” in *The Spatial Turn*, eds Barney Warf and Santa Arias (London and New York: Routledge, 2009), 2-3.

<sup>5</sup> Warf and Arias, “Introduction,” 3-5.



As international travel has become faster and easier, and the development of communication technologies has made identities and lives built online a reality, space and its role in lived experience has become an increasingly contested and problematised concept. Accordingly, Edward Soja identifies a “fast-flowing diffusion of a spatial perspective” in a range of disciplines from the mid-1990s onwards, initially in the proliferation of spatial metaphors (such as mapping, territory, space and so on) and also as a deepening of a specifically spatial inquiry.<sup>6</sup> The point of the spatial turn is not to focus on space at the expense of time, but to understand them as mutually constitutive.

An understanding of spatiality has also been influential in the recent memory and nostalgia booms: in a contribution to *Remapping Memory* Jonathan Boyarin draws attention to the tendency to “speak of the past in territorial and national metaphors”, citing as examples Pierre Nora’s “*lieux de mémoire*” and David Lowenthal’s *The Past is a Foreign Country*.<sup>7</sup> *Remapping Memory* is of course itself indicative of the same trend. The coupling of space and memory is not new, in that time and memory have often been explained through spatial metaphors, such as in Augustine’s “provinces” of expectation, present, and memory.<sup>8</sup> The marriage of the spatial turn and the memory boom, however, has produced a number of works that revisit this interconnectedness of place and memory in the specific context of what might more generally be called globalisation, or what David Harvey refers to as the “compression of our spatial and temporal worlds”<sup>9</sup> and Marc Augé calls “supermodernity”: an era of history accelerated to the point of constant memorialisation, the overwhelming presence of images and sounds of faraway places in daily media and the increasing individualisation of society.<sup>10</sup> Such research tends to involve an understanding of the ‘doubling’ of spatial memory, or the possibility of a site expressing a hegemonic social power “through architectural order, monuments and symbols, commemorative sites, street names, civic spaces, and historic conservation” whilst also being marked with banal uses, countercultural practices and “memories from below”.<sup>11</sup> This kind of

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<sup>6</sup> Edward W. Soja, “Taking space personally,” in *The Spatial Turn*, eds Barney Warf and Santa Arias (London and New York: Routledge, 2009), 23, 25.

<sup>7</sup> Jonathan Boyarin, “Space, Time, and the Politics of Memory,” in *Remapping Memory. The Politics of TimeSpace*, ed. Jonathan Boyarin (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), 19.

<sup>8</sup> St Augustine cited in Paul Copley, *Narrative* (London and New York: Routledge, 2001), 18.

<sup>9</sup> David Harvey cited in Boyarin, “Space, Time, and the Politics of Memory,” 13.

<sup>10</sup> Marc Augé, *Non-places. Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity*, trans. John Howe (London and New York: Verso, 1995), 28-41.

<sup>11</sup> Michael Hebbert, “The street as locus of collective memory,” *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 23 (2005): 592.

understanding is evident in particular in recent studies of commemoration and rebuilding work in devastated cities, such as New York, New Orleans, Hiroshima and Berlin.<sup>12</sup> A spatial perspective is also closely linked with an understanding of social and historical context – “*where* things happen is critical to knowing *how* and *why* they happen”<sup>13</sup> – and as such often involves considerations of national mythscapes. The ‘doubling’ of spatial memory applies in a particularly auterial way to the Kaurismäkian cityscape as well. On the one hand the films’ depiction of alley ways, courtyards and small bars harnesses a counter-cultural ‘memory from below’, while on the other hand the significance of the Kaurismäkian auterial brand bestows the cinematic city with a certain canonicity.

To think or write about film is already a spatial practice, and so in some respects it may even be tautologous to identify a ‘spatial turn’ in film writing. Nevertheless, the influence of cultural studies and human geography is clear in film studies, and the formulation of research questions certainly draws from this broader spatial turn, even if some of the key methodologies of film studies precede it. In addition, the 1970s saw the rise of interest in the relationship between architecture and film, which heightened awareness in film studies of the built environment captured, replicated or undermined on screen.<sup>14</sup>

As Mark Shiel points out, “[c]inema is a peculiarly spatial form of culture” and has a twofold relationship with space: there is

*space in films* – the space of the shot; the space of the narrative setting; the geographical relationship of various settings in sequence in a film; the mapping of a lived environment on film; and *films in space* – the shaping of lived urban spaces by cinema as a cultural practice; the spatial organisation of its industry at the levels of production, distribution, and exhibition; the role of cinema in globalization.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>12</sup> See for example Edward S. Casey, “Public Memory in Place and Time,” in *Framing Public Memory*, ed. Kendall R. Phillips (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2004). Christoph Linder, “Trash aesthetics. New York, globalization, and garbage,” in *Globalisation, Violence, and the Visual Culture of Cities*, ed. Christoph Linder (London and New York: Routledge, 2010); Ian Buchanan, “Space in the Age of Non-Place,” in *Deleuze and Space*, eds Ian Buchanan and Gregg Lambert (Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 2005); Lisa Yoneyama, “Taming the Memoryscape. Hiroshima’s Urban Renewal,” in *Remapping Memory. The Politics of TimeSpace*, ed. Jonathan Boyarin (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1994); Karen E. Till, *The New Berlin. Memory, Politics, Place*. (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2005); Simon Ward, “Globalization and the remembrance of violence. Visual culture, space, and time in Berlin,” in *Globalization, Violence and the Visual Culture of Cities*, ed. Christoph Linder (London and New York: Routledge, 2010).

<sup>13</sup> Warf and Arias, “Introduction,” 1. Emphasis in the original.

<sup>14</sup> Patrick Keiller, “The city of the future,” *City 7*, no. 3 (2003): 382.

<sup>15</sup> Shiel, “Cinema and the City in History and Theory,” 5-6. Emphasis in the original.

My purpose in this chapter is to explore both ‘space in films’ and ‘films in space’. I begin with a focus on ‘space in films’ through an analysis of the representation of cities in cinema and in particular Helsinki in Kaurismäki’s work, with specific reference to *Lights in the Dusk*. To explore ‘films in space’ I then examine the extratextual uses of Kaurismäkian space, including the creation of Kaurismäkian enclaves in the real world, Kaurismäki’s public statements regarding urban development and the Kaurismäkian marketing of Helsinki for tourism purposes.

### Space in films: practical consideration

In analysing ‘space in films’ it is important to be reminded of the logistics of filmmaking and how these may impact on the representation of space on screen. John R. Gold and Stephen V. Ward argue that, as filmmakers in Berlin and Hollywood in the 1920s were “[f]ascinated and repelled by the city in equal measure”, cinematic cities came to be depicted as “enclosed, overcrowded, noisy and tense”, often being juxtaposed “with romanticized images of a bucolic countryside”.<sup>16</sup> The creation of this “sinister and hostile” view of the city was also in part due to the technological specifications of film equipment at the time: Gold and Ward point out that due to technical advances in early cinema, in particular the introduction of sound, “film-makers rarely left the confines of the sound-stages or exterior sets constructed within the grounds of the feature studios.”<sup>17</sup> While the dark city of early cinema drew from popular anxieties about modernisation and urban development, it was also caused by the particular technological restrictions of filming equipment of the era. Similarly, while the emergence of neorealism in the 1940s is often identified as spurring on the use of authentic locations in filmmaking,<sup>18</sup> along with the material damage done to some studios during the war, and the association of meticulously-arranged studio productions with fascist ideologies,<sup>19</sup> the move out of the studio was not possible until film and sound equipment developed to the stage that it could be more easily transported and adapted to an outdoor environment.

Despite the influence of neorealism in the rise of on-location shooting, the use of real locations as settings for cinematic action does not automatically imply that the film itself would be ‘realistic’ in its depiction of place: Henry Bacon points out that the creation of cinematic space tends to involve “considerable dramatic license” with regards to the actual, existing city, and that “[t]he audience

<sup>16</sup> John R. Gold and Stephen V. Ward, "Of Plans and Planners. Documentary film and the challenge of the urban future, 1935-52," in *The Cinematic City*, ed. David B. Clarke (London and New York: Routledge, 1997), 63.

<sup>17</sup> Gold and Ward, "Of Plans and Planners," 63-64.

<sup>18</sup> Gold and Ward, "Of Plans and Planners," 64.

<sup>19</sup> Bergfelder, Harris, and Street, *Film Architecture and the Transnational Imagination*, 12.

[...] is expected to ignore these discrepancies rather than assume that the characters inhabit anything else than the real city."<sup>20</sup> In some cases the city may stand in for another city altogether. Among the best-known of such disguised cities is undoubtedly Helsinki being used as St Petersburg or Moscow in Cold War-era films. The director Ere Kokkonen also recalls using different parts of Helsinki to depict London, Tenerife, Stockholm, Paris and Rome in his films: in these cases the issue was not geopolitical necessity but restrictions of time and budget.<sup>21</sup> The coherence of the film's internal spatial structure is more important than the real-life replicability of the film's geography. Similarly, while the creative combination of real-life locales into otherwise impossible cinematic combinations may in some cases be due to a desire to draw attention to the way space is depicted, more often than not cinematic cities are assembled according to what is practical and not too expensive.<sup>22</sup>

Due to the 'dramatic licence' which is necessary for depicting a city on screen, Charlotte Brunson cautions against analysing the real-life locations of a film. Brunson argues that retrospective "location sleuthing", or finding out the shooting locations of cinematic places which were not diegetically identified in the film, misrepresents the role and significance of the real place in relation to the film. She gives as an example *Blow-Up* (Michelangelo Antonioni, 1966), which features an anonymous park that has since been identified as Maryon Park, "and now writing about the film frequently mentions this in a way which distorts the role of the park within the film. It was its unfamiliarity that was significant."<sup>23</sup> Brunson argues that while some locations "must be recognized to serve their part in narrative fiction" – such as classic scene-setting shots of the Eiffel Tower or the Statue of Liberty – the recognition of other places "disrupts the imagined world of the film".<sup>24</sup> She goes on to say that for the most part "[t]he point of cinematic geography is that it is made up."<sup>25</sup> Brunson paraphrases a similar sentiment by the filmmaker Thom Andersen: "there is something wrong with the film if you are thinking about where it is shot."<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Bacon, "Helsinki," 30.

<sup>21</sup> Ere Kokkonen, "Lavastus Carl Ludvig Engel," in *Kinokaupunki - Helsinki elokuvatähtenä. Kuvatekstit*, eds Outi Heiskanen and Minna Santakari (Helsinki: City of Helsinki, 2000), 36.

<sup>22</sup> Sirpa Tani, "Helsingin monet kuvat," *Filmihullu*, no. 1 (1993): 30.

<sup>23</sup> Charlotte Brunson, *London in Cinema. The Cinematic City Since 1945* (London: British Film Institute, 2007), 10.

<sup>24</sup> Brunson, *London in Cinema*, 11.

<sup>25</sup> Brunson, *London in Cinema*, 1.

<sup>26</sup> Brunson, *London in Cinema*, 8.

In what follows I bear in mind Brunsdon's concerns and accordingly begin with a focus on "where films are set, rather than where they are shot."<sup>27</sup> However, I feel it is necessary to consider some of the real-life anchoring points of Kaurismäkian space and the process by which Kaurismäkian Helsinki is brought into existence as a means to further understand the complexities of the Kaurismäkian auteur narrative and to give context for my discussion of Kaurismäkian 'films in space', or how the Kaurismäkian cinematic world comes to influence the city itself.

### The cinematic city: an archive

Cinema and the city are both characterised by a dichotomy of transience and permanence, albeit in different ways. A filmic image is, at least in theory, eternal, while what is depicted passes away. What remains is an image of a past trapped in the present: *Workers Leaving the Lumière Factory in Lyon* (*La Sortie des usines Lumière à Lyon*, Louis Lumière, 1895) is only a click away on the internet, more than a century after the workers were first captured on film and long after every last person shown has passed away. In contrast real cities are in a continual process of shedding their skins, changing layout and outlook, home to movement and change, palimpsests. Where a film image resurrects the past for the present, the cityscape layers the present over traces of the past. Due to their complex relationships with the past and the present, both the city and cinema are often associated with anxieties of belonging, memory and loss. Stephen Barber discusses this connection between cinematic and urban presence with reference to Louis Le Prince's 1888 films of urban activity, and of his mother-in-law dancing, only days before her death:

In every film image, the capturing of the body intimates a simultaneous loss of corporeal existence; the immediacy of the image insistently counters sensations of presence with loss. The space of the city itself imbues the film image with an opposed dimension: the city adroitly negotiates and enforces its own mass within the image, applying intricate pressure around the human forms which that image holds. But, once the image has been fixed, its residue in urban space abruptly becomes vulnerable to erasure or alteration – the city is subject to the intrusive power of capricious elements beyond its own domain, in the form of the great upheavals that incessantly amend cities' faces. The innumerable disparities and enigmas that comprise the gap between the contemporary city and its filmed surfaces form the vital core in every human obsession with filmic urban space.<sup>28</sup>

In essence, on film the impressive urban space is robbed of substance and deprived of its potential for transformation and growth, its image fixed in time. Annette Kuhn describes this contradictory,

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<sup>27</sup> Brunsdon, *London in Cinema*, 6.

<sup>28</sup> Stephen Barber, *Projected Cities. Cinema and Urban Space* (London: Reaktion, 2002), 20.

eternal ephemerality of a cinematic world as being both “outside” and “embedded in” place and time.<sup>29</sup>

The possibility of fixing cities in time through cinematic means was quickly appropriated for an explicitly archival purpose: from 1909 onwards Albert Kahn sought to safeguard cities from disintegration and destruction by funding a large-scale project of filming world cities and their urban cultures.<sup>30</sup> Satu Kyösola refers to the similar archival nature of the Kaurismäkian cityscape, as filming locations have often been demolished or repurposed soon afterwards.<sup>31</sup> When Antti Lindqvist asked Kaurismäki in 1996 if he specifically sought out condemned locations, the director denied that was the case, but admitted that he wished to “document everything that is beautiful,” and said that everything beautiful is under threat in Finland. The director went on to say that earth-movers have always followed at the crew’s heels, but that this was due not to his decision to seek out such sites, but to a coordinated effort to “destroy Old Finland” in favour of becoming a “Euro-worthy High-Tech society”.<sup>32</sup> Already at the time of making *The Worthless* Aki Kaurismäki stated that the film’s settings had been chosen very carefully in order to comment on Finnish culture: “what is left of it and what has been done to it”.<sup>33</sup>

When *Lights in the Dusk* was released Kaurismäki drew attention to his films’ spatial awareness, pointing out that together they chart a quarter of a century of Helsinki’s changing cityscape.<sup>34</sup> Kaurismäki’s attitude towards the city, then, is concerned with the make-up of the city itself and is explicitly conservationist. Kaurismäki takes advantage of the ability of cinema to fix images in time, to make cities ephemeral and eternal at the same time. Kaurismäki’s archiving of the city in his filmmaking practice has even had unexpected uses beyond the original intention to capture a particular moment of the city’s history, with relevant film stock being appropriated for use by other filmmakers. For example, the 2000 film *Badding*, a biographical film about the musician Rauli Badding Somerjoki set in the 1980s and directed by Markku Pölönen, incorporated panoramic shots of Helsinki from Kaurismäki’s *Crime and Punishment* into the film. The Helsinki cityscape had changed so much since the 1980s that the filmmakers had to find suitable ‘archival’ material from

<sup>29</sup> Annette Kuhn, "Heterotopia, heterochronia: place and time in cinema memory," *Screen* 45, no. 2 (2004): 109.

<sup>30</sup> Barber, *Projected Cities. Cinema and Urban Space*, 30-31.

<sup>31</sup> Kyösola, "The archivist's nostalgia," 50.

<sup>32</sup> Lindqvist, "Katse, sen varaan minä rakennan," 14.

<sup>33</sup> Keskimäki, "Aki Kaurismäki - suomalainen sankari," n.p. See also Peter Cowie, *Finnish Cinema* (Helsinki: VAPK-Publishing, 1990), 172.

<sup>34</sup> Marttila, "'Mihinkäs vuodet tästä välistä ovat menneet?'," C1.

films of the appropriate era.<sup>35</sup> This dedication to recording the marginal and soon-to-be demolished or gentrified spaces of the city, then, has led to the Kaurismäkian depiction of Helsinki having a literal presence in the works of other contemporary Finnish filmmakers as well.

#### The Kaurismäkian city in the Finnish context

As Mikko Lehtonen notes, while Finnish “national landscapes” are not exclusively rural – the Senate Square in Helsinki in particular is instantly recognisable and an integral part of the national mythscape – Finnish national identity has traditionally been conceived of in predominantly rural and agrarian terms for a very long time.<sup>36</sup> The prioritisation of the countryside has accordingly been a defining feature of Finnish cinema.<sup>37</sup> At the same time, however, the valorisation of the countryside over the city is not a uniquely Finnish attribute, as Gold and Ward’s description of early cinematic cities in Hollywood and Berlin demonstrate. As ever in cinema, national themes and concerns marry with international narrative and stylistic conventions. Similarly it would be incorrect to claim that the city had *exclusively* been depicted as corrupt and unpleasant in Finnish cinema, despite the general tendency to view the city as dark and dangerous. For example, Peter von Bagh states that while it can be debated whether Finnish cinema ever really felt at home in the city, based on the films of one of Finland’s main production companies of the middle of the twentieth century, Suomi-Filmi, the city could also be a fun, cosmopolitan place, with its elegant apartments and sassy, stylish women.<sup>38</sup> Generally speaking, however, the valorisation of the countryside and condemnation of the city intensified in Finnish cinema following the Second World War as a response to the rapid urbanisation process.<sup>39</sup> As this urbanisation continued, the moralistic distinction between the city and the countryside began to break down. Gradually the countryside ceased to be seen as either idealised or traumatic, but became treated more as a neutral backdrop, or even a great equaliser where urban protagonists were “freed from the strictures of the superego and [could confront] the self laid bare”.<sup>40</sup>

The dichotomy of city versus countryside began to disintegrate in earnest in the 1980s with the arrival of a new generation of filmmakers, Kaurismäki among them. Specifically urban social

<sup>35</sup> Pauliina Susi, "Helsinki valkokankaalla," *Yhteishyvä*, no. 11 (2006): 9.

<sup>36</sup> Mikko Lehtonen, "Suomalaisuus luontona," in *Suomi toisin sanoen*, eds Mikko Lehtonen, Olli Löytty and Petri Ruuska (Tampere: Vastapaino, 2004), 56.

<sup>37</sup> Sirpa Tani, "Elokuvat öisen Helsingin kuvaajina," in *Helsingin yö*, eds Jaana Lähteenmaa and Laura Mäkelä (Helsinki: Helsingin kaupungin tietokeskus, 1995), 50-51.

<sup>38</sup> Peter von Bagh, *Suomalaisen elokuvan kultainen kirja* (Helsinki: Otava, 1992), 9.

<sup>39</sup> Toiviainen, *Levottomat sukupolvet*, 99.

<sup>40</sup> von Bagh, *Drifting shadows*, 71. See also Toiviainen, *Levottomat sukupolvet*, 112, 114.

problems began to make their way on to the screen, and unlike protagonists of earlier decades, the urban disenchanted of the films of the 1980s did not have a fondly-held rural homestead to escape to.<sup>41</sup> Stephen Barber identifies a similar process in the cinematic depictions of cities in European cinema more broadly: the increasing familiarity with cities and commuter suburbs “inspired a visual banality that jarred with all of those unique and elated entries into urban space from the city films of the late 1920s.”<sup>42</sup>

More recently the contrast between urban and rural space has begun to shift into a division into rural and urban *time*, as the countryside has increasingly become associated with the past. As Sakari Toiviainen points out, since the 1990s films that depict the countryside have more often than not been set in the past, and few films have modern rural characters as their protagonists.<sup>43</sup> Of the boom time nostalgia films set in the past, for example, most were also set in the countryside.

Sirpa Tani notes that as the Finnish film industry is concentrated in the capital city, most films that are set in “a city” are set in Helsinki.<sup>44</sup> Helsinki has in essence been used as an ‘Every City’, as a generic urban backdrop rather than a meaningful location. However, there are also certain privileged landmarks that are used when films are explicitly coded as being set in Helsinki. Tiia Teronen refers to the Lutheran Cathedral on Senate Square as one such location, as its cinematic appearances elicit knowledge of its history and serve to combine “private and public, local, national and international” modes of experiencing the city.<sup>45</sup> Similarly Minna Santakari refers to the central railway station in Helsinki as a classic ‘real’ location used to signify Helsinki on film.<sup>46</sup> In addition to such iconic landmarks of the city, films at the turn of the twenty-first century have increasingly depicted real-life locations which require a greater degree of local knowledge and experience to recognise: according to Teronen modern urban Finnish films express a “new kind of local identity”.<sup>47</sup> Teronen cites as an example *Lovers and Leavers (Kuutamolla, Aku Louhimies, 2002)*, whose protagonists demonstrate a strong sense of locality in their relationships and

<sup>41</sup> Sirpa Tani, "Suomalaisen maaseudun ja kaupungin kuvat. Elokuviin maantieteellistä tulkintaa," *Lähikuva*, no. 3 (1992): 55.

<sup>42</sup> Barber, *Projected Cities. Cinema and Urban Space*, 63.

<sup>43</sup> Toiviainen, *Levottomat sukupolvet*, 118.

<sup>44</sup> Tani, "Suomalaisen maaseudun ja kaupungin kuvat. Elokuviin maantieteellistä tulkintaa," 51.

<sup>45</sup> Tiia Teronen, *Loppuuko koti-Suomi Keravalle? Paikallisuus ilmiönä nykyajan kotimaisessa fiktioelokuvassa* (University of Helsinki, 2005), 31-32.

<sup>46</sup> Minna Santakari, "Elämää elokuvien asemilla ja satamissa," in *Lähdön ja saapumisen paikat*, ed. Anna-Maija Halme (Forssa: Suomen Kotiseutuliitto, 2006), 31.

<sup>47</sup> Tiia Teronen, "Elokuviin Suomi," *Hiidenkivi*, no. 2 (2006): 23-24.



everyday activities, and which depicts more intimate locations such as apartment building courtyards to signal a sense of belonging in the city.<sup>48</sup>

This change in the depiction of the city roughly corresponds to David Bass' distinction between films by 'insiders' and those by 'outsiders'. Bass writes specifically about films set in Rome and laments that "[o]utsiders' films of Rome violently warp the city's topography and present stereotypes of its culture and physical constitution," filmmakers and audience members all visiting the city as anonymous tourists, with no obligation to explore the city in greater depth. Instead, they are interested in "out-of-sequence litanies of landmarks" whose presence already signals a disjuncture between the city and the plot: there is no organic connection between the two.<sup>49</sup> In contrast, films by insiders "are made in the service of the existing city, [...] guided and squeezed by its intransigent topography and the character of its areas."<sup>50</sup> Although for Bass 'outsiders' are typically foreign filmmakers who lack the means or the interest to capture a more authentic city on film, the shift Teronen identifies exists within city films made by Finnish filmmakers: in effect, as more people become urban 'insiders' so, too, does the insider perspective begin to dominate in domestic cinema.

Although Kaurismäki's films have been urban from the start, the Finland trilogy has seen a shift in the protagonists' relationship with and sense of belonging in the city. Writing in 1992 and referring specifically to the Workers' Trilogy, Peter Cowie argued that Kaurismäki "regards the city as a cold, inhospitable prison, occupied by cheats and felons. To survive, to escape: these become the essential aims of any Kaurismäki character."<sup>51</sup> However, by the end of the films of the Finland trilogy, characters choose to stay in Helsinki and make a life for themselves in the capital rather than escaping overseas or being claimed by death or the police. The decision to stay in Finland to forge an identity (*The Man Without A Past*), reject unemployment and stake out a physical claim on the cityscape (*Drifting Clouds*) and refuse death (*Lights in the Dusk*) reflects a change in the conceptualisation of the city. In these three films, at least, the city is a location of *potential* belonging: the protagonists may not be taken seriously by the bureaucracies that are ostensibly

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<sup>48</sup> Teronen, "Elokuvien Suomi," 26.

<sup>49</sup> David Bass, "Insiders and Outsiders. Latent Urban Thinking in Movies of Modern Rome," in *Cinema & Architecture. Méliès, Mallet-Stevens, Multimedia*, eds François Penz and Maureen Thomas (London: British Film Institute, 1997), 85.

<sup>50</sup> Bass, "Insiders and Outsiders," 88.

<sup>51</sup> Peter Cowie, *Scandinavian cinema: a survey of the films and film-makers of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden* (London Tantivy Press, 1992), 75.

there to help them, and they do encounter adversity, but the cards are not stacked against them to the same degree as they were with Taisto, Iris and to a lesser extent Nikander. By removing escape from Finland as a default option the Finland films depart from the Kaurismäkian 'tradition' of the 1980s and early 1990s and focus more on the internal tensions in Finnish society.

#### On the outskirts of the panoptic city

Irmeli Hautamäki points out that the setting specified in the Finnish title of *Lights in the Dusk* – 'the Outskirts' – appears misleading. The film is set in Ruoholahti in south-western Helsinki, the city's centre of investment and high-tech business. Ruoholahti is not even very far from the city's historic empire-style centre. Hautamäki states that the title only makes sense when you realise that fifteen years earlier Ruoholahti *had* been on the outskirts of the city, home to industrial storage halls and a well-known youth centre, itself a repurposed homeless shelter, which had since been demolished.<sup>52</sup> The film, then, takes as one of its core themes the impact the built environment has on individuals and society as a whole, criticising the razing of local culture and what Pasi Mäenpää describes as the development of Helsinki into a "panoptic, semipublic" city at the turn of the twenty-first century.<sup>53</sup> Mäenpää argues that the transparency characteristic of the era's architecture has confused the boundaries of public and private, and elevated the act of seeing and being seen above debate and genuine civic engagement: Mäenpää also draws attention to the fact that as privately-owned shopping complexes take over the cityscape, their visual publicness in fact serves as a method of exclusion, restricting entrance to certain groups of people, making it almost impossible to exist in the city as anything but a consumer.<sup>54</sup> The contrast between the setting and the title of the film, then, elicits a historical perspective, and criticises the development of an area once known for its services to the marginalised into a high-tech enclave of commercialism devoid of empathy and community spirit.

*Lights in the Dusk* opens with shots of a city at night: glass and steel highrises by a body of water, a staircase, an escalator. The city is introduced first, before Koistinen emerges from the shadows of the staircase, heading down into a tunnel, then up the escalator. He passes by a locked-up shop and checks its security by shaking its gate, before moving on to more technologically advanced methods of security: he scans a set of barcodes on a safe and a list he carries with him. From these

<sup>52</sup> Irmeli Hautamäki, "Yksinäiset kaupungin yössä – Aki Kaurismäki: Laitakaupungin valot " *Mustekala*, no. 5 (2006), <http://www.mustekala.info/node/108> [cited 30.12.2010].

<sup>53</sup> Pasi Mäenpää, "Viihtymisen kaupunki," in *Urbs. Kirja Helsingin kaupunkikulttuurista*, ed. Stadiipiiri (Helsinki: Edita, 2000), 30.

<sup>54</sup> Mäenpää, "Viihtymisen kaupunki," 25, 30.

first shots, it is clear that *Lights in the Dusk* revolves around security, inclusion and exclusion, public and private space and surveillance.

In the introductory sequence Koistinen betrays his insecurities as he hides next to a large garbage bin while three drunken men walk past, talking animatedly in Russian: the guard clearly wants to avoid confrontation. The fact that the sound of an argument in Russian unnerves Koistinen may well be a jibe at lingering Finnish fears of the 'eastern neighbour' and Russian imperialism. That the trio's conversation is not aggressive, but simply a passionate assessment of the lives of classic Russian authors, underlines the fact that Koistinen's fear and anxiety are unwarranted. After hiding from the Russians, Koistinen returns to his work headquarters. A neon sign announces that he works for Western Alarm: the presence of the words on screen also provides a satirical label to Koistinen's unease over the Russian men. Koistinen's anxiety over Russians is, however, vindicated later in the film: when he is framed as an accomplice in a jewellery heist it is done in order to provide "open day for the Russians".

This play with Eastern and Western identities reflects the 'in-between' anxieties of Finnish national identity that have often been referred to in Kaurismäkian film. For example, the escape overseas to Estonia in *Calamari Union* and *Shadows in Paradise*, and the international romances in *Take Care of Your Scarf*, *Tatjana*, undermine the Finns' steadfast desire to be seen as Western by depicting the Soviet Union as a site of potential happy endings. Sergei Medvedev offers a spatial psychoanalytic reading of Finnish East-West relations that can be appropriated to consider the thematic shift in Kaurismäkian spaces following the end of the Cold War. For Medvedev Russia is Finland's "dark pre-historic and pre-conscious id," while the West is Finland's superego, "normative and institutional." Medvedev sees "boundless space" and the "realm of water and frost" as representing Russia, or the East. He argues that the primal associations with Russia in Finland reflect Russian self-perception as "Russia-the-endless-steppe" and the personification of Russia as Mother, in contrast with the West as Finland's Father.<sup>55</sup> While it is problematic to transport aspects of a theory of individual psychoanalysis to explain aspects of the national mythscape, Medvedev's analysis does provide an original reading of the imagery and meanings associated with the mythical, stereotypical cultural constructs of East and West. This psychoanalytic model of Finnish national identity is particularly interesting in that it treats Easternness as a primordial aspect of Finnish identity, while Westernness is an adopted and

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<sup>55</sup> Medvedev, *Russia as the Subconsciousness of Finland*, 8, 12-13.

institutional identification: “[t]he genesis of the nation can be traced back to the emergence of the territorial Finnish ego from the id of Russian space.”<sup>56</sup> The interpretation contradicts the recent emphasis on Finland as “naturally” European, prevented from being true to this Western identity during the Cold War by Soviet intervention.<sup>57</sup> In addition, the psychoanalytic model attributes mythic imagery such as harsh winters to the East, and not the North as might otherwise be expected.

In keeping with Medvedev’s model, as Kaurismäkian films have become increasingly concerned with the effects of Europeanisation on Finnish culture, the settings of the films have become more confined to the city, the Western normative superego-associated environment, whereas wide open spaces and landscapes are associated with Cold War anxieties and Easternness. For example, Kaurismäkian films that include road trips or are at least in part set in open landscapes (as opposed to cityscapes), such as *Ariel* and the Leningrad Cowboys films, all have as an important theme Finland’s Cold War position in-between blocks.<sup>58</sup> With the exception of *Juha* all other post-Cold War Kaurismäki films are determinedly urban. It is telling that when in *The Man Without A Past* M visits his ex-wife in a country town, he has no memory of having ever lived there: the place is so far buried in his past it retains little relevance to his present life. The reference to ‘Western Alarm’ and Koistinen’s anxiety over the three Russians in *Lights in the Dusk*, then, harks back to Cold-War era anxieties about identity and, like the contrast between the film’s Finnish title and its setting, draws attention to recent shifts in the Finnish mythscape.

Once downstairs in the change rooms of the Western Alarm headquarters Koistinen’s outsider status within his work environment is emphasised by his positioning on screen: he buttons up his shirt on the left of the screen, using small movements as if attempting not to take up any more space than absolutely necessary, facing away from his colleagues on the opposite side of the frame (Figure 27). His isolation is reminiscent of that of Henri in *I Hired A Contract Killer*, who is similarly placed apart from his colleagues in the workplace canteen, or Iris in *The Match Factory Girl*, who remains seated on her own at a nightclub as everyone else around her is asked to dance.

<sup>56</sup> Medvedev, *Russia as the Subconsciousness of Finland*, 13.

<sup>57</sup> See for example Browning, "Coming Home or Moving Home?."

<sup>58</sup> See for example Sanna Peden, "East, West and In-Between. Marginal Cold War Identities in *Shadows in Paradise* and *Ariel*," in *In Between Fear and Freedom. Cultural Representations of the Cold War*, ed. Kathleen Starck (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010)., Pietari Kääpä, "The Politics of National Identity in Aki Kaurismäki’s Leningrad Cowboys Trilogy," *WiderScreen*, no. 2 (2007).



Figure 27. Koistinen dresses

Just as Koistinen's working life is characterised by a certain liminality – working at dusk and dawn, policing exits and entrances, his isolation from his colleagues – so, too, is his home life. His low social status is reflected in his sparsely furnished apartment, a basement-level open-plan

space. Koistinen's underground cavern has only a small window at pavement level exposing him to daylight. The space is also not truly his own, but impeded upon by the needs of the building's other inhabitants: exposed water pipes run through the apartment, invading his private space. The impediments to a true sense of belonging and comfort in the structure of the apartment itself are reflected in the way Koistinen makes use of the space, as well as in the way he has to adapt his body to the requirements of the apartment rather than the apartment being set out for his purposes. For example, he completes his homework for a management course at the coffee table, crouching over his work awkwardly. Preparing for his date with Mirja, he polishes his shoes leaning on an opened kitchen drawer. When Aila helps the drunken Koistinen return home she lays him down on the sofa to sleep: the pillow and blanket positioned on the sofa in later scenes suggest Koistinen does not even have a proper bed. It is as if his stay in the space was only ever intended to be temporary, and that he is physically uncomfortable even in his home environment.

The gangster Lindholm notices Koistinen's loneliness and identifies in him the opportunity to break into a jewellery store on his security route. Lindholm sends Mirja to befriend Koistinen and to collect information on the security system. While Koistinen is initially suspicious of Mirja's motivations in starting a conversation with him, he soon brags about his new girlfriend to the ever-faithful Aila, whom he slights repeatedly in the film. Koistinen's suspicions about Mirja's role in the burglary are confirmed when he sees her plant some of the stolen jewellery in his apartment. Even as Koistinen is forced to acknowledge to himself that he has been taken advantage of, the fact of the abuse of trust is too humiliating for him to admit to anyone else: without even attempting to defend himself, he is sentenced to prison.

Tim Vermeulen draws attention to the way in which Mirja inhabits the city more flexibly than any of the other characters. She moves fluidly within the city, and as the “intermediary” between the underclasses represented by Koistinen and the “criminal bourgeoisie” represented by Lindholm is the “only one who spatially dwells in both the former’s and the latter’s place, without being framed and firmly held by either one of them, nor is ever [sic] out of place.”<sup>59</sup> This is not entirely correct, as Koistinen has similar access to disparate environments. Further, as with Koistinen, access alone does not guarantee comfort or a sense of belonging: Mirja appears visibly uncomfortable when she visits Koistinen’s underground home, and the slow, short drink with which she steels herself before submitting to Lindholm’s request for an embrace suggests her entrapment and subjugation by the criminal underworld. The work she carries out for Lindholm unsettles her, and in a moment-of self-loathing Mirja wonders why she consents to running his criminal errands. Lindholm observes that if she did not, she would “have to work.” When Mirja reacts to Lindholm’s suggestion of a short holiday in a major European city with the dismissive response that “all cities are the same” the viewer understands that she is as alienated from her environment as Koistinen is.



Figure 28. Koistinen visits Aila’s kiosk

In contrast, Aila moves in the city according to her own needs and desires, unencumbered by the demands of surveillance technology or the criminal underworld. Her little grill kiosk may represent exactly the kind of work Mirja dreads, but it also gives her a space of her own to

control: she makes the decision to suddenly close when Koistinen inadvertently offends her or when she feels he needs to be taken home to sober up. The kiosk itself is mobile and holds the

<sup>59</sup> Tim Vermeulen, "The Loneliest Man of The Crowd: A Loser's Guide to Helsinki (part 4)" [website] *Orimattila Town Library*, (2007) available from [http://www.orimattila.fi/kirjasto/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=200&Itemid=94&limit=1&limitstart=3](http://www.orimattila.fi/kirjasto/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=200&Itemid=94&limit=1&limitstart=3) [cited 2.1.2011].

potential for relocation: in contrast to the temporary arrangements that characterise Koistinen's experiences and Mirja's receipt of cash allowances for ad hoc criminal acts, Aila's modest mobile kiosk represents the possibility of transience coupled with agency rather than displacement. Working in the kiosk Aila blends in, the colour of her outfit matching the many condiments on display in her environment (Figure 28). While the colours associated with her on the one hand reflect her belonging in the kiosk environment, it is ironic that she should also resemble the many items on offer, and that Koistinen does not recognise that she is available to him.



Figure 29. Aila writes a letter in the Alku bar

Later, when Koistinen has been imprisoned, Aila writes a letter to him. She sits in a bar called Alku, 'the Beginning', drinking lemonade (Figure 29). The orange tones of the setting recall those of her kiosk and match Aila's clothing and hair: here, as anywhere, Aila belongs. The difference,

however, is that in the bar Aila becomes a (literal) consumer and an active agent: no longer on display or waiting for Koistinen's advance, she takes on the task of being the one to establish contact. As she exits the bar she posts the letter, the orange tones now linking her to the mail box outside. This linkage emphasises her role as a communicator, as someone who desires and is able to offer human contact. Koistinen receives her letter, but destroys it without reading it. His action reflects his humiliation at the thought of interacting with anyone who knows that he has been taken advantage of and a rejection of human contact generally rather than of Aila specifically.

Koistinen's experiences of loneliness and spatial isolation as a free man contrast with his much more positive experiences in prison. While he begins his incarceration with an ambivalent mood and is seen looking eagerly out his barred window, over time Koistinen comes to interact with others. In prison he has the chance to work with other people, and is shown laughing and joking during a cigarette break with other inmates. For the first time he is part of a group, instead of an isolated man watching a social activity, unable or unwilling to join in. That he should have such a

positive experience surrounded by convicted criminals, who are officially excluded from society, while gangsters such as Lindholm enjoy influence and even respect in their day-to-day dealings in the city, serves as a critique of the social erosion of contemporary society.

The lingering goodwill of the prison environment even carries through to Koistinen's life after his release: he has a letter of recommendation and a new career as a dishwasher in a fine restaurant. The restaurant's manager physically resembles Mrs Sjöholm of *Drifting Clouds* (although is not played by the same actor), and appears to share her belief in second chances. However, Koistinen is not able to remain at the restaurant. As he fetches clean plates from the kitchen, Koistinen sees Mirja dining with Lindholm, and the three recognise each other. Koistinen finally understands who has been behind his demise. He leaves abruptly, confronted by the looks of people who know the full extent of his gullibility. Lindholm, true to form, takes developments to their "logical conclusion" and arranges for Koistinen's dismissal from the restaurant. It is after this final humiliation that Koistinen strikes out, in an act of desperation that sees him punished further by Lindholm's associates and left to perish at a building site. It is as though his time in prison has given Koistinen a sense of purpose and personal worth denied him in the past, and it is this newly found sense of belonging that leads him to defend his lost honour, albeit unsuccessfully. A small boy watches Koistinen being beaten by Lindholm's men, and goes to Aila for help.



Figure 30. Koistinen and Aila at a building site

The film closes with Koistinen leaning against heavy machinery on a construction site, Aila by his side, new building work taking place in the background (Figure 30). This final location condenses Kaurismäki's spatial critique into a single image: a defeated man finding

momentary respite at the base of machinery designed to make the city increasingly hostile towards him. In his abject state Koistinen represents the homeless who were evicted from Ruoholahti when the area's gentrification process first began, and the many more contemporary



urban marginalised who are similarly in the process of losing their footing in the ‘panoptic’ and ‘semipublic’ city. There is no container village community for Koistinen to call home as there is for M in *The Man Without A Past*, and no prospect of him claiming a stake in the city through entrepreneurial aspirations as there is for Ilona and Lauri in *Drifting Clouds*. In the film’s final image Koistinen takes Aila’s hand. The gesture is not romantic, but almost formal, and indicates Koistinen’s acceptance of his need for the sense of stability and human contact that Aila represents. As a visual representation of the social contract the lingering image of two rigidly clasped hands suddenly brings into focus the social implications of the panoptic city.

#### Vision and surveillance in *Lights in the Dusk*

The critique of the panoptic city ties in with a striking focus on vision in *Lights in the Dusk*, most clearly present in the narrative significance of surveillance in the film. Usually absent in Kaurismäkian film, modern technology is prominently on display during Koistinen’s security rounds. The opening sequence shows Koistinen scanning barcodes and punching in security codes on his route. The security company office is, however, less technologically advanced: guards watch security camera footage on a grid of bulky television screens, and the signing in and out of keys takes place on paper. The technological paring down of the world beyond the shopping complex reflects the fact that even though the guards are tasked with the security of the growing commercial centre, they are not a part of it themselves. The role of the guards in relation to the property they patrol is made clear when Koistinen explains to Mirja how the system works: codes have to be scanned in the right order and at the right time, as too much of a delay between scans tells the computer that a guard has been waylaid. Deron Albright describes the similar situation of a security guard in Mike Leigh’s *Naked* (1993) as being “physically and physiologically under control of a vague but powerful force that is ultimately void of meaning or substance.”<sup>60</sup> In essence, the guards are under surveillance as much as anyone else – perhaps even more so, as their understanding of the system combined with their inability to act as automata makes them potentially dangerous. The jewellery heist can, in the end, take place only because of Koistinen’s human error, the one weakness in a meticulously planned and timed choreography of surveillance. Koistinen does not seem disturbed by the way he is subjugated to the needs of the surveillance system in his working life: instead, he seems genuinely impressed by its efficiency.

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<sup>60</sup> Deron Albright, "Tales of the City: Applying Situationist Social Practice to the Analysis of the Urban Drama," *Criticism* 45, no. 1 (2003): 101.

Koistinen's work involves observing and recording events, but his role as a maintainer of order and peace is undermined when he cowers from the Russians at the start of the film, as he has gone from authoritative to submissive, and there is no implied power in his gaze. We see that he has grown accustomed to being sidelined and ignored: when he signs off, his foreman of three years pretends not to know his name. Two older guards, their eyes otherwise fixed on a multitude of closed-circuit television screens, glance at him in a way that suggests they know of his isolation, friendless state and recurring yet understated bullying by other guards: one of them even asks the foreman to let Koistinen be, but does not persist when the foreman insists Koistinen has to "learn". In the change room an exchange of looks between other guards and Koistinen makes it clear that the invitation to go out for a drink at the end of a shift does not apply to the protagonist.



Figure 31. Lindholm watches Koistinen (sequence)

Koistinen heads out on his own, but walks past the bar where his colleagues sit together drinking. Again, a meaningful exchanging of glances occurs before the men tease him and Koistinen storms off to a much more upmarket establishment for a drink. He has no more luck in fitting in or being accepted there: he finally takes up position behind the toilet door, away from the bar and far from the prospect of interacting with anyone. As Koistinen makes do with his humiliating position, others

pay very close attention to him. An older security guard converses with one of the gangster Lindholm's associates and points out Koistinen as a loner working for the same company. The associate in turn draws Lindholm's attention to Koistinen: Lindholm watches Koistinen carefully as

the latter shuffles next to the toilet door, and the camera focuses on Lindholm's observant face (Figure 31). The whole sequence is filled with meaningful glances and the irony of a security guard, a man tasked with maintaining social order and observing his environment, not realising he is the object of so many greedy, scheming gazes.

On Lindholm's orders the attractive Mirja befriends Koistinen, follows him on his rounds, memorises his security codes and finally drugs him at the end of a shift, passing on his keys to the burglars. A diversion at the security company's head office prevents the guards on duty from seeing the blacking out of security cameras. There is no way of knowing who the burglars are, but it is clear from the preceding scenes that they have used Koistinen's codes and keys. The police initially recognise that Koistinen has been taken advantage of, but as he refuses to admit to it – going so far as to deny all human contact by saying “I don't know anybody” – they have little choice but to charge him as a willing accessory to the crime, particularly once Mirja has paid him a quick visit and hidden some of the stolen jewellery in his apartment just in time for a police raid called in by another of Lindholm's associates.

Once Koistinen has been interrogated about his part in the burglary, people begin to notice him in ways he has not been noticed before. In several scenes characters look straight into the camera, dissatisfied or apprehensive, usually when Koistinen has entered a new space or looked around to take stock of his surroundings. Examples include the check-out operator and other supermarket customers looking at him as he goes about his daily shopping, the investigating police officers and court officials as Koistinen's trial is about to begin, the restaurant manager and head chef watching as Koistinen starts washing dishes after being released from prison, and the small boy looking on as Koistinen is finally beaten by Lindholm's associates. The logic of editing in these cases equates both the audience and Koistinen as the object of these hostile or evaluative gazes. The figures in these scenes are not depicted as unkind or corrupt. Rather, even as they appear to be in an antagonistic relationship with Koistinen, such as the police officers who originally interrogate him, they are seen as normal, reasonable people who are doing what is required by law and necessary for the maintenance of social order. The evaluative gazes directed at Koistinen and the audience, then, also invite introspection on the viewers' part as to whether they can see any alternatives to the process.



Figure 32. Koistinen's conviction

At the moment of his judgment Koistinen returns the audience's gaze (Figure 32). While the charges are read during Koistinen's trial, the camera focuses on his eyes for an extended period of time. As he is found guilty and handcuffed by two police officers, Koistinen looks intently into the

camera as if to acknowledge the viewers' presence and to expose their complicity as silent eye-witnesses to his downfall. A similar, less intense exchange occurs early in the film as well: as Koistinen changes out of his guard's uniform he looks straight at the audience.

Tarja Laine has interpreted similar returned looks as instances of "dialectical spectatorship" that occasion "intersubjective" emotion in the viewer. Laine applies Jean-Paul Sartre's "look of the Other" to cinematic experience and argues that in watching a film spectators can be confronted "with their own look", and that this confrontation

prevents the spectators from looking from an omnipotent position and disturbs their relation to the film. At that precise moment, the spectators have to think of themselves as in an unsatisfactory relation to the others (or the consciousness of the others), exposed to the eyes of the others within their own field of vision. As a result, the spectators are able to experience the Other not as an object of the look, but as a conscious subject that is able to reduce the spectators to objects. The spectators become aware that they exist for others just like the others exist for them.<sup>61</sup>

Laine discusses the dynamics of characters on screen looking at the audience in films such as *Hate* (*La haine*, Mathieu Kassovitz, 1995), *Dogville* (Lars von Trier, 2002) and *Drifting Clouds*. She argues that as Lauri and Ilona in *Drifting Clouds* identify with both the community of unemployed people ("the Other") and with broader Finnish society ("the Third Other") they experience their unemployment as shameful "because they know how the unemployed are seen in Finnish society."<sup>62</sup> Laine notes that the same process applies to the spectators of the film as well, as they,

<sup>61</sup> Laine, *Shame and Desire*, 18.

<sup>62</sup> Laine, *Shame and Desire*, 82.

too, identify with both the protagonists and the social order that marginalises them.<sup>63</sup> The courtroom sequence in *Lights in the Dusk* repeatedly invokes this intersubjective connection between the audience members and the characters on screen, as the former are subjected to the critical gazes of the police officers, court staff and Koistinen. In these instances, then, the viewers are made to recognise both their connection with Koistinen and their complicity in the social processes that further facilitate his social marginalisation.

Given the critiques of Kaurismäki's depictions of poverty, homelessness and unemployment as moral virtues discussed in Chapter Four, it would be plausible to see the subsequent depiction of Koistinen and the happy band of convicts as yet another example of Kaurismäki's pandering to 'middle-class café philosophising'. Indeed, the audience is in some respects absolved of its implicit guilt in Koistinen's wrongful conviction as it sees him enjoying his time in prison and having more social contact there than in his life as a free man. However, he does not leave prison with a new sense of purpose and destination as Taisto in *Ariel* does, and he is left unsalvaged by former colleagues or international human rights attorneys, unlike the protagonists of *Drifting Clouds* and *The Man Without A Past* respectively. The film's much more pessimistic ending forces the viewers to come to terms with an unromanticised social marginalisation, one in which they are themselves complicit. In the final scene the construction site setting and the focus on a solemn handshake, then, collapse together the film's social, spatial and ocular critiques: as shopping complexes and other privately-owned commercial ventures effect an irreversible change on the city's social landscape, its inhabitants quietly watch on, unwilling or unable to intervene.

#### The psychogeographic city in *Lights in the Dusk*

It is commonly understood that in Kaurismäkian cinema the city itself has a presence, a starring role of sorts. The city is not a neutral backdrop; it is both a cause and a consequence of the protagonists' alienation. Jarmo Valkola argues that Kaurismäki's protagonists have internalised the urban logic of their "melancholy city," and that the protagonists' experiences in the city demonstrate the profound connections between self and community, individual and the society.<sup>64</sup> Due to this connection between the characters' lived experience and their environment, Kaurismäkian space can be seen as a psychogeographic rendering of the city. The term

<sup>63</sup> Laine, *Shame and Desire*, 82.

<sup>64</sup> Jarmo Valkola, "La ville mélancolique. Trilogie d'Helsinki," in *Théorème 10. Villes cinématographiques. Ciné-lieux*, eds Laurent Creton and Kristian Feigelson (Paris: Presses Sorbonne Nouvelle, 2007), 171.

“psycho geography” was coined in Paris in the 1950s by the Lettrist International radical art group, subsequently succeeded by the more political Situationist International.<sup>65</sup> As the term suggests, psycho geographic practice explores the influence of built environments on people. Particularly for the Situationists, psycho geography involved “explor[ing] the city politically, identifying places of intensity and disorientation,” the aimless wanderings of its practitioners “demand[ing] a playful yet militant engagement with the city.”<sup>66</sup> The best-known psycho geographic practice, the *dérive* or drifting, involves wandering without predetermined plan. Other activities seek to undermine the authority of cartography by altering existing maps: a famous example of a psycho geographic rendering of the city is Guy Debord’s map of Paris, cut up and rearranged according to the ‘feel’ of the distinct parts.<sup>67</sup> Psycho geography depends on a pedestrian’s perspective, as walking “allows one to challenge the official representation of the city by cutting across established routes and exploring those marginal and forgotten areas often overlooked by the city’s inhabitants.”<sup>68</sup> Although in this politically active and explicitly named sense psycho geography is a relatively recent phenomenon, Merlin Coverley identifies in the practice’s re-mystification of the cityscape a connection with gothic writing, citing the work of authors such as Daniel Defoe and Robert Louis Stevenson as “a precursor to psycho geography”.<sup>69</sup> More recently psycho geographic groups – with varying degrees of structure and longevity – have been founded in cities around the world, many interested mainly in experiencing the built environment in a new way rather than having any artistic or political aspirations. Phil Baker describes modern psycho geography as involving

three or four main ideas, separately or in combination: the emotional and behavioural effects of the environment, and its ambience; ‘cognitive mapping’ (the city in our heads, with the places that have special meaning for us); and what might be more prosaically called ‘local history’.<sup>70</sup>

The Kaurismäkian focus on back alleys and inner-city courtyards and his desire to ‘archive’ the city in the face of commercial development certainly conforms to certain aspects of psycho geographic practice, and Alan Bonnett’s description of the “psycho geographic turn” in British art and literature in the 1990s can easily be adapted to describe the Kaurismäkian oeuvre:

<sup>65</sup> Merlin Coverley, *Psycho geography* (Harpenden: Pocket Essentials, 2006), 10, 92.

<sup>66</sup> Bonnett, *Left in the Past*, 146.

<sup>67</sup> For examples of other kinds of psycho geographic maps see Maanmittaus, “Psykokarttoja” [blog] *Maanmittauslaitos. Feminististä tilantutkimusta*, (2010) [cited 30.12.2010].

<sup>68</sup> Coverley, *Psycho geography*, 12.

<sup>69</sup> Coverley, *Psycho geography*, 13.

<sup>70</sup> Phil Baker, “Secret City: Psycho geography and the End of London,” in *London from Punk to Blair*, eds Joe Kerr and Andrew Gibson (London: Reaktion Books, 2003), 323.

This body of work explores and reimagines the forgotten nooks and crannies of ordinary landscapes. It seeks to re-enchant and remythologize prosaic geographies. The resultant effect is disorientating, funny yet melancholic; utterly of our time but ill at ease with modern Britain.<sup>71</sup>



Figure 33. Koistinen at work

The opening sequence of *Lights in the Dusk* exemplifies this psycho-geographic approach. The camera follows Koistinen on his round, through a graffitied tunnel (Figure 33) and deserted metro station to a locked-up shop and garbage bins in an alleyway.

The locations in themselves are banal and ordinary, but in the *mise-en-scène* they become ‘re-enchanted’. Carlos Gardel’s “Volver” accompanies Koistinen’s walk on the soundtrack: together with the largely blue tones of the sequence the music imbues the scene with a sense of loss and melancholy. As Koistinen walks the length of a pedestrian tunnel, there is a cut to an old speaker, indicating it is the source of the music. The audience and the protagonist, then, are aurally linked: their shared exploration of the blue-tinted city occurs within the same soundscape. The speaker also reveals a brief instance of auteurial humour: as music in Kaurismäki’s films is typically diegetic, or anchored into the on-screen reality in some way, the appearance of the speaker is a predictably ‘Kaurismäkian’ touch and indicates the film’s self-reflective and ludic engagement with Kaurismäkian conventions.

A similar psychogeographic orientation reveals itself in the composition of the screenspace as well, as it is not only the real, existing ‘nooks and crannies’ of the city that are ‘remythologised’. The interior spaces, choices of clothing and colour schemes also contribute to a critique of a gentrified city in the process of shedding its links with the past. The Kaurismäkian *mise-en-scène* is sparse and anachronistic. On-screen technologies are often outdated or created simply for the purposes of filming, made to *look* outdated, with objects from past decades on display on otherwise clear

<sup>71</sup> Bonnett, *Left in the Past*, 155.

surfaces and empty shelves. A good example is the lounge room in *Drifting Clouds*: the book case holds no books, but a single Russian nesting doll, and both Ilona and Lauri view their new television's colour images as something new and extravagant. In *Lights in the Dusk* Koistinen listens to music on an old radio or a jukebox, and all of his lived environments, from his basement apartment to his prison cell and space at the halfway house, are strikingly sparse.



Figure 34. A waiting table

There are no sudden edits or unnecessary movements of the camera, and instead the viewer can take in the full presence of the screen and observe its understated details. It is common for the camera to first introduce a location, such as, a park bench or a street corner, before an actor appears on

screen. For example, when Koistinen is released from prison, one of the first things he does is order a coffee in a small café. The camera rests for a moment on an ash tray and a makeshift vase placed on a small table before Koistinen brings over his coffee and takes a seat (Figure 34). Conversely, once the action of a scene abates and a character walks off-screen, the camera often lingers on the vacated setting, granting these 'prosaic', 'ordinary landscapes' a sense of melancholy pastness, of being left behind.

Alan Bonnett points out that Situationist psychogeography was at heart a critically nostalgic project, as it opposed the gentrification of the city and the associated erasure of a class-conscious and politically active localised "popular memory".<sup>72</sup> Over time the political radicalism of psychogeography waned: "[t]he drifter, once transmuted into the flâneur, may remain a cultural transgressor but is no longer recognizable as a communist revolutionary."<sup>73</sup> This psychogeographic view of the city can be seen in what Kaurismäki has referred to as his determination not to show "ugly and impersonal" new cars in his films, and to avoid the "rough realism" of modern Helsinki,

<sup>72</sup> Bonnett, *Left in the Past*, 146.

<sup>73</sup> Bonnett, *Left in the Past*, 146-147.



choosing instead to create his cinematic city to correspond with idealised nostalgic images of the cities of decades past.<sup>74</sup> In Chapter Four I explored some of the complexities of Kaurismäkian nostalgia, such as the significance of the films' references to a range of time periods and the debates about Kaurismäkian nostalgia's morality and the validity of its social critique. This nostalgia applies in Kaurismäki's psychogeographic spatial practice as well, as the depiction of marginal people in marginal sites expresses a commitment to fixing in time, 'archiving', specifically those parts of the city that are associated with working class experience.

#### The local logic of Kaurismäki's Helsinki

Kaurismäki's Helsinki-bound films express a heightened awareness of locality and local identity, with particular areas of the city associated with specific classes and social statuses. A good example is *Calamari Union*, a satire in which a group of men undertake an epic journey from Kallio to Eira: they feel too imposed upon, too threatened, by the old ladies, children and pets that roam Kallio. They have heard of a mythical faraway land, Eira, a place of greenery and open air, and begin their perilous journey towards a more promising future. In reality the trip from Kallio to Eira should take only a few minutes. The group splinters up, each faction following a different route: this way, they reason, some of them at least have a chance of finding the right way and surviving the migration. Most of them perish, and on arriving at their mythologised destiny the remaining two decide – after a fight – that the only way to achieve the land of their dreams is to continue travelling, this time to Estonia by dinghy.

Kallio has been profiled as a 'tough' working class neighbourhood while Eira has traditionally been a more bourgeois area, and the group's fraught journey reflects a desperate desire for upward social mobility. Widely considered something of an inside joke of the "Kaurismäki clan", *Calamari Union* plays with the conventions and stereotypes of locality and belonging in the city. Similarly *Shadows in Paradise* is very locality-conscious. Reviewing the film at the time of its release, Helena Ylänen referred to *Shadows in Paradise* as extraordinarily territorial: protagonists live along and near Hämeentie and the Hakaniemi markets, resisting the pull of other parts of the city and the commuter suburbs in particular.<sup>75</sup> When Ilona tells her flatmate she is leaving to go 'back home', Ilona explains that she is not local but "from Hämeentie", a main street in Helsinki and not far from where the scene itself was filmed. Ilona's comment again splinters the city into small

<sup>74</sup> von Bagh, "Työmiehen muotokuva," 9.

<sup>75</sup> Helena Ylänen, "Aki Kaurismäen *Varjoja paratiisissa* on mestarillinen filmi vilpittömästä rakkaudesta," *Helsingin Sanomat*, 18.10. 1986, 22.

sections: one is not 'from Helsinki', but from a more specific street or part of town. At the same time the comment emphasises her alienation, her inability to find herself a home and a place to belong even in the multitude of potential opportunities available in the capital.

Kaurismäki prefers shooting on location to shooting in a studio, and he has filmed many scenes in the traditionally working-class area of Kallio and around the Hakaniemi markets. Satu Kyösola points out the recurring role of certain real-life locations in Kaurismäkian films, such as the symbolically named Tehtaankatu or Factory Street, "paradoxically situated in the south in the bourgeois neighborhood of the capital", which is the setting for Iris' parents' house in *The Match Factory Girl* and the Restaurant Work in *Drifting Clouds*.<sup>76</sup> Although there is no reason to doubt filming locations would have been chosen on the merits of the places themselves – and as Tehtaankatu is a relatively long street the chances of finding suitable locations along it would perhaps be reasonably high – it is possible the filmmakers would have found a certain humour in the street's appropriately proletarian name. In addition, during the Cold War the phrase "going to Tehtaankatu" referred to garnering favour with the Soviet Embassy on that street, lending an additional level of irony to the location in the Kaurismäkian films of the 1980s in particular.

Lauri Timonen touches on the significance of locality in the films by drawing attention to how Kaurismäkian settings reflect developments in plot rather than cartographic reality, giving the appearance of unity and proximity to disparate locations.<sup>77</sup> This in itself is not unusual: as we have seen, it is often impossible to replicate a coherent cinematic geography in the real city. However, Kaurismäkian settings do also draw from a range of pre-existing associations with specific parts of the city, even when these are not explicitly mentioned in the films. Henry Bacon offers a detailed analysis of how settings are selected to reflect the events on screen and give them added meaning. In *Drifting Clouds* the restaurant Dubrovnik is in central Helsinki, and so while Ilona and Lauri are both employed they are part of the central cityscape, Lauri even in an official capacity as a tram driver. Once the couple become unemployed, however, they become associated with marginal places such as the anonymous bar Ilona has to work in, and the predominance of indoor settings does not allow for the couple to be easily located within the known city: "[i]t is as if when being made unemployed they had been ousted from the public sphere as well as from society as a

<sup>76</sup> Kyösola, "The archivist's nostalgia," 51-52.

<sup>77</sup> Timonen, *Aki Kaurismäen elokuvat*, 312.

whole.”<sup>78</sup> When Ilona and Lauri establish the restaurant Work at the end of the film, the act also restores the couple’s claim on the city centre.

Although the locations used in making the films connect in this way to the narrative developments and are in that sense certainly significant, the extent to which they are recognisable to a viewer who is not specifically looking for Kaurismäkian locations is debatable. As part of his analysis of the locations of *Drifting Clouds* Bacon adds a caveat regarding the recognisability of the location of the Restaurant Work:

How recognizable the location is remains arguable. To the present writer the location is obvious because it is only a block away from the offices of the Finnish Film archive, where he worked for some five years.<sup>79</sup>

When I visited the archives on my research trips I also regularly walked past “Work”, by then a carpet shop. For me the shop was recognisable not because the area itself was familiar to me, but because I already knew the place was a relevant Kaurismäkian location and had looked up the address before walking past it for the first time. Would I have noticed it without the pre-existing interest in Kaurismäkian locations? Perhaps not. In Kaurismäkian spaces, then, there is a curious disjuncture. On the one hand the real-life locations correspond to some degree with the protagonists’ rising and falling fortunes as settings take advantage of the reputations and identities of specific parts of the city. On the other hand it is unclear to what extent these values and associations are picked up by viewers who are not specifically attuned to them, particularly as the specific locations and buildings on display are themselves not iconic, but quiet street corners or back alleys. Charlotte Brunson’s criticism of “retrospective location sleuthing” certainly applies here, in that for the purposes of most people viewing the films, it is the “unfamiliarity [of Kaurismäkian places] that [is] significant.”<sup>80</sup> Still, the by now disproportionately valorised and no longer anonymous locations cannot be said to be entirely without significance, either, as Bacon’s analysis shows.

#### Non-places of memory in Kaurismäkian cinema

In addition to specific parts of the city being more Kaurismäkian than others, particular kinds of locations, such as back alleys, drab yet affectionately furnished apartments and brutally minimalist

<sup>78</sup> Bacon, “Helsinki,” 34-35. See also Tani, “The Aesthetics of Backyards”.

<sup>79</sup> Bacon, “Helsinki,” 37, endnote.

<sup>80</sup> Brunson, *London in Cinema*, 10.

offices, have a privileged status in the Kaurismäkian oeuvre and appear in several films. For Tytti Soila certain choices of settings are inherently nostalgic and signal in themselves social, and specifically national, transition: “[u]biquitous and pleasantly anonymous” bars and cafeterias in particular are a “reminder for post-war Finnish audiences of the shared past.”<sup>81</sup> Crucially, Soila argues that Kaurismäki’s nostalgically imagined “cinematic space [...] is constructed as *critical space* allowing the interrogation of political, social and economic power structures.”<sup>82</sup> In a similar vein Pietari Kääpä discusses locations in Kaurismäkian films as corresponding to Michel Foucault’s “*heterotopias*”, or “counter-sites”: buildings and delimited areas that somehow code social transition or transgression.<sup>83</sup> Delivered as a lecture in 1967 but not published until 1984,<sup>84</sup> Foucault’s essay “Of other spaces” posits certain criteria for heterotopias, spaces that arise out of the tension between public and private space. These criteria include an element of containment and exclusion and a specific relationship with the passage of time. Foucault’s examples include libraries and museums as sites for protecting material against the ravages of time, prisons and boarding schools for containing a threat to conventional society (such as crime or adolescent sexuality), and theatres and cinemas for providing alternatives to everyday reality, if only momentarily.<sup>85</sup> As Michiel Dehaene and Lieven De Cauter point out, Foucault’s heterotopias were “important institutions of the city;”<sup>86</sup> not so much places that questioned social order, but places whose impressive presence suggested that social order did not occur naturally.

Kääpä extends the Foucauldian original to apply more broadly in the Kaurismäkian cinematic world: here the roads, the bars and edges of the city are also heterotopian sites, marked by transience and outsideness. Given Kääpä’s broad use of the term ‘heterotopia’, the places he refers to are closely linked to what Andrew Nestingen calls Kaurismäkian “non-places”, emphasising their non-national role as “social spaces that are cut off from the national past.”<sup>87</sup> Nestingen argues that the marginality of the Kaurismäkian city reflects the films’ self-aware distancing from national narratives.

<sup>81</sup> Soila, “The face of a sad rat,” 196.

<sup>82</sup> Soila, “The face of a sad rat,” 197.

<sup>83</sup> Michel Foucault cited in Kääpä, “Displaced souls lost in Finland,” 5.

<sup>84</sup> See Michiel Dehaene and Lieven De Cauter’s preface to Michel Foucault, “Of other spaces,” in *Heterotopia and the City. Public Space in a Postcivil Society*, eds Michiel Dehaene and Lieven De Cauter (London and New York: Routledge, 2008), 13.

<sup>85</sup> Foucault, “Of other spaces,” 18-21.

<sup>86</sup> Michiel Dehaene and Lieven De Cauter, “Introduction. Heterotopia in a postcivil society,” in *Heterotopia and the City. Public space in a postcivil society*, eds Michiel Dehaene and Lieven De Cauter (London and New York: Routledge, 2008), 5.

<sup>87</sup> Nestingen, *Why nation?*, 167.

The French anthropologist Marc Augé introduced the concept of non-places in his treatise on “supermodernity”, proposing that such spaces are located outside national imaginaries and are instead symbolic of an increasing individualisation of reference. Augé’s non-places include routes and means of transport, hotels, shops “and finally the complex skein of cable and wireless networks that mobilize extraterrestrial space for the purposes of a communication so peculiar that it often puts the individual in contact only with another image of himself.”<sup>88</sup> As Georges Benko argues, however, “non-places do not remain total non-places. They become elements in an established and broader social context” and gradually “transition [...] to places with a greater identity”.<sup>89</sup> This kind of development certainly applies to Kaurismäkian non-places, as the auteurial-national nexus lends to seemingly marginal locations some national meaning.

Non-places (*non-lieux*) are in some respects the antithesis of Pierre Nora’s realms of memory (*lieux de mémoire*). Nora edited the impressive seven-volume collection *Realms of memory*, which catalogues and explain more than a hundred narratives integral to the French national mythscape. The original French realms of memory are not necessarily real, material places, but can be abstract concepts, historical periods and modes of behaviour. For Nora realms of memory are “material, symbolic and functional” and characterised by “a will to remember”.<sup>90</sup> In essence the realms of memory can be anything from school textbooks to museums and events, as long as they have a ritualised quality that keeps them artificially anchored to the present. Nora gives as an example the children’s book *Le Tour de la France par deux enfants* (G. Bruno/Augustine Fouillée, 1877), which remained part of the school curriculum for a long time. With its outdated depiction of France it “trained the memory of millions of French boys and girls” for decades before losing popularity and then beginning to be reprinted again in the late 1970s.<sup>91</sup> What makes *Le Tour* a realm of memory is its regular and officially-sanctioned use in narrating a distant national past in a way that makes the narration itself part of everyday experience and lived history: “all *lieux de mémoire* are objects *mises en abîme*.”<sup>92</sup> Similarly the Kaurismäkian mythscape memorialises itself as a realm of memory by self-reflectively reiterating its own view of society, its particular visual

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<sup>88</sup> Augé, *Non-places*, 79.

<sup>89</sup> Georges Benko, "Introduction: Modernity, Postmodernity and the Social Sciences," in *Space & Social Theory. Interpreting Modernity and Postmodernity*, eds Georges Benko and Ulf Strohmayer (Oxford and Malden: Blackwell Publishers, 1997), 26.

<sup>90</sup> Nora, "Between Memory and History," 19.

<sup>91</sup> Nora, "Between Memory and History," 20.

<sup>92</sup> Nora, "Between Memory and History," 20. Emphases in original.

style, privileged places and cast of characters. Understood in these terms, the marginal places of Kaurismäkian cinema cannot be said to be removed from national narratives in the way that Kääpä and Nestingen suggest.

Augé argues that non-places and realms of memory are products of the same process: the more people's lives are lived in non-places marked by transience, the more 'communities of memory' ["*milieux de mémoire*" in Nora] and real existing connections with local history decrease and are instead "listed, classified, promoted to the status of 'places [realms] of memory'".<sup>93</sup> Keeping in mind this dialectical relationship between non-places and realms of memory it becomes possible to understand how the very marginality of Kaurismäkian space is interlinked with the national mythscape and itself emerges as a realm of memory. The garbage dumps, back alleys and drab apartments that are frequently the setting for (in)action may in themselves be non-places outside the national imaginary and disconnected from the national mythscape. However, they are at the same time places of Kaurismäkian intertextual 'oeuvre memory', to recall Elsaesser's term, that draw attention to how contemporary society has lost certain crucial ties to the past: "what we see in them is essentially how we have changed, the image of what we are no longer."<sup>94</sup> The films' spaces are both real and symbolic, and the oeuvre's self-referentiality alone fulfils the element of ritualisation that characterises realms of memory. When the films' televisual afterlives and their role in eliciting discussion about national identity and society are taken into account, it becomes clear how Kaurismäkian urban marginality is itself embedded in the practice of imagining the nation.

For example, the pared-down security firm office in *Lights in the Dusk* recalls a similar simple folder-and-pen filing system used to tragicomic effect in *Drifting Clouds*, and Koistinen's interrogation in a clinically bare police headquarters suggests a similar scene in *The Man Without A Past* – even the police chief is played by the same actor – and brings to mind the miraculous intervention of the Salvation Army's attorney. While garbage collection and its associated spaces are insignificant from the point of view of the governing national mythology, through their frequent appearances in the Kaurismäkian oeuvre they attain an almost legendary quality in the director's work: there are many references to characters dying in or being buried at garbage dumps, and when the restaurant Work opens at the end of *Drifting Clouds*, the arrival of two garbage collectors serves as another posthumous tribute to Matti Pellonpää and as a further sign

<sup>93</sup> Augé, *Non-places*, 77-78.

<sup>94</sup> Nora paraphrased in Augé, *Non-places*, 55.

of the connections between *Drifting Clouds* and *Shadows in Paradise*. The depiction of garbage collector Nikander in the 1996 set of stamps is further evidence of how the marginal is made national through auteurial associations.

These otherwise nondescript settings, then, are not 'cut off from the national past' as Nestingen claims so much as drawn from an auteurial 'oeuvre memory', continually reaffirmed as contributing to that memory and as being part of a national *present*. I am not suggesting that these Kaurismäkian spaces have become privileged tropes within the national mythscape as a whole. Rather, I argue that as these marginal spaces and the characters that inhabit them recur in a self-consciously nostalgic auteurial framework, they too acquire national significance and meaning.

#### Establishing a Kaurismäkian city

The intertextual self-perpetuation of the Kaurismäkian 'non-places of memory' is reinforced by the appropriation of the Kaurismäkian cinematic Helsinki for the purposes of the real, existing city, and how knowledge of the specifics of Kaurismäkian places is becoming an increasingly prominent part of experiencing Helsinki. In addition to creating a unique cinematic vision of Helsinki that draws on the city's local identities, Kaurismäki has also taken part in discussions about the development of the real, existing cityscape. For example, Kaurismäki has been vocal in opposing certain building projects that he feels somehow detract from Helsinki's local identity. While Kaurismäki's well-documented opposition to the building of nuclear power plants or nuclear disposal sites is based on ecological and moral grounds,<sup>95</sup> his opposition to other building projects is often based on a desire to retain examples of old architecture and preserve certain aspects of local history.

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<sup>95</sup> See for example Aki Kaurismäki, "Itsekkään harkinnan jääkylmässä vedessä," *Helsingin Sanomat*, 9.5. 2010, n.p.



Figure 35. Design for Katajanokka hotel (c) Herzog & de Meuron

For example, together with the other Academicians of art, Kaurismäki opposed the proposed hotel building designed by the Swiss architects Jacques Herzog and Pierre de Meuron and intended to be built in Katajanokka on the waterfront of the city's historic centre (Figure 35). The cross-shaped glass design had

been controversial from the outset, eliciting petitions and protests from the community since being made public in 2008. Along the way the design had been altered slightly in response to criticisms, but it remained unpopular as a potential addition to the cityscape. In their public statement the Academicians described the hotel design as resembling “the bar of an American night club, equally well suited to an arctic fell as an oil rig,” and said that if realised the building would cause extensive environmental damage and “aggressively break the area’s historical architectural front.”<sup>96</sup> The reference to the aggressive breaching of a front frames the proposed building in military terms, as a foreign assault on sites that anchor the national present to a more stable past. One of the group’s main criticisms was that the architects had not even visited Helsinki, and so had come up with a plan that did not arise naturally out of its environment but would instead lead to its destruction, both ecologically and historically. The Academicians express what M. Christine Boyer refers to as a “desire for authentic memories and city experiences” in the face of a “depoliticized [concern for] a city’s competitive location in the global restructuring of capital”.<sup>97</sup> The publication of the Academicians’ petition was timed to coincide with a planning meeting of the Helsinki city council, which finally decided to reject the hotel plan.<sup>98</sup> It is unlikely that the Academicians’ petition in itself influenced the council’s decision, but it did serve as a very public summing up of popular opposition to the hotel, and helped to frame the project’s opposition as an expression of morality and historical-national consciousness. Kaurismäki was also

<sup>96</sup> Outi Heiskanen et al., "Katajanokkaa ei saa pilata," *Helsingin Sanomat*, 7.4. 2010, n.p. In the original the latter statement reads “Mikäli suunnitelma toteutuu, se rikkoo aggressiivisella tavalla alueen historiallista rakennusrintamaa. Hankkeen ympäristövaikutukset olisivat laaja-alaisia ja tuhoisia.”

<sup>97</sup> M. Christine Boyer, *The City of Collective Memory - Its Historical Imagery and Architectural Entertainments* (Cambridge and London: The MIT Press, 1994), 4.

<sup>98</sup> "Kohuhanke nurin: Lasikuutiota ei tule Katajanokalle," *Uusi Suomi*, 8.4. 2010, n.p.



named as one of forty “influential cultural figures” who petitioned the city of Helsinki to cease its zero tolerance policy on graffiti, demanding that people should be able to freely enhance certain publically-owned spaces and utilities.<sup>99</sup>

These examples of Kaurismäki’s active role in trying to influence the Helsinki cityscape illustrate a connection between the ‘archival’ uniformity of Kaurismäkian cinematic space and the director’s desire to exert similar archival influence on the real city. This is not to say that Kaurismäki would oppose all development of the city or have a very narrow view of what the city ought to look like, as demonstrated by his support for young graffiti artists. Instead, Kaurismäki’s public statements about the cityscape, whether in political action or in commenting on the locations used in his films, all express an appreciation of local culture and history and a general approval of ‘bottom-up’ developments of the city that take these into account.

In addition to seeking to publically influence the development of the city, the director has also devoted considerable energy to bringing the look of his own films into the real world.<sup>100</sup> Kaurismäki briefly owned a small hotel outside of Helsinki called Oiva, which translates approximately to “exemplary” or “fine”. Oiva was set up with familiar features from Kaurismäki’s films, and rooms were decorated according to a specifically Kaurismäkian aesthetic, described by one traveller as “forged from 80s alternative rock, Soviet glam, and the famous reticence of [the Finnish] people.”<sup>101</sup> Even the musical entertainment at Oiva’s dance evenings would at times overlap with the cinematic Akilandia: for example Sakari Kuosmanen, the musician and actor who has appeared in several of Kaurismäki’s films, and Marko Haavisto & Poutahaukat – the Salvation Army band from *The Man Without A Past* – would occasionally perform at Oiva.<sup>102</sup> At present the filmmaker is one of the owners of a cluster of entertainment venues in central Helsinki, all furnished according to a Kaurismäkian aesthetic.<sup>103</sup> Towards the end of the 1980s Aki and Mika Kaurismäki ran the Andorra-cinema, which specialised in showing art house films from around the

<sup>99</sup> "Kulttuuriväki vaatii graffitien nollatoleranssin lopettamista," *Helsingin Sanomat*, 10.10. 2008, n.p.

<sup>100</sup> See also Kainulainen, *Traduction de films: le cas de l'Akilien*, 24.

<sup>101</sup> Vijai Maheshwari, "Kaurismäki's Finland" [website] *Travel intelligence*, available from <http://www.travelintelligence.com/travel-writing/1000188/europe/finland/helsinki-and-the-south/helsinki/kaurismakis-finland.html> [cited 6.5.2011].

<sup>102</sup> Terhi Raunonen, "Kaurismaen ja nostalgian Karkkila" [website] *Plaza.fi*, (2006) available from <http://plaza.fi/matkalaukku/kotimaa/uusimaa/kaurismaen-ja-nostalgian-karkkila> [cited 29.6.2009]. Kaurismäki sold the hotel in 2007, and the venue now operates as a rehabilitation centre. "Kaurismäki möi Oiva-hotellinsa" [online article] *YLE*, (2007) available from [http://yle.fi/uutiset/kulttuuri/2007/06/kaurismaki\\_moi\\_oiva-hotellinsa\\_240305.html](http://yle.fi/uutiset/kulttuuri/2007/06/kaurismaki_moi_oiva-hotellinsa_240305.html) [cited 29.6.2009].

<sup>103</sup> See also Kainulainen, *Traduction de films: le cas de l'Akilien*, 24.

world.<sup>104</sup> Peter von Bagh cites the Andorra-venture as an example of the Kaurismäki brothers' passionate cinephilia: not only do the Kaurismäkis maintain a relentless pace in their own filmmaking, but they also provide "a home" for films that would otherwise remain unknown in Finland.<sup>105</sup> Von Bagh also recalls that on purchasing the cinema, one of Aki Kaurismäki's first acts was to dispose of the cinema's popcorn machines: Andorra was intended as a place of cinephilic reverence free of the excesses of commercialism commonplace in other cinemas.<sup>106</sup> The brothers then founded the Corona Bar and Billiard Hall in 1991, next door to Andorra. The Corona quickly became very popular, and was followed in 1993 by the Moskva. According to Mika Kaurismäki, Moskva was established as a less-popular alternative to the Corona, and a place where the "old traditions" of Soviet-style poor service are maintained.<sup>107</sup> The Moskva was famously the setting for the scene in *The Man Without A Past* where M meets the bank robber in a bar. In 2004 the Andorra was renovated, and separated into two ventures: the Dubrovnik Lounge and Lobby and a smaller cinema called Kino.<sup>108</sup> The former was named after the leftover neon sign from *Drifting Clouds*, and the cinema is now used only for private screenings and events. The entertainment complex as a whole retains the name Andorra, and its website describes it as "a place in the world" and provides a brief historical overview of the site:

In the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century a Russian merchant sold home-made candies at Eerikinkatu 11 and the basement of the building was used for selling firewood. The building was renovated in 1966 and is known as Rakennusmestarien Talo (building engineers' house).<sup>109</sup>

As with Kaurismäki's public statements about the cityscape, the description reveals a commitment to retaining links between the past and the present, and promoting an understanding of the city's psychogeographic history. It is difficult to establish how active a role Kaurismäki has in the day-to-day running of the bars and restaurants owned by him: one would suspect that it is minimal, given that the director spends half of the year living in Portugal. Kaurismäki's direct personal influence in these ventures might be limited to investment, occasional patronage and the donation of used film props to create an ironic auto-pastiche of 'Kaurismäkianness'. These venues, then, are

<sup>104</sup> Eeva Järvenpää and Sirpa Rähä, *Ensimmäisiä esikaupunkeja. Kertomuksia Kaartinkaupungin ja Kampin kortteleista* (Helsinki: HS kirjat, 2009), 228.

<sup>105</sup> von Bagh, *Suomalaisen elokuvan kultainen kirja*, 8.

<sup>106</sup> von Bagh, *Aki Kaurismäki*, 22. Kaurismäki is also reported to have said Andorra was located both geographically and conceptually between the National Film Archives and mainstream commercial cinemas. Viander, "Aki Kaurismäki," 6.

<sup>107</sup> Järvenpää and Rähä, *Ensimmäisiä esikaupunkeja*, 229-230.

<sup>108</sup> Järvenpää and Rähä, *Ensimmäisiä esikaupunkeja*, 230.

<sup>109</sup> "Andorra. A Place in the World" [website] available from <http://www.andorra.fi/> [cited 6.3.2011].

'Kaurismäkian' in the sense that their look draws from Kaurismäki's cinematic oeuvre, and that an awareness of their existence contributes to the broader Kaurismäkian auteur narrative, even though the director's role in running them remains ambiguous.

Officially alternative: selling a Kaurismäkian city

In an essay collection about the urban culture of Helsinki, Sirpa Tani describes the experience of a hypothetical tourist in the capital city. The tourist takes part in a guided tour, collecting ticket stubs and other memorabilia along the way. The tourist learns that the restaurant s/he has stopped in is owned by the filmmaking Kaurismäki brothers, and hears a fellow customer describe the Helsinki of their films. This cinematic city sounds completely different to the one the tourist has already explored, and s/he resolves to visit the areas north of Pitkäsilta, such as Kallio and Hakaniemi: these Kaurismäkian spaces the helpful local feels are more authentic, more marked with life, than the city centre whose outlook and culture strives for a Euro-worthy sterility.<sup>110</sup> Having experienced Helsinki from two very different angles, the tourist returns home, only to be wrong-footed by reading yet another 'authentic' take on Helsinki, one s/he does not connect with at all.<sup>111</sup> Tani provides the tale as a reminder of the many ways it is possible to 'authentically' experience the city. The relative importance granted to the Kaurismäkian view of Helsinki, however, indicates the significance of the Kaurismäkian oeuvre in imagining Finland, suggesting that the Kaurismäkian Helsinki is the dominant alternative perspective on the city.

Elsewhere Tani draws attention to the official appropriation of these Kaurismäkian spaces for tourism purposes with reference to the city of Helsinki's tourism campaign Nordic Oddity, which sought to attract young adults to the city. In the 2005 incarnation of the campaign the city was given three distinct identities: Groovy, Smooth and Bohemian, each indicating a set of activities, events and places to visit in the city. Bohemian Nordic Oddity – the title itself recalling the epithet frequently applied to the interpreter of Kaurismäki's screen alter egos, Matti Pellonpää – has a certain Kaurismäkian flavour, as the Kaurismäkian bars are prominently featured in the list of attractions.<sup>112</sup> Giacomo Bottà considers the use of the word "oddity" in the campaign, and

<sup>110</sup> The local specifically disapproves of what he considers to be moves to make the city "European and clinically neat" in time for Helsinki being named the European Capital of Culture in 2000. Sirpa Tani, "Turistin katseita kaupunkiin," in *Urbs. Kirja Helsingin laupunkikulttuurista*, ed. Stadipiiri (Helsinki: Edita, 2000), 155-156.

<sup>111</sup> Tani, "Turistin katseita kaupunkiin," 159-160.

<sup>112</sup> Tani, "The Aesthetics of Backyards", p.2.

suggests that the term itself is closely associated with the work of the Kaurismäkis.<sup>113</sup> Tani sees in the references to Kaurismäki and his business ventures in the Nordic Oddity campaign a sign that “Kaurismäkian Helsinki has finally moved from the margins to the core of the image created for marketing purposes.”<sup>114</sup>

More recently the Nordic Oddity categories have been Alternative, Bliss and Chill Out. The categories describe different ways of experiencing the city:

Alternative Nordic Oddity introduces Finland’s unique culture, a warm melancholy that can be found in and around the city centre

Bliss Nordic Oddity is suited to the lifestyles of people that appreciate luxury and entertainment

Creative Nordic Oddity offers a range of alternatives for visitors interested in inexpensive and creative ways to enjoy for example of [sic] nightlife<sup>115</sup>

While Bliss and Creative direct people how to carry out particular activities or “lifestyles” in the city, the Alternative category is the only one that is described as arising out of Helsinki itself, as informed by a particular local identity. The logo of the category even gives added prominence to the ‘native’ part of the title and foregrounds the idea of lived experience, authenticity and locality. It is unsurprising, then, given the importance of local cultures and identities to the Kaurismäkian city, that Kafe Moskva, Dubrovnik Lounge and Lobby and the Corona Bar are all listed under the officially sanctioned ‘alternative’ city experience.<sup>116</sup>

<sup>113</sup> Giacomo Bottà, "Urban Creativity and Popular Music in Europe since the 1970s: Representation, Materiality, and Branding," in *Creative Urban Milieus. Historical Perspectives on Culture, Economy, and the City*, eds Martina Heßler and Clemens Zimmermann (Frankfurt/Main: Campus, 2008), 304.

<sup>114</sup> Tani, "The Aesthetics of Backyards".

<sup>115</sup> "Marketing campaigns" [website] *Visit Helsinki*, available from [http://www.visithelsinki.fi/In\\_English/Trade/Marketing/Marketing\\_campaigns.iw3](http://www.visithelsinki.fi/In_English/Trade/Marketing/Marketing_campaigns.iw3) [cited 1.1.2011].

<sup>116</sup> See for example Helsinki City Tourist & Convention Bureau, "Nordic Oddity. 24 hours in Helsinki" [brochure/map] *Visit Helsinki*, (2009) available from <http://www.visithelsinki.fi/loader.aspx?id=bd0eeb61-6e35-40bf-945d-4279dc773604> [cited 1.1.2011]; Helsinki City Tourist & Convention Bureau, "Nordic Oddity. 24 hours in Helsinki" [brochure/map] *Visit Helsinki*, (2010) available from <http://www.visithelsinki.fi/loader.aspx?id=32ae69ad-4969-4ede-86bc-47e7356e2faa> [cited 1.1.2011]. I thank Karoliina Saarnikko of the Helsinki City Tourist & Convention Bureau for making the Nordic Oddity map available to me.

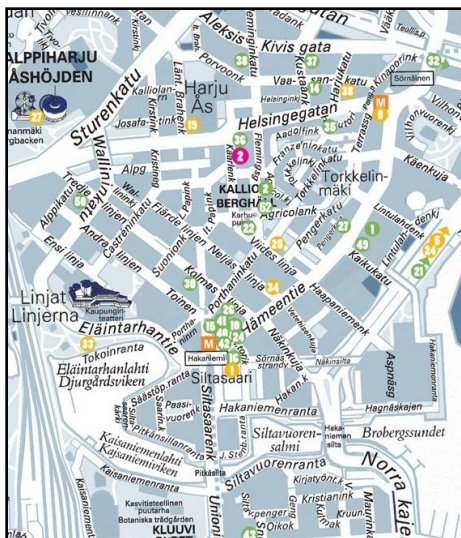


Figure 36. “Nordic Oddity 2010” (detail) (c) Helsinki City Tourist & Convention Bureau

What is striking about these new Nordic Oddity identities is how they are spread out across the city, and in particular how Kaurismäkian the Alternative category is: even the description of ‘warm melancholy’ could easily have been lifted from a review of one of Kaurismäki’s films. While the Alternative (green), Bliss (pink) and Creative (orange) destinations are relatively evenly spread out in the centre of the city, placed mainly between Arkadiankatu and Uudenmaankatu and in the proximity of the Central Train Station, Alternative has close to a monopoly on Kallio and the environs of the Hakaniemi market hall, places that figure frequently in Kaurismäkian

films (Figure 36). In addition to Kaurismäkian locations being listed as Alternative, then, the Alternative experience itself is Kaurismäkian. In essence, the advice Tani’s hypothetical tourist received from a cynical local in the year 2000 had within a few years become part of the city’s essential marketing strategy.

That the Kaurismäkian approach to the city is becoming understood as a marketable identity by Finnish officials testifies to the filmmaker’s increasing influence over the national mythscape. The Nordic Oddity-promotion aims to encourage people to visit the bars and cafés that are endowed with an air of official auteurial-nationality and to ‘location-sleuth’ Kaurismäkian places: places which by virtue of their marketed Kaurismäkianness lose their anonymity. The perpetuation of the Kaurismäkian cityscape, then, does not serve to challenge hegemonic views of the city so much as it becomes a part of them: perhaps not the dominant thread in the narrative, but an officially sanctioned one nonetheless. This national-commercial appropriation of Kaurismäkian spatial narratives, then, is a pertinent reminder of the fact that in order to understand how cinema is involved in process of national imagining it is necessary to also look beyond the confines of the film text.

## Conclusion

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When Aki Kaurismäki's latest film *Le Havre* was released in Finland in September 2011, the tabloid newspaper *Ilta-Sanomat* dedicated two pages to discussing the director's work and posed the question "Is Aki Kaurismäki the last film artist or an overvalued national monument?".<sup>1</sup> The article concluded eventually that he could well be both: there was an air of resignation in the article, an acceptance that Kaurismäki is a nationally significant figure, for better or for worse.

A few days later *Le Havre* was selected by the Finnish Film Chamber as Finland's nominee for a foreign language Oscar. Like Kaurismäki's appointment as the Academician of film three years earlier, the selection of *Le Havre* demonstrates Kaurismäki's significance in Finnish cultural life. Indeed, as *Le Havre* was being shown in competition at the Cannes International Film Festival earlier on in the year the Finnish media showed keen interest in the film, seemingly expecting another 'national' win from Kaurismäki.<sup>2</sup> The musician Herra Ylppö even proposed that, should Kaurismäki's latest offering win the Palme D'Or, the director should be welcomed back to Finland with the same pomp and ceremony that had in recent years been afforded to Finland's World Champion ice hockey team and the band Lordi, which won the Eurovision Song Contest in 2006: in these cases tens of thousands of people had assembled with very short notice at the city centre in Helsinki for celebratory concerts and a presidential greeting.<sup>3</sup> In among the publicity around *Le Havre* Kaurismäki has also been called on to comment on a range of political issues, from the current financial crisis to cultural policies and the recent electoral success of the True Finns party.<sup>4</sup>

The nomination of *Le Havre* and the kind of public role expected from Kaurismäki in promoting it exemplify the nexus between the auteur and nation in Kaurismäki's cinema, or the way in which 'Kaurismäkianness' is inflected with 'Finnishness', even when the film in question cannot be said to be 'Finnish' in any meaningful way: *Le Havre* is set in France, spoken in French, features an

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<sup>1</sup> Kari Salminen, "Kaikki hyvin Akilandiassa?", *Ilta-Sanomat* 10.9.2011, 34-35.

<sup>2</sup> See for example Lehtonen, "Menevätkö Cannesin palkinnot uudelle sukupolvelle?", n.p.; "Kaurismäelle epävirallinen kriitikkopalkinto Cannesissa", *Helsingin Sanomat* 22.5.2011, n.p.; Veli-Pekka Lehtonen, "Kaurismäelle povataan palkintoa", *Helsingin Sanomat* 20.5.2011, n.p.; Raine Tiessalo, "Kaurismäelle sovitellaan jo Cannesin pääpalkintoa" *YLE* [website], available from [http://yle.fi/uutiset/kulttuuri/2011/05/kaurismaelle\\_sovitellaan\\_jo\\_cannesin\\_paapalkintoa\\_2601216.html](http://yle.fi/uutiset/kulttuuri/2011/05/kaurismaelle_sovitellaan_jo_cannesin_paapalkintoa_2601216.html) [cited 3.10.2011]

<sup>3</sup> "Suomalaisrokkari: Torilla tavataan jos Kaurismäki voittaa Cannesissa!" *YLEX* [website], available from <http://ylex.yle.fi/uutiset/popuutiset/suomalaisrokkari-torilla-tavataan-jos-kaurismaki-voittaa-cannesissa> [cited 1.10.2011]

<sup>4</sup> See for example "Aki Kaurismäen haastattelu", *YLE Areena* [video], available at <http://areena.yle.fi/video/1314884399771> [cited 1.10.2011]; Hanna Kuusela, "Rainy day, dream away", *Voima* 6/2011, 16-19.

international cast (even Finnish actors Elina Salo and Kati Outinen play French characters) and was coproduced by French and German production companies. The Finnishness of Kaurismäki's cinema, then, transcends the parameters of the films themselves.

The present thesis arises out of a desire to understand this transcendence, or the connection between the auteur and nation in Kaurismäkian cinema. Despite the problematic histories of both concepts they remain relevant to the film viewing process, and in some instances the auteur and nation have become entwined in unexpected ways. In order to appreciate how the auteur and nation can be implicated in one another I developed in this thesis a model of analysis that not only explores how an auteur engages with the national mythscape, but also takes into account how a particular auteorial approach to nationhood can in turn feed back into society.

Analysis of Aki Kaurismäki's Finland trilogy – *Drifting Clouds*, *The Man Without A Past* and *Lights in the Dusk* – revealed complex connections between the films and the national mythscape. The films' heightened nostalgia, depiction of place and network of auteorial intertextuality serve to interconnect Kaurismäkianness and Finnishness on the level of the film text, for example in the way the social criticism of each of the films draws on references to Kaurismäki's earlier work. The extratextual iterations of Kaurismäkianness, or how popular opinion and Finnish institutions have engaged with the Kaurismäkian film world, demonstrate a similar interconnectedness. This real-world linkage between Finnishness and Kaurismäkianness is illustrated, for example, in the way the intertextual loss that colours *Drifting Clouds* was appropriated and given formal national recognition by Finland's Post in a stamp set celebrating the centenary of Finnish cinema; the way *The Man Without A Past's* international success acted as a catalyst for popular debate about Finnish society and culture; and how a Kaurismäkian understanding of space and locality has become an important part of the City of Helsinki's tourism campaign.

The Finland trilogy reflects the complex processes of national imagination in Finland's years of Europeanisation. The films are symptomatic of the broader turn towards national culture following Finland's EU accession and reflect a desire to come to terms with contemporary challenges to national identity. At the same time the films' self-reflective and ritualised Kaurismäkianness, infused as it is with critical international accolades, leads to a process of national imagining that is also aware of its international audience. Indeed, as the publicity around *Le Havre* further demonstrates, the director's profile on the international film festival circuit plays an integral part

## CONCLUSION

in the national prestige of Kaurismäkianness. The national mythscape and the auteur framework are intricately interlinked in Kaurismäki's cinema, and it is as a result of this complex relationship that 'Kaurismäkianness' has become a valuable source for official Finnish institutions as they, too, strive to establish a marketable Finnish identity on an international stage.



## Filmography

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*Aaltra* (Gustave de Kervern and Benoît Delépine, 2004)  
*Ambush/Rukajärven tie* (Olli Saarela, 1999)  
*Amélie/Le Fabuleux Destin d'Amélie Poulain* (Jean-Pierre Jeunet, 2001)  
*American Graffiti* (George Lucas, 1973)  
*Ariel* (Aki Kaurismäki, 1988)  
*Back to the Future* (Robert Zemeckis, 1985)  
*Badding* (Markku Pölönen, 2000)  
*Bico* (Aki Kaurismäki, 2004)  
*Blade Runner* (Ridley Scott, 1982)  
*Blow-Up* (Michelangelo Antonioni, 1966)  
*Breathless/A bout de souffle* (Jean-Luc Godard, 1960)  
*Calamari Union* (Aki Kaurismäki, 1985)  
*The Clan – A Tale of the Frogs/Klaani – Tarina Sammakoitten suvusta* (Mika Kaurismäki, 1984)  
*Crime and Punishment/Rikos ja rangaistus* (Aki Kaurismäki, 1983)  
*Dirty Hands/Likaiset kädet* (Aki Kaurismäki, 1989)  
*Dogs Have No Hell* (Aki Kaurismäki, 2002)  
*Dogville* (Lars von Trier, 2002)  
*Drifting Clouds/Kauas pilvet karkaavat* (Aki Kaurismäki, 1996)  
*Farewell My Concubine/Bàwáng Bié Jī* (Chen Kaige, 1993)  
*The Flight Before Christmas/Niko – lentäjän poika* (Michael Hegner and Kari Juusonen, 2008)  
*Forty Guns* (Samuel Fuller, 1957)  
*Grease* (Randal Kleiser, 1978)  
*Hamlet Goes Business/Hamlet liikemaailmassa* (Aki Kaurismäki, 1987)  
*Hate/La haine* (Mathieu Kassovitz, 1995)  
*Hold on to Your Scarf, Tatjana/Pidä huivista kiinni, Tatjana* (Aki Kaurismäki, 1994)  
*Howard's End* (James Ivory, 1992)  
*The Hurt Locker* (Kathryn Bigelow, 2009)  
*I Hired a Contract Killer* (Aki Kaurismäki, 1990)  
*Jackpot 2* (Mika Kaurismäki, 1981)  
*Juha* (Aki Kaurismäki, 1999)  
*Juha* (Nyrki Tapiovaara, 1937)  
*Kaikki rakastavat* (Valentin Vaala, 1935)  
*Kill Bill* (Quentin Tarantino, 2003–2004)  
*La Vie de Bohème* (Aki Kaurismäki, 1992)  
*The Lady Bug* (Jane Campion, 2007)  
*Laveata tietä* (Valentin Vaala, 1931)  
*Le Havre* (Aki Kaurismäki, 2011)  
*Leningrad Cowboys Go America* (Aki Kaurismäki, 1989)  
*The Liar/Valehtelija* (Mika Kaurismäki, 1981)  
*Lights in the Dusk/Laitakaupungin valot* (Aki Kaurismäki, 2006)  
*Lilo & Stitch* (Chris Sanders and Dean DeBlois, 2002)

*The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring* (Peter Jackson, 2001)  
*Lovers and Leavers/Kuutamolla* (Aku Louhimies, 2002)  
*The Man Without A Past/Mies vailla menneisyyttä* (Aki Kaurismäki, 2002)  
*The Match Factory Girl/Tulitikkutehtaan tyttö* (Aki Kaurismäki, 1990)  
*Monsters Inc.* (Pete Docket, 2001)  
*The Moonshiners/Salaviinanpolttajat* (Teuvo Puro and Louis Sparré, 1907)  
*Mouchette* (Robert Bresson, 1967)  
*Naked* (Mike Leigh, 1993)  
*Never on Sunday/Pote tin Kyriaki* (Jules Dassin, 1960)  
*Night on Earth* (Jim Jarmusch, 1991)  
*The Piano* (Jane Campion, 1993)  
*Pirates of the Caribbean: At World's End* (Gore Verbinski, 2007)  
*Priest of Evil /Harjunpää ja pahan pappi* (Olli Saarela, 2010)  
*Rare Exports – A Christmas Tale* (Jalmari Helander, 2010)  
*Right on, Man!/Täältä tullaan elämä* (Tapio Suominen, 1980)  
*Rolli/Röllä ja metsänhenki* (Olli Saarela, 2001)  
*A Room With A View* (James Ivory, 1985)  
*Rosso* (Mika Kaurismäki, 1985)  
*The Royal Tenenbaums* (Wes Anderson, 2001)  
*The Saimaa Gesture/Saimaa-ilmiö* (Mika and Aki Kaurismäki, 1981)  
*Se minun töistäni* (Eero Tuomikoski, 1984)  
*Shadows in Paradise/Varjoja paratiisissa* (Aki Kaurismäki, 1986)  
*Soot and Gold/Nokea ja kultaa* (Edvin Laine, 1945)  
*A Summer by the River/Kuningasjätkä* (Markku Pölönen, 1998)  
*To Each His Own Cinema/Chacun son cinema* (2007)  
*Total Balalaika Show* (Aki Kaurismäki, 1993)  
*Total Recall* (Paul Verhoeven, 1990)  
*The Tough Ones/Häijyt* (Aleksi Mäkelä, 1999)  
*The Unknown Soldier/Tuntematon sotilas* (Edvin Laine, 1955)  
*The White Reindeer/Valkoinen peura* (Erik Blomberg, 1952)  
*Workers Leaving the Lumière Factory in Lyon/La Sortie des usines Lumière à Lyon* (Louis Lumière, 1895)  
*The Worthless/Arvottomat* (Mika Kaurismäki, 1982)  
*The Year of the Hare/Jäniksen vuosi* (Risto Jarva, 1977)  
*Zorba the Greek* (Mihalis Kakogiannis, 1964)

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