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MYTHIC WOMEN IN THE NORTH – BETWEEN REALITY AND

FANTASY1

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In the Land of Women (Terra Feminarum) there are no leaders among them and they do not know the Christian God, instead they worship snakes and birds. Adam of Bremen (1044–1075) (Kannisto et al. 1982, 15)

Ultimate Thule. Terra Nullius. Femina Borealis. The Land of Hero Drowners. The Man Eating Village. Pohjola. North Cape. The Arctic Circle. The Land of Lux and Lucifer, Louhi and Lovetar, Maderakka, Sarahka, Uksakka, Juksakka. Akka. Rauni. Äkäätär. Rauna neide, The Great Bear, Otava, ILMATAR, KAVE, The Maiden on the Rainbow....

This article will revisit the North, its gendered myths, its conscious and unconscious politics, its political and psychological unconscious. Its collective and repressed Manala, its freezing tundras beyond and over the mystic Tuonela. The beauty of its snowscapes, its soul-sobering silences. The expanses to soothe the wandering gaze, to fix the restless soul.

Epics and myths among other cultural narratives are not innocent. They have socio-political and economic dimensions, their tentacles reach far into our souls and the pocket book, they are subtle tools of gendering processes, they are unrecognized technologies of collective socialization, they design and naturalize those constructed “essences” and social relations, those fictions we call “males” and “females,” “Westerners” and “Natives,” the “North,” and the “South.”

This article will contrast the dominant myths and motifs regarding “Pohjola” with the geopolitical reality of the North, a region that affects men and women very differently in today’s context of globalization. Pohjola is a pivot of the mythical yet

1. I wish to thank the Finnish Academy for funding which contributed to this research (“Gendered Power Relations, Violence and Monoacculturation in Educational Institutions, 2000). Special thanks to Mari Lahtinen for research assistance.

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geopolitical imaginary, and a favoured realm of fantasy, a projection screen and blank page for the most diverse desires and hopes, fears and yearnings. How are they gendered, how does gender play in the tundras and fjords of the psyche and the bodysoul? How are the notions of the North and of Nordicity similar or different across the Canadian and Finnish North, across time and space, from Greco-Roman myths to pan-arctic narratives of the modern age? What is the gendered core of the North?

Image-clusters of the North

Much has been written about the North as a Mystic/Mythic North in Canada and the Nordic countries; it is generally recognized that the concept – what I call “Nordicity” – involves a particular set of projections of human desire, fears and adventurous spirit for which the Arctic and subarctic areas of the world have for long provided an attractive screen. There is, however, a black hole, a gaping gap in the research and writings on Nordicity; this has to do with the lack of gender sensitivity or awareness as to the gender of northern sensibility and mythic patterns. Such studies are as scanty and scarce as trees on the tundra. Women’s perspectives and gaze on the North are covered over by thick permafrost. Nordicity—the study of the North in all of its various spiritual, ethnocultural, gendered, geopolitical, internal and external dimensions – is characterized by an overwhelming focus on the male experience – whether we think of explorers, frontiersmen, hunters, developers, colonialists, tourists or brave adventurers seeking the exotic, the extraordinary, the pure, the wild, the landmarks of “freedom”. To quote Laurie Kruk, one of many Canadian scholars focused on the Northern dimension:

For Atwood, Kroetsch, and others, Canada’s national identity is bound up with the idea of “the North,” a utopian zone wherein resides our endlessly deferred maturity.

Lawren Harris, whose painting with the Group of Seven and on his own helped to establish the idea of “the mystic North,” ... wrote: “We are on the fringe of the great North and its living whiteness, its loneliness and replenishment...its cleansing rhythms. It seems that the top of the continent is a source of spiritual flow...” (Kruk

1990, 45)

Another Canadian researcher, Jeanette Lynes (1990) expresses my own concerns when asking which questions one should privilege when engaging with “Nordicity”: Which north? Or, to pose a related question, whose north? (1990, 8). As Margaret Atwood remarks in “Strange things: the Malevolent North in Canadian Literature, “North”, being a direction, is relative. “The North’ is thought of as a place, but it’s a place with shifting boundaries...a state of mind” (qtd. in Lynes 1990, 8). Atwood examines this “state of mind” in terms of the mythologies, or what she calls the

“image-clusters” that it has spawned in the popular imagination. “North,” in

Atwood's analysis, is more or less synonymous with wilderness, and she evokes such figures as Franklin, Grey Owl and Pauline Johnston, to explicate certain aspects of wilderness mythology: its preoccupations, for instance, with savagery and exoticism, disaster and deliverance (qtd. in Lynes 1990, 114?). Echoing what many other analysts of the North have remarked, while the 'north' might be a plural signification in terms of 'where,' in terms of 'who', Atwood postulates that an essentially masculine myth of heroic adventure and exploits underpins constructions of the North in the popular imagination. Atwood's discussion of men moiling for gold under the midnight sun might have been augmented in interesting ways by a consideration of yet another north, that of Labrador (Lynes 1990, 83). In the Nordic context, too, much literature has been produced about the North as a particular space for male initiation, action and quests. Much of this genre of writing is a form of nature writing where the male ethos is predominant, whether the authors describe fishing, hunting or existential themes linked with the North (eg. Varis 2003; Varis 2004).²

Arctic Othering – linked with the study of the North or Nordicity – is another theoretical concept I have coined for analyzing how women in the North are represented as a symptom and effect of asymmetrical power relations; in this sense Arctic Othering refers to the effects on groups like women or the Indigenous populations of not being the subjects in sufficient control of collective mind colonization regarding gender, the environment, and the values that would best guarantee a good life in the North – for all. I follow Edward Said's "orientalism" as a study of an imperial and colonizing gaze which, in the case I present, is not directed at the East and its exotic "others" but at the Northern peripheries, their women and pristine nature, resources and hidden treasures. It has particular relevance for understanding the portrayal of Sami or Native Canadian women as the exotic other, rendered inhuman by the mechanisms of idealisation or denigration (the noble savage, drunken squaw-stereotypes). The related term Nordicity further refers to the study of issues in and around the North, the Circumpolar World, based on webs of considerations that must be kept in view when dealing with this vast region. As a political and psychological idea, and as the matrix of conscious and unconscious fantasies, dreams, assumptions, and even fears, Nordicity refers to a place of romance, exotic beings, haunting memories and landscapes; remarkable experiences that are feared to be disappearing (Penniket 1985; Hamelin 1978). Like the Orient, the North is not only a particular geographic site, but also a particular ambivalent mindscape for those (mostly outsiders) longing for their imaginary, "primitive" past; or for escapism from urban boredom. For the locals, in contrast, it is only too real, only too boring and oppressive, and at the same time, full of dazzling splendour, existential joy, life and

2. See Inger Birkeland (1999, 2000) for a study of the North Cape as a gendered and gendering screen of psychological projections.

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beauty, like the desert's nuanced riches which so often are invisible to the outsider's untrained mind. The magic invisibility of that which to outsiders seems like mere aridity, virtuality, Terra Nullius. Nordicity can represent an illusion or a mirage for non-indigenous people or for those un-identified with their indigenous roots (cf. Birkeland 2000). This is because the North implies longings for purity and the destruction of the very purity longed for and pursued at any cost. One can call this projection Arctic othering for the term Arctic represents the less familiar (and hence more idealized and also more denigrated) dimension of many humans' externalized experience – a form of “other”.

In economic and political terms, Arctic othering also manifests itself as the one-sided exploitation or "development" of northern peoples and lands, the latter as exotic playgrounds for the privileged people who have the time and money to seek a lost rapport with "nature." As Vandana Shiva has said, “Before yearning there was destruction, before romanticizing there was violence” (1993, 145). Before Development, there was balanced ecology, lack of “opportunity,” before Progress, there was serenity, alignment between humans and environment. Now there is Money, prostitution, consumerism. Before Terra Nullius, there was local habitation, gift economies, verdde systems. After globalization, there is unemployment, opportunities, mining, bingos, the ozone layer, global warming. Farewell to welfare. The reality changes, but the myths, they live on, they linger and lead a life of their own...

In the critical yet loving gaze I direct at the myths of the North, I wish to give some gripping facts on the gendered and ethnocultural politics of representation. I want to provide soulful glances at Lovi, Louhi, Lovetar, Pohjan Akka, Mistress of the North, who is a most complex character condensing numerous cross-cultural motifs and female figures from the Greco-Roman mythology to Sami and Nordic oral tradition. She is best known through the Finnish Kalevala, an epic which is an appropriate mise-en-abyme of the tendencies persisting in literature on the North. In many ways the Finnish epic epitomizes the masculinist bias regarding representations of the deep North, to which I have alluded above. The epic's central tensions and dualisms pit the male heroes' land against that of the Northern matriarchy or Pohjola, which is the Finns' major projection screen for both positive and negative stirrings and impulses – what psychoanalysis calls simply “desire”. In short, men are the subjects and key protagonists while women are defined in relation to male relatives or male values and ideas about gender-appropriate femininity and masculinity.

The literary and mythic tradition transmitted and reified by Kalevala has been so influential within Finnish culture that it has created a near-naturalized order of the Mythic Landscape. It has created an imaginary that reproduces certain core narratives, beliefs and biases with the result that the image cluster perpetuates the same stereotypical views of gender ad nauseam. Although Finnish folk poetry in the multiple volumes collected in the 19th century contains a wealth of alternative narratives both

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of the North, of Pohjola and of the mythic characters from haltias and heroes to goddesses defying patriarchal gender scripts, the same male-created stories are repeated in slight variations even beyond Finland's borders. The striking feature about these stories is that their representations of femininity and masculinity, male heroes and female anti-heroes could not be further removed from reality, in light of historical facts or contemporary developments. The question therefore imposes itself as to the reasons for such stability of the oral tradition and their literary offspring – and for the psychological meaning of such projections across time and space, from Finland to North America.

These myths are not as innocent as they may appear at first sight. They are not just stories. At worst, they are harmful to women's self-representations and even to career choices because they have a way of naturalizing and thereby near-legitimizing gender-specific realms of influence, being and power. The European Union has set up numerous programs and funds many projects aimed at dismantling European gender segregation. The fact is that European working life is divided into sharply separate male and female spheres with women getting, in all woman-dominated fields, the shorter end of the socio-economic stick – in terms of rights and entitlements, employment security and salary scales. For all their differences, European societies have all tended to socialize women through career counseling and institutional practices into choosing employment and careers in education, care work, health care and social work. Men and boys tend to choose mathematics, natural sciences, physics and technology, and end up in much greater numbers than women in the enclaves of power and prestige in politics and economic life. There are also few women in leadership position or in the fields of "hard science." The different socialization has led to a vertical and horizontal segregation of the sexes (Hirdman 1988). The aim of the many EU projects is to encourage women to choose the male-dominated fields and to make career counselors, teachers, educators and policy makers more gender sensitive and conscious of the subtle and less subtle workings of gender conditioning. Myths are a powerful tool of conditioning people into accepting and embracing gender appropriate ideas and behaviors because they make them appear immutable, timeless and desirable. Hence one needs to become more sensitive about the constructed and culturally variable nature of gender scripts transmitted by myths, and to see them as a social relation, not as a reflection of a biological essence.

As I will show, Louhi, the "Gap-toothed Mistress of the North" is a case in point. Ilmarinen, the "eternal hammerer" is endowed with all the positive attributes of a male innovator, scientist, smith, and creator (Kailo 2002). In sharp contrast, Louhi, something of a feminized alter ego for all of the male heroes is as a woman of science and innovation/power made to carry all the negative attributes of knowledge as mere black magic. The famous painting by Akseli Gallen-Kallela, *Sammon Ryöstö* (The Theft of the Sampo) has completed the picture; can young, self-conscious girls and women identify with a role model of awesome skills, leadership and creative ideas

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(Louhi invents the idea of the Sampo) when it is couched in such grim imagery; Louhi, after all, is depicted as an old, ugly, animalistic, aggressive and asexual hag that does not provide a positive mirror image for female scientists-to-be. Louhi is a character that has (like the Finnish epic Kalevala) intrigued me for long as a research subject (Kailo 1985; 1987; 1988, 1992; 1996; 2000a; 2000b; 2002). This time, I will analyze how she is linked with the idea of the North, and how this mythic cluster ties in with a strong, powerful woman's mythic evil, greed, avarice and transgressive role in Finnish-American science fiction. Finally, I hint at the meanings she could have for the women's Mythic North beyond the male fantasies and projections.

Louhi and her mythic kin are truly liminal figures – neither totally outside of mainstream narratives and scholarship, nor analyzed and approached as the central figures that they represent to woman-identified women. In the liminal space of Kalevala and myth scholarship, Louhi occupies a favored position of in-between, between the male or androcentric scholars perpetuating the myth of her predominantly evil, castrating character and role, and those, mostly female or feminist theorists, for whom she is a figure more of renewal and promise (Korte 1988; Vakimo 1999). The North in all of its ambivalence is a kind of trope of the in-between – between light and dark, the death and return of Nature's cycles, arid landscapes and dazzling sights of beauty. While it may be understandable that this geographic location has been feminized and made to symbolize liminal states and psychic longings, its meanings are likely to be very different for women. For women, Louhi can thus represent a Northern Strong woman emancipated from the shackles of the whore-Madonna dichotomy and the historically recurrent sets of disempowering stereotypes. She condenses a number of mythic re-sisters of patriarchy from Sami and Nordic mythology to Greco-Roman mythic discourses in their pre and post-Hellenic forms (Ränk). In very few writings does Louhi appear close to her most distant, archaic roles or mythic relatives, as the one releasing, not concealing and hoarding the the moon and the sun – the representation which Elias Lönnrot has locked her in, petrifying her creative spirit in male fears of her life-enhancing powers. It is important to remember that mythology does not as much provide eternal gender scripts as much as historical sex/gender contracts are projected onto them and their re-presentations. As in all other manifestations of social life, they reflect broader social concepts about the gender relations; thus there has according to Ortner & Whitehead (1980, 8) been a general cultural tendency to define men in terms of status and role categories (warrior, hunter, statesman, elder and the like) that have little to do with men's relations with women. Women in contrast tend to be defined almost entirely in relational terms – typically in terms pertaining to kin roles (wife, mother, and sister) which upon closer inspection turn out to mean that they center around women's relationships to men. This contrast is not in most cases an explicit component of cultural thought but as feminist anthropologists have shown, it constitutes a very general feature of the way in which the categories of male and female are differently

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defined and organized cross-culturally. Stereotyped narratives have a way of lending unconscious and narrative support to the politics of representations that lock women into the fields labeled as “unproductive;” they tend to be socio-economically less prestigious than those to which men are socialized and encouraged to orient themselves – High Tech and economics, politics and business. Hence the importance of exposing the hegemonic male (Connell 1995) agenda in the Northern imaginary, and to suggest how it might look through the female gaze – or even, the Sami gaze, the scene and geography of elsewhere. Through another imaginary.³

The witch is a classical antitype: the Other. Antitypes are categories onto which individuals and groups project qualities that they do not accept in themselves or that they wish to idealize in the other. Those qualities are ‘exteriorized’ onto the Other, developing a we-they dichotomy, with differences defined as deviances. Extreme outsiders are the antitypes of stereotypes from the insider’s perspective. For Winnie Tomm, for example, in her analysis of mythic women and female psychology, the female witch is the antitype of dependent femininity. She is the archetype of independent female power:

The [historic] refusal by the Church (supported by the state) to allow women to practise healing and midwifery (their main activities) was fuelled by several factors. (Tomm 1995, 214.) Women’s power to both create and destroy was displaced into a nurturing power that supports male power of creating and destruction. Women’s bodies very often symbolize that form of nurturing power, the power to empower men. Women’s power, when it does not do that is viewed negatively. The witch image is the exemplary ‘antitype’ image of women whose power is not directed primarily at supporting men’s authority. Old women are sometimes referred to as hags. This denigrating term is a form of slander which devalues the existence of women when their sexuality is perceived to be no longer of service. Mary Daly’s use of ‘Lust’ as the passion for being is a powerful symbol of women’s bodied spiritual, vital energy. As the new definition enables women to feel lusty, the old feeling of being victimized by men’s lust for women loses its grip. (Tomm 1995, 76)

It is necessary to raise awareness of these gendering representations so that women might begin to resist the tendency to regard their bodies in terms of the pervasive beauty myth that serves to divert women’s attention from actualizing their potentials as whole and healthy persons (Tomm 1995, 76).

Prior research on women and the North

The historical itinerary of Nordic and Arctic women’s mythic patterns has yet to be written. Of course, much has been written about women in Northern myths and

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“The imaginary” is a psychoanalytic term that derives from the influential writings of the French theorist Jacques Lacan.

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literary traditions, but rarely from the perspective that is conscious of the asymmetrical power relations, and that does not reiterate and perpetuate unchallenged patriarchal notions about the sexes, their desirable roles and ways of behaving.⁴ What, however, might women across the North have in common that we might analyze them in such light? Are not Nordic, North American, Russian and Indigenous Northern women's lives and realities too heterogenous and locally specific to allow for any monocultural patterns or red threads to unite them? It is important to remember that "femininity" and "masculinity" are not essentialist notions to do with biology, but a culturally and historically contingent social relation. Can one meaningfully talk about women and science or women and knowledge without exploring the different meanings and practices that accumulate in the life of someone who is a woman at any particular historical intersection of race, class and culture? There are as many relationships between women and mythic patterns as there are cultural configurations of womanhood (and of myths). Or are there?

First of all, like men who have established cross-cultural networks of patriarchal mythological research (even when they do not label it as such), women, too, have formed various "imaginary communities" based on what they might well have in common despite the recognition of obvious differences. Although the women's movement has in the 1980s and 1990s expressed suspicion over any universals, with women of color particularly critical of homogenizing notions of a shared "sisterhood", strategic alliances have been formed to explore not only the differences of access to power and resources but also of shared visions. I do not deny the importance of recognizing that the oppressive "master identity" and consciousness with its dualisms and hierarchies of privilege and power is still a reality and operates not only among male/male but also within female/female relations across class, ethnicity, religion, geography, age, sexual orientation and other such variables. In my collaborative work with Indigenous women (eg. Helander & Kailo 1998) I have taken this into account. However, at this stage of my own research I find it important to participate in efforts to also find mythic materials for a politics of affinity where one might share cultural gender-sensitive materials beyond the colonizing politics. A dissertation on the mythic patterns of the Wolfish Woman Who Married the Bear by Helga Reischl (2004) claims that for all the vast cultural differences, regarding this cross-cultural motif and matrix of narratives, it contains undeniable structural stability even when the stories have

4. There are isolated articles and some dissertations on women's literature in the North from Nina Työlähti's "Mad Women in the (Northern) Attic" to Vuokko Hirvonen's description of Sami women's writings (1999). Despite a number of books on Northern women and enterprise (*), general anthologies (Crnkovich 1990) and special journal issues (Canadian Woman Studies), there are no cross-cultural extensive studies on the Northern mythic patterns across the Arctic and subarctic regions today and in the past. In fact, many women have adopted and internalized the stories written through the male gaze, as natural and appropriate, not even realizing the extent to which a woman-friendly mythic tradition has been overwritten, transformed, neglected, marginalized, even consciously silenced.

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been circulated and transmitted in regions as far apart as today's Northwest Coast of Canada and Greco-Roman myths of the Hellenic age. It seems that striking structural similarities regarding women's relationship with bears and wolves unite women through the shared mythic patterns as far back as the Magdalenian age and possibly even beyond. She lends support to my own claim (eg. Kailo 2000,b) that in the North there are women's cross-cultural image clusters which contrast sharply with the male-identified narrative traditions. I will return to the question of women's gaze on the North after exposing the way Louhi has been immortalized as the evil Witch of the North.⁵

The patriarchal narratives do not as a rule offer mythic patterns focussed on mothers and daughters or on women expressing their divine relationships beyond the prescriptions and dualisms (the whore-madonna categories) of patriarchal religions. Woman or "gynocentric" narratives, in contrast, reflect women's stirrings and existential yearnings not in the world of fathers and sons, husbands and patriarchs, but in terms of their self-defined spiritual and cosmic relations. First I will discuss the recurrent myth of the North and of the evil matriarchal woman, then I will comment on real-life Northern women's issues. Finally, I will speculate on how the North might "look" from the woman's mythic intrapsychic perspective. Although I focus on the Finnish mythic alternative, I will show that like the patriarchal ones, they have similarities or rather, affinities, across "women's" North.

Patriarchal patterns of the Woman of the North – the Malevolent Woman and the Evil Eye

Annis Pratt finds it startling to realize in "The New Feminist Criticism" that volumes have been written about the development of the male psyche as if it, in itself, defined the human soul:

If there is a 'myth of the hero' there must also be a 'myth of the heroine,' a female as well as male bildungsroman, parallel, perhaps, but by no means identical. Carol Christ similarly observes that "the quests of heroes, from Gilgamesh and Odysseus, Apuleius and Augustine, to Stephen Daedalus and Carlos Castaneda, have been recorded

5. I have come up with similar structural patterns and cross-cultural image or story clusters, allowing me to posit that women do share a core narrative which in the Northern regions centers on women marrying or being intimate with bears (Kailo 1997, 2000, 2004). Without analyzing the complex reasons for such structural persistence and mythic stability in this article, it is worth noting that the representation of women – for all their historical and ethnocultural differences – share striking similarities – when circulated and produced by patriarchal institutions controlling the gendered politics. In a similar vein, representations of the feminine and mythic patterns flowing from women's own experiences and desires tend to also converge on similar, if not identical values or ways of relation to the socio-cosmic realm. To offer a simple, if reductive summary of the

similarities in the patriarchal and non-patriarchal patterns, the former tend to define and describe women only or essentially in relation to male relatives and patriarchal social orderings, while the latter focuses on women's desires and fantasies from the standpoint of female subjectivity.

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throughout history. Joseph Campbell in his classic work, *The Hero with A Thousand Faces*, charted the journey of the hero in many cultures. Typically the hero leaves home, defines himself through tests and trials, and returns with a clearer understanding of himself and his place in the world. But if the hero has a thousand faces, the heroine has scarcely a dozen (Wall 1988, 3).

For Kathleen Wall (1988) in *The Callisto Myth from Ovid to Atwood. Initiation and Rape in Literature*; "Defining the mythic patterns which accurately reflect the forms and realities of woman's experience is a major concern of feminist literary criticism. Mythic analyses of literature by and about women have revealed the inadequacies of the paradigms describing the masculine experience that have been posited by Carl Jung, Joseph Campbell, and Northrop Frye" (1988, 3).

Kalevala is a prime example of the allegedly neutral world myths which, at closer analysis, turn out to be narratives of male initiation. As all humans tend to project their shadows, good and bad, on the "other", men have tended to write their stories from the subject position where women constitute tempting objects for the projection of both disowned, negative part-selves, and idealized feminine aspects that they cannot access except through the "Eternal Feminine." If Northern stories in general have reflected the focus on male adventures and projects in which the woman, native, other is a prime object rather than subject, Kalevala's positioning of the tension between the North, Pohjola and the southern land of the Kalevala heroes is the epitome of gendered and gendering polarizations. As Anna-Leena Siikala (1996) and others have discussed, the North has in the popular imaginary come to represent the inner Darkness, the epic battleground of dark and light forces. Throughout the ages, Louhi and her mythic relatives, have been made to bear the mark of shameful femininity, of transgressive gender beyond the desired norms and scripts of patriarchal views of womanhood. Because a self-determining, radically independent, agentic and innovative matriarch "calling her own shots" and exhibiting leadership abilities threatening a male sense of entitlements tends to be condemned in patriarchal oral and written traditions, Louhi is "punished mythologically". This is no doubt as a reaction to her role as an "indigestible" woman not embracing the traditional female role – of defining herself essentially in relation to male authorities, relatives and scientists. Louhi steps out of the acceptable realm by also taking on "male" attributes such as inventing the idea of the Sampo – no doubt a kind of magic technological tool for all of its other symbolic meanings. As Patricia Sawin has noted: "Only virgins and mothers, women who act to reproduce the patriarchy and remain fully under the men's control are evaluated positively. Women who want to retain control over their own sexuality and alternative knowledge are condemned as whores, witches, or monsters" (1988, 199). Mary Daly's insistence on etymology as a pointer to women's lost power reinforces my point. For her, the massacres of women throughout the witch hunts were aimed at eliminating women living outside the control of the patriarchal family; women who presented an option – an option of "eccentricity," and of

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"indigestibility." The term eccentric is derived from the Greek ek (out of) plus kentrum (center of a circle). One definition in Merriam-Webster is "not having the same center, used of circles, cylinders, spheres, and certain other figures: opposed to concentric. It also means "deviating from some established type, pattern, or rule." The women hunted as witches were (are) in a time/space that is not concentric with androcracy (Daly 1987, 186).

One might see Louhi also as the Finno-Ugric version of the Indian Goddess Kali, regarded as the bloody Goddess of Death, but actually a more multidimensional figure when seen through women's eyes. Like Louhi, Kali can be interpreted as a woman who challenges men's authority as intellectuals, spiritual leaders, or men of war. Challenging men's authority is still considered an act of subordination by men who strongly believe that they should be in charge. Arit Mookerjee (1988) claims that this is the Kali Age. According to Mookerjee, Kali has regularly been negatively represented in patriarchy because of her supreme powers of creation and destruction. Patriarchal fears of female elemental power are projected onto goddess figures like Kali who are denounced as destructive:

Death in patriarchal culture is often seen as defeat of the ego rather than accepted as part of an ongoing transformation of changing reality. The body is the exemplary symbol of change. Women's bodies often represent the kind of immanence that is to be transcended in the move toward immortality. Figures like Kali serve as a reminder of the reality of change, of death. When death is understood as 'letting go,' however, it loses its association with finality. As part of the cyclical regenerative process, death has a positive power of letting go of old ideas, patterns of behaviour which obstruct transformation into new ideas and actions. Kali represents the conscience reminding us not to get fixed in egocentric categorical thought and become stuck in static

'notional-conceptual' realities that prohibit transformation (Tomm 1995, 47). Connecting to Kali's power enables a person to make space for new developments by weakening the grip of previous negative realities. These negative forces in a person's consciousness can be referred to as the demons with which one struggles, without attributing an external existence to them. In classical representations, Kali was usually depicted as a demon, whereas in women-centred interpretations of her, she symbolizes the destroyer of demons (Tomm 1995, 291).

It is important to remember that Elias Lönnrot compiled the Finnish epic on the basis of the Finnish-Karelian stories he collected but also by selecting and combining

them to suit his own 19th-century patriarchal and nationalistic agenda. Also, his vast knowledge of Greek and Roman mythology is reflected in the story line he created; it reflects and echoes many of these other cultural archaic mythologies which he imitated and incorporated. Lönnrot has no doubt also built into Kalevala's mythic subconscious (the level that has been suppressed and not made visible in the course of the epic's patriarchal research and interpretations) the hints of a Finno-Ugric matriarchy, a "Terra Feminarum" with whom patriarchy – Kalevala – has waged a war of the sexes

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in the course of history. Quite generally, Kalevala is seen to refer to the "southern land of heroes" which is thus set against the land of women, Pohjola, shrouded in associations of evil and the forces of death and darkness. Kalevala, the South, epitomizes the epic's underlying fantasy; to prove that the non-Indo-European Finnish men – often treated as primitives by Russians and Swedes – were worthy of the esteem of the men of the South, of Europe.⁶ It is intriguing that the opponent of Kalevala is Pohjola, the North, in other words, the Northern Dimension of a culture that is itself essentially identified as the North. Kalevala's hero-centred and predominantly epic plot predictably foregrounds the history of the male shamans and heroes and represents women and the Lapps (Sami) as followers or helpers of men or as men's enemies in the margins--literally, in the Pohja, Pohjola, the bottom, the fringe of the world. In *Le Kalevala. Épopée finlandaise et universelle* (Kirkinen & Sihvo 1985) the very title sums up one of the fallacies that postmodern feminist theory continues to point out; the patriarchal fantasies common in world epics, as also represented by the Finnish version, are assumed to express universal truths. In offering their analysis of the basic tension and polarity of the Kalevala, the authors write: "Lönnrot appela ces peuplades Kalevala et Pohjola, l'une symbolisant la Finlande, et l'autre symbolisant l'empire étranger de l'obscurité et des forces du mal" (1985, 14).⁷

The structural and thematic unity of the story is built around the forging, capture, and loss of the Sampo – the magic mill of prosperity – which the "Mistress of Pohjola," Louhi commissions as a ransom for the hand of her daughter. The heroes' search for wives and their clash with Louhi over the Sampo forms the core also of the dominant interpretations of the epic. The Sampo serves to unify most of the episodes and characterizations of the epic (Kailo 1987). Patricia Sawin in "Lönnrot's Brainchildren: the Representation of Women in Finland's Kalevala" believes that for Lönnrot: "The most profitable and inspiring account he could create from the available materials was one in which the forefathers of the nation earn the right to the land and ensure its continued well-being by defeating a perfidious enemy. The characters that he created, both male and female, are different in many ways from those found in the source poems, but it is the images of women that he most obviously distorted in the service of his larger goals" (1988, 194). As Sawin has also noted, Finnish readers are accustomed to interpreting Sampo as the promise of the South's, Kalevala's prosperity, which the three heroes are seemingly justified in stealing from the Mistress of the

6.

Reclaiming the endonym Suomi may also become a necessity for woman-identified women; as I have found out, the most likely etymology of Finland is "land of heroes, men," which, after all, is also the subtitle of the epic. According to Sheila Embleton and Raimo Anttila: Like Suomi, until now [Finn] has also remained without a convincing etymology. Martin Huld (1994) now has a new suggestion that by far surpasses the previous speculation. Apart from proper name function, FINN also carries the meanings "Man, hero; dwarf" in the earliest Scandinavian contexts. Thus it is not unreasonable to

assume that *finna- reflects Proto-Indo-European *pes-no- "penis" which also in Hittite pesna- has given "Man, Male" (cf. Latin penis, Greek peos "penis"). The actual reconstructed stages, all of

which exemplify totally regular changes, are: *pesno-, *fezna-, *fenna- *finna- (1994, 31). Finland – the land of heroes or dwarves with a penis?

7.

On Pohjola as the land of women, see Pentikäinen, (170–71).

North, the woman who conceived this wonderful object. Whether seen as a token of culture, or of psychic, material and mental prosperity, the Sampo functions as a coveted Northern object of desire for the polarized historical groups seeking to possess it. The male heroes are mostly viewed and interpreted as the Self with women and the ethnically overlapping, ambiguous Sami/Lapps as the Other (Kailo 1998, 2000). The patriarchal-nationalistic and monocultural bias that I am concerned with is also the cumulative product of Kalevala's long patriarchal history of reception, teaching and interpretation. Kalevala's representation of the Finnic origins is not innocent, however, for it reinforces projective and misleading views about the historical relations between the main culture and minorities, such as the Sami, epitomizing the asymmetrical power relations in the combined image of the woman/Native/other. Thus we see that gender is not an essence but a relation intersecting with one's social status, ethnicity and race. The representation of the Other is often accompanied by a dualistic depiction: the noble savage/depraved primitive or the true, ideal woman/castrating bitch/witch, or any other dualistic pair (Kailo 2000a).⁸ Thus Aino, a young virginal maiden in the epic has been idealized as "innocence" with Marjatta, the Finnic Virgin Mary receiving the projections of the "mature" woman giving birth to a male child. The epic provides no positive role model of shape-shifting, self-determining women. Ageism, sexism and racism are all interconnected and converge in the image of Louhi as the ugly old hag, echoing the recurrent features of patriarchal lore (Kailo, 1994; 2000a, 2000b; Lyons 1978; Sawin 1997; Zipes 1987; Tatar 1987; Lieberman 1972/73).

As has been noted in many postcolonial studies, the subject, the Self will tend to ascribe the highly valorised traits to itself, while reserving less honorific labels for the Other, accompanied by a dualistic overcompensation of this bias. The denigration/idealization based dualism is harmful to the Other because human beings, men and women as well as cultures are not amenable to static stereotypes and monolithic descriptions; through them the human and ethnic diversity, complexity and nuanced multidimensionality of being, experience and values is merely lost. By being treated as a "being-for-the other," the other's existential freedom is curtailed or denied (de Beauvoir 1949). At worst, being conditioned to see him or herself in this light, the other internalizes the dualistic gender script or ethnic stereotype which then risks becoming a self-fulfilling prophecy. This evokes de Beauvoir's question as to why women among other subordinate groups have internalized being the other and have seen their condition as "natural." Modern psychoanalysts explain it through such terms as "internalized sexism", "self-hatred", incorporation of the culture's dominant gendered ideals. The reasons involve complex socio-economic, political and

8. Since the historical male view insisted on a woman's oppositeness and was disturbed by any blurring of clearly defined differences, the 'civilized' male eye perceived the "Lapp" woman as a spectacularly masculine type rather than a well-developed human being, able to come to terms with the demands of her environment (Paddon 1987, 8).

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philosophical issues. For the purposes of this paper, however, I wish to stress the deep impact of education and of the dominant representations that make the representations appear natural rather than constructed. As Ward Churchill notes: "Literature and the stereotyping of culture establishes complete control over truth and knowledge. It finally replaces troops and guns as the relevant tool of [mental] colonization" (1992, 2). For feminist literary and myth critics, the same applies to the mind colonization based on gender. According to Pratibha Parmar, "the deeply ideological nature of imagery determines not only how other people think about us but how we think about ourselves" (qtd. in hooks, 1992, 5).

Through conscious manipulation of the representations, more positive connotative evaluations are linked with the "Finnish heroes" of Kalevala than with the polarized opposites, the Lapp/Sami people and women of the North. The Sami have precisely been made to embody the idealized and denigrated Northern Other of the mainstream male hero, of the national subject and legitimate citizen, considered both alien to the male Self and a much-desired fantasized female Other, a romanticized anima. The additions which, as Lönnrot confesses he made in his own words [to the Kalevala] are, according to Krohn, the incident of the making of a false sun and false moon, and the rape [sic] of the celestial luminaries by the Lady of Pohjola" (Comparetti 1898, 135-37). In the process of rounding out his story Lönnrot further justifies the men's aggression against Louhi by making her appear cruel and vengeful. If the Italian folklorist, sarcastically referring to Louhi as "lady", refers to the loss of the Sampo as a "rape," is this not a curious reversal of what really happens in the epic to women? It is women that the heroes, such as Lemminkäinen or Kullervo either rape, abduct or seduce, and yet that loaded term is used about the wronged people and about women as victims of organized aggression. Of course, women participate in transmitting the ideological gender scripts and even identify in many cases with the master consciousness or identity (Plumwood 1993) in which dualistic, hierarchically ordered gender relations are inscribed. This strategy continues to manifest itself in the courts dealing with cases of sexual harassment and rape where the tendency continues to be strong to blame the victim for example by focusing on her clothes, the fact she was in the wrong place at the wrong time, all of which belong to the strategies for diverting attention from the perpetrator of violence and his responsibilities. This is a good illustration of how mythic patterns reinforce real-life policies and practices, although they seem as only innocent "stories".

On the other hand, there are many references to Louhi or the Mistress of the North as a Whore, a traditional way of labeling and thus controlling a woman who refuses a male definition of her being and sphere of action (Saarikoski 1986). There is no unequivocal Finnish folk tradition or history to justify the representation of Louhi and the Northern matriarch as evil, yet this very myth has made its way into the numerous rewritings of the epic in Finland and abroad.

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In this version of representing Louhi, she echoes Pandora's Box⁹ and the goddesses who have given birth to a multitude of evils and have sent scourges to ail humanity. In line with her place of habitation ("lovi", connoting a crevice, an entrance into the entrails of the earth), Louhi has been called Lovetar, Loveatar, Loviatar, Loviatar, Lovehetar, Louhi (Ganander 1792; Kemppinen 1960).¹⁰ In the patriarchal tradition, she has been described as giving birth to the common cold and as sending freezing breeze from the deep (SKVR VII 3 No. 182). Thus we see that Louhi has a privileged position as the embodiment of the North in its most negative pole. What about his male counterpart? As Mercante points out, while Loki has a distinct personality in Nordic mythology, his counterpart in Finnish mythology, Hiisi (or Lempo), is a rather indistinct being. He appears in the Finnish epic poem the Kalevala, where his name is also used as a general term for demons who haunt Hittola ("Demon's Domain"), a dreary region with charred and burned heaths and hills, not far from Pohjola, the Northland. Hiisi creates the Hiisi Elk, a magical animal which the hero Lemminkäinen must subdue in order to win the Maiden of Pohjola as a wife (Mercante 90–92).

As is typical of patriarchal religions and phallogocentric myths, however, the male figure of evil and demonic powers is less central and less emphasized than his female counterpart. This allows the tradition of woman-blaming, particularly that of the elderly, most vulnerable ones, to continue as part and parcel of the widely-spread phenomenon of scapegoating. According to Mercante, who thereby reveals his bias, actually the true demonic character in the Kalevala is not Hiisi but the gap-toothed Louhi, mistress of Pohjola and mother of the maiden whom Lemminkäinen wishes to marry. Louhi is rightfully enraged in Kalevala because her land has become barren after the loss of the Sampo, echoing the Greek myth of Demeter and Persephone (Kailo 1988, 1996, Korte 1988); Lönnrot makes her send a plague to Väinämöinen's land, but the hero one can identify as a representative of the Finnish South is depicted as

9. For example, consider the following lines labelling "Louhi" a whore and making her the midwife of all manner of evils and diseases: "Portto Pohjolan emäntä, Loviatar, vaimo vanha, Joka vanhin vaimoksista, Eläjästä ensimmäinen, Selin tuulee makas, Teki tuuli tiineeks, Ahava kohulliseksi, Tekipoikoo yheksän, Aavalle merell selälle: Minkä pisti pistokseks, Minkä ähkyks äkä, Minkä loihtiluuvaloks, Minkä hammasten kivuks (Haavio, qtd. in Korpinen 1986, 277–278).

10. Cf. The views of Tuulikki Korpinen on the etymology of Loviatar: "Vaikka en pidäkään oikeana Haavion esittämää Loviatar -nimen etymologiaa kannasta Flogiatar eli 'Lentäjätär' (ruots. Flyga

'lentää' jne.). hyväksyn silti mahdollisuuden, että tuulen hedelmöittäjä Louhi voi käsitteenä samastua Lilithiin, joka lensi Punaiseen mereen, ja josta tuli siten "maailman ensimmäinen lentäjätär, demonilasten emo", sillä Louhihan pystyi muuttautumaan jopa suunnattoman suureksi kokoksi elikotkaksi sammon ryöstäjiä takaa ajaessaan ja useat Egyptin Jumalattaret ovat esiintyneet korppikotkan hahmossa. Nähdäkseni Loviatar = Lovetar, Lovin eukko, Luovatar (vrt. luoja) yms. Louhen toisintonimet saattavat yksinkertaisesti olla johdoksia sanasta lovi, joka on tarkoitannut synnytysaukkoa sekä ihmisellä että imettäväiseläimillä ja toisaalta aukkoa tai ovea tuonpuoleiseen maailmaan; siten Loviatar voisi olla mm. loveen lankeavan auringon yösijan

jumalatar siinä kuin Hatorikin ja synnyttäjätär aamuisin (vrt. Louhi = Päivölän emäntä). Vrt. sanontoihin “käydälouhessa“ = käydä tuonelassa, langeta loveen, kulkea tai maata lovessa, nousta lovesta, lovmies ‘lappalainen noita’, loveen langennut samaani jne.; Setälä on esittänyt lovi sanalle merkityksen ‘ecstasis magica’ ja lovehtia verbille merkityksen ‘in extase sein’, jossa tapauksessa Lovetar voisimerkitä vaikkapa ‘tuonelassa asustava noita’ (Korpinen 1986, 29–30)

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healing his people by the use of white magic. Yet, in Folk poetry Louhi is the one associated with the healing arts (eg. Ganander 1792, Vakimo 1999). As Mercante reports, "Not satisfied, the "Evil mistress" then sends a great bear to ravish the herds, but Väinämöinen once again is victorious. Finally out of desperation Louhi steals the sun and moon as well as fire from all the hearths in Vainamoinen's [sic] land, but new fire is kindled by a thunderbolt from Ukko, the supreme god. Chains are then forged for Louhi by Ilmarinen, and out of fear, Louhi releases the sun and moon" (Mercatante 90–92). As Mistress of the Hill of Pain, Louhi is being referred to variously as Pohjolan emäntä, Kivutar, Lovin eukko, Lovetar, Lovehetar, Lovijatar, Loviotar, Loviitar, Lovetar, Lovetari, Luovatar, Louhi, Louhiatar, Louhietar, Louhetar, Louhutar, Lohiatar, Lohjatar, Lohetar, Lauhiatar, Loviatar vaimo vanha, Luonnon eukko, Hiitten eukko, Pohjan akka Hiitten eukko, Äijötär äkeä akka, Äkäätär, Äimätär, Portto Pohjolan emäntä jne. (Setälä I. 213–14). She is even described in epithets that make her blind and having the Unseeing Eye, echoing the notion of the evil gaze which has been projected as the trait of women, particularly elderly women, "gypsies" and other "suspicious" social groups (Vuorela 1960). To the extent that Louhi is linked with "lovi", a crevice leading to the insides of the earth, of Manala – the Finnish land of the dead – she is associated also with shamans or tietäjäs falling into ecstasy, experiencing trance states and "going into their being".¹¹ In the folk poetry collections, a central feature of Louhi is also her singing, her ability to sing herself into a trance state of which there are many examples.¹² As pointed out by Irmeli Niemi: "hos pohjola-frun liksom allmänt hos kvinnorna framträder un uppenbar svaghet: hon kan inte spela, strängarna gnisslar ill and rosten låter grov" (Niemi 1985, 77). Unlike the heroes in the Kalevala, the antihero/ine does not command the arts of music. However, this is because Lönnrot systematically reverses the positive attributes, skills and strengths of the folk poetry figure and makes her a shady character.

Louhi has mythic affinities with the Greek Hecate going back to the Hellenic age when all the evil in the world was being shifted on women's shoulders. Hecate was an underworld witch of magic in possession of fire. It is worth noting, however, that Lönnrot as mythographer was not alone in transforming a positive or ambivalent goddess into a negative version of an Earth goddess, or a Midwife Goddess helping women with childbirth – her folk poetry essence. It is obvious that Lönnrot commands the Greco-Roman mythology which abounds in goddesses being transformed from their originary more positive roles to the demonized versions reflecting patriarchal rewritings of the tradition. Hecate, for example, was originally a

11. Christfrid Ganander (1792) explains in *Mythologia Fennica*: "Loween langeta, falla in ecstasin och vandra

utom kroppen til Wallhall, in synnerhet hos Laparne til Jabmiaimo". *Nytt Finskt Lexicon*: Langeta

loveen, falla i dvala, vandra utom sign, idem ac Tuonella käydä", Käydä Tuonella l. Tuonelassa, kulkea

Tuonella, bort dana, falla i dvala, i ecstasi, vid. Lovi a Graec. thanein. Svet. dana, animo delingi".

12.Cf. "Lauloi itsensa loveen, lauloi itsensa louheen, meni lovheen, meni louvehn, louheen meno makasi

lovessa, oli louhessa, i loge, il love." Martti Haavio notes that "lovi" is related to Germ."kuilu," a word

meaning "onkalo" whose Norwegian form is "klove" and Icelandic variant "klofi". (Korpinen 1986.

pre-Hellenic Great Mother, a goddess in her own right, ruling over the three realms of earth, heaven and sea.¹³ But she lost her identity with the virgin and mother aspects and consequently much of her power in patriarchal times. "Hekate's early association with cosmic power and a high moral/spiritual function gave way in Greek religion to primarily chthonian associations." Although Hecate retained her title as goddess of the moon and of childbirth, she took on evil connotations for the patriarchal Greeks. In the Hellenic period all her creative functions were however replaced and overwritten by her associations with black magic – precisely what happened with Louhi.¹⁴

Louhi's other affinities include a kinship with aspects of Ishtar and Astarte, Artemis and Isis. These goddesses have represented life, fertility as well as destruction and war. They were essentially goddesses of the moon commanding light and darkness.¹⁵ Louhi can be compared also with the archaic Scandinavian goddess of death, Hel, the personification of old Germanic Haljo, old Swedish Hael, Icelandic Hel, German Hölle, Gothic Halja, Greek Hades (Korpinen 1986, ?Eddan I, 138). Like Ereshkigal and Persephone, the archaic Scandinavian goddess Hel releases nobody from her queendom under the earth. As Kemppainen argues, as the pagan beliefs in the recurrent cycles of death and fertile and related myths were replaced by the Christian creed of resurrection and the monotheistic religion, female goddesses dropped out of the picture. Kemppainen considers this a reflection of the spiritual growth and development of the Finns! Lönnrot's attitudes of belittling the role of mother earth -type deities such as Rauni and Akka are also worth considering, when analyzing the reasons for the dark feminine picture of the North.

Like many epic scholars of his day, Lönnrot thought that the male gods, even pagan ones, were the "real" divinities with the Akkas only reflecting and embodying mindless, soulless matter. In line with the description of other goddesses of the underworld, Louhi, too is portrayed as ugly and half black or bluish black. Even blackness, however, is not an innocent symbol of "soul darkness" or any other negative attributes to which it is associated in Western mythology. As women of color in particular have persistently pointed out in anti-racist guides and writings, the association of evil, depravity and blackness also lends support to the racist tendencies

13. See Irma Korte (1988, 85–93) for a psychoanalytic analysis of Louhi's multidimensionality where she is seen as the matrix of many associations and analogies. Korte looks upon Louhi as the great mother, mother earth and womb of Finnish mythology echoing my own research.

14. For more on these links, see Kannisto et al. 1982, 30–31.

15. According to Korpinen: "Aikoinaan E.A. Tunkelo on jo tarjonnutkin Louhi nimelle merkitystä 'salama, kalevantuli', mikä ainakin Karjalan kannaksella kansankielessä on ollut louhi appellatiivinmerkityksenä. Tukea tämä otaksuma saa sanastosta saks. Lohe 'liekki, loimu' vrt. suom. Loihu, loihuta) = engl. low (vrt. mahdollisuus Lovetar), ruots. Låga (vrt. suom. liekki, liekkiö 'virvatuli;

kummitus, aave, peikko') jne., ieur kantana leuk-, louk-, luk-, lat.lux 'valo, päivä, silmä, valaistusjne., luceo' olla kirkas, paistaa, loistaa', kreik. Leukos 'valoisa, kirkas, loistava, valkea'jne. Muuantämän sanaston johdos on Skand. Mytologian Loki 'Liekin jumalatar', jonka M.A.Castren ja JuliusKrohn aikoinaan yhdistivät Louheen; vrt. myös lat. Lucifer 'Kointähti, valontuoja, Venus', jokälänsimaisessa teologiassa muuttui perkeleen nimitykseksi jes. 14:12 ja Luuk.10:18 perusteella(Korpinen 1986, 37).

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to justify the oppression of black people by reference to their “inborn” primitiveness, savagery and related features.

The Finnish folk poetry collections contain vast source materials for alternatives to the whore-madonna version of the Northern woman. They reveal the extent of Lönnrot’s patriarchal bias and the reversal of Kave, a goddess of life and birth and a Great Healer helping relieve women of birth pains, also in some of her manifestations the Mystic Northern Midwife who releases the luminaries in order, through imitative magic, to help women similarly release the child from the darkness of the womb. Petaja and Lönnrot represent Louhi as the one hiding the luminaries in Kipuvuori, the Magic Mountain, as a symbol of nature’s state of infertility and darkness in the Northern winter months. Kave, in the Folk Poetry often Louhi’s synonym or kindred spirit has the exact reverse role of representing life-giving dimensions of female divinity and wisdom. John Abercromby, in his 2-volume *Magic Songs of the Finns in English* translation thus reveals the links between the mysterious Kave – turned Virgin Mary in later periods – and Louhi as principles of life promotion:

The recuperative power of nature would naturally occur to exorcists and wizards when healing the sick, and in a more objective form would be appealed to for assistance. Old mother Kave (the woman), the daughter of nature (luonto), the oldest of womankind, the first mother of individuals, is therefore invoked to come and see pains and remove them. Almost in the same terms she is implored to help an exorcist. And under the same title she is invited to allay the pains of child-birth because she formerly freed the moon from imprisonment in a cell, and the sun from a rock. But the original idea is on the wane in a charm for relieving pain, in which it is related that three Luonnotars sit where three roads meet and gather pains into a speckled chest or a copper box, and feel annoyed if pains are not brought to them. And the old idea of her functions is missing where the woman (kave), the old wife Luonnotar, the darling and beautiful, is asked to point out the path to a bridal procession. Or when she is invited to bewitch sorcerers and crush witches; to weave a cloth of gold and silver, and make a defensive shirt under which an exorcist can live safely with the help of the good God. In the next two examples Nature can scarcely be separated from God the Creator and seems only another term of him. (Abercromby 1898, 307–8)

Luonnotar, Ilmatar, Kapo or Kave are all powerful images of women’s strength, healing and nurturing, creative spirit that might have been chosen as the quintessential aspect of the Northern woman. There are versions of Louhi as bringer of light, guardian of fire. Lönnrot, however, combined in the fashion of patriarchal mythic patterns woman’s alleged kinship with the devil, with Lucifer, echoing also the Norse Loki. As Korpinen has noted, it would have been more logical to associate Louhi with “Lux” or the Swedish word for flame “låga” as related not with devilish things but with the light of passion and intelligence (Korpinen 1986). Louhi as harbinger of life and light could have been associated with love, care and the rationality of care associated with women. History, after all has proven that due to their socialization and the psychological, moral division of labor, unlike male science

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with its relatively speaking tighter links to warfare and hierarchies of mastery over nature, women's science has had more to do with the maintenance and advancement of life rather than war or military technologies (eg. Hassi 1986).

In sum, Lönnrot has raped the gynocentric spirit and layer Finnish folk poetry by making Louhi steal and conceal light and symbolize the dark age of the human soul. This kind of tampering with mythic materials, as Wall (1988) and other feminist myth critics have argued, is part and parcel of patriarchal ways to overwrite versions of herstory/history that do not fit with masculinist "his stories" which so often are about "maps" and "chaps", i.e. conquest. It can of course be argued that Lönnrot depicts Louhi as the one hiding the luminaries in order to symbolize of nature's state of infertility and darkness in the Northern winter months. However, to make the woman such a strong symbol of the North's freezing, life-denying aspects is still an ideological choice. After all, male gods are given superior, overriding powers and as such, certainly could represent the destructive forces of nature. Although the whore/Madonna splits of the female often result in another female character embodying the best and most noble dimensions of the feminine, the actual divinity and cultural authority, leadership and spiritual essence is reserved for men. In the next section I will elaborate on how the negative pole of the Goddess of Life and Death is resurrected and passed on in science fiction written in California...

Emil Petaja's Science Fiction Fantasy – Louhi as the Cosmic Scum-Hag

Then did Pohyola's Old Mistress
Speak aloud the words of portent
"Still can I devise a method,
"Gainst thy ploughing and thy sowing,
"Gainst thy children and their children

(Kalevala, Runo XLIII)

Emil Petaja, an American-Finnish science fiction writer has resurrected the character of the evil witch of the North in many of his books, providing a good illustration of the mind colonization to which I have referred above.¹⁶ He perpetuates those negative attributes of Louhi which Kalevala scholars have focused on, to the

16.Emil Petaja was born in 1915 in Western Montana and grew up with Finnish immigrant parents who instilled in him his love of Finnish culture and mythology. He attended Montana State University.

His poems and stories have been sold to *Weird Tales* and *Amazing Stories*. He has had published 14 science-fiction novels and 150 short stories. He also founded the Bokanalia Memorial Foundation in

1967 to champion and promote his favourite artist and lifelong friend. Petaja died in 2003. Inspired by Kalevala, he has written four science fiction novels based on the Finnish epic. The Stolen Sun, (1967) Tramontane (1967), The Star Mill (1966), Time Twister (1968). Most of the epics deal with the emotion aroused by mythical analogues like those in his Kalevala books and Saga of Lost Earths (1966).

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detriment for example of Louhi's other traits, i.e. her hospitality to Väinämöinen lost in the Northern seas, and her scientific, creative impulses (coming up with the innovative idea of a Sampo). In *The Star Mill*, for example, Petaja continues where Kalevala takes off, the moment of the loss of the Sampo and "Vainamoinen's" (Petaja's spelling) departure:

The conflict between Vainomoinen [sic] and the Witch carried [the Sampo] far up in the air. It fell from Louhi's eagle-claws. It was presumed to have been broken into a million pieces and lost to the world forever." "But it wasn't." "No. It was damaged, twisted into a grotesque mass of rainbow-color and alien metal – but Louhi returned after the wild storm to the spot where it vanished. She retrieved it, and by her own wicked sorcery she made it work again. But in reverse! It can no longer absorb molecules out of space and create things from them. All it can do is destroy. Whatever comes within its domination is seized and shredded into molecular matter of a destructive nature." ... "The Black Storm!" "Yes, many centuries ago Louhi set it to work out among the stars, hoping to make it the treasure-house it was before it fell. But Louhi's magic is black and evil. What came out as eternal bounty with Ilmarinen, came out in reverse, when impelled by her blasphemous sorcery. Ironically, Louhi found herself and her storm-haunted island trapped in the middle of it!" (*The Star Mill* 1966, 178)

The Star Mill begins with a description of how Ilmar, a stellar castaway, slowly recovers consciousness on the fringes of the forbidden region of space and how he is rescued by a passing starship. The whole universe is menaced by a "Black Storm" (one of the manifestations in the paradigm of pollution in all Petaja's novels), a cosmic scourge which has the power to disintegrate everything that enters into contact with it (Kailo 1985, 58). As Mary Douglas (1996 [1966]) has exposed in her writings, in many cultures the female body is the imaginary screen on which societies project their notions of purity and pollution, making women the carriers of the Nation's shame and honor regardless of an actual fit between reality and fantasy. The Lapp/Sami woman thus continues to be blamed for negative actions to do with the Sampo in the science fiction novels by Petaja (1996 [1966]) showing the persistent mythic power of Kalevala representations. On another level, it sends the message of powerful matriarchal women's "bad and evil science". This is all the more ironic that it is precisely Northern Indigenous women that are the prime victims of such anti-ecological activity as that which culminated in the Tsernoby accident and which destroyed masses of reindeer in Samiland, depriving numerous Samis of their livelihood. It is also ironic in the sense that the kind of science ("sorcery", "magic") that has had the most devastating impact on the ecosystem, the Earth, and on humans, is the result of male experimentation from Frankensteinian mad cow experiments to terminator seeds and other monsters of "development" (Shiva 1993, 1997, 2000). What Shiva has written in her numerous books and articles on the imperial piracy politics linked with neoliberal corporate globalization stems from the

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realities she has observed in her native India. However, to the extent that many Northern communities and nations live in “fourth world conditions” and are as vulnerable to corporate biopiracy and ecologically short-sighted bully politics, what she has written about patenting nature and the commons, and about the devastating impact of terminator seeds and other types of gene manipulation in their worst potential also threatens the North. To quote Shiva: ”By denying the creativity of nature and other cultures, even when that creativity is exploited for commercial gain, intellectual property rights becomes another name for intellectual theft and biopiracy. Simultaneously, people’s assertion of their customary, collective rights to knowledge and resources is turned into “piracy” and “theft.” (Shiva 1997, 10). Shiva further quotes Jack Doyle who has also “appropriately remarked that patents are less concerned with innovation than with territory, and can act as instruments of territorial takeover by claiming exclusive access to creativity and innovation, thereby monopolizing rights to ownership;

The farmers, who are the guardians of the germ plasm, have to be dispossessed to

allow the new colonization to happen. As with the colonization of land, the

colonization of life processes will have a serious impact on Third World agriculture.

First, it will undermine the cultural and ethical fabric of agriculturally based societies.

For instance, with the introduction of patents, seeds which have hitherto been treated as gifts and exchanged freely between farmers will become patented commodities

(Shiva 1997, 53).

As Kuokkanen (2004a,b,c) and other Sami scholars have already noted, the traditional gift-based values and worldview of the Northern Indigenous people are being seriously threatened by the structural adjustment programs and values inherent in the free trade ideology, where nothing must stand in the way of corporate entitlements to profits. The advocates of corporate capitalism and development have recently turned against the Kyoto Accord aimed at sustainable development and the prevention of further depletion of the already thinning Ozone layer. How ironic it is, in this light, to read novels of global pollution and “black storms” blamed on the least likely source of such threats – elderly Sami/Lapp women.

Occupations such as hunting or agriculture were considered holy in prehistoric times. These activities were often surrounded by rituals which reflect deep respect for all of nature's creatures. Such rituals sought to ensure that waste and excessive use did not occur and that fishing, hunting and harvesting took place with the permission and willingness of other beings. Native culture and history continue to be based on ecological sensitivity and Native values are inseparably intertwined with the worldview of balance and the so-called medicine wheel, despite cultural variation of detail. Is this

not, however, my projection and continuation of the Noble Savage stereotype, rooted in idealizing the so-called "nature peoples?" Of course, Indigenous people have been partially and in some cases, fully assimilated into European values and ways, and one must distinguish between Native philosophies and traditional worldviews, and

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individual eco-social behaviour. Dualistic stereotypes, however, serve goals other than those I promote; whether created to subjugate women and/or Native people, the dualistic portrayals aim at reductive representations that would better allow for the exploitation of those described under black and white labels. To foreground the other or another imaginary is fraught with epistemic traps and challenges. Can any scholar know the marginalized cultures that have been portrayed for centuries via white mythologies and fantasies objectively and sufficiently well to avoid some measure of ethnocultural distortion?¹⁷ The Sami scholar, Rauna Kuokkanen notes with indignation: while it is not necessary to romanticize indigenous or pre-capitalist communities as nostalgic examples of societies without violence, it hardly does justice either to the complexity of the logic of the gift or the social order which largely depended on cooperation and nonaggression to reduce one of the central structuring principles – the gift – to a form of violence, however subtle of symbolic!” (Kuokkanen 2004a). Yet such tendencies reflect the imposition of Western interpretations on cultural practices and worldviews deemed “primitive.” Even the philosophy of giving back what one receives from nature has thus been psychoanalyzed as “a denial of the more underlying human competitive instinct and aggression” (Kuokkanen 2004a).

As the Native scholar Deloria notes, “Interrelatedness is reflected in indigenous systems of knowledge, which often are explained in terms of relations and arranged in circular format consisting mostly or solely of sets of relationships seeking to explain phenomena” (1999, 48). Rauna Kuokkanen describes the traditional Sami Indigenous worldview by considering precisely traditional Sami gift practices such as the *verdde* system and *sieidi* gifts in the context of cultural practices stressing ecologically sustainable ways of relating to the environment; in her recent thesis (2004b), she elaborates on their relevance in contemporary Sami settings and discourses. The *verdde* system is a Sami practice in which two families of different livelihoods have established a relationship and trade their respective products with one another on a

17. Can men ever write about women’s rituals with enough sensitivity to understand their role and meaning for women? I do not claim to be free of ethnocultural limitations despite my years of study and contact with Native Canadians. I recognize that even such apparently harmless and “natural” terms as “folklore”, “mythology” and “animism” evoke suspicion, even anger, among Native North American scholars. They are seen as central dimensions of white academic mythology, or the dominant academic canon, which has pitted such terms, associated with “primitive” and “developing nations” against the “high culture” of “civilized”, “advanced” cultures. Beth Brant, a Mohawk two-spirited theorist and storyteller (also terms that evoke different value judgments) sees Native “folklore” and “myths” as HISTORIES, for she points out the trivializing aims of the terms “folklore” or “mythology” which she sees as denying Native people their own legitimate history. Many Native theorists also replace “animism” with the term life-celebrating cultures or cultures based on immanent spirituality, pointing out that Native worldviews are complex symbolic and religious systems rather than reflections of “simple,” “primitive” and “animistic” nature peoples with naive and unscientific notions about magic and supernatural beings. While I recognize my own

epistemic boundaries, I write this chapter with a view to facilitating the ongoing and deepening process whereby western and also Indigenous scholars might be better able to withdraw cultural projections, traces of the Master Imaginary and male/female gaze, by familiarizing themselves more and more with their biases and alternatives to the imaginary order they, we tend to take for granted or naturalize.

regular basis. Sieidis are naturally shaped stones, rocks or caves which are looked after by giving gifts aimed at maintaining a good relationship with the land and its guardians. Kuokkanen sees the sieidi gifts as a manifestation of the Sami “give back” philosophy, which seeks to sustain a social order and balance in the world. Both of these practices actively recognize and reinstate the principles of sustainability, responsibility and reciprocity that are necessary for all human survival (Kuokkanen 2003).

In Petaja’s novels the evil witch of the North (Louhi) is responsible for making the Sampo grind goods in reverse, i.e., she is the root of the ecological destruction the book dramatizes. Petaja provides an extreme example of the negative portrayal of strong matriarchal women of the North; his descriptions are epitomies if not caricatures of mythic woman-blaming and misogynous representations. Thus Louhi is identified in *The Star Mill*¹⁸ as the “Mistress of All Evil” (SM, 200): “Sorcery and cunning were the Witch’s watchwords. Louhi’s evil nature was so strong that it soaked up all of the other evil in the universe like a sponge, and had done so for thousands of years. Her pacts with alien creatures who were inimical to man had given her immense power” (SM 196).

As with the most misogynous interpretations of Kalevala, Petaja describes Louhi as the epitomy also of greed: “Begone, smith! Can’t you see that I am busy thinking up things to want?” (SM, 165). As Petaja describes it, the smith Ilmarinen returned to his homeland and found his people starving and sick. The gods of Tapiola and the shining lakes and oceans had not been kind to them. Ilmarinen told his old friend, the wizard, Vainomoinen: “Here we starve, while in pohyola [sic] the accursed Louhi grinds our provisions on the Sampo. Our children cry for food, and their welfare is eternal!...Louhi cheated you. We will prepare an expedition of warriors and go to Pohyola and demand that she share her bounty with us!” (SM, 175). Louhi is further portrayed as vindictive, unforgiving and cruel: “Witch Louhi had never been one to keep her promises, nor did her vindictive spirit ever forgive” (SM, 203). Around the world, it is the rich North that is leading the rat race of “economic growth” and “competitiveness” and getting more prosperous at the expense of the overexploited, or “developing nations”. In the North, however, there is a reverse situation as the Northern parts of the North are the geopolitical and economic “south” – they occupy similar subject positions as colonized lands or women. They are forced to comply with the structural adjustment plans or SAPS as a condition for WTO and World Bank, IMF and industrial countries’ loans and “services” (eg. Cavanagh 2002). As these conditions make it mandatory to cut public expenditure on education, health care and social services, paving the way for corporate control and increased privatization, we see that the Sami or Lapp witch really is the prime victim rather than beneficiary of such policies. After all, the elderly women are around the world the most vulnerable, poor

18.From here on referred to as SM.

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and defenceless. Privatization derives etymologically from “privare” (Lat. to “rob”), showing the real face of neoliberal free trade; since private business does not aim at charity or at ensuring the equal access of all citizens to services at reasonable rates, it threatens those with the least money, power and capital, making them at worse the new paupers of the 21st century from Russian to Samiland, Finland, Northern US and Canada, Russian and the Far North. How ironic then that in Petaja’s imagination, such a figure serves as the epitome of greed and want.¹⁹

In mythic tales animal companions of the heroes and other characters serve to accentuate their idiosyncracies in positive or negative ways. The snake has in ancient mythology been associated with Goddesses of the earth and of renewal, because they can renew their skins at will and have been symbols of the recurrent cycles of nature’s rebirth. In line with Christianity’s efforts to label powerful pagan or Goddess-related symbols evil, Petaja also makes the snake accentuate Louhi’s “evil” and to associate it with death rather than life renewal, contrary to pre-Christian beliefs: “Louhi hid a toothless smile and adjusted the black shawl over her hump. Her claw held fast to the woman snake-stick that was her bag of membership among the star-demons of the Black Nebula” (SM, 163). Even Louhi’s gaze is described as worse than the Medusan gaze that in patriarchal myths petrifies men:

Her fur-trimmed robe fell about her hump and her crumpled-steel body in luxurious folds, jewelled claws scuttled out of voluminous sleeves; her time-blackened face was so squeezed and contorted by unspeakable sins that it was hardly human any more. Ilmar’s first full look brought a deep gasp of physical pain. The condor’s eyes were crimson at the edges and the pupils were blank holes pulling him down into her brain’s bottomless pit. (SM, 210)

As Kannisto et al. (1985) note, and as I have suggested above, Louhi has affinities also with the Indian Kali, the most bloody of goddesses of death and the Gorgons with snakebeds in their heads. With Medusa this matrix of goddess imagery condenses the evil female gaze, a gaze so petrifying that it could turn even the dead into mortified terror. If these forms of spiritual consciousness were to inform cultural symbolic meanings through the feminist lens, the image of Kali, for example, could be interpreted not as fearful but rather as symbolizing death to destructive or ‘dead’ patterns of thought, actions, or ways of being. She would be invoked when there is a desire or need for new growth. Death would not be feared or shunned, but rather accepted as intrinsic to creative new birth. If, as Mookerjee (1988) claims, we are now in the time of Kali, such a meaning could be related to the death of patriarchal

¹⁹Sinikka Vakimo also notes that greed and passion for material possessions and power are recurrent themes in many writings about Louhi, as part of the defamation that she is the object of. Vakimo notes that the authors in fact pay attention to traits which in the masculine culture of leadership are seen as quite necessary and useful (eg. Vilkkema 1927, 90). She notes that for the elite males of the turn of the century, the image of a woman having thoughts other than motherhood and family were not appropriate (esim. Krohn 1885; Kallio 1910; Tarkiainen 1911; Engelberg 1914; Kaukonen 1949 as qtd. by Vakimo, 64).

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culture and the birth of a new cultural order sharing all of the resources between both sexes and more equitably across the planet. The new order would be based on the interrelatedness of birth and death through continual regeneration. The snake goddess is one of the oldest symbols of women's regenerative power just as the bird goddess is among the oldest symbols of women's power. The bird-headed goddess also represents the power to see from a distant perspective. Hence it could be made to symbolize the wisdom of the heavens which complements the wisdom of the earth

– symbolized by the snake.²⁰ It is worth noting that the equation between snakes and venomous women persists also in modern Finnish Kalevala plays by Väinö Åberg.²¹ The chilling stereotype of the elderly woman's evil gaze circulates in all of Petaja's

Kalevala-books. Thus in *Saga of the Lost Earths* he repeats Louhi's role as the demon of darkness:

A raw cackling cleaved his reverie. Lemminkainen whirled. Behind him on a hillock of stones, stood Witch Louhi, holding her twisted middle and rocking with laughter. Behind her stood the ugly black castle – her snake-stick caressed her splayed feet her eyes shone evilly, out of caverns so black and deep they seemed to be no part of her hideous crooked body, and those long skeleton fingers. Over her ancient shoulders she wore a vivid green cloak that flapped to a gnawing wind; her medusa hair was allowed to whip about her sunken dark face at will. (*The Saga of Lost Earths*²² 1966, 83)

²⁰Miriam Robbins Dexter has provided us with an important survey of twelve countries in which goddess imagery was important in the earliest extant myths and humans. The oldest records are Indic, while the Baltic folktales and folksongs “were recorded quite late, but, nonetheless, both Baltic language and Baltic folklore preserve very archaic vestiges... which show many parallels with those of the Indo-European culture...” (1990, 1995,). The life- and death-giving qualities of the goddess in her various manifestations were symbolized most often by bird and snake symbols. The earth and sky are represented by the female goddess imagery of Indo-European culture has shades of the same themes found in Hopi mythology of America. Paula Gunn Allen says, *The Hopi account of their genatrix, Hard Beings Woman* gives the most articulate rendering of the difference between simple fertility cultism and the creative prowess of the Creatrix. *Hard Beings Woman* (Huruing Wuhti) is of the earth. But she lives in the worlds above where she ‘owns’ (empowers) the moon and stars. *Hard Beings Woman* has solidity and hardness as her major aspects. She, like *Thought Woman*, does not give birth to creation or to human beings but breathes life into male and female effigies that become of the parents of the Hopi – in this way she ‘creates’ them (Allen 1986).

²¹Åberg's play identifies itself as a description of man's spiritual quest for transcendence and self-improvement: “xx”. As in Kalevala, however, the male sex holds all of the spiritually meaningful and powerful subject positions. In the play, there is even a trinity of male gods from past and present,

Väinö, Ukko and Kaleva. In the spiritual division of labor, women have the classic positions as spiritual assistants or embodiments of agape, eros and divine love: Echoing the classic whore/

Madonna split to which the female representations are subjected in patriarchal narratives, the opposite of the good presence, the soft feminine, there is Louhi as the awesome, evil and greedy embodiment of evil. Not a single woman, then, occupies the position of a beneficial, spiritual and powerful leader once again robbing women of such role models in an asymmetrical division of spiritual imagery. What is the meaning of the rhetoric about man's self-improvement as a process across time, if it does not reflect itself in this kind of shift, even a subtle shift of asymmetrical power relations? It can be argued that the narratives likewise perpetuate negative images of men as warlike, aggressive conquistadors. Precisely, modern men's studies scholars like Arto Jokinen deplore the images of hegemonic masculinity that many modern men find insulting, limiting and existentially narrow. The male heroes of Kalevala and of the Northern literature are not appropriate mirrors of selfhood for a number of modern men who do not build their gender on the basis of hunting expeditions, gold digging adventures or the modern ethos of Developing the North in a world of dwindling ecological resources.

22. Abbreviated as SLE from here on.

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When it comes to the description of the loss of Sampo, whereas a feminist reading of the scene would likely portray Louhi rebuilding the lost alignment between men and women, nations and animals in line with the life supporting character of Louhi's kin folk in the original folk poetry collections, Petaja portrays Louhi's actions at the mythic "scene of crime" as the ultimate chaos – itself another persistent representation of the feminine. For Louhi to pick up the pieces of the Sampo is in Petaja's work an opportunity for her to express her polluting impulses, to make the sampo grind goods and effects in a spirit which is the opposite of its original intent:

Louhi's strangled moan was venom that stung his hand like fire. With one swift move he ripped a long tatter of gag from his torn tunic and rammed it in her mouth. Louhi's voice must be stilled, as her mind had been snared, during that tick of time when she was over-confident and cut-powered from snipping of bits of Karina's memory. (SM, 220)

As the many examples show, Louhi's recurrent negative representations as the matrix of destructive, death-wielding forces in the universe makes the "ethnic" or black-jaceel woman the embodiment of pure evil. Many ethnic women around the world would have good reason themselves to disown the societies and male elites for the circulation of these kinds of representations and for the oppressive treatment they experience, since they have been the primary victims of ecophobic, misogynous and racist politics. Instead of these women expressing a justified rage, Petaja makes them appear simply full of freefloating, i.e. inexplicable hatred:

Yelping in a quasi-intelligent fashion, the demon hounds leaped out of their iron kennels. Their deep-throated screams were ululations of pure unadulterated hate;[my emphasis] Louhi had traded these ganged horrors from their own relatives – star-demons out of the Black Nebula – removed certain of their powers to chain them to her and triple their blood-lust. They were black, Louhi's demon dogs. Black and gigantic, with muscles that quivered for the kill; with eyes like crimson swords, and fangs that could tear the heart out of a man in one great bite, after those yellow-black talons had stripped away his muscles. (SM, 202)

Even in wisdom, Louhi, who in the epic came up with the very idea of Sampo, is

made to embody perverted wisdom and the opposite of creativity:

Sol like any star is composed of hot gases. Wayne told himself, wisely silent about it. Gases which produce a fantastic amount of energy. Now, if Louhi has the perverted wisdom to snuff out the light and energy, at the same time leaving the mass intact. She is trying to change the pattern which the Creatrix of the Universe has woven. (The Stolen Sun 1967, 53)

Ultima Thule, the periphery of Europe becomes in Petaja's fiction "the wandering space island once called Pohyola. Rooted on a small once called earth, Louhi's island had, by her witchery, taken off on eldritch voyagings to the darkest most evil corners of the universe" (1967, 55). If this is not dark enough, Petaja adds: "One of her

tricks was a time ...she remained alive on her befogged space-island eternally.“

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According to a Japanese scholar of mythic spaces, Yi-FuTuan, there are two ways of understanding mythic place, both of which have persisted within modernity. The first way is to understand mythic place as an area outside of something known, pragmatically and empirically or in other ways. Mythic place becomes similar to a “fuzzy area” or a “hazy field” (Tuan 1977, 86–88). There is an understanding that there exists something outside, something that lies on the other side of the mountain, or beyond the immediately visible horizon. In terms of this first level of mythic space, Louhi, it seems clear to me, represents on a psychological level the hazy, misty areas of the male psyche – the realms that they are conditioned to disown and displace on those that are in the most vulnerable position to prevent this scapegoating on (ethnic) women. It is of course also possible for non-native women to disown their own shadows and to project them on minority women, or any group having less power and resources to resist such scape-goating tendencies circulated through social institutions. In order to become myths myths require validation by a group, for myth is a collective agreement about some aspect of the unknown (Lauter 1984, 6). However, the least powerful groups like Indigenous women do not have similar channels of influence for circulating their view of reality, their worldview and experiences – hence they are vulnerable to the kinds of caricatures and defamatory stories that Petaja, Åberg and others continue to coin and circulate.

Myths and Reality – the Amazing Gender Gap

As studies of racial and gendered representations attest without any doubt, the negative portrayals of Native peoples, women in particular, conveniently divert attention away from the roots of Native peoples or women’s poverty, misery and deprivation to misleading justifications and excuses for their lot; they feed the partial or unfounded myths of a lazy laid-back people, or of women as willing and corrupt prostitutes if not victims of economic disparity. To portray women of the North as either Strong or as Evil is as far as one might get from the real facts of history and social distribution of power – including the power to form images of the way things are – media power. Some facts about the lot of the “strong women” remind us of the discrepancy between fact and fiction (Kuokkanen 2004c). According to Mary Douglas, (1996[1966]) women are often made to be the collective (often also sexualized and ethnic) carriers of symbolic values and of Nation making, now represented as the pure and ideal body, now as the polluting one. Elite white men are thus left free to embody these enlightenment, “true knowledge”, progressive action and heroism. I would add to’ insights that women of color are now becoming the privileged “polluting body” of the global village.

Although my goal is not to turn Indigenous women into mere victims of men, white women and their own elites, it is important to raise consciousness about the

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structural and institutional forms of racism that affect them, not as individuals alone but as a group in a particular geopolitical time and place. What then are the real issues and hard facts of women in the North? Since the goal of this paper is not to focus on the hardships and challenges of women in the North, something I have addressed in other articles or teaching modules (Kailo & Sunnari 2003; Kailo 2002, 2003) I will limit myself to outlining those major issues that prevent Northern women from sharing equally in the promise of the North – real and mythic.²³

As numerous studies have revealed, violence against women is the single most serious social issue in the Northern communities, where it is rampant from Canada, the US and Russia to other countries and communities in the subarctic and to the Arctic (Winberg 2002; Chamberlain 2002; Greene 2002; Bergman & Leask 1994). According to Chamberlain,

In the US and Canada, domestic violence has been identified as the leading cause of homicides and injuries for women. In Russia, estimates for the number of women who are killed by their husbands or a family member range from 3,500 to 14,000 homicides annually. Injuries and homicides are just the tip of the iceberg in terms of measuring the impact of domestic violence on women's health. Most statistics and research do not measure the emotional abuse, psychological intimidation and threats, deprivation, shaming, stalking and sexual abuse that are part of the cycle of violence against women (Chamberlain 2002, 195).

The Swedish Minister for Gender Equality Affairs, Winberg also pointed out at the "Taking Wing. Gender Equality and Women in the Arctic Conference" in Saariselkä, Finland, 2002 that in the Arctic region as in the rest of the world, the prostitution industry is rapidly expanding. Pimps, individual traffickers and organised crime networks are constantly looking for new profitable markets. This, combined with the increasing demand for prostituted women and girls by local men, has resulted in women and girls being trafficked for prostitution purposes from countries outside our region to communities all round the Arctic. Winberg points

23. Changes in the way work is organized have led to more women working on an increasingly casualised, part-time basis and in the peripheral labour force, where wages are low, job security is non-existent and protections are few (Day 2000; Miles 2000; Linnakangas *ym.* 1995). Vulnerable women, particularly in the so-called developing countries and also in the remote Northern/

Circumpolar regions, are expected to provide cheap, docile and dispensable labor under contract to transnational corporations which can produce goods anywhere in the world (eg. Day 2000, 13). It is important to realize that the myths of "trade liberalization" and increase in wealth attendant upon neo-liberal globalization serve to mask asymmetrical power relations. It is important to specify whose North and whose prosperity is being increased. Studies on North/South and center/periphery relations demonstrate that it is the income and prosperity of the dominant power elites that have been radically improved (Miles 2000; Eisenstein 1998). The same characterizes the situation of women living in the "peripheries" (Klopov 1996; *Women in Extreme Situations*, 1997). New macro-economic policies rely on old assumptions that women will be available as a low-paid

or even as unpaid workers. At their best, these policies perpetuate women's economic inequality. At their worst, they deepen it. Although the European Union is encouraging women and girls to study mathematics and to enter the male-dominated fields of technology and natural sciences (through several research programs), the motivation behind these projects is the labor shortage in IT-fields (Kailo & Sunnari 2003).

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out, giving an example of "Arctic othering" that women and girls from Northern communities are also domestically trafficked from village to village across the circumpolar region, as well as to large cities in the south (Winberg 2002, 195). Greene (2002) echoed these findings and reported that women in the Arctic suffer multiple forms of oppression; lack of affordable housing, childcare, legal services, medical care and the welfare reform; Alaska has the highest rate of domestic violence in the U.S.; one in three women has experienced domestic violence in Alaska; the NANA Region has the highest rate of domestic violence and sexual assault rates of accidental death and suicide for Alaska Native females are about three times higher than the U.S. average, Alaska Native females are more likely to be murdered than the average U.S. female (Greene 2002, 232). As for Russia, Greene reports that an estimated 15, 000 women die each year from domestic violence and that 70% of women have experienced or will experience violence at some point in their lives; of the 30–40% of murders that take place in families, a majority of the victims are women and children (Presidential Commission On Questions of Women, Family and Demographics) (Greene 2002, 232).

Although there are no statistics on gendered violence in many Arctic communities, it is likely that in similar life conditions and under a similar social structure it thrives across the most peripheral regions. Alcohol, substance abuse, patriarchal mores and values and other conditions create fertile conditions for violence particularly in communities where there is economic hardship, lack of opportunities and unemployment. While these are widely-spread problems across the Nordic countries, with Finland leading in terms of violence against women (Harvard 2002), it is also worth remembering that in northern communities where the availability and access to health care and mental services are limited, the impact of domestic violence on women's health is magnified. Chamberlain points out that women who disclose sexual assault may wait days to leave their village when weather is bad so they can have a medical exam – it may be too late to obtain forensic evidence and victims are further traumatized in the process.... (Chamberlain 2002, 195). As WTO and other instruments and mouthpieces of globalization are prompting Finland and other Northern countries to cut down on public spending, including health care and state services, it is the Northern communities that are the hardest hit. Profit-oriented private companies are not interested in providing services there for their motives are purely utilitarian and commercial – yet privatization is seen by the advocates of neoliberalism as the new solution to "lack of public money."

The idea of a Sami matriarch (Lapp) of ambinecent ethnic backgrounds controlling the North's resources and representing an enemy to Finnish "heroes" does not seem to have any basis in history, now or earlier. There is even less reason to circulate images of Northern women labeled as "whores" (cf. Kalevala's term "Pohjolan portto" and the term "huorimus" of Finnish folk poetry). It is important to realize that whore labeling is simply a traditional patriarchal strategy for controlling women – like Louhi – who

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refuse the limiting gender scripts imposed by patriarchal society and its asymmetrical division of gendered resources and power. It has nothing to do with “actual” sexual behavior. On the other hand, it is a relatively recent phenomenon that Northern communities have increasingly become the visitation sites of globally “mobile” and “nomadic” sex workers, particularly from the Eastern countries (Penttinen 2004). This has everything to do with the “new economy”, the cuts to social services and the increased unemployment that has accompanied the transition in Russia and Estonia, for example, to market economy. Nor does this mean that “Russian women are whores” – although such imagery and stereotypes do predominate in the most harmful way in Finland and other countries. Nor is there any reason to portray the Sami, or any other historical group living in the deep North as particularly greedy, vindictive, unsharing and deceptive. In fact, the historical reality is that the Sami, like many other Indigenous people, have been represented as being, to the contrary, more sharing and less materialistic than their neighbors, particularly, of course, their colonizers. This was shown in the previous section on the Sami worldview and *verdde* system.

It is necessary, then, to expose the absurdity of the myth of bottomless feminine evil and pollution by heeding what statistics alone tell us of the reality of gender relations under neoliberal globalization, affecting regions both in the South and the North, the wealthy southern parts of the North and the less privileged and “developed” North regions of the North.²⁴ What Genevieve Vaughan (1997) calls the patriarchal exchange economy has been transmuted into “casino capitalism” where freedom has come to mean the free flow of the elite's capital across and through the circuits of information highways. Whether they are represented as goddesses or cyborgs, capital eludes women in the North and in the South, as power, economic and corporate power gets increasingly concentrated into the hands of ever fewer transnational owners most of which are in the hands of men (e.g. Kailo 2002).

On the other hand, patriarchy as the male-led religious and political systems has been weakened, while hegemonic masculinity (Connell 1995), the master imaginary and turbo or machocapitalism have grown even stronger. Still, patriarchal laws have already narrowed the self-determination of Sami women among Northern women.

24. Patriarchy refers to a social system where men are seen and valued as heads of both families and institutions and women are defined in relation to men, whereas men are defined as subjects in their own right. Patriarchy has existed through the ages and has manifested itself as different types of socio-economic “contracts” from socialism to capitalism with a different impact on women's status and rights. Historically the ideological basis of patriarchy appears to have been in the idea of Father God, but the justifications have changed over time. Through economic, familial/social, political, religious justification men still determine what part women should or should not play. It does not imply that no woman, or group of women have power, nor does it mean that all women are oppressed despite the institutional and structural inequality. Now that the role of the Church in society has become weaker for example in the Nordic countries and men are no longer uncontested economic heads of families, “patriarchy” is undergoing its own crises. Male hegemonic power tends,

however, to adapt to new historical conditions and to find new ways of discriminating against women. Recently, sexuality and the female body have appeared to be especially central components in women's oppression, and accordingly patriarchy as a concept has been accompanied by the term hegemonic masculinity (Connell 1995) to add contemporary nuances to the meaning of male power.

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One among today's active Sami scholars and feminists, Jorun Eikjok has documented the impact of differential laws and regulations on reindeer herding women in Norway (Eikjok 1992, 8) at a time preceding globalization. She describes the ways in which some the complementary and symmetrical roles of men and women changed in the course of history as the responsibility for farming formally passed to men and the gender roles underwent changes after the Second World War (1990, also 2000). Formerly, most women formed part of a female exchange and dependency-relationship, the so-called "verdde" system but at this historical moment, women and their knowledge and experience were no longer needed. They were increasingly isolated in the home, in the private sphere.²⁵ The practical consequences of this have been that Sami culture and language became defined as inferior with the woman bearing the brunt of the loss of status, self-determination, support and respect (1990, 10). Eikjok notes the impact that the development of capitalism wage-work also had by creating a new sectorization in society leading to sex segregation and the appearance of the domestic/public dichotomy (1990, 10). Capitalism brought with it the market system where women lost their role as producers with the domestic sphere becoming, simultaneously devalued. In many ways this also diminished their influence (1990, 10). These trends have only been reinforced by the impingement of neoliberal policies (Eikjok 1990; 2000). Some statistics about the impact of neoliberal global politics reveal the extent to which it is gendered, resulting in the feminization of poverty and the masculinization of power. As the "new economy" with its ethos of free trade, competitiveness, economic growth, cost-savings, synergy creation, cuts to public spending is spreading to the most remote corners also of the North, it is worth considering the gender impact of these values and policies and to recognize the trends affecting employment:

Between 1983 and 1993, U.S. banks replaced 37 percent of their workforce with automated teller machines (ATMs). China is planning to introduce computerized production, which is expected to eliminate 20 million jobs. Worldwide unemployment is expected to continue to increase. Already, more than 800 million people are underemployed or entirely without a job. Meanwhile, profits are at an all-time high due to digital technology and jobless recoveries, where profits increase and jobs decrease. (Eisenstein 1998, 83)

Global reorganization of capital means rising prosperity for a few, and rising unemployment and poverty for most of the rest. Some 70 percent of the world's income is produced and consumed by 15 percent of the world's population. This inequity exists within and across nations. More than one-fourth of u.s. workers do not earn wages above the poverty line while CEOs make 149 times as much as an average factory worker. The top 1 percent of u.s. families have more wealth than the entire bottom 90 percent. (Eisenstein 1998, 114)²⁶

²⁵For the gender division of labor among the Sami today, see also Amft 2000. For Inuit traditional gender roles, see J. Billson 1990, 44.²⁶Eisenstein consciously spells the names of countries and also her own name in lower case.

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The emergence of a high-tech-info economy requires new tax laws that assist its beneficiaries. The Reagan-Bush decade of the 1980s put much of this new law in place. By 1992, the richest 1 percent of americans gained 91 percent in after-tax income while the poorest fifth lost 17 percent of their income. This has led to the top 1 percent's total income equaling that of 40 percent. The same government that has rewritten social welfare law and ended 'hand-outs' to the poor has in 1997 given away digital spectrum worth up to 70 billion u.s. dollars to commercial broadcasters. The largest media companies in the world got the equivalent of at least five new channels in every market where they currently own one. (eisenstein 1998, 83)

The privatization of and cutbacks in the welfare state continue to devastate. By 1992 less than 1 percent of the US children were defined as poor. Yet billions of dollars continue to subsidize corporate interests. Welfare caseloads shrink, homelessness escalates, the shelters overflow. Utter destitution is the order of the day in the streets of most large cities, while Wall Street bonus babies cruise the Hamptons in their shiny new muscle cars (eisenstein 1998, 26).

In 1960 the combined incomes of the richest fifth of the world's population were 30 times greater than the poorest fifth. By 1991 it was over 60 times and in 1998, 78 times as high. ... The amount of tax breaks given to corporations and wealthy individuals in 1996 was US 440 billion, more than seventeen times the combined cost of state and federal spending on AFDC (Aid to Families with Dependent Children). (eisenstein 1998, 62)

On a world scale the polarization is obscene. In 1997, 450 billionaires had assets equal to the combined annual income of the poorest 50% of the world's population (Korten 1999).

While I have no exhaustive disaggregated gender statistics on how globalization has affected women in the North, in the various regions, it is likely that the effects are very similar across the region, since the policies adopted from Canada to Russia through the Nordic welfare states are responses to OECD recommendations and WTO ideologies that stress cost-cutting, restructuring and cuts to public spending (however, see Kailo, Sunnari & Vuori 2003. Statistics prove beyond doubt that women are the most vulnerable to the impact of such austerity measures. More than men, they depend on public services to combine family and work, and the reduced services in health care and nursing end up as their increased unpaid workload. Although more research is needed to bring out the extent to which the "new economy" has resulted in more opportunities and more threats to the communities' and the women's well-being, the ethos of privatization and tax cuts has nowhere led to women's well-being, except for the few elite women benefiting from capital accumulation or the increased wealth of their husbands and partners.²⁷ Also, in comparing the situation of the Indigenous women across the Atlantic, one can note that in both Canada and Norway the state defines who belongs to the indigenous population in a way that creates internal conflicts and divisions, plus an internal hierarchy (Eikjok 1990, 11). This certainly prevents any "Strong women" from

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exerting the kind of power that myths and stereotypes ascribe to them.²⁸ State policies applying to the sexes likewise reflect a differential treatment. Under globalization, women have even less agency and possibilities for retaining values and a life style that do not fit with the monocultural global ethos of capital accumulation and technological literacy. Of course, globalization in itself is neither negative, nor positive. However, to the extent that economic policies privilege the rights of multinational corporations at the expense of the self-determination of women and marginalized nations, citizens and nation states, they narrow significantly the choices the women have for making a living. Women, and most urgently native women in peripheral locations in the North, badly need social, publicly funded services, particularly in a situation where they live at the mercy of abusive husbands and partners, economically dependent and physically vulnerable (Crnkovich 1990). On the other hand, the North is also the traditional home of peoples with the soundest ecosocially sustainable life styles and values. Hence the view of Louhi heading a land of the greedy and inhospitable people that one knows from Kalevala AND the influential film, *Iron Age* (Holmberg) is most misleading.

Native people as groups stand little chance of resisting the onslaught of the developers and global forces that are storming their communities in search of opportunities and business ventures. Pollution has indeed become an everyday phenomenon in the North. However, far from it resulting from the greed, cruelty, avarice and blackness of soul of Native women, it derives from the unsustainable, short-sighted values of corporations and developers whose terminator capitalism little cares for the rights of future generations or the future of the most vulnerable regions of the world. As Shiva notes, homogenization and monocultures introduce violence at many levels. Monocultures are always associated with political violence – the use of coercion, control, and centralization. Without centralized control and coercive force, this world filled with the richness of diversity cannot be transformed into homogeneous structures, and the monocultures cannot be maintained. Self-organized and decentralized communities and ecosystems give rise to diversity. Globalization gives rise to coercively controlled monocultures (Shiva 1997, 101–106). Globalization is not the cross-cultural interaction of diverse societies; it is the imposition of a

27. Women's/girls' secondary status defines their particularly proletarian role across the globe. But now the

privatized nation-state plays a more circuitous role in enforcing this gendred hierarchy. The location of

power has been dispersed to multiple sites in the transnational economy, and to the single-parent family

headed by women. The first-world nation-state regulates less paternalistically in its diminished social

welfare role. Instead, privatized sites like the single-parent family and the market itself economically

discipline women-girls (Eisenstein 1998, 108).

28. Eva-Britt Nilsson (2000) notes that out of 17000–20.000 Saami in Sweden only 325 run sustainable

herds, 38 of these are women (in Hällgren, 2000, 10–11). On women and reindeerherding see also

Elgvin, Dag T. 1999, 12–18). Details change from family to man-herding resulting in the whole

industry suffering from loss of involvement, and also points to economic discrimination in duodji,

subsidy and leadership, lack of rights of married women... For a debate on feminism and the issue of

reindeer herding see Outi Jääskö (1999, 19–20) comments on the disproportionate number of reindeer

herding check women in leadership positions. See Sara (1999) also on role of women in reindeerherding.

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particular culture on all of the others. Nor is neoliberal globalization the search for ecological balance on a planetary scale. For Shiva, it is the predation one race, one race, and often one gender of a single species on all of the others. The "global" in the dominant discourse is the political space in which the dominant local seeks global control, freeing itself of responsibility for the limits arising from the imperatives of ecological sustainability and social justice. In this sense, the "global" does not represent a universal human interest; it represents a particular local and parochial interest and culture that has been globalized through its reach and control, its irresponsibility and lack of reciprocity (Shiva 1997, 103).

The Indian Act of Canada (before it was repealed) made Indian women lose their rights to be Indian if they married non-Indians while Indian men marrying white women allowed them to get rights. Sami women in Sweden likewise lost Sami rights when moving away. In summary, the main society's negative ideas about women are reproduced within the Indigenous culture and Indigenous women, then, are regulated both within the mainstream society and within their own culture. State assimilatory practices together with the impact of monocultural patriarchy thus represent a threat to the diversity of both Indigenous and women's culture. In Canada 80% of the members of the reservation councils are men. In 1978 a new law was passed regarding reindeer herding which prioritized the role of men as the exclusive reindeer herders (Eikjokk 1990, 12; Sara) Helander also reports that the older generation of women appear to have experienced equality in the past but modernisation, overprotective national policies and non-Sami legislation have led to their oppression (Helander & Kailo, 1998, 149). The much-touted ideal of sustainable development implies moving from the development of monoculture to the recognition of the value of biological and cultural – including gendered diversity. However, as Mark Nuttall, among others remarks in his research on the North, conceptual frameworks for understanding human-environment relationships and working out effective strategies for sustainable development are often incomplete unless they include consideration and analysis of different gender roles in a culture's mode of production as well as different impacts men and women have on environment (1998, 67–73). Arctic Othering as a concept can also be applied to the treatment of Sami or Native Canadian women as the exotic other, rendered inhuman by the mechanisms of idealisation or denigration (the noble savage, drunk squaw-stereotypes). As Frank Norris has noted: "according to representations of popular culture, the North is a frozen frontier populated by Klondike prospectors, outlaws, sled dogs and stout hearted Mounted Policemen along with a smattering of Eskimos, dance-hall girls, seal poachers, fisherman [sic] and other hard-bitten characters who inhabit the fringes of life" (1992, 52).²⁹ Far from sustainable policies being the order of the day under the new economy, once again,

29. See also R.H. Proppe for women's lives and the construction of gender in Icelandic fishing villages (1998).

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women are left with the shorter end of the joystick, holding onto the edges of the digital wedge.

The myth of a borderless brave new world is just that, a myth. It continues to be a man's world. Cyborgs or Goddesses, women continue to be "matter out of place." What Vandana Shiva labels as "Maldevelopment" militates however against this equality in diversity and superimposes the ideologically constructed category of western technological man as a uniform measure of the worth of classes, cultures and genders (Shiva 1993, 5). Shiva concludes: "Maldevelopment is the violation of the integrity of organic, interconnected and interdependent systems, that sets in motion a process of exploitation, inequality, injustice and violence. It is blind to the fact that a recognition of nature's harmony and action to maintain it are preconditions for distributive justice" (1993, 5). Thus, the car drivers who flee from the overcrowded cities into the hills and the countryside destroy these landscapes, and forests where they want to find unpolluted nature are destroyed by the fumes from car exhausts. The sex-tourists who flee to Thailand [or northern communities] destroy the women there, make them into prostitutes and possibly infect them with AIDS. In conclusion therefore, according to Shiva: "Before yearning there was destruction, before romanticizing there was violence" (1993, 145). In fact, trafficking in women, as well as child and youth prostitution, are relatively new Northern problems, at least in their current scope. The time is passing when virgin forest (uncut by man), virgin oil (uncontaminated by manmade preservatives), virgin soil (untilled by man), or virgin girl (untouched by man) can be used as metaphors by the 'lords of creation' who defined nature, nature's products, and women as resources to be used for economic profit or personal gratification. An ironical twist with regard to these metaphors is that they were devised by men who are also largely the destroyers of this so-called virginity (Tomm 1995, 281). Linked with the global "restructuring" of social security networks and the rising gap between the wealthy and the poor, these symptoms of social despair, unemployment and the loss of safety nets are best analyzed in light of the impact of development policies. The issues facing the Circumpolar North and the Northern hemisphere at large (Northern United States, Canada, Russia, Finland, Sweden, Norway, Iceland, Denmark, and Greenland) are intertwined with economic and political globalization, and above all, with the impact of the increasing power of multinational corporations seeking outposts of "development." In such a context, one badly needs, indeed the Lapp/Sami woman with Second sight – and with the kinds of shape-shifting capabilities that would help bring to balance the entire dysfunctional, unbalanced world. (Moyne 1981)³⁰.

30. See Moyne (1981) on Sami women's second sight.

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Women's Mythic patterns in the North – Second Sight Revisited

In many ways, the Mystical or Mythic North exists at the interface of reality and fiction, the conscious and the unconscious, the periphery and the margin, inside and outside. As Yi-Fu Tuan notes “When we establish a border between our knowledge of what exists within the walls of this room and what is outside, we also have an understanding of mythic place. . . .mythic place is that which lies outside of familiar and everyday places, and as such functions as a precondition for the known world (Birkeland 1999; 2000, 65). Mythic place exists outside of discourse, so to speak. To the extent that there are so few stories of women's inner north, women's perspectives on whatever the Mystery of “Terra Nullius” means, it is time to speculate on what the gender differences might well be. One way to conceive of mythical place, according to Tuan, is to see it as a component in worldview or cosmology (1977, 88). Worldview can be seen as the attempt to make sense of environment in one kind or another, or answers to human beings regarding questions of their place in nature. This second way to understand mythic place implies that place is both earthly and cosmic. According to Tuan, there are two typical answers to the question of how human beings are related to the earth and to cosmos (1977, 88). One way is to treat the human body as an image of the cosmos, while another way is to treat the human being as “the centre of a cosmic frame oriented to the cardinal points and the vertical axis” (ibid.). In the first, the body is the microcosm: “the earth is the human body writ large”, while the cosmos is macrocosm. According to encyclopaedias of symbolism, in this view there is a parallel between microcosm and macrocosm (qtd. in Birkeland 2000, 65). There is of course no official female mythology of the North. However, Tuan's discourse contrasts with the view of woman as the carrier of a nation's pollution or unrealistic ideals. As an alternative projection screen, one for sustainable, balancing, life enhancing processes and values, it could become and can be resurrected as a sobering counterbody – a cosmic body with a nourishing Milky Way. However, the other imaginary need not, and in feminist philosophy rarely represents “reverse sexism.” It is based on and reflects an altogether alternative conception of human relations, relations between men, women and nature, beyond the dualistic, hierarchical orderings of western patriarchal social order. Myths require group validation and this has not taken place in the context of shared gynocentric myths. To be sure, individuals do not make mythic stories with lasting impact alone for in order to become myths these require validation by a group. Myth is a collective agreement about some aspect of the unknown. (Lauter 1984, 6). However, many scholars have tried to unearth the image clusters in women's writings and traditions across the globe, trying to locate their shared core, even when there is in the wake of postmodernism a general suspicion over any grand narratives or assumptions of unified discourses. Many groups, such as the Native people of North American, have sought to group the values they have in common despite the many

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nation-specific variations and idiosyncracies of culture. They commonly refer to a Panindian philosophy where respect for Mother Earth and the interconnectedness of all species and people feature centrally. The goal of such “imaginary communities” is to mobilize group spirit, self-esteem and perhaps – to spread values held to be sacred. It is hard to speak of a collective pan-feminine philosophy or worldview since women are conditioned to identify less with other women than with their immediate families and kin groups. Yet, the global women’s movement has tried to describe the core values around which the heterogenous women’s groups, associations across the world subscribe in peace work and the collective mobilization today for an “ecosocial sustainable future” where the safeguarding of women’s well-being and rights would ensure the well-being of their children, families and communities.

Vicki Noble says, “Shakti women are human females who are feeling the call of the Dark Goddess – the deep, serious will-to-live arousing from within the body of the planet. This demanding energy of the Death Goddess-she who would destroy the old forms in order to make way for the new – is pushing through us for healing and the realignment with nature that needs to happen at this time” (1991, 7). We need images of women’s bodies that integrate materiality and spirituality as another pathway into new conceptions of female power (Tonn 1995, 282). It is not a matter of trying to reconstruct an earlier period of history and transplant it into the contemporary period. Rather, pagan images and mythologies provide inspirational resources for increasing numbers of women in their drive for ‘sexual and spiritual democracy.’ Cultural mythologies underscore social realities. As Carol Christ has noted (1987b), symbols are embedded in consciousness. In times of crises or transition, we revert back to deep-seated beliefs, values, and attitudes which are associated with symbols that reflect our culture’s most entrenched beliefs. These symbols are religious symbols which reflect the ultimate meaning of life in terms of our origins, natures, and destinies. Even a predominantly secular society is founded on such cultural symbols (Tomm 1995, 289). As Tomm points out, this happens specifically with women who have rejected symbols which restrict their power and independence but they have not replaced them with new images. In periods of upheaval, the void is filled with old images and meanings. They provide few, if any, resources for envisioning a way out of the crisis. Alternative images are required to fill the void. Images are more powerful if they have an historical trajectory. Because of this, it is important to connect one’s own spiritual life today with the spirituality of women in the past (Tomm 1995, 289). Ynestra King for her part notes that any revolution needs a cultural foundation and a utopian vision (1990, 115). Imagination is part of innovative change. Lack of imagination, on the other hand, leads to reductionist thinking..

It would be difficult to speculate on what the North as a loaded psychospiritual notion would mean in this context. However, it is less difficult to bring out what the dominant myths have been in the liminal historic stage between matriarchies and the emerging, increasingly more misogynistic patriarchy. Before one can address the

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“hero” versions of women’s narratives, one has to recognize how strongly patriarchy has colored what we can know about them, and how deeply the motif of rape and initiation have colored women’s stories across the world. Their link with the cardinal direction of the North is intriguing, however, as I will show...

The tension between Rape trauma and Gynocentric Initiation as part of women’s mythic pattern

Kathleen Wall found in her early explorations of feminist criticism, and of historical, sociological and psychological studies of women’s experience that the motifs which constitute the myth of Callisto – rape, troubled motherhood, forest exile, metamorphoses – are generally viewed by scholars as integral to the lives of real and fictional women. In the course of writing *Archetypal Patterns of Women’s Fiction*, Annis Pratt for example found that “the rape-trauma archetype” recurs as one of the most frequent plot structures in women’s fiction.” I have found that the same plot is typical also for narratives of women marrying bears – the most widely and internationally circulated myth complex associated with the Arctic – Arctos deriving from the word Arctos as Bear, the Great Bear.

It seems true, in fact, that the raped, abused woman is the recurring structural feature of women’s writings in the most geographically distant parts of the world. The global circulation of similar stories and discourses seems to go back to historic times, instead of only marking today’s widely-spread Hollywood-style mass culture. Kalevala is no exception even in this regard, although its alleged peacefulness and the recourse to magic rather than weapons as a softer form of warfare are noted as its distinguishing characteristics in comparative studies of epic lore.³¹ Like Reischl (2004), Wall (1988), Geminder (1984) and my own research reveal, the Arctic, the North is in women’s fiction and myths closely related with the exile of women from their self-defined social and cosmic values, ways of relating to life and their own desires for a life beyond the male script – being defined essentially in relation to male desire and male relatives’ needs. Finnish narratives of the North in their most distant layers echo the Greco-Roman mythologies but are not restricted to them; these for their part echo Native North American mythologies which are strikingly similar.

31. The rape theme is present also in the Finnish epic, although it has been overshadowed by the focus on the male adventures, or the tragedy of Kullervo, the anti-hero who unwittingly seduces and causes the death of his own sister. It is truly absurd that scholars like Comporetti should have foregrounded Louhi’s defense of the mill as a “rape” although she conceived and rightfully earned the Sampo for the exchange of her daughters. The actual rather than metaphoric rapes of Kyllikki and of other women by Lemminkäinen, the murder of Louhi’s daughters by Ilmarinen (turning his wife into a seagull can be seen as a violent and abusive attitude towards his marital problems) and other violent male activities are not condemned but ignored; they do not diminish the stature of the heroes suggesting then that male violence is natural. However, a strong woman defending her rightful property in her “land of women” is judged with an altogether different moral tone, and the alleged “rape of the luminaries” by Louhi is the Finnish version of enlightenment views on female “darkness” of soul.

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The stories of women marrying bears also contain many versions making the motif one of a woman's forceful capture by a bear, for whom she produces half-human, half-furry offspring (Kailo 2005b). Whereas the historically older versions appear to express the cosmic/erotic encounters and relations between a woman and a green lover

– the bear, the patriarchal, historically more recent versions turn women into victims of abduction and rape (Kailo 2005). The stories about women and bears are northern stories by excellence for the bear is the privileged mythic symbol of the North – arctos, after all, derives from the word denoting “bear” – the great bear star constellation which is the home of the ancestral god-goddess of most northern peoples. In this tradition the North stands for the Great Numinous, a spiritual force of equal relevance to women as to men. What then, would the North, the bottom, the deep reaches of a geopolitical and psycho-spiritual Arctic realm connote for women in its particular modern forms?

A picture drawn of the woman and the bear by a friend, co-activist Irma Heiskanen, gives a hint of what the North might well represent from the women's perspective – a gaze based not on a homogenous feminine essence but a strategically essentialist narrative matrix on which there might be many individual versions and variants... In Finnish folk poetry, Louhi is linked with the bear as her procreator and primal mother. We learn that Louhi rocked the primal bear and gave it substance and life through balls of wool and by rocking it to life. Instead of the image of the castrating witch or bitch, we find the image clusters of a goddess, a haltia and matriarch with the power of creating life out of primal matter, balls of wool, snippets of the forest.

Irma Heiskanen, Cosmic Bears.

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According to Francine du Plessix Gray (Wall 1988) “From Emily Brontë’s moors to Doris Lessing’s veld, women authors have turned to nature not only in search of heightened perception but also as a refuge from the patriarchal order...Until all forms of sexual dominance are abolished, nature may be the only form of nunnery left to us, the only shelter in a desacralized world.” Similarly, Pratt notes that the heroine often escapes the confines and demands of society by retreating to a green world...At this point Pratt introduces an archetypal figure that she identifies as the green-world lover, a man who is removed from the patriarchal social structure and its values, and who initiates the heroine into her sexuality. Yet the heroine’s sexual experience in the forest is equally likely to occur at the hands of a rapist, a representative of the enclosing patriarchy, whom Pratt identifies with Olympian (and non-chthonic) deities like Zeus and Apollo. Pratt observes, then, that this configuration of the heroine’s sojourn in the natural world has two opposite manifestations, initiation and rape, and that both are central to fiction.³² Another paradox in fiction by and about women is manifested in the quality of the forest retreat itself. Gray’s remarks suggest that the natural world may be a place of chosen retreat – a “nunnery” – a place of companionship with other women, or, as Pratt describes it, a place of escape from the pressures of patriarchy, but Pratt also observes that because such an escape signals a woman’s rebellion against the patriarchy. It frequently results in a rape, which is designed precisely as punishment for her rebellion. Such a retreat is as likely to end in rape as in freedom from domination. The natural world is also a place of involuntary exile. After a woman’s fall, Auerbach writes, “indifferent nature simply reclaims her. Once cast into solitude, the fallen woman is irretrievably metamorphosed” (Wall 1988, 5). Christine Downing, in her poetic analysis of Artemis and Greek mythology well sums up why women need not only a room of their own, but a mythic tradition in their own image:

To be fed only male images of the divine is to be badly malnourished. We are starved for images that recognize the sacredness of the feminine and the complexity, richness, and nurturing power of female energy. We hunger for images of human creativity and love inspired by the capacity of female bodies to give birth and nourish, for images of how humankind participates in the natural world suggested by reflection on the correspondences between menstrual rhythms and the moon’s waxing and waning. We seek images that affirm that the love women receive from women, from mother, sister, daughter, lover, friend reaches as deep and is as trustworthy, necessary, and sustaining as is the love symbolized by father, brother, son, or husband. We long for images that name as authentically feminine courage, creativity, loyalty, and self-confidence, resilience and steadfastness, capacity for clear insight, inclination for solitude, and the intensity of passion. We need images; we also need myths – for myths make concrete and particularize; they give us situations, plots, relationships. We need the goddess and we need the goddesses.... (Downing 1989, 120–121)

32. What Pratt fails to consider is the compulsive heterosexuality of these stories, which may well have prevented western scholars from detecting less dualistic, eurocentric paradigms within the storyline.

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What Downing writes about the meaning to her of Artemis as a heroine of the wilderness and of “dark and lonely places” might help us understand what Louhi and her kinfolk might represent to women also in the North; “I have learned by now that I need to start with what is darkest, with what I like least but which cannot be eluded...” (Downing 1989, 123). Downing relates such mythic women to wilderness as an intrapsychic realm of being where goddesses are ever-efanescent and appear to say: “Here you are alone, as you have said you were ready to be.”

One of the meanings of the North as the geography of silence, absence, creative virtuality, liminality and the “frozen moment” could be this confrontation with oneself in the paradoxes of desire (sexistential “greed” for the elusive something in life) and yearnings for the not-yet-here... Louhi and other similar ambivalent figures of life and death could represent the dark side of the soul as that which one has not yet fully faced and confronted, what Jungians call one’s shadow beyond good and evil. The wilderness or the tundra of the psyche thus condenses a multitude of open vistas and unploughed, process-like states which call for “development” – not the literality of mining and gold-digging but the plumbing of one’s inner depths from the dimension of Manala to that of the North Cape – heights of perception and insight and descents to the dead (suppressed) dimensions of being. In such a reading of Louhi as the liminal space between lux and Lucifer the embodiment of the North Pole and the frozen dimensions of being need not be represented as the evil feminine. Nor do they become the breeding grounds for an idealized femininity, the Goddess of Birth and Life. Rather, they become the meeting ground, the transitional space between what is dark in men and women, and what, by being brought into light or consciousness can be harnessed for creative uses to advance collective wellness, for all. For Downing, manifest as Artemis’ manifestations may be, we discover their unity and thus apprehend their “essence,” when we know her as the goddess who comes from afar, whose realm is the ever-distant wilderness” (1989, 10). For Downing, as regards the goddesses, one must apply a different logic, a different strength and wisdom than rules in the realm of the living (the dominant Eurocentric consciousness?). Just as Arcadia, beyond the romantic myths of pastoral paradise is an imaginal realm, set apart from the everyday world, the North, Pohjola can be seen as a geography of elsewhere where things are as they are in themselves, not as already shaped and developed by humankind (Downing 1989, 123-124).

As a figure that both haunts and is haunted, Louhi is also Northern nature as it is, before taming, prior to development and politics. She is desire itself in its ambivalent and multivalent meanings; that which sets us on quests, that which triggers our fears, that which satisfies our creative longings and yearning for that something always over the horizon – the frontier, approaching us to the Pole, the North pole and pivot of our fantasies and fears. Irene Claremont de Castillejo speaks of discovering the inadequacy of all theories about the female psyche, including the Jungian framework into which she had for so long tried to fit her own experience and that of her female patients. For

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now, she suggests, we need simply to attend lovingly and precisely to the images spontaneously brought forward in our dreams and fantasies. (Downing 1989, 119)

Feminists want major social change such as reorganization of power relations with respect to things like pay cheques, conjugal relations, social leadership, cultural constructions of meaning, and self-determination. Freedom from institutional violence in its various manifestations is required for the kind of social change feminists envisage from within their particular social contexts. The hidden thread that connects abuse in private relations with unjust social organization is acknowledged in the feminist slogan "the personal is political." Feminists have empowered women by showing how abusive personal situations can be explained in terms of larger cultural patterns that have normalized unequal power relations (Tomm 1995, 5). Myths can have an important role also in describing an inner and outer world where these asymmetrical power relations no longer operate as the subconscious legitimating force of women's unequal status.

Conclusion

To all of us [in Canada], the vast unknown country of the North, reaching away to the polar seas, supplies a peculiar mental background....I never have gone to James Bay: I never go to it: I never shall. But somehow I'd feel lonely without it. (Stephen Leacock,

1936, qtd. in Kruk 1997, 86)

As I have suggested, the North condenses our longings for an Inner North, the psychic Arctic of the Soul, both male and female, national and global, a geopsychic space which is localized, yet globally unifying, Sami and Indigenous, Indian and peripheral, yet pivotally non-specified, ethnoculturally distinct. And yet defying all such limiting categorizations. The Myths of the North, those best known to the Finns and to the world, as well as the less known ones, span a spectrum as deep and vast, as rich and as harsh as the very geography and climate to which they are tied. Myths, some argue, like oral tradition, are particularly resistant to change and transformation. What do we understand with the North, wherein resides its symbolic and discursive meaning beyond the matter-of-fact definitions of geopolitics and geography, land mass and scientific approach?

Terra Nullius, Ultima Thule, land of Arctic hysterias, of women with Second Sight, of the evil Witch of the North, of brave pioneering gold diggers or explorers, of seekers of frozen laurels, snow queens, Indigenous resources and riches of the inner and outer kind. The definitions of the North flow from psychic and material, external and internal perspectives, but one thing is sure. As I have emphasized with my material, they have tended to reflect the experiences, challenges and conquests of elite white men, exploiters both of material and immaterial resources from minerals to animals, women and "virgin landscapes". Are the myths of the North changing, however, now

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that collective consciousness increasingly recognizes the gendered processes of mythographers and the gender politics of globalization?

Whether commercial or spiritual, the accounts of the actors and protagonists, heroes and frontier men of the North have reflected the ethos of conquest, mastery over pristine nature and an imperial imposition of Western, Eurocentric ideologies of science, medicine, technology and social policies on the Northern peoples. It is high time, then, to melt the permafrost of hegemonic projections on Northern women seen as mere exotic companions of wandering explorers or as depraved prostitutes of the frozen periphery. From the point of view of ecological, social, economic, spiritual, psychological and political balance and sustainability, it seems to me most urgent to heal the abused, distorted image of the Indigenous Strong woman, i.e. that harmless and even ecologically most sensitive wise woman whom the politics of Arctic Othering most seriously misconstrue. The Lapp/Sami woman with second sight is a condensation of the Northern woman in her ambivalent, cross-border identity. Still, the image must not conceal the real geopolitical subjugation, limitations of choices of the Sami women, who suffer multiple forms of discrimination in the pressures of colonization.

In this preliminary women's quest of the North, I have evoked the pan-arctic figures that are related to each other in the sense of life/death ambivalence and the promise of renewal through descents and ascents to the less visible regions of the soul: Helka, Kave, Maderakka, Sarakka, Akka, Bear Woman, Louhi, Lovi, Loviatar. As a single goddess whose diversity has been covered over by patriarchal narratives, she is the Indigenous Autochthonous Superwoman, the Goddess and the Whore, the Finno-Ugric Matriarch and the Sami Local Divinity all rolled into one. She is the condensed embodiment of liminality, of the Northern inner and outer periphery, Sami and Finnish Gynocentric Reality, Nordic male Fantasy, world androcentric Nightmare and World Women's Redeemer Wise Woman. And even less known, she is the Fertility Goddess of the Russians, Babushka mother earth reduced to the stereotypical Eastern Whore in a world where the virility and sterility of fast sex and fast food have overwritten the mythic narratives of fertility and abundance. She is Pan Dora. The feminine Gifts that are Everywhere.

In discussing female desire, it is rewarding to consider that for all of us there are specific privileged images and spaces in our soul. Macquarrie for example invites us to imagine a space in the centre of our being, a place where one goes in the process of centring oneself. This is an ontological space at the centre of one's being. He says, "The empty space of freedom which I have called the metaphorical hole is a centre of creativity" (1983, 12). For Winnie Tomm, "Individual desire is shaped by intentionality toward egoity within the metaphorical hole and toward sociality through interaction with others" (Tomm 1995, 58). Macquarrie referred to the metaphorical hole in the centre of one's being as the location for spiritual energy to propel the individual into community from their own subjectivity. As in the Buddhist

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discussion of mindfulness, Daly also claims that intensity of desire focuses energy and unlocks it. A woman unbinds her mind through focussed attention on her desire for Be-ing and actualizing the desire in the act of Be-Longing through the process of Be-Friending. The Lust for Be-ing is thereby awakened (Tomm 1995, 73). Benjamin for her part uses the metaphor of space to represent desire. Open space – where I now situate the Northern expanses and sprawling horizons – is a prerequisite for the expression of the desire to be recognized. Inner space represents the capacity to hold oneself. Benjamin says the open space inside “allows us to feel that our impulses come from within and so are authentically our own” (Tomm 1995, 128). However, we need a particular gynocentric, woman-positive North complete with images like the North which crack the veneer that covers the ‘wild side’ of women’s bodies. It is a way of opening up possibilities for women to affirm themselves and to create linguistic meanings which bring female morphology more into the realm of acceptable discourse. This emphasis on women’s anatomy is intended as a strategy to get out of a symbolic order constructed, exclusively on male morphology in which women’s bodies and their whole persons are defined by ‘lack’ and male projection.

There is a crack in everything. That is how the light gets in. Leonard Cohen

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