

Echoes from the Past:  
The Kalevala's Cultural Significance in Present-Day Finland  
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### **Abstract**

The goal of this study is to determine if the Kalevala, a series of ancient Finnish mythological stories, is culturally significant within present-day Finland. The author theorizes that it is. The research methods involved in constructing a descriptive ethnography are used in this study, although the study goes beyond pure description and moves into attempting to demonstrate support or lack of support for the thesis. The author uses both research of literature and interviews with six young adult Finns in the research process. The research indicates that the Kalevala is present in modern Finnish culture, but that the original text is not well-known to modern, young adult Finns. The research further suggests that modern-day reinterpretations of the Kalevala may be key in cultivating interest in the original text of the Kalevala. Further, young Finns should not be overexposed to the original text of the Kalevala too early – this will discourage them from attempting to read the Kalevala later in life.

## Introduction

“For a mythologist, it is quite the same whether Pohjola or Kalevala existed in reality or not, and how they existed: he clarifies only what a people thought about those places.”

- *Mathias Alexander Castrén, as quoted in Pentikäinen 1999:9*

In the spring semester of 2013, I took part in an amazing adventure – living as a student in Tampere, Finland, I was exposed to people, ideas, and places that were completely new to me. Before leaving for Finland, I conducted some basic research on its cultural history. This is how I first learned of the Kalevala, a series of ancient Finnish mythological stories. While I was living in Finland, I noticed that the Kalevala kept popping up in unexpected places – in the name of the park on the other side of town, in the sign on the jewelry store near my apartment...and I was amazed that such an old, lengthy text was still seemingly present in Finnish culture. I wondered if this was just an outsider’s perspective, and if the Finns considered it at all part of their modern culture. These thoughts brewed throughout my five months in Tampere.

I believe that the Kalevala, an ancient Finnish mythological epic, has significant influence on present-day Finnish culture. By understanding the Kalevala’s present-day cultural significance in Finland, we can better understand the Finnish people. This understanding has significant intrinsic value. Beyond allowing outsiders to better understand Finns, this project also provides the opportunity for Finns to reflect on their cultural heritage – and hopefully, Finns will better understand themselves.

## Literature Review

I will approach the cultural significance of the Kalevala in present-day Finland from the school of cultural anthropology. The aim of cultural anthropology is to better understand people

by understanding their culture. This is what Clifford Geertz, regarded by many as the most influential American symbolic anthropologist to date, refers to as the “enlargement of the universe of human discourse” (Geertz, 1973:14).

It must be understood that culture is a “context” – that is, culture is not the explanation for social phenomena, but an important component of understanding how and why they occur (Geertz, 1973:14). What is meant by “culture,” however, can be complicated. The meaning of the word “culture” can often be overextended, stretched so thin that it loses any meaningful definition. In an effort to operationalize what is meant by “culture,” within my thesis I will adhere to Geertz’s explanation of culture: “[if] man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun, I take culture to be those webs, and the analysis of it to be therefore not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretive one in search of meaning” (1973:5). This interpretive analysis is accomplished through the process of ethnographic research.

Ethnographic research involves both becoming a participant in an unfamiliar culture and identifying what steps are necessary to become a successful participant (Geertz, 1973:13). According to Bronislaw Malinowski (the Galileo of anthropology), this method requires close relationships with the persons being studied in order to access the “native’s point of view.” Malinowski was the first to propose the use of field work in ethnography instead of armchair ethnography (Wiebe, Durepos, & Mills, 2010:347). Fieldwork can include talking to people in both conversations and interviews, observing and participating in social rituals and day-to-day life, and “close reading of documents” (Wiebe et al., 2010:348). Fieldwork is the process of gathering information. The process of analysis and interpretation begins after that information is gathered. In creating an ethnography, analysis consists of sorting out the significant symbols

within the subject of research and determining those symbols' importance in society (Geertz, 1973:9). In other words, this is the process of describing how the participants of a culture make sense of their surroundings (Wiebe et al., 2010:348). Geertz uses the illustration of observing someone closing one eyelid. What was actually observed was someone closing one eyelid. However, after taking the cultural context and symbolic meaning of the action into account, we can determine if this behavior was a wink, a twitch, an imitation, or something else (Geertz, 1973:6). Although the analysis of culture is centered on symbols and constructs, it does not ignore the reality of day-to-day life (Geertz, 1973:17). It is also important that ethnographers not become too shortsighted. While ethnographies emphasize the value of the individual and subjective perspective, this perspective is combined with an awareness of its social context (Wiebe, et al., 2010:348).

Anthropology is criticized on occasion because of its acceptance of the subjective experience as a valuable component of academic knowledge. Many anthropologists claim that this is exactly what makes the field valuable. Geertz states that anthropologists should embrace the subjective experience as “an ingredient in the work” – after all, the point of anthropology is closer to “grasping a point” than “abstracting a law.” (Geertz, 2003:30). Ethnographies are not designed to create an objective report. The cornerstone of interpretive ethnography is the philosophy of phenomenology, which is the idea that reality is altered and even created by the way human consciousness perceives that reality. This requires the recognition that multiple types of knowledge are valuable – not just the type generated by the scientific method (Wiebe et al., 2010:350). With this in mind, I will now move to an analysis of the Kalevala, the cultural symbol that is the focus of my research.

Before 1835, scholarly knowledge of Finnish mythology and religious belief was limited to the writings of Mikael Agricola, a Finn and Lutheran clergyman. In his introduction to the Book of Psalms (published 1551), Agricola included brief descriptions of some Finnish spirits and gods that were not entirely accurate. One of Agricola's mistakes is that he presented the gods/spirits in a stratified mold, whereas modern study of Finnish mythology indicates that this hierarchy is very loose and that each god (no matter how small) had complete sovereignty over his territory (Pentikäinen, 1999:7). For example, even though the stars are contained in the sky, the god of the sky is not able to interfere with the god of the North Star (Crawford, 1904:xi). Another misrepresentation in Agricola's text is the assumption that Finnish gods were part of a pagan theology. Salo (2005:167) states that there was probably not a structured theology in pre-Christian Finland "because there was no common cult shared by the entire society."

Elias Lönnrot's transcription and compilation of the Kalevala was published in 1835. Previously, the Kalevala only existed within the oral tradition as ballads. Lönnrot was a physician, so he had a unique form of access to the public, and was able to collect stories from the public mind (Crawford, 1904:xxxv). Lönnrot traveled around Finland "collecting poems and songs of the Finnish people, sitting by the fireside of the aged, rowing on the lakes with the fishermen, and following the flocks with the shepherds" (Crawford, 1904:xxxvi). Lönnrot emphasized that the version of the Kalevala he published in 1835 was not its original form – the stories he gathered were interrelated, but separate. He ordered them chronologically and created bridges between stories in order to present a seamless epic. It is estimated that he only contributed about two percent of the text in the Kalevala (Pentikäinen, 1999:2). In addition, the true form of the Kalevala is the ballad – it was not intended to be a written text. Despite Lönnrot's disclaimer of his alteration from the original presentation of the stories, many believed

the Kalevala was a “pure” epic and compared it to the likes of the Odyssey and the Iliad. It should be noted that more recent scholars have demonstrated Homer’s epics were also separate ballads knit together into one piece, but during Lönnrot’s lifetime, that theory was not taken seriously (Foley 1996:22; Pentikäinen, 1999:1).

Before Lönnrot’s collection of the stories making up the Kalevala, they were exclusively passed down through the oral tradition in ballad form (Bonser, 1965:244). Because of this, it is difficult to determine the age of these stories. Some scholars believe that the stories of the Kalevala may be very ancient. One piece of evidence for this belief is that some of the chants of Finnish mythology are also found in Hungarian mythology. The Hungarians and the Finns have been distinct people for at least 3,000 years. In addition, the Kalevala does not mention the Swedes, Germans, or Russians, which leads scholars to believe that these stories originated during a time when the Finnish were still isolated from their neighbors (Crawford, 1904:xliv). Other scholars doubt that the stories of the Kalevala predate the Middle Ages (Pentikäinen, 1999:10).

The plot of the Kalevala centers around Väinämöinen, a hero-magician, and Ilmarinen, a hero-blacksmith. Väinämöinen performs magic by singing (Bonser, 1964:242). Both heroes live in the southern part of Finland – known as the *Kalevala* (“land of heroes”) – and travel to a northern land known as *Pohjola*, which is suspected to be modern-day Lapland (Bonser, 1965:242; Lönnrot, 1849:v). Pohjola is the home of evil sorcerers, such as Louhi, the “old and gap-toothed dame of Pohja” (Bonser, 1965:242; Lönnrot, 1849:99). Pohjola is also known as the land of beautiful women (Bonser, 1965:242). Although the Kalevala is too long to be able to summarize the entire plotline in this paper, I have included the basic plotline centering around Väinämöinen, Ilmarinen, and the Sampo.

Väinämöinen travels to Pohjola for the purpose of finding a wife, but gets lost. Louhi comes to his aid, and says she will return him home and promise him the hand of her beautiful daughter if he will forge the Sampo, a very valuable talisman/weapon. Väinämöinen replies that he cannot, but that he knows of someone who can – the famed blacksmith Ilmarinen. He promises to send Ilmarinen to forge the Sampo if Louhi will only return him to Kalevala. Louhi agrees and sends him back home on a sledge on the condition that he not look up on his journey home. The reason for this stipulation becomes clear – on his journey home, Väinämöinen hears a “shuttle whizzing” (for weaving) and looks up to see the daughter of Louhi sitting on a rainbow (henceforth she is called the Rainbow Maiden). He immediately falls in love, but the Rainbow Maiden refuses his advances by giving him seemingly impossible tasks to accomplish before she will marry him (Lönnrot, 1849).

Väinämöinen eventually returns home to Kalevala. Väinämöinen tricks Ilmarinen into going to Pohjola. Ilmarinen forges the Sampo for Louhi, as promised, but the Rainbow Maiden turns down Ilmarinen’s marriage proposal. Eventually, both Väinämöinen and Ilmarinen decide to propose to the Rainbow Maiden again. They encounter each other on the way to Pohjola and decide to let the Rainbow Maiden choose who she wants to marry instead of fighting over her. The Rainbow Maiden listens to both proposals and chooses Ilmarinen (Lönnrot, 1849).

Later, Ilmarinen and Väinämöinen decide to steal the Sampo from Pohjola. They travel to Pohjola via boat. On the way there, their boat is attacked by a giant fish. They kill the fish and Väinämöinen turns its jawbone into a musical instrument called a Kantele, which is a type of harp. Ilmarinen and Väinämöinen eventually succeed in stealing the Sampo - Väinämöinen plays a song on his Kantele and the people of Pohjola fall asleep while the Sampo is stolen. Ilmarinen and Väinämöinen escape Pohjola by boat, but are chased by Louhi and some of the other

residents of Pohjola. In the struggle, both the Sampo and Väinämöinen's Kantele are lost in the sea. The Sampo is broken up into many small pieces. Some of the pieces remain in the sea, but other fragments wash ashore in Kalevala and bring the land good fortune. Väinämöinen eventually remakes his beloved Kantele, this time from wood. In the end, Väinämöinen leaves the world because he has been replaced as the ruler of the land by a child born to a virgin (Marjatta – or, as we may better know her, The Virgin Mary). Väinämöinen leaves his Kantele to the people of Kalevala so they may continue to make beautiful music, and predicts he will be needed again someday (Crawford, 1888).

It is important to note that Väinämöinen and Ilmarinen are heroes, not gods. Although they possess superhuman abilities (magic singing and magic blacksmithing), they are, strictly speaking, mortal (Pentikäinen, 1999:8; Salo, 2005:3). The gods of Finnish mythology play a moderate role in the Kalevala. Although they are not the main characters, they are often referenced and, on rare occasions, intervene to help or hinder the heroes (Bonser, 1928:345). The gods are also very anthropomorphic and tend to deal with aspects of nature instead of abstract concepts such as wisdom and justice, perhaps because the ancient Finns were more concerned with subsistence than philosophy (Bonser, 1928:344; Salo, 2005:167).

### **Research Question**

Although we know much about the Kalevala and its ancient cultural relevance, there is little we know about its present-day significance to the Finns. By closely reading the text of the Kalevala, and drawing connections to its present-day influence in Finland, I will be able to generate research that does not currently exist in the field. The research question I aim to answer is as follows: Is the Kalevala culturally significant to present-day Finns?

### Theory

In order to successfully answer my research question, I will need to have some method of interpreting what I observe during research. This process of interpretation will rely heavily on my theory: Cultural symbols that were culturally significant in the past remain culturally significant by being reinterpreted in formats that speak to the present-day members of that culture. We know from the literature that the Kalevala and its contents were culturally significant to ancient Finns. This is clear just from the fact that Finns thought it was important enough to keep telling the stories. The ballads of the Kalevala served to reinforce norms such as funeral rites and sled-building. The Kalevala served as a method of preserving the culture's customs and rituals. The Kalevala's songs educated the next generation on how to live life as a Finn: "It must be remembered that until the Kalevala was written down, the wisdom of the Finns was stored in the various songs of which it was composed, and which were committed to memory and repeated by the singers. Information ... was thus passed on from generation to generation," (Bonser, 1965:246). Some of this information included funeral rites, how to build a sled, and beliefs about the afterlife (Lönnrot, 1849). Furthermore, the representation of different groups of people in the Kalevala gives some insight into ethnic relations at the time. The Laplanders of the north come from a different genetic line than the Finns of the south. Thus it is important to note that when Väinämöinen travels to a northern land known as *Pohjola* (which is suspected to be modern-day Lapland), *Pohjola* is represented as the home of evil sorcerers and beautiful women (Bonser, 1965:242; Lönnrot, 1849:v; Lönnrot, 1849:99). This is in stark contrast to the heroes harking from Kalevala, which translates as "the land of heroes" (Bonser, 1965:242).

We also know that there are some modern interpretations of the Kalevala in present-day Finnish culture. For example, a graphic novel published in 2000 tells the story in its original text, but with the modern animation styles characteristic of graphic novels (“The Kalevala graphic novel,” n.d.). A children’s story published in 1992 retells select stories of the Kalevala using cats and dogs as the main characters (Kunnas, 1992a). One Finnish heavy metal band, Amorphis, primarily uses retellings of the stories of the Kalevala for the lyrics of their songs (Amorphis, n.d.). My thesis is that the Kalevala is culturally significant to present-day Finns. My theory - that cultural symbols that were culturally significant in the past remain culturally significant by being reinterpreted in formats that speak to the present-day members of said culture - explains this phenomena. However, it is possible that present-day Finns consider the Kalevala a relic that was important to their ancestors, but is of little importance in modern Finland. If this is the case, it would indicate that the present-day manifestations of the Kalevala are cultural anomalies. According to the theory of phenomenology, the best way to discover truths about a group is to ask the members of the group (the “insiders”) what they think (Locher, 2014). For my project, that means asking Finns if they think that the Kalevala is culturally significant in present-day Finland.

### **Thesis**

My thesis is that the Kalevala is culturally significant in present-day Finland. If my thesis is correct, there are several observations that should be true within present-day Finland:

*There are modern reinterpretations of the Kalevala in Finland.* These reinterpretations could include simplified versions of the Kalevala, the stories of the Kalevala told in the present-day, or otherwise – essentially, this category refers to retellings of the stories found in the Kalevala. The presence of retellings of the Kalevala indicates that the stories found in the

Kalevala have some sort of relevance or importance to present-day Finns. The presence of these reinterpretations does not explain *why* the stories might be relevant or important, however.

*There are modern movies, books, art, and/or music that depict the Kalevala.* The stories of the Kalevala were woven into Finnish culture even before its first publishing in 1835.

Originally, the stories existed in a musical/poetic format as ballads that were sung and passed down. Once Elias Lönnrot transcribed and compiled the Kalevala, it also existed in written form. Soon after its printing, the stories of the Kalevala started popping up in music, art, and eventually, movies. It follows that if the Kalevala is culturally significant to present-day Finns, its stories should continue to be reworked into various modes of expression.

*Finnish children are exposed to the Kalevala.* What parents expose their children to says a lot about what the values of a family (and on a larger scale, a society) are. If the Kalevala is truly culturally significant within present-day Finland, one would expect that Finnish children have some idea of what the Kalevala is. This would almost necessarily require that modern reinterpretations of the Kalevala exist, as the Finnish used in the original Kalevala is quite dense and difficult for present-day Finns to understand. It is comparable to what Middle English is for English-speakers.

*Modern reinterpretations of the Kalevala are widely known and recognized by Finns.* Observing the presence of modern retellings of the Kalevala would be interesting, but would not be nearly as useful in supporting my thesis as Finns' *recognition* of those modern retellings. This recognition would indicate that retellings of the Kalevala are known to the general Finnish public, not only by a niche group of Finns. This would show that modern retellings of the Kalevala are not cultural anomalies.

*References to the Kalevala are present in Finnish culture.* These references might be present in language, advertisements, street names, and other aspects of society. These references would be important in supporting my thesis because they would show that the Kalevala is still widely known enough that the general population is aware of its contents and familiar enough with them that the contents can be used to communicate a message.

In order to test my thesis' validity, I will need to assess (1) the number and popularity of modern reinterpretations of the Kalevala in Finland; (2) the Kalevala's presence in present-day Finnish culture; (3) present-day Finn's knowledge of the Kalevala; and (4), present-day Finns' opinion of whether the Kalevala is culturally significant in present-day Finland.

## **Methods**

### **Sample**

The participants in this study were not randomly selected. According to Wiebe, Durepos, and Mills (2010:348), the tools for fieldwork in constructing an ethnography are to have conversations and/or interview the members of the subject group, observe the group in day-to-day life with a degree of participation, and to closely read documents related to the research subject. The depth of this project did not allow for a full-blown ethnography or for by-the-book ethnographic research practices. These limitations are discussed more extensively in the Procedure section. However, in order to obtain any information on how Finns view the Kalevala, meaningful conversations with Finns would have to take place.

Having lived in Finland for five months, I knew that it would be quite difficult, if not impossible, for those meaningful conversations to take place with strangers – especially since I would have to interview them over Skype. My general experience was that making acquaintances in Finland was a slower and more deliberate process than it is in the U.S.,

especially because Finns engage in less small-talk than is custom in the United States (particularly in the Midwest). Even the official travel site of Finland says that Finns are considered “cool,” “quiet,” and “reserved,” but are friendly after getting to know them (Visit, 2014). For this reason, I decided to interview Finns that I had developed relationships with while in Finland. This automatically limited the sample size to a handful of people. Nine different people were asked if they would be willing to participate in this study. Six people agreed to participate.

Although the sample was limited, the interview process was very in-depth. Interview lengths ranged from 24 minutes to 115 minutes, with a mean of 56.7 minutes. I believe the number of participants was suitable for the breadth of this study. Ages of participants ranged from 22 to 26, with a mean of 24. The age range is so narrow because I primarily met Finns through attending classes at the University of Tampere (UTA). It was difficult to find opportunities to communicate and form relationships with Finns outside of the university. Additionally, many of the participants study fields related to social sciences, because that is the department I studied in while attending UTA. Participants’ reported areas of study included psychology, social anthropology, sociology, social sciences, public health, German, and English language and literature.

There are some limitations on the generalizability of the findings. First, the participants belong to a narrow age range. It is possible that members of different age cohorts in Finland would have answered the interview questions entirely differently. However, because the participants are all young adults, my research may also provide a more accurate picture of the future cultural significance of the Kalevala within Finland than if participants had widely varied in age. Second, the participants may be more educated than the general Finnish population. I met

all of the participants through various activities related to Tampere University. Although many Finns obtain their bachelor's degrees and even master's degrees, it could be that if my sample was randomized, the participants would not be as well-educated as the actual participants in this study. Third, due to their chosen areas of study, the participants may be more sensitive to socio-cultural phenomena than the general Finnish population. As previously stated, most of the participants study fields related to social sciences. Finally, at one point all participants lived in or around Tampere. Although Tampere is the third-largest city in Finland, it is possible that the mindset of people who live there is not representative of the general Finnish mindset (Väestökisterikeskus, 2014).

## **Measures**

### **Interviews.**

The measure used in this study was an open-ended interview questionnaire. A copy of the standardized interview questions can be found in Appendix A. Although open conversations can sometimes allow for a more natural flow of ideas and lead to concepts that would otherwise remain uncovered, I decided to use a more structured interview style. This ensured that I asked every interviewee the same basic questions and helped guide the conversation. The structured questions also prompted participants to remember encounters and experiences that may have otherwise been forgotten. For example, one of the questions in the interview is, "Do you remember the first time you heard about the Kalevala?" If I had not asked a specific question regarding the interviewees' first encounter with the Kalevala, then I may not have been able to see some of the patterns that appeared later in the research.

I began the interview with basic demographic information, in part to have some basic information on the participants before the interview began, and in part to "warm up" the

interviewees. I had not spoken to some of the participants since I left Finland in May 2013.

Although each interview was prefaced with some casual conversation, I also wanted to get the participants in the mindset of answering the questions asked. I did not have any instances of participants refusing to answer or asking to skip a question.

### **Present-day manifestations of the Kalevala.**

Although the interviews were hugely valuable to this study, it was also important to have independent knowledge of the present-day cultural manifestations of the Kalevala. If it had been the case that none of the participants could name a modern book, movie, song, etc. that was modeled after the Kalevala, it would be crucial to know if those artifacts did not exist or were simply unknown. Furthermore, it was necessary that I as the researcher and interviewer had knowledge of these cultural manifestations. For example, one of my interviewees, Alekski (Appendix G), mentioned that he believed one of the popular children's versions of the Kalevala was very similar to the original Kalevala, and that the author really "sticks to the facts." Had I not read both the original Kalevala and the children's version that we were discussing, I would not have known that the author of the children's book omitted some large sections of the Kalevala.<sup>1</sup>

At times this process felt like trying to capture an octopus in a butterfly net. The Kalevala has deep roots in Finnish culture, and has woven its way into most (if not all) branches of culture. As one of my participants expressed (Viivi, Appendix H), it is difficult to distinguish how the culture influenced the Kalevala and how the Kalevala influenced culture. Researching

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<sup>1</sup> The book referred to here is the *Canine Kalevala (Koirien Kalevala)*, by Mauri Kunnas. Kunnas makes several small changes to the story, such as having Aino pursue Väinämöinen as a mate instead of the other way around. Kunnas also makes several large alterations or omissions that were necessary in making the book suitable for children (e.g., omitting/editing stories that involve suicide, adultery, murder, or incest).

related books led me to graphic novels, graphic novels led to art, art led to music, music led to more books, and those books led to theatre productions. In researching a cultural artifact so engrained in the history of a nation, it is difficult to find a part of culture untouched by its presence.

The interviews conducted were helpful in showing me aspects of the Kalevala's influence I had not yet researched. The time that I spent in Finland was also very important for realizing how far-reaching the Kalevala's influence is. The city I lived in, Tampere, had a whole area of town named "Kaleva" with street names like "Väinämöisenkatu," "Joukahaisenkatu,"<sup>2</sup> and "Ilmarinkatu" (note: *-katu* means "street"). I walked by a jewelry store named Kalevala to and from my favorite coffee shop most days. While studying at UTA, I also took a class called Finnish Society and Culture that helped me get started in this research process. Specifically, a lecture by Toni Lahtinen on Finnish literature first introduced me to some of the modern cultural manifestations of the Kalevala (Lahtinen, 2013).

The focus of this study is on the *present-day* manifestations of the Kalevala in Finnish culture. For the purposes of this study, I limited "present-day" to mean within the past 30 years. This means that all the manifestations of the Kalevala discussed within this study were produced within or shortly before all of the participants' lifetimes.

## **Procedure**

Participant recruitment started by making a list of Finns that I developed relationships with while in Finland that I had contact information for. There were several Finns who I knew from classes that I had developed relationships with and felt fairly confident that, if asked, would be happy to participate in my research. However, I had lost their contact information – our only

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<sup>2</sup> Joukahainen is the name of a character in the Kalevala.

method of contact outside of the classroom had been through school email, and my UTA email account was automatically deleted after I was no longer enrolled in UTA classes. This meant that the pool of possible participants was pretty small. As previously mentioned, I contacted nine people and six agreed to be part of the study.

### **Non-participants.**

One of the non-participants had been contacted via Facebook message. The message briefly described the study and asked if he would be willing to participate. I never received a response from him. I think it is worth noting that he was much better acquainted with my husband, Graham, than he was with me. I believe this may have played a role in his non-response. Of course, there are many other factors that may have contributed a role in his non-response, such as not seeing the message, simply forgetting to respond, or being too busy.

The second-non participant is married to one of the participants (Anni, Appendix D). Eetu, Anni's husband (fiancé at the time of the interview), is less proficient in English than Anni is. Originally when I asked Anni to participate in the interview, she said that Eetu might be able to participate as well. Eetu was in the room while I was interviewing Anni. He heard some of the questions I was asking Anni and felt that they were beyond the scope of his English proficiency. Had I been proficient in Finnish, I may have been able to interview Eetu.

The third non-participant was also referred to me by Anni. Anni was my closest friend while I was in Finland, so I believe she really made an effort to try to help me with my research. Anni gave me the Skype contact information of a woman that she works with. I sent Anni's coworker a message on Skype briefly describing the study and asking if she would be interested in participating. I never received a response from her. Again, I believe this is because we had not developed a relationship, though there could be many other factors that played a role.

**Interviews and recording software.**

After the six participants said they might be willing to be interviewed, I sent them a copy of the informed consent procedure which was approved by the Missouri Southern State University Internal Review Board. The informed consent procedure briefly explained the purpose of the study, gave some examples of questions that might be asked, described the procedure for conducting the interview, and gave the contact information of who to contact if the participant had questions about the study, research subjects' rights, or was injured in the course of the study. There was a space for the participants to sign to show that they had read the informed consent form. Collecting back the signed consent forms was tedious for me and the participants, because many of the participants had to print the form, sign it, scan it, and send it back to me. Since the signed form needed to be turned in before the interview, the participants received the form several days before the interview was scheduled to happen. I was concerned about sending out the informed consent procedure because it conditioned the participants to start thinking about how the Kalevala may or may not influence present-day Finnish culture. I was careful in the informed consent throughout the interviews not to say that I thought it *did* influence present-day Finnish culture, but the very knowledge that it was my research topic may have had some effect on participants' response. However, since I am an undergraduate student interviewing human subjects, there was really no way to get around the informed consent process, despite the effect it may have had on the results of the study.

Four of the six participants were interviewed via Skype video call. One of the participants was interviewed via Skype call (meaning there was no webcam data transmitted). Another participant was interviewed via Facebook chat because her internet connection would not support a Skype call. Upon the recommendation of the MSSU IT helpdesk, I used the paid version of

Fraps recording software to record the five interviews conducted over Skype. After conducting and recording each interview, I transcribed the recording. If any personal names had been mentioned in the interview (besides mine or my husband, Graham's), I substituted a pseudonym. Once the transcription was complete, the recording was deleted. For the interview conducted over Facebook chat, I simply copy and pasted our conversation into a Word document and assigned the participant a pseudonym.

Each participant was asked the same standard set of questions (Appendix A). However, I also followed the path of our conversation. For example, if the participant's response to "Do you remember the first time you heard about the Kalevala?" included some mention of a book they were given as a child, I might ask him or her who the book was from. This opened up the conversation for the participants to give more detailed response, and also showed the participants that I was listening and responding to what they said.

### **Present-day manifestations of the Kalevala.**

Many of the present-day manifestations of the Kalevala could be found through the internet. For example, there is a retelling of one of the stories from the Kalevala that uses Disney's Donald Duck and Uncle Scrooge as the main characters (Leevi, Appendix C). Some of these materials could be easily found through the internet. Many of the books and graphic novels related to my study had one or two pages scanned and available through Google Image Search. However, some of these materials required closer reading than what was available from the internet. For this reason I decided to apply for the MSSU Student Research Grant, which I received. The money was used to purchase *The Kalevala Graphic Novel* by Kristian Huitula and the album *Skyforger* by Amorphis. The book *The Canine Kalevala* by Mauri Kunnas was rented through inter-library loan with the help of James Capeci, the Acquisitions and Administrative

Librarian of the MSSU Spiva Library. Having hard copies of *The Canine Kalevala* and *The Kalevala Graphic Novel* proved extremely valuable. For example, many of the participants referenced the *Canine Kalevala*, and two participants even said that it was the way they were first introduced to the Kalevala. Having a good understanding of its contents helped me understand how it may have shaped their view of the Kalevala.

### **Barriers in research.**

There were several barriers that had to be worked around throughout the duration of this project. These barriers included language, technology, and distance.

#### ***Language.***

The national languages of Finland are Finnish and Swedish. Many Finns, especially those belonging to my generation, are fluent in English. All of my participants spoke English very well, but there were several instances where the participant had to spend a long time thinking of the word they meant, or was even unable to come up with the word they wanted. As previously mentioned, there was even someone who decided not to participate in the study because of the language barrier.

Communication would have been a lot smoother and more accurate if I was a fluent Finnish-speaker. I also would have had a better understanding of the Kalevala if I was fluent in Finnish. Finnish language relies heavily on prefixes and suffixes to change the meaning of words. For example, in Tampere my apartment building was on the street Tuomiokirkonkatu. *Tuo* means “yonder,” or “over there.” *Tuomio* means “judgment.” *Tuomiokirkko* means “cathedral.” The suffix *-katu* means “street.” So, *Tuomiokirkonkatu* means something like “yonder cathedral street” (which makes sense, because the street went right by a large church). Much of the Kalevala’s poetry is constructed in a similar fashion and is based on slight

modifications to words, which is very difficult to translate. As the author of the *Kalevala Graphic Novel* wrote in an email correspondence, "...there is a certain characteristic in the Finnish language that the Kalevala is based on in a profound way, it's the possibility to 'form' new words, like verbs, from certain main words, and it's still understandable for a Finnish reader. And the Kalevala's language is a lot about that, that the story verses are being repeated many times, little bit altering the words and phrases in the poetic sentence" (Appendix B). I did study very basic Finnish while I was living in Tampere, but the class was essentially a "crash course" and was not sufficient for being able to effectively and fluently communicate in Finnish. However, this very basic knowledge of the Finnish language was valuable in being able to understand how the original poetry was constructed.

### ***Technology.***

All of the interviews were conducted using some form of internet communication. Problems arose from poor internet connection and malfunctions in the recording software. For example, my internet connection cut out in the middle of the interview with Anni (Appendix D). I had to spend a long time trying to get the connection back, which was inconvenient for Anni and also interrupted the interview. It was harder to get back into "interview mode" after spending twenty minutes wrestling with my modem. One of the participants, Lilja, had a weak internet connection and so it took a long time for her responses to send – in all, the interview lasted nearly two hours (Appendix F). During the interview with Oona, the recording software did not record the first part of her interview, and so some of her responses were essentially lost (Appendix E). Finally, the recording of the interview with Viivi only recorded the audio, not the webcam transmission. This made it difficult to understand some of the words Viivi said later while I transcribed the interview because I could not see her mouth moving (Appendix H). The

only way to fully avoid risk of these technology problems would be if I had interviewed the participants in-person.

*Distance.*

There were many times that I wished I could interview the participants in-person. The participants had to take time out of their busy schedules to partake in an interview on their computers. There was no real way to compensate the participants, save thanking them for their time. If I was able to interview the participants face-to-face, I would have bought them a cup of coffee or tried to otherwise compensate them. The interviews also felt more rigid than I believe they would have if conducted in-person. The distance between myself and the interviewees also meant that time difference had to be worked around, and was sometimes inconvenient for me and for the participants. The earliest interview conducted took place at 5:03 AM US Central time. The latest interview ended at 10:58 PM in the participant's time zone. I believe the study was valuable and worth conducting, despite all the barriers that had to be worked around – but ideally, I would have been able to interview the participants face-to-face in their native language.

## **Findings**

### **Present-day manifestations of the Kalevala**

When modern artists utilize the Kalevala, they are not merely re-telling or re-illustrating the Kalevala's stories, rather, they wish to address, through the mystical world of the Kalevala, the eternal questions facing humanity: life, death, love, and survival.

The Kalevala thus lives on in Finnish culture. From a perspective of nearly 200 years what is significant is that each generation has interpreted the Kalevala from its own standpoint, using what went before and creating new things. The Kalevala has not

gathered dust on a pedestal but has been present in both celebration and everyday life.

(Finnish Literature Society, 2014a)

The purpose of this study is not to create a catalog of all the modern-day manifestations of the Kalevala, but to demonstrate the cultural significance of the Kalevala in present-day Finnish culture. The works I describe here do not make up an exhaustive list of these modern manifestations of the Kalevala. I chose to study and describe the manifestations that seemed most well-known and important to modern-day Finns. These include works that were specifically referenced by the interview participants and works that seem to be widely popular within Finland.

### **Books, children's books, and graphic novels.**

The presence of children's versions of the Kalevala is perhaps one of the greatest indicators that the Kalevala is culturally significant within Finland. The Kalevala's stories are not limited to scholarly studies and advanced literature circles (as, say, Shakespeare or the Iliad might be in American society) – instead, its stories have been retold in a way that speaks to the youngest of Finns, acquainting them with their cultural heritage. Children's versions of the Kalevala range from basically “simplified” versions of the story to retellings that incorporate characters more accessible to children (like dogs or Donald Duck, for example).

One of the most beloved children's retellings of the Kalevala is *Koirien Kalevala* (*The Canine Kalevala*) by Mauri Kunnas. The original Finnish version was published in 1992 (Kunnas, 1992a). Since then, the book has been translated into 23 languages and sold over 5.5 million copies (Ondine, 2014). In this version of the Kalevala, the story follows Väinämöinen,

Ilmarinen, Lemminkäinen<sup>3</sup>, the quest to win the hand of the “maid of the North” (the Rainbow Maiden), and the quest for the Sampo. The story is played out with animals. The residents of Kalevala are dogs; the Northerners from Pohjola are wolves; and Lemminkäinen’s kin are cats. Kunnas’ version is a very short, basic, edited version of the full Kalevala – but these changes were necessary if the book was going to hold the attention of children and also be appropriate for that age range. For example, Kunnas did not include any reference to Kyllikki, Lemminkäinen’s adulterous wife, or Kullervo, who unwittingly seduces his sister and later commits suicide. There were some stories that Kunnas kept in the book but altered – for example, Kunnas keeps the character of Aino,<sup>4</sup> but changes the story so that Aino pursues Väinämöinen’s hand in marriage (instead of vice versa) and also does not drown herself (Kunnas, 1992a). Kunnas models eight of the scenes in the *Koirien Kalevala* after Akseli Gallen-Kallela’s famous paintings of the Kalevala.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Lemminkäinen is a character from the Kalevala. He is a womanizing man who often disregards his mother’s advice.

<sup>4</sup> Aino is a young girl who, in the original Kalevala, is promised in marriage to Väinämöinen, but drowns herself to avoid this fate.

<sup>5</sup> Akseli Gallen-Kallela was a Finnish painter who lived from 1865 to 1931 (Lahtinen, 2013). His works are widely recognized and respected in Finland. Many of his works depict scenes from the Kalevala, which have become iconic in Finland today – they can even be found in primary schools (Lilja, Appendix F).



Figure 1. Gallen-Kallela's *Lemminkäisen Äiti* (1897) and Kunnas' recreation. (Salut, 2014)

Kunnas' version of the Kalevala is so revered in Finland that it was transformed into a seventy-minute opera designed for children (Ondine, 2014). In a separate project, the book was made into a puppet show (Yle, 2011). Characters from *Koirien Kalevala* are also featured in Herra Hakkaraisen Talo (*the House of Mr. Clutterbuck*), a museum/store dedicated to the works of Kunnas in his hometown, Sastamala, Finland (Herra, 2014).



Figure 2. Real-life depictions of scenes from *The Canine Kalevala* found in the House of Mr. Clutterbuck. (Pikku-Puhi, 2010)

Donald Duck is very popular in Finland (Anni, Appendix D). It is no surprise, then, that a Donald Duck-version of the Kalevala would be a hit with Finns. Don Rosa's *The Quest for Kalevala* was one entry in a series of Scrooge McDuck comic books that many Finns subscribed to (Anni, Appendix B; Kontturi, 2012).<sup>6</sup> In this comic (originally published in 1999, and later published as a book), Scrooge McDuck learns of the Sampo and its money-making abilities. He travels to Finland to attempt to find the Sampo. He and his comrades (Donald Duck, Huey, Dewey, and Louie) eventually obtain the Sampo, but are confronted by a Louhi-like duck that tries to steal it from them. Donald retrieves Väinämöinen's Kantele from the sea. The Kantele is used to summon the spirit of Väinämöinen in order to help them fight off the would-be thief of the Sampo. Eventually the thieves are defeated. Väinämöinen realizes that Scrooge only wants to use the Sampo for selfish purposes, and takes the Sampo back into "eternity," leaving Scrooge behind (Zocoi, 2012). Rosa modeled his scene of Scrooge McDuck attempting to take the

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<sup>6</sup> It should be noted that Don Rosa is an American author and comic book artist. However, his works are widely known throughout Europe, and especially in Finland – likely because of the Finns' love of Donald Duck.

Kalevala after Akseli Gallen-Kallela's famous painting, *The Defense of the Sampo*, created in 1896 (Lahtinen, 2013).



Figure 3. Gallen-Kallela's *The Defense of the Sampo* and Rosa's recreations. (Lahtinen, 2013; Zocoi, 2012)

There are also several versions of the Kalevala retold through graphic novels. One of them is *The Kalevala Graphic Novel* by Kristian Huitula. This book is unique because the Finnish version uses the original text of the Kalevala, but cuts out some of the repetition of the poems. The author wrote in the introduction to the book,

...the primary starting-point was to maintain the original poetic textual form of the Kalevala. Even if making it undoubtedly more difficult to comprehend, it was the only way to preserve the heart and soul of the original epic. Changing the textual form would have changed the whole core of the epic, thus also destroying the delicate connection into the history and tradition. (Huitula, 2005)

*The Kalevala Graphic Novel* was the first comic book to contain the entirety of the Kalevala's stories. The book was originally published in two volumes, with the first volume being published in 1998 and the second volume in 2000. The English publication was translated by Eino Friberg. In my experience, the graphic novel was much easier to read than the full text of the Kalevala – but perhaps that is because the full-text version I read used the Crawford translation, which was published in 1904, rather than Friberg's translation, which was published in 1988 (Huitula, 2005). Either way, it seems natural that having graphics, speech bubbles, and a more “streamlined” version of the Kalevala would make it an easier read and more accessible to the current generation of Finns. Although Huitula did not recreate any of Akseli Gallen-Kallela's paintings, it is worth noting that Huitula had similar character designs as Gallen-Kallela – for example, Väinämöinen is depicted as a very elderly man with long white hair and a long white beard. Although Väinämöinen is described as very old, his hair and beard are not described within the Kalevala.

The other graphic novel I encountered was *Kullervo* by Gene Kurkijärvi. Although I was unable to obtain a full copy of the text, many of the pages were available online. This graphic novel is a steampunk retelling of the story of Kullervo. The story takes place in a seemingly post-apocalyptic world. There was at least one scene which Kurkijärvi modeled after Akseli Gallen-Kallela's *Kullervo*:



Figure 4. Gallen-Kallela's *The Curse of Kullervo* (1899) and Kurkijärvi's steampunk recreation. (Lahtinen, 2013)

### **Music.**

Although many folk musicians incorporate the Kantele into their music, there are fewer modern-sounding musicians that draw from the Kalevala. One band that stood out, though, was Amorphis, a heavy metal Finnish band. Since forming in 1990, Amorphis has released six full albums with lyrics that center around different characters and plotlines in the Kalevala (Amorphis, n.d.). The band uses Pekka Kainulainen as their lyricist. It should be noted that

Kainulainen is otherwise unaffiliated with the band – he is not an official member, and is not even very familiar with the metal music scene. Kainulainen composes the lyrics in Finnish, and the band translates them into English (Ylex, 2012). I learned from my time in Finland that many Finnish bands choose to sing in languages other than Finnish because it is a difficult language to make fit into modern music. In some contexts, the band describes themselves as promoting new ways of understanding the Kalevala. In the band’s description on their website, a note on the band’s album *Skyforger* states: “Bringing the archetypal blacksmith Ilmarinen to life with a depth of character far beyond the one-dimensional portrait of the hero rendered by the Kalevala, the poetry of *Skyforger* cements the role of Amorphis as modern-day storytellers perpetuating an age-old tradition in their very own way” (Amorphis, n.d.). However, in interviews the band sometimes describes the Kalevala as “boring” for kids who have to study it in school. Some comments make it seem as though the band incorporates references to the Kalevala as a way to make money: “Yeah, and I think back in Finland at least, everybody can relate to it. I used to hate it in school but nowadays we make a living out of it, so. [laughs]” (DarkSceneMagazine, 2012).

### **Paintings and photographs.**

As evidenced from my prior analysis of modern-day Finnish books, the works of Akseli Gallen-Kallela are widely known and referenced within present-day Finnish culture. Gallen-Kallela’s paintings have been reproduced in many contexts. As an example, I used one of Gallen-Kallela’s more famous paintings – the *Aino-taru*, or Aino Triptych. Reproductions include a women’s magazine, where the roles of male and female are reversed:



Figure 5. Gallen-Kallela's *Aino-taru* (1891) and a reproduction for a 1995 issue of *Me Naiset*.  
(Atheneum, 2009)

As previously referenced, the *Koirien Kalevala* also includes reproductions of many of Gallen-Kallela's works:



Figure 6. Mauri Kunnas' reproduction of Gallen-Kallela's *Aino-taru*. (Atheneum, 2009)

And some other enthusiasts:



Figure 7. Private recreations of Gallen-Kallela's work. (Krista 89, 2009; Sisuradio, 2010; Suvanto, 2011)

**Language and marketing.**

There are many references to the Kalevala present in modern Finnish. Some common phrases and sayings are based on the plot of the Kalevala – for example, if a company has an item that is bringing in a lot of money, they may refer to their marketed item as “rahasampo” – a clear reference to the Sampo of the Kalevala. Also, there is a saying that is along the lines of “no one is a blacksmith when he is born” – which is to say, you must practice something to be good at it, and is probably a reference to Ilmarinen’s advanced blacksmithing skills (Aleksi, Appendix G). Another popular saying is something like “singing someone into a swamp,” which refers to the instance where Väinämöinen sung Joukahainen into a swamp for his foolishness (Lilja, Appendix F; Viivi, Appendix H).

References to the Kalevala are also widely used in marketing and advertising. Many different companies – selling products ranging from bingo cards to electricity – use the brand “Sampo” (Finnish Literature Society, 2014b). There is also a well-known bank in Finland called Sampo (Lilja, Appendix F). There is also a construction company called Lemminkäinen and an insurance company called Ilmarinen (Anni, Appendix D). Some products are specifically marketed as being inspired by the Kalevala, such as Marimekko’s Kanteleen Kutsu Upholstery Fabric – which, by the way, sells for only \$84 per yard (Finnstyle, 2014; Oona, Appendix E). Additionally, there are streets, parks, and even towns whose names come from the Kalevala (Finnish Literature Society, 2014b). Some Finnish children are also given names that are from (or based on) names of characters in the Kalevala, such as Ilmari, Aino or Väino. These names are not considered out of the ordinary (Finnish Literature Society, 2014b; Viivi, Appendix H).

**School.**

I knew from conversations that I had while in Finland that studying the Kalevala is part of school curriculum. However, much more detailed information on these studies surfaced throughout the course of the interviews. Finnish children are required to study parts of the Kalevala in primary school and complete more in-depth studies later in high school. From the interviews, I gathered that primary school children usually learn basic information about the Kalevala – who compiled it, the basic plotline, etc. – and high school students read more of the original text and secondary scholarly analysis of the text (Anni, Appendix D; Oona, Appendix E; Aleks, Appendix G). Study in primary school takes place around age 9 and study in high school takes place around age 16 (Anni, Appendix D; Viivi, Appendix H). Depth of study varies from school to school and also appears to vary over time. For example, Oona mentioned that she enjoyed studying the Kalevala in primary school because the students got to play the Kantele (Appendix E). No other participants mentioned getting to play the Kantele. Anni and Lilja mentioned exposure to Aleks Gallen-Kallela's paintings while studying the Kalevala in primary school (Appendix D; Appendix F). Viivi also mentioned that in her high school, the students were only required to read some sections of the Kalevala, while in other schools students might have to read the entire Kalevala (Appendix H). In my correspondence with Kristian Huitula, he mentioned that Finns born in the 1950's had to memorize sections of the Kalevala, but when he was in primary school in the 1980's that was no longer the case (Huitula, 2014).

## **Interviews**

Each interview participant provided unique and valuable information for this study. Some common threads emerged from the interviews, which provided valuable insight into how young adult Finns think about the Kalevala.

### **First exposure.**

Of the six participants, two (Leevi and Anni) reported first being exposed to the Kalevala through school. Although Leevi reported that the first time he must have heard about the Kalevala was through school, he mentioned that the first time he learned anything about it was when he was around 7 or 8 years old and read Don Rosa's Scrooge McDuck retelling (Appendix C). Anni stated that she was around 9 years old when she first heard about the Kalevala at school (Appendix D). Three participants reported first exposure to the Kalevala through a children's book. Lilja and Alekski both stated that the first time they heard about the Kalevala was by reading Mauri Kunnas' *Koirien Kalevala*. Lilja could not recall at what age she first encountered the *Koirien Kalevala*, but stated that her parents read it to her before she herself could read (Appendix F). Alekski stated that he was between 4 and 7 years old when he first started reading the *Koirien Kalevala*, and that he read the book many times (Appendix G). Viivi stated that the first time she heard of the Kalevala was between ages 10 and 12 when she was given a simplified version by a family friend (a Finnish language teacher). Viivi could not recall the exact version she received, but stated that it was still advanced and lengthy for her to read until a few years after she received it (Appendix H). Oona's response to this question was lost due to recording software malfunctions.

### **National pride and cultural heritage.**

Finland has long struggled for an identity. The first written edition of the Kalevala was published in 1835. Just twenty-six years earlier, in 1809, Finland had been given over to the Russians after over 600 years of Swedish rule. Finland was then a Russian duchy. In the late 1800's there was a wave of Finnish nationalism, including the creation of Finland's own currency, flag, and army. After a long struggle, Finland finally became an independent state in 1917. This independence was soon followed by a civil war. A tense period of little progress

followed, being brought to a head with the Winter War from 1939 to 1940, where Finns battled against Soviet takeover (Vares, 2013). Finland has had a long struggle for national independence and identity.

Many participants pointed to the Kalevala as one of the sources for that identity. Lilja stated that the Kalevala gave Finns “something concrete, something to be proud of, in a time when the sense of their own origin and heritage wasn't very strong yet” (Appendix F). When asked if the Kalevala influences present-day Finnish culture, Leevi said yes – that it gives Finns “something that we can say that’s somehow ours in history” (Appendix C). Similarly, Alekski stated that the Kalevala influenced Finnish culture in the past because “it was the Finnish way of finding your own identity,” and gave Finland a “first story” (Appendix G). The Kalevala was also one of the first books written in the Finnish language, and helped to form the basis for written Finnish (Viivi, Appendix H).

Participants stated that they believe the Kalevala is not very well-known to present-day Finns, and perhaps one of the reasons is that Finns are becoming more integrated into global culture instead of national culture (Leevi, Appendix C). One of the participants, Oona, said that perhaps another reason for detachment from the Kalevala was that her generation and her parents’ generation had not experienced war, and thus had not experienced a pull towards patriotism or national pride. Oona also said she thought her generation perhaps “takes it granted that we are Finnish...that we are independent” (Appendix D).

#### **Future knowledge of the Kalevala.**

There were varied views on the knowledge and significance of the Kalevala to future generations. Most participants expressed a hope that the Kalevala would mean something to future generations, while also saying that it probably would not if current trends continue. Anni

stated that she thought the Kalevala would need to be taught more in schools in order to mean something to future generations (Appendix D). Lilja said that the Kalevala would need to be presented in a new way in order to be significant to future generations – for example, if someone made a song about the Kalevala and it became popular (Appendix F). Alekski made a similar comment, stating that perhaps there might be “some new forms of art connected with Kalevala” and indicated that this might make the Kalevala better-known to future generations (Appendix G).

Alekski and Oona were the most optimistic about future generations’ appreciation of the Kalevala. Oona made the comment that “old things are coming back and they are being given more value,” and perhaps the Kalevala would follow that trend (Appendix E). Alekski said that it would always be part of Finnish heritage, and people in the future would probably still be interested in national heritage (Appendix G). Leevi stated that there would probably always be a niche group of Finns interested in history, and thus in the Kalevala, but that most people (“normal youngsters”) would not be interested (Appendix C). Viivi gave the briefest response, stating that she was not sure but she expected future generations’ views of the Kalevala to be about the same as current views (Appendix H).

### **Interest and desire to read.**

Several participants described thinking that the Kalevala was boring or uninteresting when they had to study it in school. Leevi and Viivi both particularly stated their disinterest. When asked about what she thought of the Kalevala when she studied it in high school, Viivi said, “Ah, I appreciate it as a classic book but I wasn’t interested in it. Um, what else... I was just really not interested in it” (Appendix H). In response to the same question, Leevi said “nothing much” (Appendix C). Nearly all participants expressed the belief that other young adult

Finns know little of the Kalevala. For example, Anni stated that she believed Finns most Finns would not be able to remember what happened in the stories or who wrote it. When asked why, she explained that she had no memory of discussing the Kalevala with anyone since she had read it in seventh grade (Appendix D).

Interestingly, all participants demonstrated a willingness to read the Kalevala, and all but two (Leevi and Anni) stated that they felt they should or they wanted to read it. This seems to be directly correlated to the discussion facilitated by the interviews. For example, when I asked Lilja how she feels about the Kalevala now, she said, “Well, actually I feel like I want to read it again!” Later in the interview, she said “I really want to read Kalevala now!” (Appendix F). Similarly, at the end of my interview with Aleksii, he said “And thank you so much, it was really interesting to...wake up my interest in Kalevala once again” (Appendix G).

Some participants expressed feelings of guilt for having not read more of the Kalevala. One of the most striking comments was from Oona, who said, “it’s an important part of being Finnish, and I, sometimes I feel a little bit of shame that I don’t know it well enough” (Appendix E). Viivi also said that she felt like she should read it (Appendix H).

### **Present-day cultural significance.**

Responses to “Do you believe the Kalevala influences present-day Finnish culture?” were basically consistent. Four of the six participants stated they believe the Kalevala influences present-day Finnish culture on some level, but that it may be hard to pinpoint. Of this group, Lilja responded with ““Hmm, maybe in some way that is not very easy to notice...But not that directly” (Appendix F). Anni stated that she thought it must have influence on some level due to its long history and popularity, but that it may not be easily seen (Appendix D). Leevi replied to the question with, “I think on some level,” then explained how it gave Finland a sort of history

(Appendix C). Oona replied with, “I think it does in some level,” then stated that it might have particular influence within certain artistic circles rather than everyday Finnish life (Appendix E). Alekski responded to the question by giving examples of present-day references to the Kalevala (in music, language, and jewelry). He followed up with, “So there are traces of Kalevala in our everyday culture, definitely” (Appendix G). Viivi stated that she was not sure if the book influenced the culture or if the culture influenced the book. Like Alekski, she mentioned some examples of present-day cultural references to the Kalevala (in music, street names, and people’s names; Appendix H).

## **Discussion**

### **Thesis**

My thesis is that the Kalevala is culturally significant to present-day Finns. In order to support this thesis, the research needed to demonstrate that: (1) There are modern reinterpretations of the Kalevala in Finland; (2) There are modern movies, books, art, and/or music that depict the Kalevala; (3) Finnish children are exposed to the Kalevala; (4) Modern reinterpretations of the Kalevala are widely known and recognized by Finns; and (5), References to the Kalevala are present in Finnish culture. The research showed that each of these standards was met, at least to the degree possible with such a small sample size. This supports my thesis, meaning that the Kalevala should be culturally significant to present-day Finns. However, the interviews conducted indicate that things are not so clear-cut. Although the Kalevala is culturally significant to present-day Finns, it is not necessarily regarded as such. In fact, many of the participants indicated that they believed other Finns viewed the Kalevala as quite boring. Alekski made a comment that clearly illustrated this view. I asked Alekski why he thought people do not read the original text of the Kalevala. He said, “I guess people aren’t just too interested in, like,

cultural heritage and stuff like that...I guess it's somehow similar to the Bible, people know about its presence and know some parts of it but haven't really read it through" (Appendix G).

This comment provides a perfect analogy for American culture. Although the Bible is obviously present in modern American culture, people are often unfamiliar with its contents and may regard it as boring. The research indicated that Finns view the Kalevala is viewed in a similar light.

The interviews also showed that Finns have limited knowledge and exposure to the original Kalevala, but are familiar with modern reinterpretations of the Kalevala. Many Finnish children are first exposed to the Kalevala through some sort of modern reinterpretation of its stories. However, many Finns become uninterested in studying the original text of the Kalevala because they realize how difficult it is to read. From this, I believe that the best way to keep knowledge and interest in the Kalevala alive is to have reinterpretations of its stories that are interesting to Finns. These modern reinterpretations exist – they simply must keep being interesting to Finns, or new reinterpretations must be made.

This is not to say that the original text of the Kalevala should be abandoned – however, it should be presented in a certain way. For example, in my correspondence with Kristian Huitula (author of the *Kalevala Graphic Novel*), he explained that he was not required to intensively study the Kalevala in school, and instead, learning about the Kalevala cultivated his interest in the stories. On the other hand, he's spoken to people who were forced to memorize chapters of the Kalevala, and that "took away the willingness to get back to it later" (Appendix B). The process of learning about the Kalevala and the use of modern reinterpretations of its stories can be used to foster an interest in the original text of the Kalevala. Indeed, Huitula states that this

was his very purpose in creating the *Kalevala Graphic Novel* – not to be used as a substitute, but to help readers become interested in the original Kalevala (Huitula, 2005).

### **Future studies**

As discussed in the Procedure section, there are many ways this study could be improved. The study would be more accurate and meaningful if it had been conducted face-to-face, in Finnish, with a larger and more varied sample of Finns. Furthermore, enough material exists that future studies could be more specialized – for example, focusing on the Kalevala’s influence in present-day Finnish music, art, or language. Another recommendation for future studies is that they occur over an extended period of time. It is difficult to take time with interview participants and fully utilize their knowledge bases with a narrow window of research time available.

### **Conclusion**

The Kalevala is present in many forms within modern-day Finland. Its reach extends to art, music, theater, schools, language, and marketing, amongst other branches of culture. However, its cultural significance within Finland is not always so easily seen. Modern young-adult Finns have only had limited exposure to the original text of the Kalevala. However, many are familiar with modern reinterpretations of the Kalevala’s stories. In order for future generations to be familiar with the original text of the Kalevala, there must also be some modern interpretations of the Kalevala that interest them available. In addition, Finns should not be forced to memorize the original text of the Kalevala or be exposed to the original text too early – this will discourage them from attempting to read it later in life.

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## Appendices

## Appendix A: Interview Questions

- How old are you?
- What is your city of residence?
- What city did you grow up in?
- What is your level of education?
- What is your area of study?
- How would you describe the Kalevala?
- What are the stories in the Kalevala about?
- In your opinion, what is the most famous story in the Kalevala?
- Do you remember the first time you heard about the Kalevala?
- Did you have to study the Kalevala in school? How old were you? What did you think of it?
- What do you think about the Kalevala now?
- Do you believe the Kalevala influenced Finnish culture in the past? Explain.
- Do you believe the Kalevala influences present-day Finnish culture? Why?
- Do you believe the Kalevala is important to Finns today? Why?
- Do you believe the Kalevala represented something different to the previous generation than it does to the present generation? Why?
- Do you think the Kalevala will mean anything to future generations? If so, what?
- Do you believe the Kalevala is important to anyone outside of Finland?
- Do you know of any books, movies, or works of art that reference the Kalevala?

## Appendix B: Correspondence from Kristian Huitula to Sarah Chambers

*Correspondence via email.*

Subject: The Kalevala Graphic Novel

From: Sarah Chambers, sarahnchambers@gmail.com

8 March, 2014

Hyvää päivää,

My name is Sarah Chambers. I am a student at Missouri Southern State University in Joplin, Missouri, USA. I am currently conducting a research for my thesis project, which aims to explore the present-day cultural significance of the Kalevala to Finns. Your book, *The Kalevala Graphic Novel*, has been really useful in my research. I was wondering, would you be willing to answer some questions about your inspiration and motivation for the book? For example, in the introduction you write that you see the books' "importance especially in widening the knowledge about the Kalevala" – why do you believe it is important for Finns to have a deeper knowledge of the Kalevala? Do you see the graphic novel as a way for non-Finns to more easily access the Kalevala?

Anyway, thank you so much for your hard work to recreate the Kalevala in graphic novel form. I think it was really a brilliant idea, and you did an excellent job seeing it through.

Sincerely,

Sarah Chambers

P.S. I noticed in your biography on your website that you studied at TAMK – I studied at UTA for a semester, and I loved it! I miss Tampere very much. You are so lucky to live there!

From: Kristian Huitula, kristian@huitula.com

10 March, 2014

Hyvää päivää Sarah!,

Thank you for your kind words, I'm very glad to hear you have enjoyed reading the Kalevala graphic novel. And I hope you enjoyed the time studying in Tampere. Yes, it's quite a nice little city, especially in the summer, with a lot of nature very near everywhere. But I'm sure Missouri is a very great place to live also :)

About your questions, well, in my experience when meeting people at the book fairs, festivals and in general, it's become quite obvious that the knowledge Finnish people have about the Kalevala is quite limited. Mostly people are familiar with the most well-known characters and stories, but the story as a whole is quite unknown. I think mostly Finnish people have read the Kalevala at school in their youth, and because the time is very limited, it's possible to concentrate on only certain small parts (which tend to be the same specific "popular"/well-known ones).

Actually many people, born in the fifties or so, say that the school more or less gave them bad experience towards the Kalevala, because the pupils, maybe in too early age, were forced to learn the chapters of Kalevala by heart, and that took away the willingness to get back to it later. That's what I've heard many times from people. But that wasn't the case at the time when I was myself in the elementary school (I think it was the 4th or 5th grade, so about 11-12 years) and we were reading the Kalevala for the first time. We didn't have to learn anything by heart (in the 80s', neither did we read the whole Kalevala, but some certain parts of it). I think it wasn't so intensive studying, but I remember that it was the time when I first got interested in Kalevala. I don't mean it being like some very huge "revelation" yet at that time, but certainly it made me interested, and certain characters and stories got stuck inside my head in a quite strong way. Something "mysterious" about it.

But so, I guess partly because I was myself so excited about the Kalevala, I wanted to somehow bring it to people in a new way, in a way that I could show that it's not boring to read at all. Certainly the original text in a form of poems (and old fashioned words and terminology) is quite difficult to read and understand. So it's not the simplest book to get through after all (even in the graphic novel format, certainly many people find even that too much of an effort...), but I think it pays off to go through the effort. Of course I could have made it even easier for the people, by changing the text into spoken modern-day language, but I really wanted to preserve the original text, to keep the story as "authentic" as possible.

The way I see it, it's almost like a duty for a Finn to know their national epic, at least to read it once through in his/ her lifetime, because it tells so much about Finnish people. Actually many very popular phrases are from the Kalevala, but people don't know it. And it's actually everywhere around us in Finland, as street names, big company names (big old insurance companies, bank, construction company etc.). The Kalevala is also quite a heritage and a national treasure, although it was compiled by Lönnrot not so long time ago, compared to some of the other older national epics of the world, but among all of them it's quite a special one, in a way that it brings up something about the Finnish culture and mind-setting. (For example the important role of mothers/women in the story, also sauna etc, and in the way it's quite an un-heroic story after all, being a hero epic...) But the original verses are of course older than that, and go back a long time in Finnish history. And that is a real treasure, to have that kind of knowledge dating back, and giving some sort of cultural "fuel" even in these modern times. But all that shouldn't stay as just some artificial surface, but have a deeper meaning and understanding even in the modern-day Finnish people's minds and lives. After all, understanding your past and where you come from, makes you more aware of yourself and can make you a much stronger and whole person to experience the world and life in general.

Quite many times though, it seems that Kalevala is being used in different forms, but I find that it's been taken completely out of context. In that way, at least to me, it's unclear what is the motivation, if for example a product etc. has been manufactured, but there doesn't seem to be any real connection to Kalevala itself. In that case the only motivation seems to be obviously just financial profit, and then it stays just as "artificial surface" without real content. Or, on the other hand, if the form created includes just for example some already previously well-known concept/part of The Kalevala, it merely just strengthens the previous mannerism and banalizes the knowledge of Kalevala, and in that way quite the contrary than the richness of Kalevala in the way that people understand it, when it should do just the opposite. But of course, there are many viewpoints to see and do things.

For the non-Finns, certainly I feel (and hope!) that it could be also much easier to get into the Kalevala (through the graphic novel). Of course that is up to the translation in a big way also. I think translation can never be exactly the same thing, unfortunately. Especially because in Kalevala there are certain words that must be difficult to translate, and because there is a certain characteristic in the Finnish language that the Kalevala is based on in a profound way, it's the

possibility to "form" new words, like verbs, from certain main words, and it's still understandable for a Finnish reader. And the Kalevala's language is a lot about that, that the story verses are being repeated many times, little bit altering the words and phrases in the poetic sentence. But I think the Friberg translation is a very readable and understandable, especially compared to some of the older English translations, and in that way works very well in the graphic novel form. But, and I have emphasized this many times, I recommend everybody to read the whole Kalevala (text form), if at all interested. Many people (maybe most) are not going to do it in their lifetime anyway, so I hope at least they could read the graphic novel, so that that they will know the story and what it's all about.

Well, this was something that came to my mind. I hope it was at least somewhat understandable. But feel free to ask if I was a bit unclear about something. And if you decide to include something in your thesis, please feel free to make any grammatical corrections, I don't mind at all :)

Yours,

Kristian Huitula

## Appendix C: Interview with Participant A (“Leevi”)

Interview conducted via Skype on 2-22-2014, 5:04 AM – 5:28 AM.

Leevi (Participant A) –Male, 22, resident of Tampere, Finland

**Leevi: Hi!**

*Interviewer:* Hey, how are you?

**Fine, thanks.**

Good, can you hear me okay?

**Yeah.**

Okay, great. So how have you been doing?

**Fine, thanks. Well, we are right now moving in Tampere to a new location, so there might be some voices or sounds from the other rooms, but my door is closed at least.**

(Laughing) That’s okay. So, were you still living, you were living in some kind of industrial building, is that right?

**Yeah, I was here in just kind of a very old building in an industrial area, and now we’re moving close to the city center.**

Oh, cool.

**Yeah, it’s actually a lot better.**

So how did the Finland-Sweden match turn out?

**Come again?**

How did the hockey match turn out?

**Oh, well, Swedes won, but that’s okay, we were pretty good actually.**

Well, I heard that the United States didn’t do very well in hockey either.

**Yeah, but you’ll be playing against us –**

Oh really?

**For the Bronze medal.**

Oh, okay.

**(laughs)**

Well, may the best man win (laughs).

**I hope my internet connection is fine, I think it is, but I just tethered it from my phone.**

Oh, wow. It's really good, it's better than the people I've Skyped with in Missouri (laughs).

**Oh, cool, I hope it stays like that (laughs). Might go off, but I hope it doesn't.**

Yeah. Okay, well, if it's okay with you, I was going to start off with some demographic information. Like I said in the informed consent procedure, I'm going to delete this video after the interview is over, and I'll just have a text version of it, so just a written version of everything that we say, and I'll change your name to a different name, but I still would like to get some demographic information just to kind of show like where my information is coming from.

**Yeah.**

Okay, so, how old are you?

**22.**

Okay. And, um, what is your city of residence?

**Tampere.**

And did you grow up in Tampere, or did you grow up somewhere else?

**What, can you come again?**

Did you grow up in Tampere, or did you grow up somewhere else?

**Uh, I grew up in Ikaalinen, that's close to Tampere.**

How do you spell that?

**I-K-A-A-L-I-N-E-N. Did you get it?**

Yeah, I think I got it. Thanks! It's hard for me to spell Finnish words (laughs).

**(laughs)**

Uh, okay, and what is your level of education?

**That's like, mm, well, I've graduated from high school and now I'm studying at university, but I don't have a degree here. I mean, yeah. I'm getting my bachelor next year.**

Did you start hearing a buzzing noise from my computer?

**I don't know, but I can try quickly with my headphones on, it makes it easier to hear, the laptop speakers are not so good. Okay.**

Is that better?

**Yeah, that's good.**

Great. Okay, what is your area of study at university?

**Well, my major is German and my minor is English language and literature.**

Okay. Um, and how would you describe the Kalevala?

**Well, okay – uh – just a moment – okay, yeah, I would describe it as, um, a collection of Finnish poetry? Or national poetry. (laughs, seems unsure)**

Okay, and what are the stories in the Kalevala about?

**Um, well they're like about, like, battles over, um, some, well, for an object, and then even people, and, between territories, and then also there are like stories, um, trying to answer the, one of the like, basic questions of life, like how everything was created, or such, so that's like, I think, and then there's kind of like old wisdom in some of the lyrics, I think.**

Yeah. What do you mean by "old wisdom?"

**I mean like, in a way like, like old folks know better (laughs).**

(laughs) Yeah, okay. And you mentioned some objects and people that were fought over?

**Yeah, there are like battles, I can't recall like correctly, or like clearly, but there was like some of the women from the north or like something and they had like fights, whom to marry or something I think, and then the parents like, had to decide on the husband or something. And then, um, this, uh, object, like this thing that you can make as much money and grains, I mean wheat, everything like that as you want, I don't know the name German, English, but it's in Finnish the raha-Sampo, or Sampo, that's the, so I guess the idea is they're like, unlimited wealth, and also love and such things.**

Okay, cool. And, uh, in your opinion, what is the most famous story from the Kalevala?

**Uh, I would say, uh, maybe the most famous story is like that the world is born out of a duck's egg or something, kind explaining the birth of the world or something, and how it all began, and uh, I think, I'm not sure, (looks like he is trying hard to remember – brows furrowed, looking up & squinting) the other one that is possibly just as famous is the story that this thing that you can make the money with. In the Finnish language we use it as a metaphor for different things, the same word, it's in great usage in our language.**

What is it a metaphor for?

**For unlimited wealth, and that's something usually, um, used like there isn't a fountain for unlimited wealth, but the word that is taken to this from Kalevala, Sampo.**

Yeah. So you might say, like, there's no Sampo.

**Yeah, or that's not a Sampo, or something. Yeah. Hm.**

I can hear a vacuum cleaner (laughs).

**Yeah. (laughs)**

It's not very loud. Don't worry. Um, do you remember the first time you heard about the Kalevala?

**Uh, it must have been in the school, but I think also um, the first time I really like got to know something about it was when I was like, maybe 7 or 8, and I read some of Don Rosa's Donald Duck comics.**

Oh, yeah!

**He wrote about Kalevala, or drew, yeah.**

Yeah, he uh, didn't the old duck try to make the Sampo?

**Yeah, I think yeah, Uncle Scrooge. Yeah. And then I was kind of a fan of Don Rosa's so I just read all his stories, and he happened to be interested about Finland especially. He has a lot of fans here (laughs). More than any nation I think. At least compared to the, like, inhabitants, or how many people there are in Finland. (laughs) I don't have the statistics but I think that's so (laughs).**

(laughs) That's funny because when I was in Finland I noticed a lot of, uh, Donald Duck, like cartoons, things like that.

**Yeah.**

Uh, okay, so did you have to study the Kalevala in school?

**No, uh, I don't actually remember anything from school about the Kalevala, maybe just like, recalling how it was written, uh, and maybe that's about it.**

Mmhmm.

**I guess we just read some extracts, but they were like very scarce, and just a few extracts. So I haven't read the book, I don't have that much real information about it, just – (laughs)**

Yeah, um, do you remember how old you were when you had to study it in school?

**No, I don't really remember, but at least we had a, kind of a closer look at it in high school, so I was like, 16, or 17.**

Okay. And, um, what did you think of it?

**Um, nothing much (laughs).**

(Laughs)

**Let me think, uh, well, I thought it kind of, um, old mythology, nothing real so it's kind of, uh, I don't know, not that, like I said, nothing much, maybe. Anyway it's kind of, yeah. I think, uh, for me as a Christian it feels a little bit, like, Pagan side of our culture or**

something, also mixed there, even today we have shamanism in the Lapland and such, so maybe mixed it somehow with that and at least in high school that kind of gave me a bad collocation to it or something.

Mhm. And, uh, do you feel the same way now?

Uh, I guess, uh, I'm not that black and white any more, but yeah, but I uh, so I could maybe read it, and there might be some good ideas in it and something like that, but I wouldn't regard it too highly or something. (laughs, seeming nervous)

(smiles) Uh, okay, and do you believe the Kalevala influences present-day Finnish culture?

Yeah, I think on some level, let me think, and least it's like something that we can say that's somehow ours in history. We have a history as a nation. But I don't know if it's like, how close it, I think you're familiar with the Estonian version, I'm not much myself, they have kind of a similar, similar book, I think.

Really? I didn't know that.

Ah, okay, so I think the name is like Kalevala-poeg (*sp?*) or something that like, Sons of Kalevala, or something, I don't know. Yeah, so, I don't know how Finnish, (laughs) I don't even know how close they are to each other. But anyway, uh, we are part, we kind of have similar ancestry, common ancestry maybe, like the language is very close to each other with the Estonians. But um, I think, yeah, it's gonna feel like we have a history, and then it influences our everyday, uh, language, and then we have like, uh, it's also something that we like, try to sell for tourists, I guess (laughs).

(Laughs) What do you mean?

Well, we have a lot of like, uh, I think, there are different kind of like, jewelry, that we call like Kalevala jewelry, and also Finns buy those. And maybe like amulets or something. But nothing like an object of sorcery or something (laughs). But I don't know, so, everything like that. And it's also like, one of those, I think it's been translated to pretty many languages, so it's also one thing, like, there's a book in Fin- a Finnish book that's been translated and that's known abroad.

Yeah. (pause) Okay, do you believe the Kalevala represented something different to the previous generation, so like your parents, than the present generation?

Yeah, I think so, because a lot of young people, they know nothing about it pretty much. That's at least my experience and um, even I don't know much about it. And I think the

**older generation, people there have maybe read it more, I guess, and um, uh, well our generation is just so much different, we are like more international-minded, we are not so much about our own history (laughs). Like with the internet and such.**

(Nods head). Do you think the Kalevala will mean anything to future generations?

**Um, I think uh, it's maybe losing some of its effect in that sense, but then I think there are always gonna be those kind of people who, uh, are interested in stuff like that, and you know, history, and so there's gonna be, I believe there's gonna be like a minority that are interested in it and actually read the book and know a lot about it, but then there are gonna be those normal youngsters who don't care about it pretty much (laughs).**

(smiles) Yeah. Uh, and do you believe the Kalevala is important to anyone outside of Finland?

**Mm...it might be helpful in like understanding Finnish culture. And maybe Finnish mentality. But, uh, um, but I'm not like, I don't have any example like how, but I guess so (laughs). But not like, if people are not interested in Finland or Finnish people, then it probably wouldn't be like that helpful, I guess. Because I think there are like a lot of similar ideas in different cultures. They just have their own national poets who have written them, in a different sense. At least that's my experience with them (smiles).**

And, uh, you mentioned the books by Don Rosa – uh, do you know of any other books, or movies, or music, anything like that, works of art, that, uh, that reference the Kalevala?

**Yeah, I think there are, but I haven't come across any. So that's like my own, I have only read these comics, comics books, but nothing else.**

Okay.

**And oh yeah, and then there was a, there was British actor or poet who was like, telling the stories of Kalevala in English, and kind of using the same uh, poetic meter, or how, I don't know how do you say it, yeah, the same like system for, uh, the same pattern for reading the poet, poetry, but in English, and he came to our high school, and, kinda, he had a drum and he was like reading out loud these stories in English.**

Huh.

**So that's the, so I, yeah, and I think he did it for a living (laughs). I don't know why he was interested in it.**

(smiles). That's really interesting. Do you know, like, how old he was, or...?

**I think he was like, 40.**

Okay. That's really interesting.

**Yeah.**

Okay, that's the entire interview, thanks so much for your help. (smiles)

**Okay, yeah, thanks (laughs) My pleasure.**

Well, yeah, if you're interested in a copy of the research after it's finished, I'd be happy to send you it, uh, if you can, please do send me the form I sent you, with your signature on it. Oh, I'll be finishing this research in like March or April, so that's when I could send it to you.

**Yeah.**

And, good luck moving! (laughs)

**Thanks! (laughs) And-**

Sorry, what?

**Say hi to Graham! (laughs)**

Okay, I will! He's sleeping right now, it's, uh, 5:30 in the morning here (laughs)

**Okay, wow, (laughs) you're up for this. Sorry about that. (laughs)**

No, that's totally okay, you're doing me a huge favor, so thank you so much. (laughs)

**Yeah.**

All right, well, hopefully I'll talk to you soon.

**Yeah, I hope this was helpful for your project.**

Yeah, it was super helpful.

**Okay, great.**

All right, bye!

**Bye!**

## Appendix D: Interview with Participant B (“Anni”)

Interview conducted via Skype on 2-26-2014, from 11:02 AM – 12:54 PM

Anni (Participant B), Female, 26, resident of Ylöjärvi, Finland

*Note: Anni’s fiancée, Eetu, was in the room while I was interviewing Anni. At times he contributed to Anni’s answers or added to what she had said.*

*Interviewer:* Um, so I’m going to start off just asking some demographic questions, so that I will be able to make statements about my population sample.

**Anni: Mhmm.**

But like I said in the informed consent, I’ll be changing all the names, and I’ll delete this video afterwards so it’ll just be a text copy.

**Okay.**

Okay, so how old are you?

**Uhh...(laughs) 26.**

(Laughs) Did you forget?

**Yeah! (Laughs) Quite terrible.**

(Laughs) Um, what is your city of residence?

**Uhh, Ylöjärvi, it’s Y, L, O with dots, J, A with dots, R, V, I.**

Okay. And what city did you grow up in?

**Um, well, both Hämeenlinna and Tampere, I guess.**

Okay. Um, what is your level of education?

**Um, Bachelor of Health Sciences.**

Mhm. Um, and, what is your area of study?

**Um, public health.**

Okay. Um. Okay, so how would you describe – is it Kalevala? Is that the way to say it?

Kalevala?

**(nods)**

How would you describe the Kalevala?

**In general?**

Yeah.

**Um, a collection of poems that tell the story how the world, I don't know if the world in total, but the world in Finland (smiles) got started.**

Yeah. Um, okay, so a collection of stories?

**(Nods)**

And, so, what are the stories in the Kalevala about?

**Well, what I can recall personally was how the planet or the world was born, and then something about marriage and relationships, and then, ummm, then they were trying to find the, the smith's work that was able to create money (smiles).**

Mhm.

**You remember the story?**

Mhm. Okay, is that it?

**Yeah (laughs).**

Okay (laughs). Um, do you remember what the smith work's, um, what he was working on, what the name of that is?

**Uh, the name of the machine?**

Yeah, the thing that could create money.

**(nods) Sampo.**

Sampo, okay. And who are the main characters?

**Um, Väinämöinen, who was the main character, and then the girl or somebody who was supposed to be his wife was Aino, and then Ilmarinen was the smith, and then something like (indistinguishable) or something was the, the woman who gave birth to the world, uh, Lemminkäinen, uh, can't remember what he did, and then, yeah, can't remember any more.**

Yeah, that's okay (smiles). Uh, you got a lot of them (laughs). Um, so in your opinion, what is the most famous story from the Kalevala?

**The only ones that I can remember...(smiles)**

(laughs)

**So, I think the most famous is the birth of the world and then they try to find the Sampo.**

Mhm. And, do you remember the first time you heard about the Kalevala?

**Um, primary school, or elementary school, um, maybe fifth grade or something? We had a teacher that was very advanced, I don't know if he told us about it, I think so.**

Mhm. So you were like, seven or eight? Somewhere around there?

**Maybe more like nine.**

Okay (nods).

**(Nods)**

Um, and, what did you think of it when you first heard about it?

**Um, well, (undistinguishable) some pictures, because a Finnish artist that has been making the paintings in it, so I think we just saw the pictures and discussed about the stories.**

Mhm.

**I kinda remember thinking that it was quite interesting.**

Mhm.

**But then when we saw a small paragraph from the text itself, the text is quite difficult to read.**

Mhm.

**Especially when you are quite young.**

Yeah. (smiles) Um, so, have you read any of the original text?

**Well, when we went to the seventh grade, uh, I think it's part of every people's, uh, well whatever rules there are that have to be taught to students, so in the seventh grade we might've.**

Mhm. Um, what do you think about the Kalevala now?

**Uhh, I think most Finnish people now too little about it. Or even cannot remember it, or even know who wrote it or anything.**

Really?

**Yeah.**

Uh, why do you think that?

**Well, we have several names and stories that are part of everyday life but I don't think that I have ever discussed about it with anybody, except in seventh grade when we were reading it (smiles).**

(laughs) Yeah. Um, so, do you believe-

**(nods) Oh yeah, I think you need to discuss with Eetu too, because he just said that the only part that he can remember from Kalevala was the part that was, was ah, animated in Donald Duck.**

Yeah, the Don Rosa story?

**(nods) Don Rosa, yeah.**

Yeah, mhm (smiles). Uh, did you read those?

**(nods) I have read it, too.**

Mhm. Uh, did you just read them because you wanted to, or was it for school?

**Uh, I think I just read them because I wanted to, I think it was part of- because, for most people in Finland, Donald Duck is, is subscribed (smiles). In many homes.**

Yeah? (smiles)

**So I think it was like a sequel or something.**

Yeah. I remember you telling me that he's very popular (laughs).

**Yeah (smiles).**

So, do you believe the Kalevala influenced Finnish culture in the past?

**Definitely I think so because, well, I can't say if it was, it's hard to explain, kind of like, not necessarily only after it was written, but the stories were alive in the villages so I think it was influencing the life even before it was written in the book.**

Mhm.

**But the stories kind of come clear in many situations even if some people are not that aware of it.**

What do you mean?

**Sorry?**

What do you mean?

**Um like, like the names of the companies or, or just, you know, advertisements and things like that.**

(nods) Can you think of any companies or advertisements that use, uh...?

**First that came to my mind is a bank that is actually called Sampo (smiles).**

Really? (laughs)

**Yeah (laughs). And, and then, there's a construction company that is called Lemminkäinen, and an insurance company that is called Ilmarinen, um...yeah. (smiles).**

Mhm. Um, so do you believe that the Kalevala influences present-day Finnish culture?

**It must influence, but it's some, I think it's on the more (cuts out) level...**

I'm sorry, could you repeat that?

**Uh, it's more in the deeper level, not really something that you could see or, or notice when you look, but it's such an old story, and so, kinda like popular, but I don't think it appears so easily any more.**

Mhm. Um...so, do you believe the Kalevala represented something different to the previous generation than it does to the present generation?

**Yeah, I think so (nods). I think in the old days they must have read it more than we have, but maybe, because I think the whole close-to-nature idea is quite present in Kalevala, so maybe that was also more present in the life of previous years.**

So, do you think that was true for like, your parents or people their age?

**Uh, maybe for more like my grandparents, probably older than that. (nods)**

Mhm. (nods) Um, do you think the Kalevala will mean anything to future generations?

**Uh, I hope so, but I'm afraid that it is not that well-known after a few years.**

Mhm. (nods)

**Unless it is taught in schools more than it is now.**

Mhm. Um, do you believe the Kalevala is important to anyone outside of Finland?

**Um, not really, except for those who are interested in Tolkien or, or things like that.**

(nods) Um, what do you mean?

**Like, I couldn't imagine that an old book from Finland could be known anywhere. (laughs)**

(smiles)

**But I think, uh, J.R.R. Tolkien was interested in Kalevala so I think there are some people that are interested elves and (indistinguishable) and things like that.**

Mhm. Uh, so you had mentioned that church to me that started in Tampere that is trying to revive, like, Pagan themes from the Kalevala. Can you explain more about that?

**Uh, (furrows eyebrows) what did you say at the beginning?**

Uh, you told me about a church that is starting in Tampere?

**Uh, I didn't know it existed before it was on the news, but it has existed for, for a few years, and, and they are like, now an official religion in Finland and they're, like, mm...what's the word when you say out loud your beliefs in religion?**

Umm, like professing beliefs?

**Um .... Ah, well anyway, (smiles) the main idea is, is that the one, the story of the birth of the world in Kalevala –**

Mhm.

**And that's, that's the base of their beliefs.**

Mhm.

**But that's all I know about it, but I think it's quite interesting.**

Mhm. Uh, do you know what the group is called?

**Uh, (smiles) I think I wrote it, it was in English "The Bear's People," but (smiles) –**  
(laughs)

**But (smiles), yeah, probably something with the bear.**

Yeah. (smiles) Interesting. Uh, have you heard of the Kalevala Graphic Novel?

**(silence)**

Sorry, could you hear me?

*At 11:22 my internet connection cut out. Connection reestablished at 11:42.*

Hi.

**Hey.**

Um, I'm really sorry about that.

**Yeah, that's okay.**

Um, I-

**We have enough time.**

Uh, can you hear me okay?

**Yeah, I can hear you but I can't see you.**

Oh, okay. Uh, I'm standing in my laundry room because that's where our modem is (laughs).

**(laughs) So you don't want me to see you?**

(laughs) No, my computer's just too slow.

**Okay, now I can see you (smiles). It's easier to talk and hear when you see the person.**

Yeah, I agree.

**Especially when it's not your language. (laughs).**

(laughs) Okay, so what I was asking before was, have you ever head of the Kalevala Graphic Novel?

**Have I ever...?**

Heard of, um, the Kalevala Graphic Novel?

**Uhhh, I'm not sure what you referred to but I think that the only one that I've seen is graphic, but it also has text.**

Okay. Um, and, have you ever heard of the Canine Kalevala?

**Ahhh! One word that I missed!**

(laughs) Oh, sorry! Canine? Like, dog?

(smiles)Um, again?

*Video recording cuts out. I retrieved the book that I had referenced and showed her some pictures of it. When recording starts I am showing her the book and she has recognized it. She said it was quite well known and that the author currently had an exhibit featured in Särkänniemi, an amusement park in Tampere.*

**They actually now have a section for Koiramäki, which is actually part of that, that whole thing. The drawer, the Mauri Kunnas, has drawn several famous stories that are canine stories.**

*Video recording cut out. At this point I was finished with the interview and simply explained to her that I could send her a copy of the research when it was finished and that I would send her the debriefing information.*

## Appendix E: Interview with Participant C (“Oona”)

Interview conducted via Skype on 2-27-2014 from 6:11 PM to 6:41 PM

Oona (Participant C), Female, 25, resident of Chicago, United States of America

*The first section of the interview was not recorded due to technical malfunction. The following demographic information was released to the interviewer during the unrecorded section of the interview. Oona’s responses to the first few questions in the interview were lost (How would you describe the Kalevala?; What are the stories in the Kalevala about?; In your opinion, what is the most famous story from the Kalevala?; Do you remember the first time you heard about the Kalevala?). The recording started about eight minutes into the interview.*

Age: 25

City of residence: Chicago

Level of education: Some college

Area of study: Psychology

*Recording starts.*

*Interviewer:* Okay.

**Oona:** Oh, now I, now I can!

Okay! Good.

**Good? Okay. Yeah.**

I had some paper sitting on there.

**Okay, I see.**

It’s actually really good that we stopped because I realized my recording software wasn’t working.

**Oh! (laughs) Okay, good. Now it’s working?**

I don’t know! I’ll find out at the end, I guess?

**Oh, okay! I hope it is!**

Me, too! But I’m just gonna take notes while we’re talking.

**Yeah, yeah. Okay.**

Okay, um. Okay, so do you remember what you thought about the Kalevala when you first had to study it in school?

**Um, I can't say that I would remember like, exactly, but I do remember that we were actually, one way of studying it was through music. 'Cause we were singing, I think we were singing the poems or something like that, and I remember that it was actually quite fun because we got to learn how to play the instrument, it's called Kantele in Finnish, I don't know the word in English –**

I think it's the same, actually.

**You know the – it's yeah, the anyways, not important, it's somehow related to the story, I suppose – anyway, so we were playing that, so it was fun for a kid, you know.**

Yeah, yeah. Um, so did you sing the original text of it?

**Probably not, because the original text is pretty hard. So they, there are like simplified versions and versions that have been kind of like translated to more modern Finnish.**

Okay, so Finnish, modern Finnish is not the same as-?

**No! No no no. (laughs).**

(laughs)

**It's, it's different, at least the way it's written, I think if I would read, right now if I would read the original writings, I wouldn't probably get too much, understand too much.**

Yeah. Um, mm, so –

*(loud noise in background)*

(smiles)

**(smiles)**

So, what do you think of the Kalevala now?

**What do I think of it now?**

Yeah.

**Mm, I think that it's, definitely that it's an important part of being Finnish, and I, sometimes I feel a little bit of shame that I don't know it well enough. I know bits and pieces, and I probably use rough – I probably use sayings and stuff like that that comes from there, without me even knowing that, where it comes from. But I think it's an important and beautiful part of our history and culture, but it's, it has just been something kind of like on my bucket list (smiles), that I want to do at some point to get to know it better, but you know, it's not the first thing that you just end up doing (chuckles). You know?**

Right, yeah. (smiles)Um...(pause) So, um, do you think that other Finns know a lot about it? **Um...I think generally my generation is kind of like me. I suppose that my parents would know more. I suppose they would know more about that. My grandma, if she would still remember things (chuckles)...**

(smiles)

**If she wasn't dement – dementic, she would probably remember it really well, but I think that generally my age, my generation, we know some, we know that it's important, we know the basic concepts, but that's about it. I mean, I wouldn't be surprised if you would ask someone that who wrote it – 'cause I, I am wondering now if it was Lönnrot – I am pretty sure, but could be someone else. (smiles)**

(smiles)

**There are couple, couple names (laughs) that are in my head, but I am not sure.**

(laughs)

**So I wouldn't be surprised if people would be like, "Oh, Kalevala, I know it's our national," - what's, whatever the word is – "but I don't know who wrote it." (laughs) So, yeah.**

(laughs) Yeah. Yeah. Um, so do you believe that the Kalevala influenced Finnish culture in the past?

**Ah, what did you say?**

Do you believe that the Kalevala influenced Finnish culture in the past?

**Influenced. Yeah, I do believe that it has influenced the art, the music, the literature, so yes, definitely, and I hope that it will continue doing that. Oh, and there's this whole series of jewelry, actually, that carries the name "Kalevala." And they are pretty famous, actually. Like I remember having Kalevala jewelry when I graduated high school, (smiles) and I...they, yeah. That is one big part as well.**

Yeah. (clears throat) Our apartment building in Tampere was right next to a –

**Yeah?**

Kalevala jewelry store. (smiles)

**Oh yeah, yeah. (smiles)**

Um, uh, so do you believe that, um, the Kalevala influences present-day Finnish culture?

**I think it does in some level be – um, I think especially, especially people who are more interested in art and literature, they probably know more about that and can get inspiration from there. So I think that it still does because it’s so important, and I suppose, I could actually say I know, that if you study art at school they will teach you more about it. If you go to university and study arts they will teach you more about it. And I know that a lot of times when you see an interview of some Finnish artist, or writer, or author, or whatever, they’re usually, there are many people who say they have been inspired by the Kalevala. So maybe it’s more of intellectual artistic circles’ inspiration more than just like everyday, basic, people who study psychology. (laughs)**

(smiles)

*(loud noise in background)*

**The cooler went on again.**

(laughs) Yeah, it’s roaring.

**Yeah.**

Um, so do you believe-

**Wait, I can’t hear you again.**

Okay. Um, (clears throat)...

**Better, yeah.**

Do you believe the Kalevala represented something different to the previous generation than it does to the present generation?

**I...think so. I, I do believe that it did represent something, or maybe, I think it carries more of, um, some kind of value of being a Finn and, um, having our own national...is it like a national book, or, I don’t know the word, but anyway, I think my generation, the younger generations, we have kinda like detached from our past, in a way, because we haven’t experienced war, our parents didn’t experience it, it was our grandparents, so we don’t have that, that – because I think it has something to do with being a little bit patriotic, and proud of being, being Finnish, so I suppose in that sense it gives more value to older generations, in a way.**

Did you say because your generation hasn’t experienced war?

**Yeah...**

(nods)

...Because the war itself, it brought the, that we'd be so proud of getting independence, and so on, so I suppose since we are getting further and further away from there, I don't think, I think to be honest my generation maybe takes it, um, how do you say it? Takes it granted that we are Finnish, that we are, that we are independent, so, yeah.

(pause while writing) And do you think the Kalevala will mean anything to future generations? I hope it does. And seems to be kind of also a trend that old things are coming back and they are being given more value, so I do hope that we will hold on to whatever cultural inheritance we have. And...I mean, I am optimistic, I hope that it will.

Um, do you believe the Kalevala is important to anyone outside of Finland?

Mm...not really, to be honest (furrows eyebrows). Maybe someone who's really interested in Finnish culture (smiles), and starts studying it, then maybe there are people who have personal, who have some personal value on it, but um, I wouldn't say so. I mean, or maybe someone who understands its artistic value, then maybe...but these are just guesses.

(pause while writing) And, um...okay, last question (smiles).

Okay (smiles).

Uh, do you know of any books, movies, music, etc., works of art, that reference the Kalevala? You mentioned the Mauri Kunnas books, and uh, the painting of Väinämöinen...

Yeah. Um. There are probably many, but now I think Marimekko has some, um, some of the artists who make Marimekko fabrics –

How do you spell that?

Uh, Marimekko. M-A-R-I-M-E-K-K-O.

And they make fabrics?

Yeah, they make fabrics, and it's our Finnish famous brand – like our Finnish design that we are very proud of. And I can't remember which of the fabrics – Marimekko has very strong patterns, that's their style. But I know there are some that are inspired by Kalevala. Definitely. But yeah, and then there's the jewelry chain, but... I don't know or remember any others right now.

Um, have you ever heard of the Kalevala Graphic Novel? I don't know what the word is in Finnish, but it's like it has the original text, but there are sort of Japanese-style pictures to go with it.

**Oh. Um... I've probably heard something about it, but wouldn't, I, no, can't have a picture in my head. I'm not sure if that's the thing you're talking about. Probably not. Because I have this picture, like this style in my head, of the types of like black-and-white photos of the book, of the characters, but I don't know if that's the one that you are talking about.**

Oh, yeah. (shrugs shoulders, smiles)

**Could be. (smiles) Or it's something totally else. (laughs)**

(laughs) Um, okay, great! And now that the interview's over, I'll tell you, it is Lönnrot who wrote-

**Okay, good! (laughs)**

(laughs)

**I was like, "Huh, it's kind of embarrassing if I don't know it!"**

No, it's okay.

**Now I can be proud of myself.**

*Graham moves into camera frame and waves.*

**Hey! You've been listening to me suffering here. (smiles)**

(laughs)

**No, it wasn't suffering, it was actually kind of funny. Or fun. I always mix funny and fun.**

(laughs)

**And then people make fun of me when I do that.**

They make funny of you?

**Yeah, yeah. (chuckles).**

Okay, well thank you so much.

**No problem.**

The paper should be finished in April. So, if you'd like I can send you a copy.

**Yeah! I would love to, I would love to.**

Okay-

**Do you have, like, you can send it to me through Facebook or something so, yeah. That should work.**

Okay, well -

**I hope it was helpful.**

It was super helpful. Thank you.

**Great. All right. I think I actually need to go, I'm going to have a presentation, no, a speech about sauna tomorrow (smiles).**

Oh! (smiles)

**Yeah, so I probably need to run to the library and get little more resources for my speech, but I hope it was helpful.**

Yeah, it was. (smiles) Have a good night. (waves)

**You too, have a good weekend. Bye! (waves)**

Bye!

## Appendix F: Interview with Participant D (“Lilja”)

Interview conducted via Facebook chat on 2/27/2014 from 7:03 PM to 8:58 PM

Lilja (Participant D); Female, 26, resident of Tampere, Finland

*This interview was copied and pasted verbatim from Facebook chat. Typos and emoticons were included in this copy of the interview because they were part of the original correspondence.*

*Interviewer:* Okay, so is it okay if we start the interview?

**Lilja: Sure!**

Okay! So I am going to start off with some basic demographic information. Like I said in the informed consent form, your name will be changed, but I am gathering basic descriptions of each person I interview so I can make statements about the group.

So first off, how old are you?

**Okay. I'm 24 now.**

What is your city of residence?

**Hmm, I guess I should say Tampere**

**:D**

What city did you grow up in?

**Ylihärmä. It's a village :)**

Never heard of it! I will have to look it up later.

What is your level of education?

**Haha nobody has heard of it..**

**Well the highest education I've finished was high school, and now I'm studying ant the uni.**

**Haven't officially finished my BA yet**

Okay. And what is your area of study?

**Social anthropology**

Great :) Now on to the "real" questions! First, how would you describe the Kalevala?

**Hmm. I'd say it is a very extraordinary and interesting old story, written in a special way.**

What do you mean?

That is, what do you mean by "special way"?

**Well, there are many weird things happening in the story. Like someone gets pregnant because of a berry and people can sing each other into a swamp.. And it is written with a special type of poetry. Don't remember how exactly it goes, to be honest :)**

**Sorry the internet cut off**

That's okay, I was wondering :)

So do you consider it to be one story or many stories put together?

**Well, I think of it as one story. But it consists of various segments that can be considered as independent little stories as well.. I think the stories were told to Lönnrot independently by various people and he fit them together?**

**If I remember correctly. Haha it has been a long time since I learned about it, sorry :)**

No problem, you don't need to be sorry :)

So, what are the stories in the Kalevala about?

You don't have to worry too much about how you respond, just say the first thing that comes to mind :)

**Well, first there is a myth about the creation of the world. And then there are stories about a few main characters and their adventures. I remember the characters have some supernatural skills but they are human-like in many ways.. They are envious of one another, compete and harm each other and look for spouses..**

**Okay :D**

Okay. In your opinion, what is the most famous story from the Kalevala?

**Well, the first that comes to mind is how one of the character signs another into swamp after he lost some knowledge competition something like that :D**

Sure! Do you remember the names of the characters in that story?

**And also the one where Sampo was stolen, because of the painting**

**Hmmmm!**

It's okay if you don't :)

**Joukahainen and Väinämöinen I think? I think Joukahainen was the one that went into the swamp**

Okay. And do you remember the first time you heard about the Kalevala?

**I don't remember how old I was, but it was before I went to school... Because we had the children's book, Koirien Kalevala**

**Kalevala of the dogs :D**

Yes, I know of it!

So you read that book with your parents, before you went to school?

**Yes. I think they read it to me before I could read myself**

What did you think of the book, Koirien Kalevala?

**I think it is great, it tells the story in a funny way for children**

**And I remember the pictures are awesome! So many details**

**I don't remember how much it differs from real Kalevala though**

**Or I don't know, actually :D**

Do you need to go to bed soon? I'm not sure what time it is there -

**No it's okay, I'm not that tired :)**

Okay.

Did you have to study the Kalevala in school?

**Unless you have to?**

No, it's only 8:00 here :)

**Hmm yeah we did but I don't remember which grade**

**Oh okay then :)**

Okay. Do you remember what you thought of the Kalevala when you had to study it in school?

**I remember we had copies of the paintings on the walls in elementary school**

**I think I thought that the stories were quite weird :D**

Of the Aleks-Galella paintings?

**Yes**

Wow! That is interesting that they were put up in your school.

**We had a huge copy of the one in the boat with Sampo**

**Sammon ryöstö I think it was called?**

**Yea :)**

So what do you think about the Kalevala now?

**Well, actually I feel like I want to read it again!**

**I think it is a fascinating collection of old stories**

**I think Lönnrot did a great job collecting all that together**

**The stories tell something about the way the people saw the world in old times.. With a lot of imagination of course :)**

**What was important in life back then**

When you say that Lonnrot did a great job collecting the stories, do you mean from an anthropological standpoint?

**Hmm, yes I guess you could say so**

**It's a way of maintaining old heritage**

So do you believe that the Kalevala influenced Finnish culture in the past?

**Well, yes. Or I'd say it's more like an important part of the past culture**

**Although according to my knowledge, Lönnrot added things to the stories as well**

**But I guess stories always change a bit when told by different people**

Yes. So you think it was closer to showing what past culture was like rather than influencing the culture in a certain way?

**I think it did both. I mean, the stories were old and tell something about how people used to think when they told these stories. But collecting it all kind of guided the way of change for the culture...**

**I mean, having a written collection gave the people something concrete, something to be proud of, in a time when the sense of their own origin and heritage wasn't very strong yet**

**Am I making sense? :D**

Yes, absolutely! :)

So do you believe the Kalevala influences present-day Finnish culture?

**Hmm, maybe in some way that is not very easy to notice**

**But not that directly**

Sure. Do you believe the Kalevala is important to Finns today?

**Well, it is a part of the history and heritage. But I think today it is not as important as a part of forming a sense of identity.. Today we have so many other things to build a sense of national/cultural identity with**

Can you give me some examples?

Sorry, I should be more specific - some examples of things you think Finns build national and cultural identity with today?

**Well, we have so many books, songs and movies in Finnish, for example. And then there are so many little things that people are proud of. Like saunas**

**And people are proud of the social and educative systems, for example.. They see their nation as something that functions well. Most of the time at least :)**

**Then there is a sense of "Finnish mentality".. Finnish "sisu"**

**you know that word?**

No, I haven't heard it.

What does it mean?

**Oh and then there are the winter sports, of course :D**

**It's a word that doesn't translate directly, but it means something like guts.. endurance.. not giving up and doing what you do with pride**

Interesting!

Thanks so much for the information, I think we are almost done...

Do you believe the Kalevala will mean anything to future generations?

**Well, as it is, maybe just as a part of history. Probably haf-forgotten for many people. But who knows... Maybe someone comes up with something new related to Kalevala**

**Like, I don't know, if somebody makes a Kalevala song for example and it becomes popular**

**And people start to talk about it more..**

So you think it's possible, but it would have to be represented in a way more accessible to that generation?

**Exactly :)**

**If not, most people probably recognise it as something important to the history and past generations, but of little interest to them**

**Kinda far from their everyday lives**

That makes sense.

On a different note - do you believe the Kalevala is important to anyone outside of Finland/

\*?

**Hehe, to you and your thesis? ;)**

:D

**Well, it might be important to the neighbouring countries.. Maybe they told similar stories there? I don't know too much about that though and it could be interesting to anyone who wants to compare old national epocs between countries**

**Is epoc a word? Probably not? :D**

Epic, I think

**epic?**

Yes!

**Okay, thanks!**

Okay, great - and last question:

Do you know of any books, movies, music, works of art, etc., that reference the Kalevala? You mentioned the Canine Kalevala and the paintings in your school - anything else?

**Hmm, can't really think of any... I think I've heard the expression "singing someone into a swamp" being used, but can't remember where I've heard it**

**Oh and there's the bank called Sampo :D**

Ha! That is funny.

**And in Tampere there are some streets named after characters of Kalevala**

**And the part of city called Kaleva, I guess it comes from Kalevala?**

**Not sure :D**

Okay, great - and thanks so much!

I think that is everything! :)

**No problem! :)**

Sorry that this took way longer than expected - I guess it goes a lot faster when talking instead of typing? Anyway, I hope you are well-rested for tomorrow.

**Oh, one more thing I thought of btw..**

**I remember there were some people in Kalevala that killed themselves, right? And suicide is so common in Finland.. Interesting coincidence? Some things don't change, maybe.**

**Oh and don't worry! I just took so much time to reply :D**

**But this was interesting! Really :)**

**I really want to read Kalevala now!**

Yes, there is one character that I know of that killed himself - it's interesting that you make that connection. Do you think it was a reflection of suicidal tendencies in the past?

Hey, I'm so glad that this has made you want to read it instead of making you never want to read it again :) Have you read it before?

**I don't know, but maybe its possible? Just popped into my head..**

**We read parts of it in school, but I haven't touched it since. I should :)**

Well, I've attached the debriefing information - as it says in the document, I'd be happy to send you a copy of the paper when it is finished :) It will probably be in April.

*open · download*

*SNChambers Debriefing 12-19-2013.docx*

Thanks again, and have a good night!

**Great! I'd love to read it :)**

**Good night!**

## Appendix G: Interview with Participant E (“Aleksi”)

Interview conducted via Skype (no video, audio only) on 3-2-2014, from 12:13 PM – 12:57 PM

Aleksi (Participant E), Male, 25, resident of Jyväskylä, Finland

*Interviewer:* Hey!

**Aleksi:** Hello, you guys. You can't see me, can you hear me?

(laughs) Yeah, we can hear you.

**Great.**

Um, how are you?

**Just fine (coughs). Just came home from band rehearsal in Tampere. Nowadays I live in Jyväskylä.**

Oh, really?

**Yeah, I am studying here cultural policy and working currently at the board of the student union. So it's been a really busy autumn and spring for me, but I like it here. It's great.**

How, how far away is that from Tampere?

**It's like, one and a half hours in the train.**

Wow.

**So it's, like not too far, so I can visit Tampere once in a while.**

Is that, so, is, where, you said that that's, uh, what town is that?

**Jyväskylä.**

Is that-

**J-Y-V-A with two dots-S-K-Y-L-A with two dots.**

Hm. Interesting.

*Graham:* And that's north, I assume?

**Yeah, a bit northern, like it's the central Finland.**

Cool. Well, I might turn off my video...

**Okay. (laughs)**

... 'Cause I feel weird being on video without you being on video (laughs).

*Graham:* Did he mean to have his video...?

Yeah.

*Aleksi and Graham briefly chatted about what was going on in their personal lives. Aleksi was Graham's tutor while we studied abroad in Tampere during Spring 2013. This section is omitted.*

So, I guess if you're ready I'll start the interview.

**Yeah, that's completely okay.**

Okay (laughs). Great.

**I'm enthusiastic to talk about Kalevala.**

(laughs) You said you *are* enthusiastic?

**Pardon?**

You said that you are enthusiastic?

**Yeah, yeah, definitely.**

Really?

**Like, come on, I'm a Finnish guy.**

(Laughs)

**I'm all about Kalevala. As we all are.**

Oh, yeah, for sure (laughs). Actually, almost everyone I've talked to has said, "Well, I don't, I don't really know much about it, I don't know if I'm the best person to talk to."

**Okay, okay (laughs).**

Do you feel the same way?

**Eh, well, I'm not like living and breathing Kalevala –**

(laughs)

**But I have had some, uh, new friends here in Jyväskylä which are from other countries, like, for example France –**

Uh-huh.

**That are really, really enthusiastic about Kalevala. They are, like, learning Finnish by reading Kalevala poems.**

Wow.

**So they've also got me into it a bit (laughs).**

That's really interesting.

**Yeah, yeah, it's like, it's strange that so, uh, few people know about Kalevala in Finland because it's, like, part of our heritage and history, and like, big part of it. So, it's interesting how, uh, not much we know about it.**

So you don't think very many Finns, uh, know much about it?

**Yeah, it's like, uh, well we have a children's book from a Finnish writer, Mauri Kunnas-**  
Oh yeah, I know of it.

**-Called Koirien Kalevala, the Kalevala of Dogs, and it's like a comic illustration of Kalevala, and many children are reading it, like they learn their Kalevala from it, mostly, and the original Kalevala isn't read as much, but, yeah, I've learned a lot from Kalevala just by being a kid and reading it all over again.**

Yeah. So, why do you think people don't read the original one as much?

**Uh, I guess people aren't just too interested in, like, cultural heritage and stuff like that.**

**Uh, for example, I-I guess it's somehow similar to the Bible, people know about its presence and know some parts of it but haven't really read it through.**

Right. Uh, I've heard that the Finnish used in the original Kalevala is old, and different from modern-day Finnish. Is that true?

**Yeah, it's really different. Like, it would be considered goofy if someone would be talking Finnish like they do in Kalevala.**

(laughs) Yeah.

**The written and the, uh, structure of the language is a lot of different, like, really old-school (laughs), so to say.**

(laughs) Yeah. Um, actually I have the Mauri Kunnas book sitting right next to me.

**Okay.**

There, there were only two copies available from any libraries in the United States. Like, only two libraries in the U.S. had copies of the book.

**Okay, okay, so it's like a rarity over there.**

Yeah, it is. But it's really interesting, I read the whole thing. Um, it was, it was fun (laughs).

**Okay, it's great that you can find it interesting.**

Yeah.

**You're ahead of many Finnish people (laughs).**

(laughs) Um, well actually, I was going to start the interview with some demographic questions, just to, um, be able to make some statements about who I was interviewing. Um, like it said in the informed consent documents, I'll change your name and I'll delete this recording after I write

it down, um, but, I wanted to get some basic information like you age and your level of education. Is that okay?

**Yeah, that's okay.**

Okay. So, how old are you?

**Uh, 25 years.**

Okay, and-

**I'm, I'm getting so old (laughs).**

(laughs)

**Yeah, go ahead.**

And, uh, your city of residence?

**Uh, Jyväskylä. I can write it down for if you, (laughs)**

I think I can find it, I remember you spelling it (laughs)

**Yeah, yeah.**

Thanks. Um, and what city did you grow up in?

**Uh, it was Ulvila.**

How do you spell that?

**Like, U-L-V-I-L-A.**

Um, and, what is your level of education?

**Eh, Bachelor of Social Sciences.**

Okay. So undergraduate?

**Yeah, yeah. I'm studying at the master's program, but I'm not, like, I'm not finished yet. I won't be finished in long time.**

Mhm.

**But, I'm studying, slowly.**

Okay, so, how- how would you describe the Kalevala?

**Well, uh, I say it's like a Finnish version of Bible, kinda way. It has like a, role of a moral guide to what's life.**

Mhm.

**And, uh, on the other hand it has a strong role in our national identity. Like, uh, the presenting of a Finnish person, Finnish character, Finnish nature, and so on. So it's kind of like a, like a product for the Finnish people to make them realize that they should be proud**

**of, proud of being Finnish. So it's strongly a national, uh, artifact, so to say. And, and it's also a good story to read. Like, it's interesting and it's fun to read.**

Mhm.

**So it can also be considered as a, a literature entertainment, as a piece of literatural entertainment, maybe.**

Yeah.

**(chuckles) Uh, and it's a good way to, like, present Finnish history to people who aren't Finnish. Like, when they're asking something about our history I can just like point out Kalevala and tell people to read it.**

(laughs)

(laughs)

Do you do that?

**(laughs), Uh, sometimes, sometimes. But not too often because I am afraid that, well, it's really a heavy thing to read when you're learning Finnish or anything like that, so that might scare people away.**

Yeah.

**But I'm mostly like giving the children's book option because it has so many pictures in it you can understand it.**

Right.

**Without knowing any Finnish.**

Yeah. Um, why do you think it – well, first, do you think that it accurately portrays Finnish nature?

**Ehh...**

Like the character of Finns?

**Eh, the stereotypical character, maybe. Which is like people running naked in the woods.**

(Laughs)

**Just coming out of sauna, and heading to drink some booze or something like that (laughs).**

**Like, some, I guess some funny stereotypes of Finnish nature are drawn from Kalevala originally.**

Mhm.

**And people, well, you have maybe come across with the stereotypes of Finnish people, like being all silent.**

Yeah.

**Not handling their drinking time, (laughs) and living close with nature.**

(laughs) right. Um, so, so you're okay with non-Finns getting this impression of Finns.

**Yeah, yeah, definitely so.**

(laughs)

**I'm not, I'm not being really like, I'm not really selling out Finland here or giving good image of Finnish people, but yeah, like the traditional stereotypes are drawn from Kalevala. I should say that.**

Mhm. Um, okay. So, um, what are the stories in the Kalevala about?

**Eh, pardon?**

What are the stories in the Kalevala about?

**They are like, one story about Väinämöinen and Aino is like old man falling in love with a young girl and facing a lot of problems with their relationship, I guess, and ending up with the girl killing herself. And in kinda ways that story. And the story about Lemminkäinen is like a growing up story of a young man who's angry and wants to, wants to make the world right, and he thinks it's wrong. And it's kind of a violent story, too. And they are like moral dimensions to the stories. And I guess one story is about Sampo which is drawn from Pohjola, and the blacksmith Ilmarinen is going to get it, and there are problems because it's being held by Louhi, the evil northern woman. And a fight emerges when they get the s-, when they get away with it, and Louhi is coming after them to get the Sampo. It's, I don't know about the moral dimension of that, I guess that's refers the greediness of evil and the problems connected to it. So they are like basic moral stories –**

Yeah.

**- All the way.**

Yeah. Um, so what do you think is the most famous story?

**I guess it's the Sampo.**

Mhm.

**Because, like, there's, there used to be a bank in Finland which was named Sampo. And like the wealth you can get out of it, the salt and gold, just by pulling the lever or, I don't know what's the term, but you know.**

Yeah.

**And, um, and well, yeah, I guess Sampo is the most famous, everyone knows that, even though they wouldn't have read the Kalevala, it's been told in schools and so on.**

Mhm. Um, so do you mean the story when it's forged, or when the people try to steal it from Pohjola?

**Eh, could you repeat that one? I didn't catch it.**

Uh, do you mean the story when Ilmarinen forges the Sampo or when he tries to steal it...?

**Eh, tries to steal it, maybe.**

Okay. Uh, do you remember – first, am I saying the word correctly? Kalevala?

**Yeah, you are.**

Okay. Any tips for how to say it like a Finn?

**Uh, maybe you should harden your K, like Kal-e-vala.**

Okay.

**Just like, be violent with your language! (laughs)**

(laughs) Okay, thanks. Um, so do you remember the first time you heard about the Kalevala?

**Eh, the first time – I was maybe in preschool. And I actually, I guess I didn't hear it in school – I was from five to seven years old, or maybe four to six years old when I read the children's book.**

Mhm.

**About Kalevala. And really got into it. I read it so many times, and that's maybe reason I know about Kalevala lots more than many of my friends.**

Mhm.

**So, yeah, I suppose when I (indistinguishable) the children's book was my first touch of the Kalevala.**

Mhm.

**So I can blame my parents over that.**

(laughs) Um, so do you think that the Mauri Kunnas book accurately portrays the Kalevala?

**I guess yeah, Mauri Kunnas is pretty academic children's writer, like he really sticks to the facts and doesn't, like, do his own twists to the story. He just draws great and really is faithful to the original story.**

Mhm.

**And I think that book's been such a big promotion to Kalevala, like people aren't too enthusiastic to give their children the original one.**

(laughs)

**Because they wouldn't be interested in it. I really have to give some hats-off to Mauri Kunnas about promoting Kalevala, uh, to the whole nation.**

Right.

**And I guess that's famous abroad, also.**

Uh, mm, where do you think it would be famous abroad?

**Uh, would be famous - ?**

Uh, abroad. Like, do you, do you think it's famous in any specific countries other than Finland?

**Eh, I'm not sure, but like, I guess Mauri Kunnas is being distributed and sold abroad a lot, and according to historical facts people might be interested in it, because Kalevala is an interesting story, but I don't think there are any like specific countries where people are interested in Kalevala or anything like that. But, like, for all the people around the world, that might be the best way to get introduced to Kalevala.**

Right.

**Like a, well, it's easier to approach than the original one, so.**

Yeah. Uh, okay, so did you have to study the Kalevala in school?

**Yeah, like, uh, on our Finnish lectures we did go through some Kalevala. Like, throughout the whole school, like the underschool, there was some points that we studied Kalevala.**

**Like, for example in Finland there is one day a year which is dedicated to Kalevala, so during those days we always had some program connected to Kalevala and so on. And in high school there was also some part of our Finnish courses to get familiar with Kalevala and do some tasks. For example, reading some articles connected to Kalevala or analyzing it or something like that.**

Mhm.

**It wasn't too much fun, maybe, but yeah, we definitely got our part of Kalevala.**

Yeah. Do you know what day is Kalevala Day?

**Eh, I don't remember the day, but I guess it's in the autumn or in the spring, it wasn't long ago that there was one.**

Yeah.

**It's always like a day people are just seeing the flags being put up without knowing what day it is.**

(laughs) Actually it was just a few days ago, it was the 28<sup>th</sup> of February.

**Okay, so I guess I missed it completely too, then (laughs).**

(laughs) So I guess you didn't celebrate it?

**Eh, no, I didn't like, pull out my Kantele and run out the streets, or anything like that.**

(laughs)

(laughs)

**Well, maybe next year. I have to start planning early.**

(laughs) Oh, man. Um, sorry, I'm taking notes while we're talking because I've had some problems with my recording software...

**Okay.**

So I'm taking notes and recording, just to make sure I don't miss – so that's why I'm being quiet sometimes.

**Yeah, yeah, no problem. I'm familiar with the academic interview system. (laughs)**

(laughs) So do you remember what you thought of the Kalevala when you studied it in school?

**Uh, again? Can you repeat? My connection is a bit bumpy at the moment.**

Sorry. That's okay. Um, do you remember what you thought of the Kalevala when you had to study it in school?

**(laughs) I didn't think anything special because I was familiar with it from my childhood.**

**It was just, I didn't consider it anything special – it has been like, part of my growing-up story, so, uh, it was a ordinary thing to me and like, I didn't really think of it like, strong part of Finnish heritage. It was just, somehow, it had been part of my, not daily life, but yeah, part of my childhood so much that I considered it as a normal thing connected to literature, so it wasn't really a big number for me.**

Right.

**And, well, as I mentioned, it's a nice story, so I didn't find it unpleasant to get in touch with Kalevala at school.**

It's really interesting that you say that because almost everyone that I've interviewed has said that they think it's really boring.

**Oh, that's too bad. I'm, I'm ashamed of Finnish people (indistinguishable) right now.**

(laughs)

(laughs) Um –

Ah –

Go ahead.

**Yeah.**

Sorry, go ahead.

**Ah, I was, I was just, eh, adding to my sentence that I'm still not that enthusiastic about Kalevala that I listen to Kantele music or anything like that, I think that's boring. (laughs)**

Yeah. (laughs)

**Like, I can listen to Kantele in rock or metal music if it's well, arranged well, but only to hear the Kantele is something like – yeah, I can listen to it sometimes for curiosity, but I'm not really enjoying it too much.**

Right.

**But it's the same with all traditional music to me.**

Mhm.

**I'm like, strongly pop-rock person in the end.**

Yeah. So the Kantele is pretty much only used in traditional music?

**Yeah, mostly. It's like, it's hard to make it sound good in anything else. That's only my humble opinion, so.**

Yeah, that's okay. Um, so what do you think of the Kalevala now?

**Eh, I think, eh, it hasn't like been forgotten. There are pretty popular bands like Värttinä in Finland where they pretty strongly draw their, uh, inspiration from Kalevala. And there are lots of, eh, ethnomusical groups that also do the same and, uh, I guess in Finland we have somehow strong traditions at some level that really make Kalevala stick to our mind, at least in some ways.**

Right.

**So...and there are some celebration years of Kalevala, and so on. Which emerge some products, uh, that really bring Kalevala up front. I guess Kalevala now, well, it's nothing like super special in Finland, but it still is present strongly in our lives – not daily, but at least like one, two days a year.**

Right.

**It hasn't lost its place in the Finnish culture.**

Mhm. Um, what was the name of that band that you mentioned?

**Uh, Värttinä, V-A with two dots-R-T-T-I-N-A with two dots.**

Okay, thanks. Uh, have you ever listened to their music?

**Yeah, I actually have. In high school, when we were studying traditional Finnish music, we listened to some. And I've listened to some also when I've seen them on TV or something like that. I'm not like a big fan of them or following them constantly, but I come across of them once in a while, and I kinda like their music to certain point.**

Yeah.

**So I'm able to listen to their music. (laughs)**

Yeah. (laughs) And you mentioned that during some years there are more products that come out?

**Yeah, they are like, uh, what's the...oh, some celebration publishings about the Kalevala book, and maybe some poems and press, celebration poems, stuff like that. And, oh yeah, there's also a product called Kalevalakorju in Finland, which means Kalevala-jewelry. It's really popular.**

Mhm.

**And it's like jewelry in the name of Kalevala, presenting some traditional Kalevala things. And people are buying them. So it's well merchandised, also, in many levels.**

Do you think Finnish people like it? Or is it mostly for tourists?

**Eh, Finnish people also like it. It's not a tourist product. Not that tourists wouldn't also be buying them, but also native Finnish people are interested in Kalevala jewelry and own them. Like my parents do own some Kalevala jewelry which they are proud of, but I do not, at least at this point. (laughs) Maybe someday I'll put all my money into jewelry. But I should have some money first. (laughs)**

(laughs)

**So that's for to come.**

Is it really expensive?

**It's not like the most expensive jewelry, but yeah, it's rather expensive. It's like high-class jewelry.**

Mhm. Okay. Um, do you believe the Kalevala influenced Finnish culture in the past?

**Eh, yeah I do. It was the Finnish way of finding your own identity. It was not only thing that helped Finnish people do it, but it was a way to make our nation feel like a real nation because we have kind of a heritage, a first story in a way.**

Yeah.

**So I guess it has influenced Finnish people in the past a lot. It's not only just a cultural, but in a political way. Like to build some confidence in our nations maybe. I'm not too national, so it's hard to say, but – (laughs) I guess the national ones are drawing the inspiration from Kalevala also.**

Yeah. Like a political party?

**No, not a political party. It's not the most selling thing in a political way. At least not in Finland.**

Right. You mean just having, just having national pride?

**Yeah, yeah, something like that.**

Okay.

**I guess Kalevala can also be misused for the national pride parties, or racial things, or anything like that, but I haven't come across anything like that. But I guess it could be a way.**

Mhm. Um, have you heard of the – the religion in Finland that is centered around the Kalevala?

**Mm, it sounds familiar but I can't like picture it right now. I guess, eh, well, ethnological religions, they are connected to Kalevala, but I don't know, that sounds more like a small cult or something like that than a religion to me.**

Right. Yeah. Okay. Um, and, do you believe the Kalevala influences present-day Finnish culture?

**Uh, are present today in Finnish culture?**

Um, like, um, today? Like modern, modern Finnish culture?

**Yeah, in the music there might be. And some metal bands are using like Kalevala lyrics. For example, Amorphis.**

Mhm.

**In Finland. A-M-O-R-P-H-I-S.**

Yeah.

**They have like a song called My Kantele, and something else like that. I guess they have a whole record built around Kalevala, but I don't remember the record's name. But I guess you can find it online or something like that.**

Mhm.

**And, as I mentioned the Kalevala days, day in Finland, also brings up Kalevala and...and in Finnish language there's like, for example if some company is making a lot of money, or they have a product that is bringing them a lot of income, it can be called *rahasampo*, which is like "money Sampo," so in our everyday language Kalevala is also present.**

Mhm.

**And we have like a phrase that goes like, "*(Finnish)*," which means, which in English is like "No one is a blacksmith when he is born," and that means like you can't be good at something if you don't like practice it. So I guess that's drawn from Kalevala, from blacksmith Ilmarinen.**

Mhm.

**So in our daily language there are echoes from Kalevala.**

Right.

**And as I mentioned, the jewelry and so on. And I guess some musical award is golden Kantele, some trophy or something like that. So there are traces of Kalevala in our everyday culture, definitely.**

Okay. Um, so do you believe the Kalevala is important to Finns today?

**Uh, not all the Finns, but some of the Finns, definitely. Like the ones who are interested of our history. And as for myself, as for an example being an international tutor at the university, it was a good way to like, get people into Finnish and Finnish culture, and so on. And we do have those phrases that I mentioned in our language, so our language would be poorer without Kalevala, so...I guess Kalevala is important to many people, even though they didn't know it too well.**

Mhm.

**It's like hidden in our culture in many ways.**

Mhm. (long pause) Sorry. (laughs) I'm frantically writing down everything you're saying.

**Yeah, yeah, I'm talking long sentences. (laughs) So sorry about that.**

(laughs) No, it's good. Um. This is really helpful. Okay. Um. Do you believe the Kalevala represented something to the previous generation than, different from what it represents to the current generation?

**Eh, yeah I guess like, uh, the more generations we go back, the more it meant to people because there wasn't too many Finnish celebrities or anything like that throughout the world. Nowadays there are more of them within sports, or music, or anything like that. So we can bring out our culture in several ways, more than hundred years ago. So, like, back in the days when there was less Finnish culture throughout the world, the Kalevala must have meant a lot to people because it has been known internationally for long. So it was kind of a Finnish trademark back in the days.**

Mhm. Okay. Um, do you think the Kalevala will mean anything to future generations?

**I guess it will. It will always be a part of our heritage. People I guess, I'm not saying it would be so, but I'm guessing people will be interested in national heritage in the future too. And who knows, there might be some new forms of art connected with Kalevala emerge in the future, so, I can't predict anything, but yes, Kalevala, will be part of future people's interests also. At least at some level. At least it's not disappearing, I say.**

Um, I know we talked about some bands already and some other things, but do you know of any other books, music, movies, works of art, anything like that, that reference the Kalevala?

**Yeah, I don't remember the painting's names, but there are a lot of them connected to Kalevala. And I guess there is a whole collection of them.**

Mhm.

**Gosh, I don't remember the artist's name, but there are, and yeah, the bands' influences from Kalevala in Finland a lot, well, not a lot, but at least at some level, and, what else...the children's books, as I mentioned...and there are some movies also about Kalevala, which aren't particularly interesting, I would say they're even boring... (laughs)**

(laughs)

**...Compared to the literature, but there are some movies about Kalevala, and I've seen a couple of them. And they're nothing special, they're just presenting the whole book.**

Mm.

**In a number of ways. So they are like three hours of boredom and bad acting because it's a Finnish movie, but...**

(laughs)

**...But yeah, there are many branches of culture that have had their share of Kalevala in Finland. I don't know if they've done any abroad, but at least in Finland several works of art can be made being influenced by Kalevala.**

Mhm. Okay. You're done! That's the whole interview.

**Oh! It's over already? I was just starting myself.**

Just warming up? (laughs) Well, thank you so much – I guess, do you have any other comments that you'd like to add?

**Eh, nothing special, just read as much Kalevala as you ever can.**

Yeah.

**That's my "hello" to the world. (laughs)**

(laughs)

**Yeah, nothing special. And thank you so much, it was really interesting to, like, wake up my interest in Kalevala once again.**

Oh, great! Well, I'm happy to hear that.

**Yeah. Well, actually, here in Jyväskylä we have a place called Kantele-talo, Kantele-house, in which ethnomusical bands play tunes connected to Kalevala and older Finnish culture, so. I definitely have to visit there sometimes.**

(chuckles) Yeah, you should.

**Yeah, yeah. And if you ever end up coming to Finland, just let me know, I will definitely take you there.**

(laughs) We would really like to go back. We miss it a lot.

**Yeah. You're always welcome. I have some room here in Jyväskylä so I can accommodate you.**

Well, thanks. Um, great, so like I said in that form, my research will probably be finished in late March or early April, and I can send you a copy of it if you'd like.

**Yeah, definitely, I can write you my address.**

Okay. I can also email it to you, if that's okay.

**Yeah, that would be easier, definitely. I can give you my email address.**

Okay. Um, great. Well, I'll be sending you a form in a few minutes just to kind of wrap everything up. It doesn't say anything new, it just says if you'd like a copy of the research, you can have it, and thank you for participating, it's been really helpful.

**Okay, I am glad I can, uh, improve your research in being a part of it, in giving you an interview.**

Okay, well, have a good day!

**Yeah, you too, you too! And once again, say my hello to Graham!**

Okay, he says bye!

*Graham:* Bye!

**Bye! Take care, man, and you, too.**

Thanks.

**Yeah, thank you very much, and let's be in touch.**

Okay, that would be great. Bye.

**Bye.**

## Appendix H: Interview with Participant F (“Viivi”)

Interview conducted via Skype on 3-11-2014, from 9:33 PM - 10:08 PM.

Viivi (Participant F), Female, 22, resident of Hong Kong.

*Original conversation included video and audio. Due to technical error, the recording software only recorded audio.*

*Interviewer:* Okay, well thanks again for agreeing to do this, I really appreciate it.

**Viivi: It’s okay.**

Okay. And, if it’s okay, I guess we’ll start off with some demographic information.

**Yeah.**

Which I’m just collecting to be able to say, like, “The participants ranged from age X to Y,” that kind of thing.

**Yeah, yeah.**

And, like I said in the informed consent, I will, uh, change your name after I transcribe the recording and I will also delete the video recording, so it’ll just be text.

**Yeah. Okay.**

Yeah. Okay, so um, how old are you?

**22.**

Okay. And what is your city of residence?

**Hong Kong.**

Um, what city did you grow up in?

**Uh, a city called Pirkkala.**

Pirkkala?

**Yeah, it’s spelled P-I-R-K-K-A-L-A.**

I’m just writing everything down to make sure I get it. I’ve had some problems with the software before, so...(laughs)

**Yeah.**

Um, and what is your level of education?

**Uh, high school graduate...I don’t have any other degree yet.**

Mhm. But you’re enrolled in university?

**Yeah.**

Um, and what's your area of study?

**Sociology. Well, you could put social sciences.**

Okay. So, uh, how, how would you describe the Kalevala?

**Well, it's...uh...I think it's somehow a book of Finnish national pride.**

Mhm.

**Um, it's full of poems.**

Mhm.

**Uh, it's somehow a historic, somehow bigger than life, it's a classic. It's still alive, I guess it's a classic. So, the story has to be somehow...I myself have not read it.**

You've not tried it?

**No. So, that's (indistinguishable) on me, now I have to try it. (laughs)**

(laughs) Um, you said that it was, um...

**Sorry?**

Sorry, you said that it was, um, bigger than life. What do you mean by that?

**Well, uh, I meant that, uh, (indistinguishable) and still everybody has to know it, (indistinguishable).**

Uh, I'm having a hard time hearing you, I'm going to try the headphones again.

**All right.**

Okay. Can you hear me?

**Yeah.**

Okay. The headphones still aren't working. I'll be right back. I'm sorry.

**All right, no problem.**

(pause)

Okay, um. Okay, so you said that kind of everyone knows of it?

**Yeah. Well, I guess the young people nowadays have not read it. But they are taught it at school, so they at least know what it is.**

Mhm.

**I think that, ah, at least it's for...(indistinguishable), somehow contemporary.**

Still somehow contemporary?

**Yeah.**

Okay. Um, what makes you think that young people don't read it?

**Uh, I guess because I am one, and at least for me, the reason it is so long and hard and I am personally not so interested in poems.**

Yeah.

**But, um, I kinda should read it, I feel like I should read it. But I guess that's the reason more people don't read it, because it's so hard.**

Um, do you think you would read it if a more simplified version was available?

**I think there are (indistinguishable, laughing)...**

What?

**Children's book.**

Oh, yeah? (laughs)

**Yeah, so I have read the simplified version.**

Yeah. (laughs) And, okay, uh, what are the stories in the Kalevala about?

**I'm sorry?**

What are the stories in the Kalevala about?

**Mm...(pause) There is a guy playing the instrument, I don't know the word in English, but you know the instrument at least, I think.**

Uh, what's the name of it?

**I don't know the name in English, but I can check it, but I don't think that's important.**

**That's like Finnish, Finnish traditional instrument that he's playing, and, uh, somehow it's like magic instrument. Also there's other people in the story, uh...and there's a young girl called Aino, and everybody's after her.**

(Laughs)

**And, uh, then there's a huge machine that produces gold and money. And, uh –**

Do you know the name of-

**Uh-**

Sorry.

**The name of what?**

The name of the machine?

**It's Sampo.**

Mhm. Okay.

**Aaah, there's, according to Google, there's direct translation for the instrument I was talking about. In Finnish it's called Kantele.**

Mhm. It's called the same in English.

**Really?**

Yeah.

**Oh. Okay. It's a Finnish word. (laughs)**

(Laughs)

**Okay, so, he plays Kantele, and I guess he fights with Kantele, and uh, when he plays it, everyone else (indistinguishable).**

Everybody else what?

**Loses. Like, it's ah, I guess it's a metaphor for violence, or physical fights.**

Oh really?

**Yeah.**

Hm. Okay. So, in your opinion, what is the most famous story from the Kalevala?

**Hm. Well, I think the story about Sampo, how they fight, or try to get it for themselves.**

Okay. Um, do you remember the first time you heard about the Kalevala?

**Um, I can't say that I remember the first time, but I remember that I had a children's book of Kalevala, and I got it as a present, but I'm not sure that it was first time I heard about it.**

Mhm. Um, what book was it?

**I'm sorry?**

What book was it?

**Um, I just remember that it was blue! (laughs)**

It was blue? Oh, okay. (laughs)

**But I think it was just called, "Kalevala."**

Oh.

**Uh, the author was someone else, and it was a simplified version but it was still very big book, and I didn't read it for the first couple of years.**

Yeah. (laughs)

**It was still too hard to read.**

Yeah.

**Because I was still too young.**

Uh, do you remember how old you were when you got that book?

**Um, maybe about 10 to 12. Something like that.**

Okay, cool. Um, who, who gave that book to you?

**Uh, it was a family friend. A family friend who was a teacher, a Finnish language teacher.**

Mhm. That makes sense! (laughs)

**Yeah, yeah. (laughs)**

Um, and uh, did you have to study the Kalevala in school?

**Yeah, yeah. Well, somehow, I think we read parts of it and I think some people, some schools may make you read everything.**

Wow.

**Yeah. But we read something else.**

Mhm. Uh, how old were you?

**I think it was in high school, so 16 or 18 years old.**

Mhm. And what did you think of it?

**You mean what did I think about it in high school?**

Mhm.

**Ah, I appreciate it as a classic book but I wasn't interested in it. Um, what else... (pause)**

**Uh, I was just really not interested in it. (laughs)**

(laughs) And, uh, what do you think about the Kalevala now?

**Well, this interview makes me think that maybe I should really read it! (laughs)**

(laughs)

**At least re-read the children's version.**

Yeah.

**Uh, and then yesterday I also thought that, ah, it has really influenced us Finns even if we don't know it because it has created some new words, and the language is alive, even nowadays.**

Okay.

**So, so that's what I was thinking, it is really important because it has even created something new which, which is alive nowadays.**

Mhm. Okay, um, and do you believe that the Kalevala influenced Finnish culture in the past?

**Yeah, uh, I mentioned that it was taught at school, regarding the influence, they said that it was important because it was one of the first things written in Finnish language, it really affected the national pride, I think.**

Mhm.

**So I guess it really changed something.**

Um, and you mentioned, uh, before, that it really influenced the Finnish language?

**Uh, sorry?**

You said before that it influenced the Finnish language? Um, do you have any examples of that?

**Um...for example, we use the word “Sampo,” we say (indistinguishable)-Sampo, so raha-Sampo in Finnish...**

Sorry, you say what?

**Uh, the word Sampo, we use that, but we add another word, um, uh, before it, before “Sampo,” the whole word is raha-Sampo, we use it when we mean, when we are talking about some kind of good business. For example, when they are making a lot of money.**

**Um...somehow we are speaking Kalevala, when I talk about how I think (indistinguishable) quite stupid, sorry I need to check one word...(pause while typing on computer) Swamp! So we say that people sing or play a person into a swamp.**

Oh, okay. Yeah.

**Even nowadays, somehow we examine long ago that. For example, if someone sits around and then they (indistinguishable), someone will say, hey, I will sing you into a swamp. So the language is somehow alive.**

Yeah. That’s really interesting. Um, do you remember the name of the guy who plays the instrument?

**Väinämöinen.**

Mhm. Um...

**Did you catch it?**

Yeah, I know it. Um, uh, okay. So, um, do you believe that the Kalevala influences present-day Finnish culture? You mentioned the language – do you think it influences present-day Finnish culture in any other ways?

**Um...(pause) I’m not sure if it book affected the same type of things that are in Finnish culture that are in the book, and I’m not sure if the things in culture already existed before**

it. So I'm not sure if it's the culture or the book. For example, Kantele is still a national instrument in Finnish musical culture, um...and the names, the names are still shown in Finland. Uh, we have street names connected to Kalevala. For example, in Tampere you remember the city park called Kaleva?

Mhm.

Yeah, that is from Kalevala. There are a lot of street names from Kalevala. There is, for example, a street called Väinämöinen.

Mhm.

Um, also people's names. Uh, I know someone named Aino.

Really?

Yeah. So it's a traditional Finnish name.

Uh, are there any people with names like "Ilmarinen" or "Väinämöinen"? (chuckles)

No. (laughs) But there are short versions of that, I'm not sure if they are from Kalevala.

Väino, that is sort of similar to Väinämöinen, it's like short version. Uh, what is the other one...Ilmarinen is the other one, the name now is Ilmo.

Interesting. Um, are those very popular names?

They are just normal names. They are like, um, they are not special, so some people are called Ilmo or Aino, and people do not say, "Oh! Your name is from Kalevala." It's just normal.

Yeah. Um, do you believe that the Kalevala is important to Finns today?

Sorry?

Do you believe the Kalevala is important to Finns today?

Do I think it's important?

Yeah.

(pause) No, I can't say it's important. But it's still part of our culture, but it's not just a book though. It's somehow more than a book. But people nowadays, they are (indistinguishable), and that's it.

They – I'm sorry, what did you say?

They talk about it at school, and that's it. So it's somehow important, and I think that people should know about it because it's a part of our culture, and a part of our literature, but still, it's - I don't think that it's important.

Mhm. Okay, and, um, do you believe the Kalevala represented something different to the previous generation than it does to the present generation?

**I think yes. Uh, to the previous generation I guess it more represented national pride, as I said before – it was one of the first books in Finland. Uh, so, I guess also it also gathered together the Finns, and then they realized that we are the same family. And so it's part of the national history as well. But nowadays I think that it's just a classic book, it's one of books in Finnish literature, and it's one of the oldest, and one of the most important in Finnish literature.**

Okay. Um, mm, do you think the Kalevala will mean anything to future generations?

**(pause) Mm, hard to say. I, I guess it will remain the same.**

Mhm. Um, and do you believe the Kalevala is important to anyone outside of Finland?

**Well, for example I was very surprised about your research topic. (laughs)**

(laughs) Yeah.

**I'm happy that you are interested, but I was interested that any, (laughs) any person outside of Finland even somehow knew what it was to do research about it.**

(laughs) Yeah.

**So I don't assume that anyone would be interested. But I think it might have been fascinating to read. Do you know about it?**

Yes. It has been.

**Yeah. So, I, I don't know if it means anything special for foreigners, but still, it's a good book to read.**

Yeah. Um, do you remember that time when I was Finland and we were having lunch together, and I mentioned that I had read parts of the Kalevala, and you were like, really surprised?

(laughs)

**(laughs) I don't actually remember, but I can believe that I was surprised!**

(laughs)

**Have you now read the whole book?**

Uh, most of it.

**Cool!**

Yeah, I think it's easier for me because, um, some of the English translations are really difficult to read, like the Finnish one is for you, but there are also more modern English translations. So it's a lot easier to read it.

**Mm.**

Yeah. So maybe you should try reading it in English! (laughs)

**(laughs) Yeah.**

Um, okay, this is the last question. Do you know of any books, movies, music, works of art, anything like that, that reference the Kalevala?

**I think yes, but I don't have anything certain right now. But I think it has been affected, at least to Finnish literature. But I don't have any clue about anything else.**

Um, you mentioned some children's books – were there any other ones that you know of, besides the blue one?

**Yeah, there, ah, there's Koirinen Kalevala, and it's a children's book, and it's by a famous children's author in Finland, uh, well he has a lot of versions of classic stories, and they are like dog versions.**

Yeah. Mhm. Um, I was able to get a copy of that book in English.

**Oh! Oh, really?**

Yeah! Yeah, it's really fun. I like it a lot. Uh, have you read it?

**Uh...I guess I have been, I have seen it, and maybe I have read some parts of it. Usually people in Finland have read it. It's a very popular children's book. But I'm not sure.**

Mhm. Okay! Well, that's it!

**Okay.**

Thank you so much for doing this. It's been really, really helpful.

**No problem. Glad to help.**

Well, enjoy the rest of your time in Hong Kong.

**Thank you.**

I have some debriefing information that I'll send to you on Facebook. It basically just says that if you'd like a copy of the research whenever I'm finished, I can send it to you.

**All right, all right. It would be nice.**

Okay, great. Well....

**Ah, have fun there. Say hi to Graham.**

Okay, yeah. He's playing videogames right now. (laughs)

**It was nice to see you.**

It was nice to see you, too!

**All right. Bye!**

Bye!