

## Väinämöinen and Aino

- Epic and Literature
- Who is Väinämöinen?
- Who is Aino?
- Aino cycle as literature within an epic
- Explanations of Aino cycle



From Gallen Kallela's Aino-Triptyche

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## Epic

- Epic's status comes from classicist aesthetics
- What is classicism (neoclassicism of 17th-18th centuries)?
- Aesthetics
  - Belief that Greeks and Romans had established conventions of aesthetic perfection
  - Artist a craftsman who imitates established models, or literary genres
    - Tragedy
    - Comedy
    - Satire (as corrective to social excess)
  - Harmony, proportion, decorum, restraint
- History
  - Renaissance
  - Patronage system
  - Enlightenment values of universalism and reason
  - French and English neoclassicists: Dr. Johnson, Voltaire
  - War of the ancients and moderns



R.W. Ekman, Väinämöinen playing, 1858



J.L. David, Oath of the Horatii (1784)

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## C.D. Friedrich, *Wanderer Above a Sea of Fog* (1818)



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## Literature



Iconic image of Finnish nature



Halonen, Winter Landscape, 1903

- Romanticism of early late 1700s-1800s
  - Increasing interest in nature and primitive life
  - Changing nature correlates to changing human sentiments
  - Imagination, spontaneity, expression
  - Subjectivity over universalism
  - Expression over form
- Famous figures
  - Rousseau in France
  - Schlegel brothers in Germany
  - Herder in Germany and Baltic
  - J.L. Runeberg in Finland
- Literature's transformed meaning
  - From conformity to a model
  - To expression of sentiment and idea
- Aino cycle displays *Kalevala*'s most lyrical side
  - Expression of feeling
  - Romantic sensibility
  - Character models versus development of characters

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## Who is Väinämöinen?

- Väinämöinen as literary figure
  - Age
  - Romantic desire
  - Human rather than deity
- Search for dead Aino
  - Desperation
  - Material practice
    - Fishing
    - In contrast to mythological practice
- Formal means of presenting Väinämöinen
  - Dialogue with Aino
  - Symbols
    - Cuckoo (5:31)
    - Water (5)
      - Source of life
      - Intractable nature
  - Melancholia
    - Lost object
    - Reflection of emotions

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## Who is Aino?

- Aino as Literary Figure
  - Lyricism
  - Expression
- Joukahainen's sister
  - Modest and quiet younger sister in contrast to brash and aggressive older brother
    - Ignored
    - Victimized
  - Gender inequity
    - Family's wishes (3: 21)
    - Väinämöinen's wishes (3:20)
    - Aino's wishes (3:21)
- Marriage as institution
  - Social union (Model for conformity)
  - Economic union (Model for conformity)
  - Romantic union (Emotion)
- Formal means of presenting lyricism
  - Dialogue with mother (4:23-24)
  - Interior monologue (4:24)
  - Repetition (4:27-28)
  - Parallelism—whisks (4: 22, 27)

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## Aino Cycle as Literature



Gallen-Kallela's Aino triptych

- Inclusion in 1849 *Kalevala*, but not in 1835 *Kalevala*
- Divergent characterization of Väinämöinen
  - Powerful Väinämöinen
    - Väinämöinen as deity
    - Cultural Hero
    - Shaman
  - Lyrical Väinämöinen
    - Väinämöinen as human
    - Melancholic
    - Weeping

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## Conclusion

- *Kalevala* as blend of classicist and romantic
  - From 1835 *Kalevala* to 1849 *Kalevala*
  - Aino cycle as evidence of shift
- Complex characters
  - Divergent character paradigms
  - Development of characters through lyricism
- Multilayered *Kalevala*

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