

**Scand 340: *Kalevala***  
**Keywords -- 10/26/10**

**Tragedy:** A story or tale based on the downfall of an individual or community. Generally based on a single character's decisions, many other forces can be involved and work toward general chaos. This character, the tragic hero, generally possesses a character trait, which may or may not be apparent to others, and which causes him to bring about his own misery or demise. Thus, tragedies generally a nuance of inevitability. The stories of Hamlet and Kullervo are tragic; in Kullervo's case, his destiny as a slave--cursed to revenge, and ignorant of his family--puts him in positions to dishonor his family and take his own life.

**Sacrifice:** Sacrifice is a function of society whereby violence arising from conflicts between individuals is symbolically enacted. It can in this way end a blood feud, or in other cases, perpetuate a positive cycle of peace. Sacrifice functions through reciprocity, whereby one individual or thing is ritually substituted for another. Examples of this in the Kullervo story are numerous, including the cycles of revenge ending with Kullervo's taking of his own life.