Discussion Questions 10/19/10: Shamanism

Poem 16

1. Why does Väinämöinen go to Death’s Domain (Tuonela)?
2. What happens during his encounter with Death’s mistress (Tuonen tytti)?
3. What’s Väinämöinen’s message upon return from Death’s domain?
4. What do you make of this episode? What other myths does it bring to mind? What does it tell us about Väinämöinen?

Poem 17

5. Whom or what do Antero Vipunen’s charms address?
6. What is the tone of the charms?
7. What’s the structure of the charms? What elements do they tend to include?
8. What sorts of outcomes do Vipunen’s charms concern? That is, what do the charms try to do?
9. How would you define a charm, based on poem 17?

Poems 40-41, 44-45

1. Poem 40-41 occur during the journey to reclaim the Sampo. What happens in these two poems?
2. What kinds of action, events, or feelings do the poems focus on?
3. Choose one of the poems and divide it into parts, based on what you think are the most relevant categories (say action, emotion, dialogue).
4. What would you argue is the purpose of including these poems as part of the Sampo expedition?