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FINNISH INTOXICATION ON THE SCREEN

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Finnish Intoxication on the Screen

Summary

The Social Research Institute of Alcohol Studies and the Finnish Film Institute arranged a joint research seminar entitled 'Finnish Intoxication on the Screen' which was held in Helsinki on 2. - 4.1.1980.

The material used at the seminar was made up of excerpts from eleven Finnish feature films which dealt with the use of alcohol; the films dated from 1923-1972. The seminar split up into work groups where the participants analyzed the films, aiming at a description of the cultural characteristics of the way in which Finnish people behave when drunk.

Some 21 people from the fields of alcohol research, the cinema and cultural anthropology were invited to attend. Two specialists were also invited from abroad: Dr Andrew Tudor (Univ. of York) and Mr Michael Lewington (Alcohol Education Centre, London).

This report of the seminar consists of three separate items. Juha Partanen's (Social Research Institute of Alcohol Studies) account of the objectives of the seminar, the selection of the film material and the way in which the seminar was organized is the first. The second item is Peter von Bagh's (Finnish Film Archive) review of the seminar's film material. And the third article by Pasi Falk and Pekka Sulkunen (Finnish Foundation for Alcohol Studies) consists of a semiological discourse on the intoxication of the Finnish man. The final article may be thought of as a theoretical summary of the ideas which surfaced during the course of the seminar.

The report is appended by a list of participants and filmography.

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Pasi Falk and Pekka Sulkunen

INTOXICATION ON THE SCREEN - The Finnish Man's Mythical Fantasia

### 1. Introduction

This paper is based on the 'Finnish Intoxication on the Screen' seminar, arranged by Juha Partanen, which was held at Alko's Training Centre at Vuoranta on 3.-5.1.1980. The seminar data, both the films themselves and the discussions which they gave rise to, furnish an excellent opportunity to delve into a branch of alcohol research which is currently attracting widespread attention: the social meanings of drinking.

Alcohol's social meanings have tended to be studied from three points of view of late.

(1) It is of central importance when one studies the great fluctuations which alcohol consumption figures show (Sulkunen 1980).

(2) The opposing point of view: alcohol use can be studied as one aspect, sometimes crucial, of the reproduction of everyday life. The focal point is not alcohol use as such; what is important is the entirety of the way of life which drinking reflects (Falk 1979, 1980).

(3) The Finnish school of alcohol research has a comparatively long history of studying the public's attitudes towards alcohol from a normative-theoretical perspective (Allardt 1957 and Bruun 1959). These studies can be transcribed into the vocabulary of social meanings. Klaus Mäkelä's study of changes in attitudes towards alcohol policy is a continuation of the Finnish approach (Mäkelä 1976).

The films which were viewed at the seminar would enable one to study the social meanings of alcohol use from each of the three above perspectives. However, we shall concentrate here on the second of the approaches and consider drinking as an aspect of the reproduction of everyday life. A most expressive aspect, in our opinion.

### Instrumental and mythical meanings

We consider it important to employ Sulkunen's classification which distinguishes between mythical and instrumental meanings (cf. Sulkunen 1980). The distinction will help us to analyze one of the central characteristics of the seminar's film material.

Whenever commodities have been studied as sign system, they have usually been regarded as a direct adjunct of the various social meanings of everyday life. Barthes, for example, has analyzed goods as artificial use values and as representative symbols of the values of society (Barthes 1970, 73-79, 133-155). Steak and chips represent Frenchness (to the French), gourmet dishes, wealth (to the hard up), interior decoration and clothes, roles, and so on. And what these social meanings have in common is that they hold a metonymical relationship to the social meanings of everyday life. They form components of those syntagmata which are used to express everyday social relationships.

Let us take an example of alcohol use to show what we mean. If I offer my guests ouzo I can thereby tell them a great deal about myself. - I have been abroad and brought this bottle back with me. This means that I am the kind of person who travels abroad, my palate is very experienced, I do not use alcohol for the sole purpose of becoming drunk, and so on. It is significant that these same matters can be expressed in words. Indeed, this often happens. The language of the object and our general everyday language are both built on the same set of paradigms of signification, and can thus become confused in speech. We shall refer to such meanings in the language of commodities as instrumental.

The language of commodities is not always a direct continuation of common, everyday language. Young people's fashions, for instance, and the iconic references to youth cult figures which one finds there, should not be exclusively construed as simple direct continuations of everyday speech which are tied up with the social relationships of everyday life. Their relationship to everyday language is metaphorical rather than metonymical. In the same way, the fact that the Finnish people often fight when they drink demonstrates that alcohol use has a social meaning which cannot be interpreted by regarding it as an adjunct of everyday speech. Social meaning

of this kind can be thought of as part of an 'alternative reality' (Sulkunen 1980) or as part of an 'alternative semiological system' (Barthes 1970, 211). We shall refer to it as mythical.

### Method

By and large, our film material tended to portray the social meaning of drinking from a mythical standpoint in the sense of our above definition. (There were a few exceptions; we shall return to them shortly.) This means that the main task of this study is one of interpreting this mythical meaning. We shall rely on the method developed by Lévi-Strauss for interpreting myths.

Myths form a language of their own. Lévi-Strauss holds that they are made up of the same kind of constituent units as natural languages are. He refers to these basic elements of myths as mythemes. The meanings of myths can be brought to light by reorganizing their mythemes and conducting analyses.

Viewed from the point of view of the present study, Lévi-Strauss's analysis of myths has three important principles. The first of these is that the order or arrangement of mythemes should not be thought of as fixed. Several mythemes, all of which have the same value, may occur in one and the same myth (as in the Oedipus myth, for example). When interpreting a myth, mythemes which have the same value should be examined alongside one another. In practice, this is done by drawing mythemes up into columns and grouping those which have the same content with each other. The columns are then read as if they were an orchestral score.

The second principle is that 'a myth contains all versions of itself'. There are no 'authentic' or original versions. A given myth should be thought of as containing all old and new versions of itself. This implies that the question of how representative one's data is is not very important. Once one has analyzed a given myth correctly on the basis of the versions available at the time, new versions which later come to light cannot have a marked effect on one's interpretation. Consequently, we do not attach much importance to the fact that our film material, as well as having gone through the critical hands of those who made the films and

the film industry, was also selected by Juha Partanen and the Finnish Film Archive. Naturally, our interpretation could perhaps be modified if we studied new material and this should be borne in mind.

Lévi-Strauss's third principle is that no universal mytheme meanings exist - in the same way as there are no universally true phoneme meanings. For example, the flying motif which frequently cropped up in the films cannot be interpreted in a simple, direct manner. It should be viewed in context, and its context is made up of other mytheme categories.

In effect, these principles imply that the representativeness of our data is of slight real importance. And neither should the fact that our data is made up of stereotypes expressed in the way the films' makers considered most appropriate, not of actual drinking occasions, bother us all that much. The truth of the matter is that these principles of myth research can be applied for the very reason that the subject of our analysis is the stereotyped mythology of drinking, and not, for example, the 'real' consequences of intoxication.

The aims of Lévi-Strauss's myth research are philosophico-anthropological. He sees its task as being one of discovering and demonstrating the general structural properties and the laws of the human mind, or more properly of human thought (Leach 1970, 52). As we see things, however, the main reason why the myth structure of modern man is interesting is that, were we to lay it bare, we could then analyze and interpret its actual historical foundations. The mythology of drinking might help to elucidate some aspects of the use of alcohol by demonstrating that the mythical meaning of drinking is part of a more general myth structure. Again, it might help us to delimit alcohol's relationship to the reproduction of everyday life, and could also help us to pinpoint some of the structural factors of everyday life.

Before we go on to take a close look at the data, we should underline one point common to all of the film material. Each of the films presented matters from a very strongly masculine point of view. In every film, every person who played a central role in its making was a man. More importantly, the main characters were men and the drinking scenes portray drunken men. With this

in mind, we should perhaps define our subject a little more closely: we are primarily concerned with the mythology of the drinking of Finnish men.

The method which we employed was a technically simple one. When the seminar was over, we took another look at the film material and made detailed notes on what we saw. We then arranged our notes into 'mythemes', trying to capture as much detail as possible (some of our notes were on the actors' lines rather than on the film's action). Following this, we wrote our notes down on cards which we then classified and grouped until we found a structure which was sufficiently simple, consistent and comprehensive of the film material as a whole. A large number of cards were involved and we therefore selected the 'best' or the most expressive ones from each mytheme category for the purposes of this paper. We also tried to select those which could most easily be made clear without having to resort to entire excerpts or recounting whole films.

## 2. Non-mythical (Instrumental) Drinking

Our film material portrayed comparatively little of the instrumental meaning of drinking.

The excerpt from the film 'Portraits of Women' (Naisenkuvia, 1970) pictured instrumentality the most clearly. The main characters are shown having a crayfish party and drink heavily but, apart from faltering in their speech somewhat and becoming slightly shabby, do not become particularly drunk. Alcohol tends to emphasize rather than alter their personal characteristics, roles and attitudes, the personalities which they have outside their circle of drinking friends. (For example, the porn merchant purports to show the sexual organs of a crayfish to a woman sitting with him.) The men and women sit at the same table for a long period of time, which was very unusual for our film material (cf. the following section). And even when the women all go off to the kitchen to talk to one another, their move is really a build up for the next 'mixed' scene (the women describe their men to one another).

The excerpt shows the non-mythical use of alcohol as



instrumental in the literary sense of the word: drinking serves as an introduction to the following scene (the swapping of women) and as a ceremonial means of expression for defining situations and roles. (Saara turns Pertti down when he tries his luck by offering her a glass of whisky: "I only drink the fruit of the vine.")

The second non-instrumental drinking scene is shown parallel to a mythical drinking scene, and explicitly so. 'The Unknown Soldier' (Tuntematon Sotilas, 1955) pictures how the officers celebrate Field Marshal Mannerheim's birthday and, alongside, shows the rank and file doing the same. The officers emphasize their role as officers by singing 'Die Fahne Hoch', making speeches ('We are the backbone of the army'), and by talking about patriotic matters. When Kariluoto, quite definitely drunk, starts to become maudlin, the others shut him up by singing in German. And when Koskela turns up at the officers' dugout and tries to pick a fight he is quickly overcome, tied up and carried away.

The rank and file, on the other hand, behave in a markedly mythical fashion - and begin to fly. We shall return to this topic a little later.

'The Unknown Soldier' very interestingly makes a deliberate 'class distinction' between mythical and non-mythical intoxication. The main characters in 'Portraits of Women' quite clearly belong to the upper middle class as well.

'Partisans' (Sissit, 1963) could also be said to portray instrumental drinking. Alcohol is depicted creating the framework of the reunion of comrades in arms. The scene, however, is portrayed in so externalized a manner that it does not give a good impression of the nature of the drunkenness itself.

### 3. The Mythical Structure of Drinking

We found that our material contained a great many mythical elements; the work of arranging and differentiating between them was not unproblematic.

After experiment, we were able to rearrange and combine the mythemes so as to obtain a triangle. The centre of the triangle

we designated intoxication; its corners were the various aspects of the mythology of drinking. We labelled these aspects as follows: (1) The tense polarity between alcohol and women; (2) The empty solidarity of drunken men; and (3) The cosmic loneliness of the drunken man.

It would be interesting to see how far modern myth research techniques could be applied to our material: the Greimas (1979) actant model, for instance. The present study, however, is of a preliminary nature; its simple and unrefined classification will be quite sufficient for our purposes.

### The Tense Polarity Between Alcohol and Women

The mythical theme which the films we watched dealt with the most often and the most comprehensively was perhaps the polarity of alcohol and women. The topic was manifested in three ways: the compensatory relationship between alcohol and women, the mutual exclusiveness of alcohol and women, and the exteriority of women in relation to the intoxication of men.

(a) The film which gave the most varied, richest account of the compensatory nature of alcohol and women was 'The Village Shoe Makers' (Nummisuutarit, 1923). Esko proposes, is turned down, and his friend then gets him drunk. One might interpret this as an initiation ceremony or rite where Esko comes into manhood - if not through woman, then through drink. In fact, one of the reasons why Esko is refused is because he is not a man yet.

'The Steward of Siltala' (Siltalan Pehtoori, 1934) brings the compensation stereotype up explicitly. The film shows Lieutenant Mandelscrona, a gross caricature of an aristocrat who speaks Finnish with a foreign accent, drinking to forget his disappointment and restore his self-esteem after he has been turned down. Similarly, it is only when the girls say "no", even though they had been full and equal members of the drinking circle at the beginning, that 'The Nights of Jesters' (Narrien Illat, 1970) allows the drunken carousal to reach its peak. Disappointment is shown by a defiant emptying of bottles. Actually, drinking

is what seems to be most important - the women would just be the icing on the cake.

'Two Hen Pecked Husbands' (Kaksi Vihtoria, 1939) is another film which shows the conviviality of carousing and contrasts it against poor marital relations.

The cliché 'my wife doesn't understand me' is shown more plainly still in 'A Man From This Star' (Mies Täitä Tähdeltä, 1958). The main character, an alcoholic who is depicted as having a weak nature, repeats it again and again.

The compensatory nature of alcohol and women is a motif which is frequently repeated. It generally appears as a rather pathetic relationship, disappointment/drink. Though, on the other hand, women and alcohol might be equated: both belong to 'another reality'. Both are difficult to win and just demonstrating that one has mastery of either one of them is proof of power. The plenitude theme which is often linked to this aspect will be returned to later on in this paper. Still, women and alcohol are alternatives and closer analysis reveals that drink is actually the better of the two. As well as pleasure, alcohol implies freedom, whereas woman entails a risk of losing one's freedom and of subjugation.

(b) The mutual exclusiveness of alcohol and women. Another string theme is the fact that women are usually barred from the drinking circle. (This is not really surprising. One only has to remember that it was extremely uncommon for women to drink before the late 1960's in Finland - not only in films, but in reality as well. Most of the excerpts which we watched date from before consumption began to soar.) If a woman does happen to be part of the drinking circle, she is regarded as a tart. The girls in 'The Night of Jesters' are swapped around intermittently for as long as they are still part of the drinking circle. Before actual mythical drunkenness is reached, however, the girls are all driven away for having tried to free themselves from their tart's role by taking the sexual initiative into their own hands.

This same is symbolically enacted in 'The Village Shoe Makers'. Esko 'kills' Antres the tailor by knocking him to the ground after having first reduced him to taking up a woman's role. Before Esko becomes violent, however, he demands that the tailor pull

his hair three times: the very same humiliating punishment which Esko's mother is wont to use on Topias, Esko's father, and Esko himself.

(c) The exteriority of women in relationship to the intoxication of men. Whilst the drinking circle is sacrosanct to women, there are still two senses in which women do enter its confines. First, women control the drinking. Martta pulls Topias's hair when he and Sepeteus drink the booze for Esko's wedding ('The Village Shoe Makers'). Waitresses are both the bringers of drink and kill-joys ('Kill-joys will be shot - except for waitresses'; 'The Partisans'). Waitresses are at least able to threaten to serve one no more ('A Man From This Star').

Secondly, drunken women often play a role as objects of sexual desire. What is striking, however, is the way in which women only appear in drunken scenes as imagined and anonymous objects of pleasure. It is often supposed that 'an evening out on the beer with the boys' will entail an amorous adventure or two, but not one single woman was present in reality in any of the excerpts which we classified as mythical. Women are given flirtatious glances in 'The Sheep Eaters' (Lampaansyöjät, 1972) and friendly innuendo abounds, but men still even forget the name of a woman they know well ('A Man From This Star'). This fictive anonymity of woman is depicted most clearly in 'The Sheep Eaters' when Sepe and Valtteri discuss pollination. They try to work out what would happen if human beings were fertilized like plants by the spread of pollen. This leads on to more jokes: they envisage the loss of paternal rights and decide that the sexual act would become a collective affair. They finish by "awarding the Lord above full points for not having done things like that".

One might divide the women present in drinking scenes into two categories: agents of control, present in reality, and fictively present sexual objects. Agents of control represent the normality of everyday life, respectability and discipline. Their presence epitomized the contrast between drunkenness and the societal bonds and borders of everyday life. The women who are (fictively) present as sexual objects have been thoroughly filtered: the human and social qualities which would prevent them from joining a drinking circle have been ignored and dismissed altogether.

All that remains is a thin chimera of unattainable pleasure.

The Empty Solidarity of Drunken Men

It was perhaps the mythemes which depicted the mutual relationships of men inside the drinking circle which surprised us the most. One tends to assume that drinking companions talk about their secrets, about enmity and friendship alike. Revellers are meant to strike up friendships, become allies and make confidences. But our material gives no support to this view. The relevant mythemes can be divided into four categories: familiar speech; alcohol as a solidarity rite; indifference; and vapid sociality.

(a) Familiar speech. One of the fundamental definitions of mythical intoxication, the manner in which the social meanings of intersocial volition are transposed to another plane of reality, is readily observable in the mutual relationships of drinking companions. The drinking circle takes no heed of the social labels which obtain in everyday life. Formal modes of address and titles are dispensed with; drinkers use their names only. This happens explicitly in 'The Steward of Siltala', the Lieutenant and the farm hand begin using the informal second person ('thee' instead of 'thou') and hug each other. Topias and Sepeteus the tailor drink in a very brotherly, egalitarian fashion in 'The Village Shoe Makers' and dodge the matriarchal sceptre together.

'A Man From This Star' gives expression to this theme in a complex way. The men are well aware all the time of what they each do for a living but, quite clearly, the drinking circle takes no account of the social standing of its members. Instead of playing the role of the circle's muse, the poet who falls asleep at the table is the circle's mascot more than anything else. Similarly, no heed is taken of observations on professions and professional pride (the journalist). Social standing is invariably emphasized, however, in the group's relationships with the outside, everyday world. (When the circle's host answers a telephoned complaint about the racket the carousal is making, he answers the phone with "Captain Lampinen speaking"; 'A Man From This Star').

Some roles do develop within the drinking circle, it is true, but role differentiation is based on drinking acts and rituals only. Heroism and charisma are demonstrated by heroic revelry, for instance. In 'The Nights of Jesters', the band-leader bets that he can down a bottle of vodka in two swallows, and wins. And in 'A Man From This Star', Captain Lampinen's leadership stems from his being able to provide the drinking circle with a base and the protection which he affords it. Sepeteus really only uses his authority to drive the interfering outsider (Martta) away, too ('The Village Shoe Makers').

(b) Alcohol as a solidarity rite. The solidarity of the drinking circle is also directed solely towards its members. Simple and almost unnoticed drinking rites are used to demonstrate this integration. People drink from the same bottle ('The Nights of Jesters'), or from the same glass ('Two Hen Pecked Husbands'), the one who proffers the drink taking first turn; everyone clubs together to pay the bill ('A Man From This Star'); or people whose glasses are alike bringing them together in friendship ('The Sheep Eaters'). The strength of the solidarity which the rite engenders is shown in the scenes where the drinkers defend themselves against outsiders. Defence always implies ensuring that the drinking can continue (cf. the previous section).

Besides being needed to protect the circle from outside threats, solidarity is also necessary to combat internalized, normative control, that is, guilt. Mikko Vilkastus threatens to leave Esko on his own if Esko does not take a drink ('The Village Shoe Makers'). And in 'Blue Week' (Sininen Viikko, 1954) Esko Siltanen tries to win the confidence and forgiveness of the man he has betrayed by first offering him a drink (and by then revealing the deed itself).

(c) Indifference. Another very surprising finding was the fact that the solidarity of the drinking circle extends no further than the bonhomie of drinking. Neither, apart from ritualized conversations and the almost unnoticeable drinking rites which we mentioned above, does any real communication take place.

'A Man From This Star' is a case in point. The drinking circle displays no interest when its members try to recount events or work out their problems. 'The Sheep Eaters' has relatively

lengthy scenes, but even there the few comments on world events are confined to clichés. The scene which bears the closest approximation to conversation is the pollination episode which we mentioned earlier. And neither - with the exception of the drinking wager scene, though even there speech is mainly limited to a few brief exclamations - is there any exchange of information or views in 'The Nights of Jesters'.

(d) Vapid sociality. The films tended to give much the same picture of the way in which friendships were made. First, and invariably, only two characters are ever concerned, never the whole drinking circle. 'A Man From This Star', for example, shows people opening up in the enclosed, private sphere of a restaurant, or beginning to talk to each other in the loo. Things always happen away from the crowd. Secondly, the sociality is superficial: it never implies revealing real problems or telling secrets. The talk of dreams and ambitions is a cliché-riddled, objectifying process; the two parties never talk about their inner, real selves. They either talk of the past or else generalize about the philosophy of life. The partisans talk about their war memories ('The Partisans'), the alcoholic main character and Captain Lampinen stand in the loo, grieving for their wives and philosophizing about the meaning of life and death ('A Man From This Star').

A drinking circle composed of men is a very strange community. It emphasizes the non-everydayness of drinking, the transfer to an alternative plane of reality, by stressing isolation and rebutting the roles and norms of the outside world. It looks upon outsiders as a threat to continued drinking. And yet the only species of solidarity which one finds within the drinking circle is the bonhomie of carousal itself. Even this is vapid; nobody really opens up in the circle and no real communication takes place there. In the final resort, the drinking circle leaves each man and his joys and his sorrows to himself. The circle admits to one sole responsibility: ensuring that its members can drink in peace, and sharing their feelings of guilt.

The Cosmic Loneliness of the Drunken Man

As well as the social relationships mentioned above - or, to be more precise, in addition to the lack of social relationships - the mythology of drinking has a third aspect. It may be that this third aspect is vaguer and more difficult to interpret than its brothers, but it may also be that it is the most central mythological element.

The reason why we refer to it as 'cosmic' is the way in which the films tended to give an unconscious but often interesting picture of the origin of man, of his position in the universe, and actualize the polarity of life and death. Our material had two main aspects: the polarity of life and death and the discovery of nature.

(a) Life and death. A great many excerpts depicted intoxication through the metaphor of flying - a state to which falling or, as in the case of Esko in 'The Village Shoe Makers', death, is inextricably tied. Esko says that he is dying when he 'takes off' and cries that the heavens and the world are turning somersaults. In 'The Unknown Soldier', the rank and file pretend to engage in aerial combat; in 'The Nights of Jesters', the hero stands up on a chair to make good his word and then, having emptied the bottle, even climbs a tree and blacks out there. If we assume that song and dance is the symbolic counterpart of flight, the flying motif appears in several other excerpts, too. At the very least, song and dance may be rightly equated to flying when both give expression to the same surging feeling of power. This is the case in 'Two Hen Pecked Husbands', where the two brow-beaten men begin to sing 'The Merry Widow' and dance together after they have had a few drinks. The flying motif is an expression of euphoric power, but the fear of falling is always inescapably present. In other words, flying manifests the joy of life via the presence of death - and perhaps the defiance of death as well.

(b) Nature. The life and death theme appeared in virtually identical form in all of the excerpts which we viewed, whereas the nature motif was manifested in a number of ways. We shall divide them into two classifications. First, drinking often takes place in countrified, natural surroundings (woods, islets,



gardens, and so on). This is true of 'The Village Shoe Makers', 'The Steward of Siltala', 'The Nights of Jesters', 'The Sheep Eaters', and 'The Unknown Soldier', for instance. There is a close link with the theme of the natural origins of alcohol: 'Eight Bullets of Death' gives a detailed picture of moonshine being distilled and 'The Unknown Soldier' shows a distillery at work "in the bosom of the earth". And secondly, nature is manifested through the polarity of regression and aggression: identifying with nature and feeling humility towards it is contrasted to the subjugation of nature. In 'The Sheep Eaters', Sepe drinks out in the rain and says that one must suffer in order to feel happiness; Sepe and Valtteri shoot sheep (half "wild" farm animals) and not, for example, cattle or poultry. In 'The Village Shoe Makers', Esko "runs his head into a pine" and bodily uproots a fir tree. The Lieutenant in 'The Steward of Siltala' claims to be a lion - a part of nature and the king of the animals.

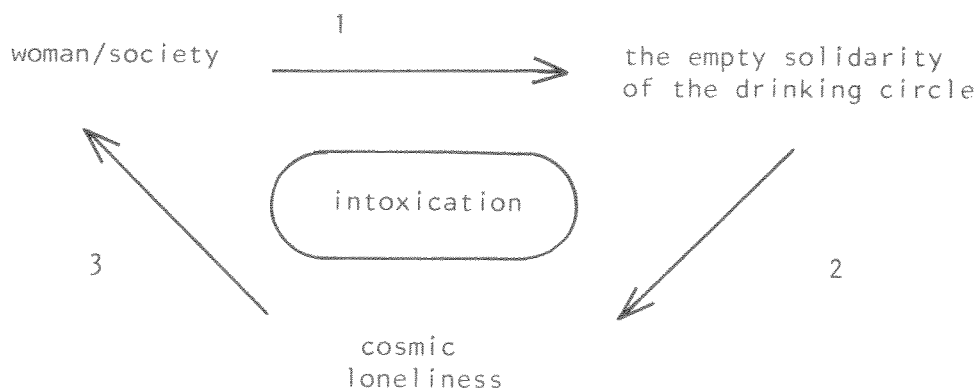
Another theme which is closely connected with bowing down in front of nature is overflowing plenty. The films often emphasized the abundance of alcohol which the characters had - although there was unremitting concern whether it would run out, too.

Man's relationship to nature thus seems to be seeped in contradiction. The theme appears in the guise of co-existing opposites. Man is part of nature - born of it (life) and bound to return to it (death). Furthermore, nature is, at one and the same time, both an enemy which has to be defeated (by using it to make alcohol or by defying it) and a threatening, frightening and restrictive force.

### The Internal Structure of the Mythical Triangle

We have attempted to draw up an overall picture of the seminar's film material by allotting the mythemes into three classes. The classifications which we used were: the polarity between women and alcohol, the empty solidarity of drunken men, and the cosmic loneliness of the drunken man. The relationships which these elements bear to each other are as follows. When a man is drunk, he (1) leaves his woman to his own devices, (2) relies on the

collective power of the drinking circle to rebut outside interferences and internal guilt, and (3) in this way finally reaches the cosmic loneliness stage. Cosmic loneliness might be thought of as the everyday societal experience of the drinker, transcribed into the language of the mythology of drinking. The following triangle represents the structure of the mythology of masculine drinking:



Finland's Tapsa Rautavaara exemplifies this myth. His hobo philosophy - the hero leaves home with tears in his eyes but goes off into the wide world with hope in his heart - is its personification.

Some historical background will help us to understand the above mythical triangle. In our opinion, the key lies in the way in which the excerpts depicted the attitudes of women towards the intoxication of men. The same key will also provide a justification for the manner in which we equated women and society in the triangle above.

We have already mentioned that woman has a dual relationship towards masculine drunkenness; the relationship's two aspects are mutually complementary. Woman appears as mother/wife and as a sexual object. Intoxication tends to divorce these two roles from each other. They 'moult', as it were, they become reduced and turn into a tragic duality. The drinking man regards the mother/wife woman solely as an agent of control, as a force which limits drinking. She represents respectability, normal everyday life - society, in short. And when woman plays the role of a sexual object, she has only a fictive part: she is anonymous, distant and unattainable essence of pleasure.

For those who look for a spirit of understanding between men and women, not to mention affection and tenderness, the films give a very disheartening picture.

These findings strike us as somewhat strange. After all, when woman appears in mythology, she usually has the role of a part of nature, of the one who gives birth and carries life, as the earth mother, and so on. But it is this selfsame feature which gives a clue to the historical interpretation of the mythology of drunkenness.

There is, however, a pure logical necessity for the polarity of woman and alcohol if one considers matters from the perspective of the structure of the mythology of drinking. The mythology manifests drinking as "outside society", as an act of escape from everyday life. Control/drinking, that is, society/intoxication are contrasted with each other. It is the collective solidarity of the drinking circle which makes escape possible. And yet, the solidarity of the drinking circle is empty and vapid; all that combines its members is the bottle itself and their shared masculinity. There is only one thing which can stand for society, and that is a non-man who does not have a bottle - in other words, a woman.

#### 4. An Attempt at Defining the Historicity of the Mythology of Drink

What are we actually doing when we disentangle this myth structure from the collective consciousness of Finnish society? Do we thereby display society's narcissist-like helplessness (Lasch), or attest to a crippled national character (Verkkö)? Is it a question of specifically masculine traumata? Or, as Lévi-Strauss would have it, is it perhaps a matter of characteristics of myth consciousness which are common to all human communities?

We would not care to unequivocally refute any of the above alternatives. But we believe that it would be more rewarding to at least consider one further possibility. Might not the films have depicted modes of consciousness which corresponded to a specific historical societal condition when they pictured the mythology of intoxication?

The Crisis of Patriarchy and Masculine Fantasies

The peculiar position which woman has in myth as the representative of societal relationships leads our attempt at defining historicity into a wide and complex field. We have to consider the manner in which societal relationships in general, and capitalism in particular, influence and are reflected in the relationships between the sexes. This topic is one of the corner-stones of family sociology and is currently receiving a great deal of attention in the literature on male and female roles.

Few are likely to disagree with the observation that capitalism has proved unable to do away with patriarchal norms, regardless of the forms which the historical development of capitalism has brought about. The question of the degree to which patriarchal norms correspond to the reality of, in particular, the modern wage worker has aroused some interesting debate. Kiselberg (1979) distinguishes two historical "masculine identities": "the traditional masculine role" and "manliness" (mandighed). Kiselberg holds that the traditional masculine role typified the patriarchal bourgeois family of early capitalism. The head of the family was strong natured, rational and dominant. It was he who bore financial responsibility and he ruled over the women of the family. Patriarchy was realistic in the traditional masculine role (cf. the old theories of familial sexual roles of Parsons). The "manliness" identity, on the other hand, is held by Kiselberg to be tied up with the development of monopoly capitalism which took place at the turn of the century. The foundations of this second identity are to be found in the growing extent of wage labour and the power of the monopolies. These turned the idea of the autonomous bourgeois subject, of the independent "entrepreneur", into a pipe dream. As well as affecting the sphere of work, the loss of power has a bearing on the family, too. The actual basis of the traditional masculine role encounters a crisis. Woman, matrimony and the family are no longer ruled over by the independent man, but instead become part of the social system - to which the head of the family is subordinate.

Societal evolution, however, does not do away with the dreams themselves, even though it does make the man's hopes of being

an autonomous bourgeois subject unattainable. Masculine identity is, in consequence, transposed to the ideological, imaginative and mystic plane. The characteristics of the traditional masculine role, strength of character and independence, still remain but they are transplanted to mythical beings (Tarzan, Superman and Wild West heroes). And this process gives rise to the masculine fantasy, which, in its turn, is bolstered by a new species of masculine community.

Theweleit's comprehensive study of "masculine fantasies" also equates the heroic masculine myth to the historical loss of masculine power. Theweleit's subject is the psychoanalysis of fascism, and he consequently concentrates on considering the nature of military communities. He analyzes the army as a masculine community which resurrects masculine power, rejects femininity and excludes women. Military communities and other bodies which imitate them tend to be markedly patriarchal, to uphold norms which aim at masculine power. The reason for this is not that patriarchy is actually dominant, it is the very fact that it is undergoing a crisis which provides the explanation. Theweleit criticizes U. Prokop's simplified conception of how patriarchy will dwindle away in contemporary society: "patriarchal modes of behaviour and fantasies will remain even after patriarchal relationships have disappeared ... perhaps in part for this very reason" (328).

Kiselberg's views have their weaknesses. In particular, the account which they give of the societal foundations of the "traditional masculine role" and actual patriarchy is far from clear and not easy to understand. This is especially true where the working class is concerned. Neither is it entirely satisfactory to define patriarchy and analyze its fall through the concept of power. And finally, Kiselberg's historical location of actual patriarchy inside the bourgeois family is also questionable. On the other hand, though, Kiselberg's and Theweleit's account of the crisis of patriarchy and the resultant masculine fantasies is very interesting. It also fits in with our analysis of the seminar's film material. We certainly found the drunken carousal of men to be a kind of masculine fantasy - a vision where the power of society and of its proxy, woman, waned and where men

experienced the cosmos and nature for their true selves.

A Case Study in the Crisis of Patriarchy: 'Eight Bullets of Death'

Mikko Niskanen's film, 'Eight Bullets of Death', represents an excellent attempt to give concrete expression to this masculine fantasy. The film might almost be viewed as a consistent, logical analysis of a societal state of affairs where the polarity between man and society becomes transformed into a polarity between man and woman.

'Eight Bullets of Death' is a long film, 5 h 16 min, based on true events. It depicts the life and circumstances of a small-holder from Pihtipudas in Central Finland. The whole composition of the film itself reflects the breaking down process which ends with a violent confrontation between the farmer and the police.

Niskanen, the film's director, shows great subtlety in displaying the connexion between alcohol, woman, and the process whereby Pasi the smallholder is finally destroyed. Pasi's life on the farm is one of unremitting toil: he clears woods, sows and ploughs. Pasi comes face to face with nature each day and Pasi is strong. But his toil gradually comes to avail him less and less. He has extremely little money and has to live straight from the land.

Pasi also makes moonshine. In the beginning, he runs his still as a hobby in his free time. But as the farm begins to fare worse and worse, the running of the still - and the drinking of its produce - turns into more than just a hobby. Before too long, his illicit still becomes the only activity which is worth while. And drinking encroaches on Pasi's farm chores to an ever increasing extent.

Niskanen is able to poignantly describe the way in which the smallholder's still bears a direct relationship to the way in which Pasi feels that the farm's failure is imminent. The director employs a host of small details to point out how the decay of the farm does not affect the wife in the same manner as the husband. Even though the farm may otherwise cease to be a farm, there will still be a fire in the hearth. Niskanen

displays equally great mastery when he portrays the way in which Pasi gradually loses his wife as moonshine becomes more and more dominant (the fictiveness of woman). In the end, the wife gives up trying to save Pasi - and the farm - and takes the police's side against Pasi (woman as an agent of control). There is, for instance, one scene where Pasi's wife lies to him and says that he had assaulted his children the night before and driven his wife and family out into the snow. The wife tends to emphasize Pasi's drunken violence and the consequent danger to the children; Pasi is actually, drunk or sober, an unfailingly affectionate father and displays a wise understanding of his children. The film's tragic climax has a rather undramatic beginning, as a matter of fact. But Pasi's wife still gets the neighbours to alert the police, and Pasi takes his gun and defends himself.

Niskanen's portrayal of the relationships between men, women and alcohol shows a great deal of similarity to the mythical triangle which we presented earlier. The original man-woman relationship, which was originally one of friendship, becomes more and more estranged. It finally resolves into a conflict between two opposing societal roles (the controller and the controlled); from the human point of view, the relationship is tragic.

Alcohol and intoxication - the masculine fantasy, the cosmic and primeval bond between the independent man and nature - are depicted through many symbolic vehicles. When Pasi goes to inspect his still, he usually slings his rifle over his shoulder and says that he is going to try his luck in the woods.

The part which the drinking circle of men plays in the plot is also interesting. The drinkers openly and exuberantly display their indifference to and defiance of the land owner's orders and the advent of the police. But Pasi stands alone at the end. His relationship to society resolves into the convergence of life and death. He kills.

We might, then, say that Niskanen's film represents a point in our mythical triangle, a historical process: the decay of the peasant mode of production and peasant culture. The film shows how a smallholder family's internal "relationships of production" gradually crumble away. The man's role is the first to go. The tasks for which he is responsible are the first to become redundant,

whereas those aspects of the peasant mode of production which are centred around the hearth continue and last. Pasi literally cuts the umbilical cord between him and the mode of production, divorcing himself from his family and the whole of society.

## 5. Summary and Discussion

Our analysis of the drinking scenes of eleven films revealed some interesting facets of the societal meaning of intoxication inside the Finnish core culture. It also indicated some ways in which the so-called Finnish drinking habits could be related to recent Finnish social history.

The excerpts seem to show the drinking of the Finnish man as a mythical expression of the decay of the peasant culture and of the growing extent of wage labour. The mythology reflected the antagonism which masculine self-consciousness held towards capitalism - the death warrant of the peasant culture - and the everyday life which it implied.

But to what extent can we regard this antagonism as the masculine fantasy's reaction to the dissolution of patriarchy (in Kiselberg's and Theweleit's sense)? Might one say that this mythology typifies the Finnish condition?

The fact that the decay of the peasant culture is the central element of the collective consciousness of Finnish society is not, in itself, surprising. During the period between the two world wars, the Finnish peasantry was at least as extensive as its counterparts elsewhere in Europe (Alapuro 1980); it was not until the upheaval of the 1960's that there was much change. If Kiselberg's assumptions of the patriarchal nature of pre-capitalist production relations can be applied to peasantry, then the mythology of intoxication could easily be historically explained as the mythical expression of the decay of patriarchy.

We now meet with two problems. First, one of our "texts", 'The Village Shoe Makers', locates itself in a period prior to the dissolution of the peasant culture; more precisely, it depicts the epoch when the peasant culture was just beginning to come into existence. Indeed, 'Seven Brothers', another classic of



19th century Finnish literature (both it and 'The Village Shoe Makers' were written by Aleksis Kivi) exemplifies the mythical triangle. Our second problem lies in the fact that it is not all clear whether the peasant culture was particularly patriarchal. Small holdings form exceptionally egalitarian communities; work is divided equally between all members of the family and the husband does not have much opportunity to dictate to his wife.

It might pay us to direct our attention towards the nuclear family's importance in peasant culture. Regardless of how patriarchal the small holding might actually be, a crisis of peasantry will also exacerbate peasant family life. And as we are talking of the nuclear family, a community which tends to be isolated because of the very nature of peasant conditions themselves, the final outcome may easily be the estrangement of the man. This same process has been observed to hold true for the exacerbated circumstances of nuclear families living in suburbia, too (Kortteinen, manuscript). And therefore, even though the dissolution of the peasant culture cannot be expressly construed as the breakdown of patriarchy, it nevertheless leads to a growing marginality in masculine standing.