European Journal of Language and Literature Studies
Volume 10, Issue 3, 2024 · ISSN 2411-9598 (Print) · ISSN 2411-4103 (Online)

Above – The Sky of Varkaus

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Submitted: 2024-08-28 · Accepted: 2024-11-28 · Published: 2024-12-28

DOI: 10.26417/abh0qx38

Abstract

Reflecting on the reality of language, this study investigates the meaning and nature of an era of 'embroidered culture' and cultural multiplicity. In language, this embroidery is manifested through English terms such as 'coloured', 'mottled', 'pied', 'diversity', and 'multiplicity', all of which correspond to the Finnish word 'kirjo'—used in describing a rainbow trout, a harbour seal, and the magical artefact in the national epic Kalevala—while 'broad-spectrum' medicines similarly carry a 'broad embroidery' in Finnish. The age of cultural multiplicity is inhabited by two existential figures, who can also represent different facets of the same individual: multi-face man and one-look man. To counteract multi-face man and achieve sufficient depth and dimensionality for examining things, one-look man is brought into the world as his inverse existential partner. Multi-face man is born from inwardness and existential interiority; containing elements beyond the reach and control of external will, his interiority makes him an existential mystery and the independent subject of his own life. Conversely, one-look man exists purely as an externality guided and led by an external will. Marked by rote-learned fashionableness and the predictable repetition of the once learned, one-look man lacks surprise and exists as a non-independent subject whose externality, devoid of self-illumination, reflects the will of an external interiority.

Keywords: value reality; lived time; observation; history of ideas and culture; literary education; time travel; metaphorical sky

Mission Statement

These applied explorations are tinted by a dialogue with professor Martti Rapola. At the same time, fictional and non-fictional elements complement or merge with each other. Perhaps they also represent slightly different elements of investigative reality. In both cases, however, the same world is examined.

In addition to the cultural dimension, time is also an important factor: lived time and the spirit of the time. The spirit of place and the realized idea of lived space also appear as an existential pair of temporality. For further clarification, perhaps a somewhat surprising work is also required: Rapola's 1959 novel *Vaarin Maisema* (Vaari's/Grandad's Landscape). Its subtitle is "An Elegiac Story". It is also the final part of the *Hämäläinen trilogia* (Häme Trilogy). Rapola ponders the subject philosophically and poetically: "Time then does exist. It grows year by year, layer upon previous layer. It's not long since he saw the fir tree time of his childhood. If he were a better naturalist, he would be able to look at the thickest growths and distinguish the boundaries between spring and autumn. After all, the annual rings could not have settled on each other jerkingly like the hands of large clocks, leaping a minute at a time. If we could look at time through a magnifying glass, we would experience the shocking sensation of how time rushes and rushes, the tree grows and grows. Somewhere, probably in a fairy tale, we are told how a boy pressed his ear to the ground and heard the grass growing." (Rapola, 1971, pp. 27–28.)

The time of applicable interpretations begins.

Into the Research Landscape

As the sky of Varkaus spreads above, can a human being hear the growth of time and being? Or is he capable of seeing time grow? At the moment when the hands of the great clocks of existence are aligned, the passing of time fleetingly ceases. Or so a human can at least imagine. Now let a photograph sharpen my investigation.

Photograph 1. The sky of industrial history.

What does multi-face man see? And what is one-look man's gaze like? The difference could be briefly stated like this: Multi-face man sees values other than utility in a

landscape. The gaze of one-look man perceives only what his partners want him to perceive, one thing at a time. Other things are marginal and irrelevant.

As the well-known saying goes, he who pays the piper calls the tune. One-look man also seems to be mainly fulfilled in the role of an acting and speaking self. In contrast, the main "activity" of multi-face man seems to be that of a thinking self.

One-look man always needs another person to be able to act. In the words of Professor Alfred Schutz, he is you-bound. He is therefore subject to the control of an external will: he can be indoctrinated and manipulated. The external will is thus able to anticipate without difficulty the future words and deeds of one-look man. In any case, one-look man has enough self-knowledge and knowledge of human nature to be able to carry out what is expected of him at a given time. Other people write the script of being for him. (See especially Schutz, 1982, p. 53; see also Itkonen, 1997; 2003, pp. 57–58; 2004a; 2004b, pp. 83–84; 2015; 2019; 2021a; 2021b; 2022; 2023a; 2023b.)

In photograph 1, the sky manifesting industrial history is also a mirror of the ages and modern times. In this view it feels as if the sky and water reflect each other. At the same time, it signifies a landscape of the beginning and the end. It could be argued that in this environment that combines rapids and an industrial setting lies the path to the essence of modern times. Essential to this, for example, is the notion of an element of temporal depth belonging to culture. There is good reason to give this aspect thorough consideration.

I, as a modern person, as well as my predecessors and my successors: presumably, each of us contains a bit of the multi-face and one-look individual. Depending on the situation, probably each of us also occasionally manifests ourself emphatically in the role of an acting, speaking, or thinking self. An illuminating example could be a summary of the possible ways a modern person might look at an essential Varkaus landscape in photograph 1. (See, for example, on the method of observing landscapes and journeys Aurén, 1954; Gulin, 1951; Karén, 1960; Levas, 1966; Talvitie, 1965.)

Actually, another shot is needed to examine Rapola's essence of culture with the required thoroughness. What are all the things that have already been cultivated or which are being cultivated as references to the styles of being in bygone times, the basic earth of life's field? What do the annual rings of being, the tree rings of existence, signify? (See also, for example, Rapola, 1965.)

Photograph 2. The sky of a church.

In photograph 1, the Varkaus sky stretches arch-like over Niskaselkä. In photograph 2, on the other hand, the Evangelical-Lutheran church presents itself under Varkaus's high celestial canopy. Both shots can be tied in with Rapola's idea of the

growth rings of being. Therefore, it can be somewhat obvious to deduce that time does indeed exist. Thus, many times are linked to photos 1 and 2.

When directing your gaze at shots 1 or 2, in your imagination, you can see time growing: New growth rings etching themselves into the circle of existence. And the old growth rings sinking deeper and deeper into antiquity. It is about the cycles of memory and forgetting, which are also associated with the hands of the large clocks mentioned in Rapola's novel. They could signify the existential hands of the timepiece of life.

In photograph 2, the hands of the church tower clock appear to be a few minutes short of seven o'clock. Is the moment in time morning or evening? And does this information have any significance? "Yes, it does," I make so bold as to answer without hesitation. I shall proceed to slightly refine my valiant claim.

Based on what has been presented earlier, it can be stated that for a profound interpretation, the gazes of both the multi-face and the one-look individual are needed. As the sky of Varkaus extends arch-like above, there are two ways in this research context to see the clock hands of life reflected in the celestial vault. Thus, it may happen, for example, that the gaze of the multi-face individual encounters only the industrial sky and that of the one-look individual only the ecclesiastical sky. Thus, there arises a divided, two-dimensional reality of perception. Each is governed by a slightly different time. However, both presents are equally true.

We can talk about qualitative and quantitative time. It is also possible to use the terms *chronos* and *kairos*. Chronos brings quantity to the moment, while kairos brings quality. (See also Itkonen, 1993.)

However, this is not enough to conduct a profound analysis. More depth and breadth is needed: spatial mobility. Therefore, clarifying the situation requires the presence of an interpretive cluster: the construction of a visual and verbal application framework. The foundation of the examination framework consists of two pairs of photographs. They are united by the idea of the sky stretching over everything. Diachrony signifies existence through time where thought and imagination traverse several contemporary times. Thus, an interpretation is created that signifies a combination of chronos-Varkaus and kairos-Varkaus.

The multi-face individual and the one-look individual are now features of the same subject. It is, therefore, a question of one observer. I, as the interpreter, appear in the role of that observer. In my existential structure, I shall use the following abbreviations: MFI = multi-face individual, OLI = one-look individual, S 1, S 2, etc. = Shot 1, Shot 2, etc.

It is worth looking at time through the magnifying glass mentioned by Rapola, through some kind of philosophical existential lens. The precise present moment

loses its significance. In reflections and interpretations, time is seen, even imagined, to grow. In this way, a layered timelessness is created amidst temporality.

In the Research Landscape

First of all, to support and deepen our study, we need to introduce another pair of images.

Photograph 3. The sky of green gold.

Photograph 4. The sky of productivity.

Now we have established the foundation for the cluster. What could be its amulet? In Rapola's novel *'Vaari'* (Grandfather), it was a nail. And for what or for whom should it bring happiness, and why? In these ponderings about application, a corresponding object could be a chimney. It might be more accurate to speak of a symbol instead of an amulet. A chimney contains multi-layered symbolism. It is an excellent starting point for a wide-ranging examination.

The nail and the tree stump acquire a powerful and metaphorical significance. Rapola's train of thought is compelling: "Vaari rolls the nail in his hand. He walks along the path across the meadow on the shore towards the lower gate of the field. The buzzing of the Riuttaniemi sawmill and the pounding of the axe strokes recede. It feels as if the nail is becoming a mascot, an amulet for Vaari. It has taught Vaari to see TIME. While fingering the nail deep in his pocket, he holds TIME in his hands. [– –]. Vaari seems to see a thick light ring between two darker ones in the centre of the aforementioned log: It's my childhood and the beginning of my youth. It is still here. In the log. But one day, it won't be anymore. [– –]. Vaari feels that he also knows TIME. It walks with him, hidden within him like the annual rings of a spruce. There is a huge difference between the surface and the heart of a tree. The outer ring is fresh;

resin flows in the spruce, sap in the birch. The rest ossify, solidify, petrify. But they exist. Time is squeezed into dozens of rings beneath the surface." (Rapola, 1971, pp. 27–28.)

S1 and S2: The sky of industrial history and the ecclesiastical sky

Introduction: What does uniqueness, singularity mean? Perhaps it could be thought to mean that no moment returns in the same way, and a person's experience does not recur in the same way as before. A law of uniqueness operates. So, what kind of sky is it possible to see, or what as?

MFI (thesis): "In all situations, aesthetic values are important or perhaps even the most important. They can also be observed in various towers or tower-like structures. So, even a chimney is a kind of metaphorical tower. I would call it a lookout, an observation tower. From there, you can see modern time and its *zeitgeist* growing. While embracing it, a person holds time in their hands or in their lap. At the same time, they can imagine noticing rings of existence that are different or vary in colour : private and collective memory rings. They are layers of bygone present times lying in strata beneath the present moment - personal and communal. In them are found the existential vintages of human life.

Flowing water and the sky of industrial history: in the composition of existence, the eloquence of the design language of nature and human architecture is evident. Stones are the annual rings of time independent of humans. In the two towers in the background, humans have captured water. The unbuilt and the built landscape, both belong to life. There they dwell, the childhood and youth of many people, in the rocks of a stream and the silhouette of an industrial landscape.

There are rings of existence even under the ecclesiastical sky. There they still exist, the circles of life's essence. Then at some point the time comes when they are no longer there. Or at least, a part of them is no longer there. The interpreters have departed. Nowadays, next to the church (in front of the location of shot two), there is a peaceful and dignified memorial grove. The clock on the tower still measures the hours of human life. Its hands show the time of functionalist existence.

My childhood is also in that tower and in the beautiful setting of the church rise. The nameplates in the memorial grove also tell my story. The number three is strongly associated with that narrative. Originally, in walking to the church, you went up three steps. Nowadays, the memorable stone steps have been removed. The demand for accessibility seems to have overridden the significance of tradition. Time changed, as did ideals.

In those steps lay the childhoods of several generations - including my own childhood. In the doors and chimneys, the time of different generations is still preserved. It is still present and tangible. That shared time still lives on, especially in memories. Even now, it also accompanies me. It is as if a clock is hidden within me,

and I feel its ticking (in my essence). It measures time: mine, my predecessors' and my successors'."

S 3 and S 4: The sky of green gold and the sky of productivity

Introduction: As characters, the multi-face individual and the one-look individual are actually opposites of each other. Therefore, they are also suitable for representing contrasting perspectives on the world they share. However, is it possible to find a shared understanding of different viewpoints? Yes, it is. At least, you must believe so.

OLI (antithesis): "Aesthetic values cannot be very important in this situation. It is not possible to consider aesthetics as a particularly meaningful factor at all.

When speaking of a tree as green gold, it is a deliberate euphemism. The framing of the question is actually quite simple: the sky of green gold and the sky of productivity mean the same thing. The factory also hums that message as an existential framework for all being. The annual rings of human ideals and goals have been hollowed out into three chimneys. A journey from a majestic forest tree to paper, a passage that is both concrete and metaphorical. A newspaper and smoke, these are the signs of the metamorphosis of green gold. Aesthetic values are on the surface; located at the core, in the heart, are utility values. They are both instrumental values. The ultimate goal is always to ensure economic productivity. All time is a time of earning and of profit.

Only the 'existence ring' of the sky of productivity is fresh. In it there flows the elixir - or resin or sap - of making a living, as wonderfully described by Rapola in his novel. Aesthetic ideals reside in the innermost rings. They have solidified, ossified. Yet they still exist, safely stowed away.

The time of generations and industrial history is layered in the existential rings of the sky of green gold and the sky of productivity. It is always a collective time. The community is a more important component of existence than the individual. If anyone claims otherwise, they do not know the truth. Now I have said what I have to say."

Rapola makes a fitting summary of the relationship between time and the experiencing self: "Time has not ceased to exist. It walks with Vaari. It is part of the landscape, and indeed a very essential part of that. This is new to Vaari. In the olden days, he had not realized the time of the landscape. Nor had he observed the time that flowed through his own consciousness and formed layers." (Rapola, 1971, p. 28.)

The situation has been examined through thesis and antithesis. Thus, there is a claim and a counterclaim. Loosely defined, the topic is dialectical. Therefore, a synthesis is still needed: some kind of combination or a presentation that at least partially reconciles the opposites. Achieving this requires the involvement of one more shot."

Photograph 5. The sky of experience.

S 5: The sky of experience

Introduction: The compilation must include values of beauty, utility, and pleasure values. Polyphony is needed. After all, what we are seeking is some sort of shared understanding, a harmony of views. (See also, for example, Ahlman, 1967; 1976.)

MFI and **SFI** (Synthesis i.e., agreement): "Let's start with the statement: 'An earthly secular person enjoys a heavenly delicious meal.' So, the food has been unearthly, celestially delicious. Is this then a gastronomic or experiential oxymoron? If the answer is affirmative, the composition denotes a culinary metaphor in which the earthly and heavenly are more than superficially opposite concepts. Man is a

temporal being. Compared to him, heaven is eternal. This perspective also fits the idea of dialecticism.

In Rapola's novel, time travels with Vaari. Time is a central part of the landscape. It is the time of the landscape. The same time flows through human consciousness and forms layers. Vaari's realization is an essential observation also when examining the essence of the sky of experience. Then, the dancing places and dining places become significant factors. Perhaps it's also about some kind of celebration: the anti- or super quotidian.

To see only opposites – the thesis and antithesis – more or further, one must rise higher, to a metaphysical point of existence. Then the observer's gaze carries beyond modern times. This is a prerequisite for understanding the combination.

In the foreground on the right, on the corner of the square, Domi, a grillikioski, (a streetside snack bar selling hot-dogs, hamburgers, etc.) appeared. Left of it, at the end of the low part of the building, there was a very small grillikioski, Aaron's Grill. Both of them were glimpses of the sky revealed in the blue yonder of gastronomic experience.

Back then, sometimes, Saturday and a whole chicken bought from a grillikioski were joined together. The 'blueprint' for a delicious meal was in a warm aluminium foil bag. The meal was always timed to take place in the moments after the sauna. This has to do with both a private and collective memory. It is a central part of the landscape of layered time.

Throughout the ages, people have danced over their everyday worries. The places and melodies have changed, but the feeling of enchantment has remained unaltered.

Restaurants like *Onnimanni* and *Puustelli* were important to the youth of past decades. The former was situated just beyond the right-hand edge of the picture. The latter was located on the right-hand side of Kauppakatu, the street which runs through the city (almost immediately after the intersection).

Family memories are also associated with both *Onnimanni* and *Puustelli*. So both places are closely related to the essence of the landscape's layered time. Weddings, funerals, lunch vouchers, and the shared meals (from the standing table) they paid for: they signify moments flowing through the awarenesses of numerous people. These instants have formed layers over generations. Food memories are among the most essential memories.

On the right-hand side, in an empty field, there is what we can presume to be a fairground tent. On Kauppakatu, there was a trendy restaurant Top Burger, reminiscent of the TV series *'Happy Days'*. Both the fairground tent and the Top Burger are associated with two bitter experiences. So, the sky of experience can also mean a sky of disappointment. Then it is about experience generally rather than about one single highlight positive experience.

I had long been looking forward to tasting candy floss and a milkshake. Sometimes reality is more brutal than the imagination. I didn't like the taste or texture of either. However, that time has also flowed through me and formed a layer of landscape's time. For now, just a brief mention of those disappointments will suffice.

Near the other end of Kauppakatu was *Virran pirtti* (River Cabin). It was an important meeting place of its own time. In the glass display case on the upper floor, savoury and sweet delicacies were enticingly displayed. The menu included omelettes and sandwiches called *oopperaleipä* (hamburger patty with a fried egg) and *kappelileipä* (a thick, fried slice of ham and a fried egg). Mid-strength beer was also available as a beverage. The *ruokalistat* (food lists), or often called *menyyt* (menus) nowadays, are like eloquent snapshots of the present moment of one's own time.

Kauppakatu ends at Pirtinniemi, where there was (and still is) a machine shop. So, the journey across the sky of experience has progressed from the *grillikioski* alongside the market square to the workplace cafeteria of the machine shop. A grilled meal is part of leisure time, and a staff cafeteria meal is part of the routine of work and activity. Since food is a powerful medium, stories about meal times are also transgenerational. Through them and by means of them, the past is still present: like a stream of time flowing through the consciousness of many generations.

The sky of Varkaus also stretches arch-like over the modern-day traveller. It is like a huge mirror of modern times, a diversely lustrous looking glass of being and time. The self-portrait of the era reflected in it is sometimes flawless, sometimes splintered. Which is the way the tapestry of modern times is supposed to be. After all, being is always essentially multifaced."

English translation by Glyn Hughes

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