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MELANCHOLIC, JOYFUL, AND OUTLAW VOICES: FINNISH RHYMED COUPLETS AND WRITERS' ARCHIVAL MATERIALS

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Abstract: The article explores the importance of writers' archival materials for the study of the cultural significance of Finnish rhymed couplets in Finnish literature. It demonstrates that the analysis of writers' notebooks, letters, drafts and other archival materials can contribute to the understanding of the literary use of this particular tradition of folk songs. The writers whose works and archival materials are analysed are two poets, Otto Manninen and Larin-Kyösti, and playwright Artturi Järviluoma. The material dates from the 1890s to the 1910s. The article deals with emotions and meanings of singing that manifest in certain rhymed couplets. The emphasis is on lyrical songs that deal with love and sorrow, longing and joy, as well as prisoner's songs and "brawl songs", depicting fights.

Keywords: rhymed folk songs, Finnish literature, archives, writers' manuscripts, emotions, oral and literary traditions

In the middle of the 1890s, many Finnish writers became fascinated with rhymed couplets (*rekilaulu*), a particular form of oral culture. Young poets used rhymed couplets in their poems, and they appeared in contemporary prose and drama, too.[1] The multifaceted occurrences of these rhymed folk songs in literary works point to the popularity of this oral tradition in general, often used in gatherings of young people, in dances, and when working or walking together. According to Matti Hako, there was occasionally a lead singer. If the crowd was walking on village lanes, a man led the singing, and when songs accompanied dancing, the lead singer was a woman. In addition, antiphonal singing occurred (Hako 1963: 425–426).

In this article I look at how the writers used rhymed couplets in their writings. I demonstrate that it is fruitful to pay attention to writers' manuscripts,

notebooks and drafts in order to understand this process. The analysis of archival materials can expose voices and discourses present in the stage of drafting a work of literature – features that are not visible in the finished text – and enhance our understanding of what was left out (Hämäläinen & Karhu 2023: 78–79). My archival findings are a result of my previous studies made in the context of genetic criticism that focuses on the exploration of writers' creative process and the analysis of archival materials (see, e.g., Karhu 2023b). Genetic critics see a literary work as a network of writing processes, not as a singular (published) text (Deppman & Ferrer & Groden 2004; Grésillon 1999 [1994]). Among other things, they are interested in ways discourses are manifested in the course of writing (Mitterand 2004). My aim is to show how the genetic analysis of archival material can also lead to other interesting culture-historical findings. This article brings out emotions presented in certain folk songs and offers an insight into how certain songs used by writers depict meanings of singing.

Rekilaulu is a Finnish version of a widely spread international rhymed folksong genre. Rhymed couplets form a unit consisting of two verses sometimes divided into four short verses: the first part precedes an argument and the second one discloses it (Sykäri 2017, 2022).[2] Rhymed couplets can be characterized as a register to express things that were important in the lives of young people.[3] These folk songs reflect many social changes Finnish society went through in the nineteenth century. New generations wanted more freedom. Among other things, the youth did not want arranged marriages (Asplund 2006: 152–153). The increase of population and the industrial revolution changed rural life: young people left their villages and sought employment in towns or emigrated to the United States and Canada. Songs of leaving Finland to seek a better life manifest this situation. In Ostrobothnia, the unrest caused by structural changes in society had culminated in the phenomenon of the *puukkojunkkarit* (knife fighters), which is reflected in brawl songs and prisoner's songs that depict fights and lives of prisoners (Asplund 2006: 153–154). However, love and courtship were the most popular themes in rhymed couplets. According to folklorist Anneli Asplund, they gave vent to expressing one's feelings of joy, sorrow, and longing, as well as the faithfulness or deceitfulness in relationships (Asplund 2006: 153). It also seems that rhymed couplets gave voice to young people to express their sexual feelings more directly.

It is important to consider that during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the attitudes towards rhymed couplets were ambivalent in Finland. Despite their popularity among common people and young writers, rhymed couplets were heavily criticized on many forums. Time after time, it was argued that popular songs corrupt the sense of proper (folk) poetry or arouse and titillate (wrong) sentiments: songs of courtship lead to immorality and those on

famous villains enhance criminality. This kind of criticism, espoused by part of the educated Fennoman elite and enlightened peasants, had its roots in the nation-building project that included a strong emphasis on popular education, morality, and sexual virtuousness. Disapproving newspaper articles demonstrate how feelings of disgust operated in the assessment of nationality and its cultural manifestations, just as Sara Ahmed has written in her book *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (2004)[4] (Karhu & Kuismin 2021). As a result, the tradition was secluded from Finnish cultural heritage. As rhymed folk songs did not serve the ethos of public enlightenment and nation building, folklore publications did not focus on this kind of material and, as a result, the subject has remained understudied (Hämäläinen & Karhu 2021).[5]

The question arises why writers were interested in these songs even though they were widely criticized. Firstly, the interest in folklore (Campbell & Perraudin 2012) and folk songs (Thiesse 2022 [1999]: 140–144) was common in Europe in the long nineteenth century in general. In other words, the interest of writers in the contemporary oral singing tradition was a transnational phenomenon. Rhymed folk songs inspired poets in France, Russia, and Sweden. They utilized features of the tradition in their texts (see, e.g., Akimova 2007). Secondly, folk songs were a living tradition for young Finnish writers, many of whom had grown up in the countryside. Rhymed couplets offered a familiar and melodious rhythmical pattern for poems (Lyly 1983: 113), and the way the singers expressed their feelings and attachment to the surrounding natural world appealed to poets. The use of the Finnish language in songs was imaginative and witty. Thirdly, rhymed couplets represented the voices of youth that the writers wanted to echo in their texts. Finally, singing was an important activity among all social classes.

In Finland writers' interest in rhymed couplets lasted roughly a couple of decades. This folk-song genre lost its popularity during the first decades of the twentieth century, as partner dance replaced circle dances that were accompanied by singing (Asplund 2006: 149). At the same time in literature poets were influenced by modernist trends, and the expression leaning on folk songs became old-fashioned.

In the following, I will analyse materials of two poets, Otto Manninen (1872–1950) and Larin-Kyösti (1873–1948), and those of playwright Artturi Järviluoma (1879–1942) at the turn of the twentieth century. Finnish classic Manninen, best known as a Symbolist poet, began his career with poems that alluded to the Finnish rhymed couplets. The material, dating from the poet's years of apprenticeship, provides a glimpse of a literary context in which oral poetry provided models for Finnish-language writers. When Manninen experimented with the rewriting of folk songs, he was an unpublished poet in his twenties.

Some of these texts were published in literary magazines, but Manninen's first collection entitled *Säkeitä* (Verses, 1905) includes only one poem in the style of rhymed couplets.

Kyösti Larson, who later used the penname Larin-Kyösti, made his debut in 1897 with poems resembling folk songs. According to Kai Laitinen, the title of his first collection, *Tän pojan kevätrallatuksia* (This lad's spring-lilts), points to oral tradition, and the same trend continues in the titles of his *Kylän lauluja* (Village songs, 1898) and *Kulkurin lauluja* (Songs of a wanderer, 1899). As Laitinen has stated, Larin-Kyösti's poems are characterized by light, effortless-seeming expression, and folk song-like accents (Laitinen 1998: 120–121). O. A. Kallio writes in his literary history that Larin-Kyösti brought the tone of joyful humour to Finnish poetry. He was inspired by two Swedish poets, Carl Michael Bellman (1740–1795) and Gustav Fröding (1860–1911), who used elements of folk song traditions in their poems (Kallio 1929: 230–231). At the beginning of the twentieth century Larin-Kyösti was popular among the readership, but nowadays he is mostly known only for his poems that various composers set to music.

In 1914, journalist Artturi Järviluoma made his debut with the play *Pohjalaisia* (Ostrobothnians), which soon became one of the most favourite dramatic works in Finland. It was translated into many languages, made into an opera by Leevi Madetoja in 1924, and filmed for the first time in 1925. Two strands of rhymed couplets, those expressing love and longing and the ones connected to brawl and prisoner's songs, stand out in the play. When analysing the songs included in the play and the ones in Järviluoma's archival material, I will pay attention to the singer's (or speaker's) relationship with other people, and to the emotions and messages expressed in the rhymed couplet in general, as well as the contexts in which the characters sing.

I focus on archival materials and published works of literature in their first editions. The archives of Otto Manninen and Artturi Järviluoma are kept in the archives of the Finnish Literature Society (SKS), while Larin-Kyösti's papers are found in two archives, at the SKS and the National Library of Finland. Archival materials of writer Johannes Linnankoski, kept at the SKS, will also be briefly touched upon. The oral source materials used in this article can be found in the folklore collection of the Finnish Literature Society.

SORROW – PERCEPTIBLE AND HIDDEN

The archival materials of Manninen, Larin-Kyösti, and Järviluoma reveal that the creative processes of these writers include attentive examination and rewriting of oral folklore. Otto Manninen's archive includes a notebook (SKS/KIA: A1908) filled with rhymed couplets, gathered by his friend Antti Rytkönen from oral sources in Sippola, southeastern Finland (Lyly 1983:112; Karhu 2019b). Both Manninen and Rytkönen created poems inspired by this oral tradition (Karhu 2019a).[6] Manninen also reshaped – and to some extent even rewrote – some of the songs recorded in the notebook and incorporated them in his own poems (Hämäläinen & Karhu 2019; Karhu 2021, 2023a, 2023b). There are also folk song transcriptions in the archives of Larin-Kyösti and another contemporary writer, Johannes Linnankoski (1869–1913). Rhymed folk songs have an important role in Linnankoski's romantic best-selling novel *Laulu tulipunaisesta kukasta* (Song of the flaming red flower, 1905).

First, I will focus on what can be said about singing as a way to cure sorrow and other negative feelings with the songs in writers' archival materials, and how writers seem to react to this. In the minds of Finnish literati in the nineteenth-century Finland, folk songs carried sorrowful undertones. The educated elite saw folk songs as expressions of Finnish people's melancholic and humble mentality (Laitinen 1986: 42–43).[7] The lyrical songs in Kalevala metre also expressed mainly worries and sorrows (Timonen 2004: 64–66; Tarkka 2005: 48).

The analysis of the notebook in which Antti Rytkönen had recorded rhymed couplets shows that Manninen's interest fell mainly upon the songs that expressed sorrow or longing. He either marked or made changes to the stanzas that he would later use in his poems (Karhu 2023a). For example, the following stanza jotted down by Rytkönen (1900) caught Manninen's attention:

En mie sen vuoks laulele että heliä on ääni	I don't sing because my voice is so melodious
Laulelen huvituksen, tuli heiliä ikäväni.	I sing to entertain myself as I miss my sweetheart.

There are numerous variants of this song in the folklore collection of the SKS, the oldest one dating from 1885. In this song, the motive of singing expressed by the speaker is to lessen the feeling of longing, not the urge to boast about one's good singing voice. In songs recorded by Rytkönen, longing and sorrow are mostly connected with disappointments in love. The joyful and defiant words often form a surface to cover other emotions in the songs. According to Matti

Hako, this kind of nonchalance was a shield to protect the sensitive parts of a singer's personality (Hako 1963: 431). The Janus-faced character is present in the following lines that Manninen later used in a poem draft:

Ja luulevat mun iloiseksi silloin kun mina laulan	And they thought that I was happy when I sing
Silloinhan mie suuren surun sydämmeeni painan.	but it is then when a great grief presses my heart.
(SKS/KIA: A1908)	

The oldest variant of this song in the folklore collections of the SKS dates from 1889. The same attitude of the hidden sorrow is present in Otto Manninen's famous poem "Pellavan kitkijä" (The flax rooter, 1897/1905), which follows the tradition of the rhymed couplets:

Muien paioiksi pellava kasvaa,	The flax grows for others' shirts,
minä vaan sen kitken.	I'm just a rooter, I.
Muien iloiksi iloan,	I give the others joy
mut itsekseni itken.	but inwardly I cry.
(Allwood 1982: 363)[8]	

This singer's inner pain is also visible in one of Larin-Kyösti's folk-song-like drafts. The first four lines variate the Finnish rhymed couplet metre, while the rest of the poem has a different rhythmical pattern:

Onnettoman laulajan onneton laulu –	A sad song of a sad singer –
Minä laulan iloni kaikille	I sing my joys to everyone
pilalauluja mulla on monta,	joke songs I have many,
minä laulan suruni kaikille	I sing my sorrows to everyone
ja monta on onnetonta – –	and there are plenty of miserable ones – –
Kun suruinen soittoni kuullaan	When my sad music is heard
niin itse suruiset nauraa vaan	the sad ones only laugh
ja murekin pilaksi luullaan. –	and they take sorrow as a joke. –
Kenen elo olis kurjempi päällä maan?!	Whose life could be more miserable on earth?!
(Larin-Kyösti's archive, SKS/KIA, Kl. A 9396)	

The folk song transcriptions found in Larin-Kyösti's archive are mostly melancholic. They are full of sorrow caused by unhappy love, like in the following rhymed couplet (National Library, Coll. 122):

En minä luullut näkeväni surullista iltaa:	I didn't think I would see a sad evening
kun minä näin tuon oman kullan toisen rattahilla.	but it happened when I saw my sweetheart in another's carriage.

In these kinds of texts, the singer of the song appears to be alone. This was also the dominant feature in lyrical Kalevala-metre songs collected from northern Karelia. Senni Timonen calls the songs in which the singer seems to be alienated from the others the poetry of loss (Timonen 2004: 63–64). In melancholic rhymed couplets, other people named are often the sweetheart and the rival (*toinen*) who has stolen the singer's sweetheart.

Sorrow was not only present in the song transcriptions found in Manninen's and Larin-Kyösti's archives but also in their drafts and in published poems alluding to this tradition. In Manninen's published early folk-song-like poetry, it was the only mood prevailing. Furthermore, even though Larin-Kyösti was known for his happy tunes, the themes of melancholy and sorrow appear in the folklore material in his archive and in his draft that can be characterized as literary rewriting of folk songs. The singer appears to be either physically alone or feeling lonely among others. The sadness of the poetic "I" is a theme that arises from both types of materials: the act of singing (joyful) songs interweaves with sorrow. In the draft of Larin-Kyösti, quoted earlier, the singer performs a role for the benefit of their audience or a community. Their feelings seem to be unimportant in this necessary and unavoidable task.[9]

JOYS OF LOVE

Singing was also a way to express joy brought about by the song itself. For example, joyful songs like the following one can be found among the songs recorded by Rytkönen:

Pienen linnun taivaan alla laulelevan luulin	I thought a little bird was singing above in the skies
Mieleni oli niin iloinen kun kultani äänen kuulin.	My mind was so happy because I heard the voice of my sweetheart
(SKS/KIA: A1908)	

The idea that joy is the essence of life takes form in the following song:

Ei meitä surulla ruokita, se on ilo joka elättelee	We are not fed with sorrow; it is joy that keeps us alive
Eikä se heilini minua heitä, vaikka se pelättelee.	And my sweetheart is not leaving me, even if he/she threatens to do so.
(SKS/KIA: A1908)	

In the first line, there are two opposite feelings, sorrow and joy, while the latter includes a reference to the fear of losing one's sweetheart. Many variants of this song exist in the folklore collection of the SKS. The oldest one dates from 1889 and the most recent one from 1955. A variant of this song also exists in the archive of Johannes Linnankoski (B1756).[10]

Even though Manninen's folk-song-like poems carry melancholic themes, the notebook filled with Rytkönen's transcriptions demonstrates that Manninen was well acquainted with merrier songs, even though he did not allude to them in his published poems. There is also one poem draft of Manninen dealing with joy and happiness. In this text, the second and the third stanza are rewritings of rhymed couplets found in the notebook. The first stanza begins with a formula common in oral tradition:

Kuusi se kummulla kohoaa	A spruce rises on a hill
Ja yli muita puita	Above other trees
Minun kultani kaunis on	My sweetheart is beautiful
Ja kaunihimpi muita.	More beautiful than the others.
Kultani kasvot kuin päivän paiste	The face of my sweetheart is like sunshine
Ja ääni se soi kuin peli	And his voice rings like an instrument.
Seitsemän impeä ihastui	Seven maidens fell for him
Kun kultani hymyeli.[11]	When my love smiled.
Minun kultani kaunis on	My sweetheart is beautiful
Se on kuin kultaraha	Like a golden coin
Siit' on tainnut monella tytöllä	Many girls seem to have
Olla mieli paha.	Become sad because of that.
Kultani mieli iloinen	The mind of my sweetheart is merry
Ja kultani sydän hellä	and his heart is gentle
Itse mä puolta iloisempi	And me, I'm even happier
Kultani sydämellä.	because I have his heart.
(SKS/KIA: A1908)	

The first stanza emphasizes the beauty of the sweetheart. In the stanza that the poet has crossed out, the speaker is a woman. She compares her sweetheart's face to sunshine and mentions that his good singing voice gives pleasure to the listeners. The next stanza points out that the beauty of the sweetheart causes resentment among other girls, which heightens the splendour of the sweetheart and does not seem to threaten the happiness of the singer. The last stanza is a cry of joy and delight: the sweetheart is happy, but the singer is even happier. Manninen's rewriting of rhymed couplets creates a sunny image of love and happiness as well as sentiments of vitality. This ethos is also present in the folk song "Ei meitä surulla ruokita" (We are not fed with sorrow) mentioned earlier. Melancholic sentiments dominate Manninen's early poetry, but the unpublished material shows that he was also interested in happier themes. It seems that Manninen drafted this text approximately at the same time Larin-Kyösti published his first poem collection that brought joyful humour to Finnish poetry.

In many folk songs studied for this article, having a sweetheart brings happiness to the poetic "I". Joy is also present in the preliminary notes in which Larin-Kyösti drafted ideas for poems. While Manninen often made lists of rhymes around which he began to evolve his text (Karhu 2012: 74), Larin-Kyösti seems to have made preliminary notes in prose. In his notebook (SKS/KIA, box 2, Kl. 8972) there are jottings that present joy as a poetic theme. For example, the poem "Kievar tytti" (Girl from a tavern) is characterized as following: "lempi ja juomalaulu sekä maailman kuulu suruttomuuden ylistys runo" (song of love and drinking – a world-famous poem praising light-heartedness). This combination of nonchalance and cheerfulness is often present in oral rhymed couplets. Apart from commenting on love's sorrows, they often praise the merry sides of life. As rhymed couplets often included jokes, banter and sexual undertones, they were associated with worldliness and sinfulness (see, e.g., Karhu & Kuismin 2021). As Larin-Kyösti's note on the theme of his poem shows, the poet was defiantly opposing this kind of thinking.

It is interesting that joy manifests differently in the archival materials and published works of Manninen and Larin-Kyösti. As mentioned earlier, Manninen was aware of the merry side of the tradition but he published only melancholic folk-song-like poems. In Larin-Kyösti's published texts, joy was a central feature, even though the folk songs in his archive are not particularly joyful. However, happier themes appear in some of the archival materials of Larin-Kyösti, kept at the National Library. These folk song transcriptions belong to the genre of *rinkilaulut* or *piirilaulut* (circle songs / roundelays), meant to accompany dancing. They are not all rhymed couplets but belong to the rhymed folk song tradition. Rhymed couplets were often used as dancing songs (Asplund 2006: 137–139; Sykäri 2022: 166–168; Karhu & Vuorikuru forthcoming).

SONGS OF LONGING

Artturi Järviluoma's play *Pohjalaisia* (Ostrobothnians) is set in Kauhava, western Finland, in 1850. The play deals with the phenomenon called *puukkojunkkarit* (knife-fighters) that occurred specifically in Ostrobothnia. *Häjy* is another word used, connoting wickedness. Fights among young troublemakers were common, and they often resulted in deaths (Ylikangas 1998). The counterforces of the knife-fighters in the play are *körttiläisyys* (awakening), a Pietist revivalist movement, and the temperance movement. Two young couples provide material for love and romance. In addition, Järviluoma's drama reflects nationalist sentiments, as the characters of *Pohjalaisia* oppose police forces whom they see as organs of repression at the time Finland was an autonomous part of Russia.

In the following, I will focus on some songs expressing longing for one's sweetheart, as well as brawl songs depicting the exploits of knife-fighters and their imprisonment. Some of the folk songs that Järviluoma included in his script were collected by the writer himself and by composer Heikki Klemetti in 1907 (Seppä 2016: 16). I have analysed two manuscript versions of the play, written in black-covered notebooks (SKS/KIA, notebook A and B) with the help of Timo Kallio's edition of the manuscripts (Kallio & Kangas & Järviluoma 2024). Besides Järviluoma's writing process vis-à-vis the use of folk songs, I am interested in the ways and in what kinds of contexts female and male characters perform rhymed couplets in the play.

Pohjalaisia opens with a song that Maija, daughter of a farm owner, is singing by herself (Järviluoma 1914: 12). Her fiancée Antti has been detained after having assaulted a cobbler who had questioned Maija's honour. She is alone on the stage and sings softly about her longing for her sweetheart:

:,: *Se ilta oli pimeä ja taivahalla paloi*	That evening was dark and the innumerable stars
Ne lukemattomat tähdet. :,:	were shining in the skies.
:,: *Ja enkä minä saattanut hyvästiä sanoa*	I didn't have the opportunity to say goodbye
Kun viimeisen kerran lähdit. :,:	when you left for the last time.

Anna Kuismin has made an observation that often in the first part of the plays folk songs were used to portray the feeling of longing (Kuismin 2023: 28). In the first scene of act II, servant Liisa is off-stage, singing about loneliness. Again, the singer is alone. The song consists of rhymed couplets that are common in oral tradition:

Luullahan, jotta on lysti olla,	They thought I was happy
Kun minä aina laulan.	when I sing.
Laulullani minä pienet surut	With singing I push
Sydämeni pohjahan painan.	my small sorrows into the bottom of my heart.
Enkä minä sillä laulele,	I don't sing because
Jotta mulla on heliä ääni.	my voice is so melodious
Laulelenhan sillä vaan,	I sing because
Kun oon näin yksinäni.	I'm so lonely.

(Järviluoma 1914: 69)

Kaisa, the middle-aged wife of the farmhouse's hired hand, hears Liisa's song. She asks if Liisa's sweetheart has found someone else, but the girl replies that she does not have a steady sweetheart. In fact, Liisa is in love with Jussi, Maija's brother.[12] Kaisa hints at the farm hand Kaappo, but Liisa says that she wants a better man for her husband. Kaisa advises her to remember her position: she is a servant even if she is treated almost like a daughter in the house.

The draft of the first song appears also in the manuscript at the end of the play (SKS/KIA, notebook A, scene 8, act I). There is one rather interesting alteration between the draft and the published text. In the draft, the singer wants to supress her great sorrows, not small ones as appears in the play. In every variant of the song in the folklore collection of the SKS the singer speaks about great sorrows, not small ones. Because of this, the alteration appears especially meaningful. This change can indicate that Järviluoma did not want to depict the character as too sorrowful, even if the song is melancholic. The manuscript analysis also shows that Järviluoma had considered two other stanzas to be part of this scene. They both appear in Heikki Klemetti's collection *Valittuja kansanlauluja Etelä-Pohjanmaalta* (Selected folk songs from southern Ostrobothnia; Klemetti 1909: 4; Kallio & Kangas & Järviluoma 2024: 177). In the draft of notebook B Liisa first sings the following stanza:

Ei kukaan puhu puolestani	Nobody is my advocate
Vaan jokahinen kaataa.	No, everybody wants to knock me down.
Ne panisivat jos ne saisivat	They would push me if they could
Mun alemmaksi maata.	lower than the ground.

The folklore collections of the SKS include only one transcription of these verses, but there are several variants beginning with the formula *ei kukaan* (nobody).

The theme of poverty appears in many of them: *Ei kukaan köyhää rakasta / Ei edes säälikkään* (Nobody loves the poor / They don't even pity them) (SKS/KRA). In the light of oral sources, the rhymed couplet in the manuscript Liisa sings could be seen as a comment on social classes. The reason for the removal of this song might stem from the writer's desire to undermine social inequalities in this way. In the play, Jussi's parents do not oppose the marriage of Jussi and Liisa. Even though she is poor, she is a hardworking girl.

The other song that is present in the draft but absent from the published play expresses the speaker's feelings for her former beau:

Jos minä saisin takaisin	If only I could get back
Sen ajan, jonka elin,	the time I have lived
Ja saisin nähdä sen vanhan heilan	And could see that old sweetheart
Jota minä rakastelin.	whom I courted.

(SKS/KIA: notebook B)

The song emphasizes the activeness of the female speaker in the act of courting and hints at the existence of a new beau. The stanza also includes the verb *rakastella* (make love) that refers to courting. This was a common word used in the songs. Women often took a casual stand towards sleeping with their sweethearts. In the following example, a girl humorously praises her sweetheart and the pleasures of a night spent together:

Renkipoika mun heilani on	A farmhand is my sweetheart
ja voi kun se on rakas.	Oh, how he is dear.
Yökin loppu liian kesken	The night was too short
kun sen vieres makas.	when I lay in his bed.[13]

(Apo 1989: 282; see also Karhu & Kuismin 2021: 32)

According to Anneli Asplund, in the age of the old Kalevala-metre song tradition, it was uncommon and inappropriate to express oneself publicly, but the culture in which rhymed couplets were sung was no longer so restrictive (Asplund 1997: 299–300). Nevertheless, in Järviluoma's play, women express their feelings in shy, chaste and quiet ways, while men handle the theme publicly as I will show in the next subchapter. However, if we look at the songs archived in the folklore collection of the SKS, and the songs that appear in his drafts, it seems that Järviluoma decided to picture in the published play a more discreet image of women's ways of singing than the original songs. He may have had an idealized idea of what was suitable for girls to sing (and feel). There are songs in the manuscript that hint towards a more active female voice, but these

songs do not appear in the published play. Järviluoma's alteration to the first song example diminishes the feelings of the female singer. As for the removal of the songs in the second example, they eliminated the references to class and sexuality. At that time sexual morality was very important for the whole idea of nationhood and this also concerned literature to a great extent (Jalava 2011; Karhu & Kuismin 2021: 27–28, 36).

SONGS OF KNIFE-FIGHTERS

Apart from songs of love and longing, Järviluoma's play includes songs that represent masculine brawl culture. Folk songs in the style of rhymed couplets depicting famous criminals were very popular in the nineteenth-century Finland (Asplund 2006: 154–155; Hako 1963: 437). The song Antti sings at the beginning of the play refers to this tradition. However, it begins with a stanza commenting on love. Antti is in chains while waiting for his trial. First, he sings quietly, partly humming the tune:

Tuuli se taivutti koivun latvan :,:	The wind bent the top of a birch
Ja meri oli lainehissa.	and the sea rose and fell.
Minä vain istuin ja lauleskelin :,:	I was sitting and singing
Heilini kamarissa.	in my sweetheart's chamber.

(Järviluoma 1914: 21)

After this stanza, Antti stands up and starts to sing in a loud voice, rattling his chains. The third and fourth lines mirror the situation in which the young man has found himself, waiting for his journey to the prison:

Tuuli se taivutti koivun latvan	The wind bent the top of a birch
Ja nostatti lainehia.	and the sea rose and fell.
Nyt mua viedähän linnasta linnahan	Now I am taken from one prison to another,
Kantaen kahlehia.	carrying my chains.

(Järviluoma 1914: 21)

Kaisa asks if Antti is telling his own story in the ditty. In the published play, Antti replies that his life is not yet worthy of a song. Besides, it seems that most songs are about knife-fighters and their exploits, he adds. In Järviluoma's manuscript (notebook A), Antti's reply is longer. He says that most songs depict the knife-fighters of Härmä and Kauhava, who fight for their honour, steal sheep,

and mistreat horses. Kaisa says that those kinds of songs are '*knivbboo*'-songs (knife songs), while the best songs tell the stories of the best of men (Kallio & Kangas & Järviluoma 2024: 142). The use of the Swedish-origin word *knivbboo* (Sw. *kniv* 'knife') seems to relate to the contemporary polemics in which it was claimed that rhymed couplets originated from Sweden (Hämäläinen & Karhu 2021: 299–300).[14]

In the minds of Ostrobothnian people, Antti's assault was justified. Besides, the cobbler was a known thief and a troublemaker, and unlike in many cases in which knife-fighters were involved, the assault did not have fatal consequences. After his imprisonment has become a fact, Antti boasts – but in a bitter tone – that now he has earned his own song. He has become one of the men whose life provides material for a song. While waiting for transportation to the prison, Antti sings a song in which the speaker emphasizes the ferociousness of his character (Järviluoma 1914: 93). In another ditty, also sung by Antti, a prisoner addresses his sweetheart, seemingly not caring about being locked in:

Älä sinä tyttö sitä voivottele	Do not wail, my girl
Ja älä ole murehissa,	And do not feel sad,
Vaikka vuorattu ovi ja raudasta	Even though there is a heavy door
kalterit	and bars of iron
On heilisi kamarissa.	in the chamber of your sweetheart.
(Järviluoma 1914: 94)	

In research, the unrest and violent behaviour have been seen as a reaction to the upheaval in land-owning conditions that took place in Ostrobothnia (Ylikangas 1976, 1998). However, it is easy to understand that knife-fighters provided models for young men who were attracted by the idea of fame (Remes 2011; Niskanen 2014: 12–13). The songs depicting knife-fighters circulated orally, but they were also published in booklets and sold in great numbers (Karhu & Kuismin 2021: 29). The protagonists in these kinds of songs were strong, brash, loud, arrogant, daring, and promiscuous. However, the songs in Järviluoma's play refer also to the theme of love; the sweetheart has been mentioned in all the cases that have been commented here.

At the end of the play, people are dancing in the main room of a farmhouse. The crowd of intruding knife-fighters sing the following brawl song:

Ala-Härmästä keskeltä pitäjestä	They are easy-going fellows
Rentoja veljeksiä	From Ala-Härmä, from the centre of the parish

Ja ne saa hypätä pöydälle	Those who are mightier than us
Jotk on meitä verrempiä.	Can jump on the table.

(Järviluoma 1914: 108)

At this point, the whole crowd has stepped outside, and men begin to search for objects that they could use as weapons against knife-fighters. One villager has a steelyard in his hand, but the text does not indicate explicitly that it could be used as a weapon. Oral tradition implies that this was the case, like this song, recorded by writer and collector Samuli Paulaharju, indicates (1933 [1932]: 334): "Härmän kirkon portahilla on poikaa koulutettu, kun puukoolla ja puntarilla on lyömähän opetettu" (Boys have been trained at the steps of Härmä church, they have learned to use the knife and the steelyard) (Kallio & Kangas & Järviluoma 2024: 200).

In Järviluoma's play, women sing alone and quietly. Their songs are melancholic, while men sing loudly, and often together with other men. This kind of situation does not reflect exhaustively the singing practices of the nineteenth-century country people, as women sang songs that expressed various feelings, and also collectively. Järviluoma's song choices were motivated by the urge to write a play with certain aesthetics, and the folk songs had a role in his literary composition.

LITERATURE, ARCHIVES, AND THE RHYMED COUPLETS

The archival material attests to the deep interest of writers towards the meanings and messages of the songs and their desire to capture some of it in their works of art. Some themes and emotions are the same in both the original folk songs and writers' texts, while in other cases the writers have modified them. Writers' manuscripts can contain orientations, interests, and aspirations different from those manifested in the published version of a literary work of art.

As stated earlier, the contemporary oral tradition of rhymed couplets inspired Otto Manninen, Larin-Kyösti, and Artturi Järviluoma, which is visible both in their published works and in their archival materials. In particular, Otto Manninen's years of apprenticeship provide a glimpse into the context in which the rewriting of folk songs acted as a stepping-stone in Manninen's own poetic writing (Karhu 2023a). Manninen was mostly attracted to songs in which the tone was melancholy. He concentrated on rhymed couplets expressing sorrows, while Larin-Kyösti focused on the merry side of the tradition in his published oeuvre. It is interesting that while the "worldliness" of rhymed couplets was criticized in the press and research, an unpublished text of Larin-Kyösti flaunts

the light-heartedness of the genre. However, manuscripts reveal that the poet also experimented with sombre tunes of rhymed couplets, as did Manninen with the merry side of the tradition.

The comparison of the songs expressing love and longing, which appear in Järviluoma's play and draft material, with those found in oral sources reveals that the writer wanted to maintain the reserved and chaste image of a country girl who sings melancholy songs. In the folk songs archived at the SKS, women comment on love from humours angles, too, and present women as active agents in relationships. It seems that Järviluoma leaned on the views of the educated elite on the alleged melancholic character of folk songs.

How do the literary use of the folk songs and the processes in which they were transformed into literature affect our comprehension of the meanings and messages of this oral tradition? It seems that one important role of the songs in literature was to intensify the expressions of certain emotions. The rhymed couplets gave vent to different kinds of feelings and singing and listening to them acted also as a communal activity. Singing alone or together gave people a means to deal with their sentiments from sadness to joy. In folk song transcriptions of Larin-Kyösti's archive, there is a connection between singing and dancing. Perhaps this physical activity and proximity made singers more courageous to express themselves more freely.

Art seldom reflects reality directly. It modulates, tames, and aestheticizes. However, literary works, and archival materials preceding them, can reveal some of the cultural meanings and messages that rhymed folk songs carried at the turn of the twentieth century. In *Pohjalaisia*, women sing sad love songs in situations when they were alone or off-stage, while the boisterous brawl songs were in most cases sung by men on the stage, in the presence of other people. The songs performed by women, expressing feelings of melancholy and lovesickness, support the idea of female passivity, while brawl songs can be interpreted as signs of masculine energy and activeness, even if the vitality is on the transgressive side. As already stated, this does not capture the true essence of the singing practices in their natural context. However, the indisputable fact is that because *Pohjalaisia* was so popular among different generations of theatregoers, the ways and types of songs the characters perform has had a great impact on the ways folk song culture has been seen.

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NOTES

[1] On drama, see Kuismin 2023.

[2] On metrical features of rhymed couplets, see H. Laitinen 2003.

[3] Compared to the register of the Kalevala folklore (Tarkka 2005: 40).

[4] Similar negative attitudes towards rhymed songs were also common in Estonia. Folklorist Jacob Hurt even denied the collecting of these kinds of poems for the archives (Hako 1963: 418). See also Oras 2017 and Särg 2012.

[5] See, e.g., H. Laitinen 2003; Kurkela 1989; Asplund 1997, 2006; Sykäri 2022.

[6] See Antti Rytkönen's collection of poems *Lauluja* (Songs, 1900).

[7] See also Kurkela 2012.

[8] The term 'cotton' is used in the translation, but I have changed it to flax.

[9] See more on this material in the context of the study of the emotions in Huhtala & Hämäläinen & Karhu 2022.

[10] Weera Suomi and Aino Tulonen had sent rhymed folk songs to Linnankoski by mail. When these songs are compared to the songs found in his novel *Laulu tulipunaisesta kukasta* (Song of the flaming red flower, 1905), it can be seen that Linnankoski has incorporated the songs sent to him in his oeuvre.

[11] Manninen has crossed out this stanza in a later phase of the writing process.

[12] Liisa is called Sanna at this stage in the manuscripts.

[13] According to folklorist Satu Apo (1989: 282), rhymed couplets also captured the sentiments of young women who came from the lowest strata of rural society. These sentiments were of course absent from the general discussions of that time.

[14] The extract also raises the question of song types. Most likely there have been different kinds of brawl songs.

ARCHIVAL SOURCES

Archives of the Finnish Literature Society

SKS/KRA – folklore collection:

"Ei kukaan köyhää rakasta". Väinö Kallio, Uskela, 14.6.1908.

SKS/KIA – collection of literature and cultural history:

The Artturi Järviluoma archive: Box 1. Pohjolaisia. Kansannäytelmä kolmessa näytöksessä, version I. (Version I of the catalogue contains two notebooks; the thicker notebook is referred to as notebook A, and the slimmer one as notebook B).
The Larin-Kyösti archive: Box 2. Poem drafts and copies of poems of others. 1896–1999. Kl. A 9396. [A1655]; Box 2. Notebooks 1896–1898, 1900. Kl. 8972. [A1651]
The Johannes Linnankoski archive: Kansanlauluvihko [Folk song notebook], B1756
The Otto Manninen archive: Uudempia kansanlauluja [New folk songs], A1908

National Library

The Larin-Kyösti archive: Coll. 122. Reki- ja muita lauluja. [Rhymed couplets and other songs]

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