



Performing Northern Places and Identities in Children's Still-Picture Animation Films

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Abstract. This article concentrates on four still-picture animation films aimed at children, *Rune Box*, *On the Pike's Shoulders*, *Päiviö's Feast*, and *The Feather Gown*, all of which were presented on YLE, the national Finnish television channel, between 1990 and 2010. These animation films aim to preserve and reshape the Finnish cultural heritage, its myths and tales examining questions of life and death, the North, nature, and the relationships between animals and humans. By close-reading the animations, the article illustrates how the animations shape cultural memory, the concepts of place, and questions of identity. The analysis reveals the utilisation of northern images and beliefs in children's fiction. It also highlights the kind of visual and cultural elements that are in contemporary children's media representations associated with the North. In the article, we postulate, first, that, in these animations, place is constructed via a network of practical, local, historically shifting interaction, which also features, in addition to practical considerations, an ethical consideration of place and nature. Second, we argue, that the dominant media helps to construct a global, homogenous children's culture, represented, for instance, in *Disney* animations. The animations that we examine in our article, however, belong to a culturally and geographically specific place and make full use of the imagery, themes, and language of the local tradition. Our third point is that the experience of watching still-picture animations produces cultural memory (cf. Sturken and Cartwright 2009), which is passed from one generation to the next and which enables the construction of a locally rooted identity. The article draws on post-structuralist theories of identity, representation, and place, as well as debates in media studies.

This article examines four still-picture animation films aimed at children, all screened as part of children's programming on YLE, the Finnish national broadcaster, from the 1990s onwards.¹ A common feature of all four of the still-

1 These animations were screened as part of a children's show called Pikku Kakkonen ('Little Channel Two'). The show first aired in 1977 and has maintained its position as the most popular programme for pre-school-aged children in Finland. The age of

picture animations we have examined is that their respective stories take place either partially or entirely in the North. The concept of the North in these still-picture animations is not defined only as a geographical place. Rather North is understood as a space constructed using a variety of visual elements and narrative devices referring to northern environments and livelihoods.

We understand spaces and landscapes as parts of both a physical and a mental reality (Ruotsala 2008, 48). Seen from this perspective, these notions of places are not static, rather they are constantly being shaped and reshaped through the interaction of humans, their surrounding environments and different visual representations. Thus places shape their users, agents and viewers who, through their deeds and actions, shape the meanings attached to these places.

At the heart of our article is the question what kind of place and space is the North portrayed in the animations *On the Pike's Shoulders* (*Hauen harteilla*, 2004), *Päiviö's Feast* (*Päiviön pidot*, 1995), *The Rune Box* (*Riimurasia*, 1994), and *The Feather Gown* (*Sulkapuku*, 2004). What are the visual and narrative elements used to construct the persona of the North? And what kind of identity and ethos do these animations permit from the perspective of the central characters? We will seek to address these questions by exploring the stories in these animations and their interpretive processes. We will examine the plots from the perspective of how events are initiated, how places and locations change, the 'now' of the stories, and the construction in the narrative of themes related to the concept of the North. Additionally, we will take due note of the motives behind the protagonists' actions and character traits that affect events unfolding in the narrative. The focus will be on the notion of interpretive process (Hall 1997, 15–19) by considering how animated stories overlap with general visual depictions of and stories about the North and images presented throughout our western culture.

At the beginning of the article, we will briefly outline the content of each animation and assess the significance of the locations they present as well as the manner in which those locations are visualised. After this, we will introduce the characters featured in the animations and the ways in which the characters relate to the narrative spaces in which they find themselves. To conclude, we will examine the ways in which different kinds of locations are constructed and conceptualised, and we will consider the role of children's television programmes in contemporary media culture.

children who regularly watch the show ranges from two to nine. One particular feature of the show in its current form is that the producers and presenters were once active viewers of the show in their own childhood. Additionally, the children of many people born in the 1970s have subsequently become regular viewers in the 2000s.

The Four Animations: A Brief Content Outline

The still-picture animation *Riimurasia* takes place in the mountainous landscapes of the far North. The animation tells the story of Jouni, a young Sámi boy, as he journeys with the reindeer across the fells of Lapland, dizzy as they speed across the hills. Eventually, Jouni finds a Lappish sled; inside the sled he finds the rune box, and inside that there is a hidden treasure. When he wakes up, ready to return home, he gets lost and soon realises that the hilly landscape has changed and seems somehow strange. In a hollow in the side of the mountain, he finds a little cabin where he can spend the night. The people in the cabin warn Jouni of a group of gold diggers who would make a racket at night. That night, Jouni encounters the group of men, who are all interested in the rune box and the treasures inside it. Jouni hides inside a bearskin hanging on the wall and, disguised as a bear, scares the men and sends them on their way. To thank him, the people in the cabin give Jouni a reindeer, which he can ride all the way home. Once he returns home, Jouni becomes a reindeer herd, starts a family, and becomes a very good storyteller. [Figs. 1–2.]

In the still-picture animation entitled *On the Pike's Shoulders*, a boy named Pekka goes to visit a mystical witch doctor in order to fetch medicine to help his sister, who is seriously ill. He travels through an underwater world, a deserted island, and the arid tundra, and on his way he encounters a pike, a deer, and an eagle. The animals set Pekka a series of tasks; each time he successfully completes a task, he receives useful advice about his journey. Eventually, Pekka reaches the witch doctor and is given the healing potion to take home. His sister recovers and will no longer have to join her father in the starry sky. [Fig. 3.]

In *Päiviö's Feast*, a young reindeer herd named Päiviö finds a good campsite in the fells at *Pyhätunturi* (*Pyhä Fell*), where he sets up camp and falls asleep. While he is asleep, Päiviö is tied up by the earth spirits. They carry him back to their underground kingdom, where Päiviö meets Maaria, a young woman under the spell of the earth spirits. Päiviö manages to resist the earth spirits' attempts to bring him under their spell and eventually escapes their underground world. Still, he cannot forget Maaria. Almost by accident, he finds a gap at the bottom of a pond in the tundra and sees the earth spirits' crystal chandeliers shining through it. Päiviö manages to pull Maaria free through the gap in the tundra pond. Päiviö and Maaria begin to herd the reindeer together and have lots of children. [Figs. 4–5.]

In the animation *The Feather Gown*, a village is caught in the grip of famine, as an unknown black figure has stolen all the village's animals. A young boy,

Taneli, cannot bear to watch his family's distress and decides to leave the village in search of the animals. On his journey, he finds a magic feather, which he can use to fly north in the form of an owl. On the way, he encounters the daughters of dusk, the sons of the northern lights, and a series of rocky rapids. He finds the village's animals stranded on an uninhabited island on the other side of the rapids. Taneli releases the animals and travels home with them. Soon the villagers can put food on their tables and the streets are once again filled with the sound of children's laughter. [Fig. 6.]

The Empirical and Mythical North

The animated stories depict two northern locations, which we will describe as the empirical and the mythical North. The empirical North refers to the everyday North inhabited by real people. In these stories, the empirical North is associated with a real-life everyday reality defined by family, home, relationships, livelihoods, and humans' interaction with their surrounding environments. The significance of empirical spaces is created biographically within the timeframe of people's – in this instance, the characters in the stories – actions, deeds, and experiences (Karjalainen 2004, 59–65; 2008, 16–18; Relph 1986).

In these stories, the empirical North is situated in and around the home and its immediate vicinity. For instance, the animation *Päiviö's Feast* depicts *Pyhätunturi* (*Pyhä Fell*), an existing geographical location in Finnish Lapland. The events depicted in *The Rune Box* are also situated in the fells of Lapland. The visual worlds of both animations feature collectively recognisable items associated with northern locations, including fells, lassoes, reindeer, sleds, and traditional Sámi costumes. In particular, the reindeer and reindeer herding are considered symbolic of the traditional Sámi cultures and as examples of a way of life adapted to suit the Arctic environment (Valkonen 2003, 20). Central to the notion of the empirical North is that in these still-picture animations, the harmony of day-to-day life, everyday forms of life, and ways of life adapted to the surrounding environment are questioned as a result of various threats, such as disease or famine.

In the empirical North, the protagonist of the story is intrinsically linked to a real environment. For instance, in *The Rune Box*, the narrator says: "Jouni had been hunting in the fells for three days, but still he had caught nothing. The temperature had dropped further and night was approaching when Jouni finally set off on his way home." In this way, the empirical North is defined as a concrete, material space in which the characters seem to belong to an empirical location and which gradually becomes part of the character's experiential world,

emotions, and location-specific interpretation (cf. Karjalainen 1997, 235; Tuan 1977, 8–11; Relph 1986).

As a space, the empirical North could also be seen as the starting point for the events in the story, a place from which the plot gradually moves towards the mythical North. The term 'mythical North' refers to a depiction of a place that helps us better understand different aspects of nature and reality (cf. Fiske 1996). Myths give us models about how cosmos is structured and what human's place is there. They highlight the themes like origins, limits, secrets and future. Interpretations and applications of myths vary from one epoch to another, but their structures and deductive methods are cross-historical in terms of their inertia (Knuuttila 2010, 16). In these stories, the mythical North is depicted with the use of the worlds of fantasy and belief, in which places, ages, people, and other beings do not directly represent reality. Typical of the mythical North is the notion of omnipotence: the heroes and their adversaries are omnipotent for the forces of both good and bad.

The concept of the mythical North is closely related to the idea of the metaphor, whereby northern nature, landscape and reality are depicted using some secondary element or visual figures of speech (cf. Forceville 1996). For instance, in the animation *On the Pike's Shoulders* the house of eternal darkness is an embodiment of people's fears and illness, and, within the framework of the story, forms a contrast to the light, safe lakeside landscapes of the empirical North. The house of eternal darkness, seen as an opposing force to the light of the lakeside landscape, creates narrative tension in which the real world is questioned while at the same time being portrayed as an ideal living environment, a counterbalance to the images of threats from the fictitious world. These animations also contain ideas of possible worlds (cf. Ryan 1991) in which, through the use of fiction, the real world can appear in a new light and in which real and fictive worlds and the relationships between them are explored and thematised.

As they are portrayed in these animations, the empirical North and the mythical North are not opposites of each other and do not represent separate spaces, rather they define one another and are intrinsically linked to one another in various ways. Neither is the North conceptualised as standing in opposition to the South, as is the case in the traditions of cultural research and in the centre-periphery model (cf. Savolainen 1995, 7–35; Voigt 2002, 42–49), rather it is always viewed in relation to other internal elements within the North. The North of these still-picture animations is at once an exciting stage where strange events take place and a cosy, familiar back garden. The nature and landscape of the North is also depicted in the stories as diverse and changing with the seasons. The stories intertwine and explore the perspectives

of different-aged people and of both men and women on the empirical and mythical North, as they see it. In the blink of an eye, the everyday, empirical North can change, becoming an unfamiliar and frightening North in which strange figures and events take over. Conversely, the protagonists can easily return from the fantasy world of the mythical North to their home territory.

Movement between the places of the empirical and the mythical North occurs as a series of transitions. In *Päiviö's Feast*, the transition from the familiar North to the unknown mythical North sets in motion a process that denies Päiviö his freedom. The next morning, Päiviö wakes up to find himself tied up at his campsite. He has the sensation of "countless hands holding him up and carrying him slowly into a dark room." The earth spirits transport Päiviö from his snow-covered campsite to their underground chambers. A similar point of transition from the empirical to the mythical North is the pond in the tundra through which Päiviö rescues his friend Maaria from the underworld at the end of the story [Fig. 5].

The transition of Jouni, the protagonist of the animation *The Rune Box*, from an empirical to a mythical space occurs in stages: the familiar, safe landscape of the fells gradually changes into something altogether unfamiliar and strange. Although the landscapes around him are, at least in theory, familiar to a certain degree, they seem somewhat strange, and, from the perspective of everyday reality, a number of 'weird' things occur, like sudden appearance and disappearance of the reindeer with golden horns. This story appeals to the collective experience of those who have ever gone hiking in the fells: a landscape that always looks the same can suddenly seem strange and even threatening if you get lost. In this story, the mythical North is seen as both a topophobic and a topophilic place (cf. Tuan 1990, 93, 247). Primarily, in this instance, the mythical North refers to the strong emotional bond between humans and location, the sense that a place is one's own, a place where calm and peace can thrive. On the other hand, the mythical North is portrayed as a variety of negative emotions, such as fear, associated with that place.

In the animations *The Feather Gown* and *On the Pike's Shoulders*, the North is seen as a destination, somewhere the characters travel once they leave home. The home and the far-away North are clearly defined as separate places. In these two animations, the area around the home or the local village is the stage that initiates the events and where they come to an end. For instance, in *On the Pike's Shoulders* Pekka leaves the safety of his home behind him and travels through various underwater regions towards the stone mountain and through the thicket towards the house of darkness [see Fig. 3]. The story demonstrates that the further one progresses from home and the closer one travels to the North, the more difficult the terrain and arduous the journey become. The story

also highlights the double theme linked to our experience of home: the need to leave and the need to stay (cf. Karjalainen 1999, 85). The North of the story in *Sulkapuku* is also a place the characters reach by travelling far away from home. The protagonist Taneli travels in the form of an owl, flying for many days through unknown regions.

In both *The Feather Gown* and *On the Pike's Shoulders*, the North is defined as a place that is hard to reach, indeed, as a place one can only reach with the help of animals. This North, hard to reach and full of treacherous terrain, is defined in these stories as the extreme North, a place where the bravery and skills of the protagonists will be put to the test. The extreme North, a place at the ends of the Earth, also provides help for the problems faced by communities in the stories, be they famine (as in *The Feather Gown*) or sickness (as in *On the Pike's Shoulders*). These stories reveal themes similar to those in shamanistic travel stories, in which the shaman, in the face of great danger and difficulty, travels with the help of animals high and low to find solutions to the problems faced by the community (cf. Siikala 1994; Pentikäinen 1995; Pentikäinen 2006). The island behind the bubbling rapids in *The Feather Gown* has clear overtones with the poetics of the journey to the underworld (*tuonela*) in Finnish mythology. Indeed, the bleak and treacherous rocky terrain in *On the Pike's Shoulders* refers to the depictions of mountains in mythical Finnish topography (cf. Siikala 2002, 20–22).

Both *On the Pike's Shoulders* and *The Feather Gown* are journey stories in that it is impossible to draw any clear topography of where the North starts and where it ends. In *The Feather Gown*, the North is depicted through the theme of being continually on the move. The journey, and thus the destination in the North as well, consists of a number of steps and challenges through which the protagonist solves the basic questions of existence, such as sickness, well-being, and humans' place in the world. In this sense, the mythical North reflects features familiar from the mythical regions of Finnish and Scandinavian mythology, including descriptions of the difficulties encountered on the path leading to the other world and adversaries capable of metamorphosis, such as supernatural animals (cf. Siikala 1994, 144; 2002).

In these stories, the transitions from the home to the North or from the empirical to the mythical North are challenging both geographically and from the protagonist's perspective. Numerous transformations occur between these places, some of which involve the protagonist changing from a human form to an animal form. The tasks and challenges encountered in the empirical, everyday North appear as human challenges in that it is acceptable and, indeed, necessary to seek help with them, as is the case with sickness and famine. Conversely, in the parts of the stories set in the mythical North, the protagonist addresses existential

problems and the universal ethical and moral questions that affect humanity as a whole. These stories are essentially progressive, as they offer a problem-solving model and, through this, the possibility of controlling the situation at hand. They do not, however, remove culturally embedded conflicts and do not deny the existence of semantic binaries, such as this world vs. the other world, human vs. supernatural, etc. (cf. Greimas 1980, 241–242). What these stories do is provide a solution to how we can live with and resolve these conflicts.

In the two stories that begin firmly rooted in the empirical North, *Päiviö's Feast* and *The Rune Box*, the protagonist enters the mythical North against his will. These transitions into the mythical North are unpleasant for both protagonists, despite their apparent bravery. However, in the stories dealing explicitly with the motif of the journey into the mythical North, *The Feather Gown* and *On the Pike's Shoulders*, the protagonist undertakes the journey of his own volition. In this way, a bond is established between the mythical North and the hero of the story: the North is needed so that the community or an individual can overcome adversity.

Because the North of these stories belongs to the past, the sphere of influence between nature, humans, and culture is very close, indeed. These still-picture animations strengthen the stereotypical view that a fundamental part of the Sámi –and, indeed, the northern Finnish – ethnic identity is a special relationship with nature and a universal understanding of the importance of fishing, hunting, and reindeer herding as livelihoods (cf. Pennanen 2000, 13–16; Pentikäinen 1995; 2006). In comparison to the realities of contemporary life in the North, these stories demonstrate the ways in which regions, places, and ways of life have changed through time and how people living in the same geographical place nowadays live in very different social and environmental spaces from people who lived a hundred years ago (cf. Valkonen 2005, 17). We postulate that, in these animations, the empirical and the mythical North are constructed through the active relationships between the characters: in these stories, place is constructed via a network of practical, local, historically shifting interaction, which also features, in addition to practical considerations, an ethical consideration of place and nature (cf. Macnaghten and Urry 1998). In particular, places are constructed through the protagonists' personal experiences and are manifested as homesteads, peat-bogs, fells. This, in essence, relates to the transferral of cultural understanding and the process of constructing northern locations as expressed through these animations.

Complex Character Gallery

The northern people presented in these animations are not simply reindeer herders, hunters, and wives, rather they have many roles and characteristics that are brought to life in different places and in a number of ways. The North is a place populated not only by people and animals but also by a variety of fantasy creatures.

In these stories, a character can change form during the course of a tale: for instance, in the empirical North, the protagonist can first appear as a playful little boy, while as he moves towards the mythical North he turns into a hero with the supernatural skills necessary for the various stages of the journey. In *The Feather Gown*, the boy turns into an owl, speaks with animals, resolves their problems, answers questions, and immediately begins to doubt his own powers. The transition from an empirical space to a mythical space opens up a variety of action spaces and possibilities for the protagonist. Particularly in the case of the hero-agent role, these stories involve, in line with the basic universal mythological schema, magical skills and the ability to overcome physical and psychological obstacles (cf. Campbell 1990, 34). Adventures of this kind symbolise the process of finding one's identity and the dangers and difficulties involved in developing oneself. The hero is also momentarily identified as a societal part of the mythical world (therefore, one outside the empirical world) (cf. Tasker 1993, 148). The function of myths is, after all, to provide solutions with which to address the fundamental conflicts of our culture. Such conflicting binaries include life/death, close/far, North/South, sickness/health, happiness/unhappiness, nature/culture (Lévi-Strauss 1972). The protagonists in these stories provide solutions to these matters that afflict both the individual and society at large.

The protagonists in these stories are courageous, wise, and decisive boys and young men, and they represent professions and games traditionally viewed in our western culture as masculine. They possess knowledge, intuition, and the will power to act for the good of the community. The supporting characters in these stories also represent a wealth of different masculine roles, including wise old men, groups of gold diggers, and male relatives. The stories strengthen the notion of male agency and provide the characters with masculine action spaces.

Although the spectrum of locations featured in these stories reflects the traditional division into feminine and masculine spaces – by, for instance, making the female characters dependent on the male heroes and in need of their help –, the counterbalance to masculinity in these stories is not only, however, the stereotypical damsel in distress. These stories present an array of different

kinds of female characters who are by turns plotting, active, wilful, and determined. For instance, the most important supporting character in *Päiviö's Feast* is Maaria, the girl who has been taken prisoner by the earth spirits against her will. She represents several attributes in the story: she is a victim, the unhappy prisoner of the earth spirits who must be helped, but she is also a sprightly character eager to seize the moment. She warns Päiviö not to eat from the earth spirits' table and asks him to set her free. As he rescues her, she shows her contempt and anger at her captors, shouting: "Farewell, dismal, mouldy cave!" Once she has been rescued and returned to the empirical North to live by Päiviö's side herding the reindeer, her outward appearance changes from that of a threadbare, dainty girl to a young woman in traditional Sámi costume.

The trolls depicted in *Päiviö's Feast* are mostly women; they are by nature irascible, cunning, slightly stupid, badly behaved, and define themselves more through a group identity than as individuals. The troll women are also portrayed as seducers and plotters and as governing a variety of social spaces, for instance as housewives. Thus the stories do not construct simple femininity–masculinity binaries (cf. Butler 1990), rather the protagonist's characteristics and process of development are shaped using a variety of subsidiary characters. Moreover, female characters are not essentialised, i.e. their character traits are not seen as innate or inherent. For instance, they are not only care-givers or in need of help (cf. Chodorow 1989, 7–8, 148–53).

Other figures helping to define the protagonists are animals, such as elks, reindeer, owls, as well as stones (for instance a pile of stones) and plants (such as spruce trees). The stories feature a variety of wild animals that help and test the main characters. They carry the protagonists from one place to another; they give advice and provide the characters with items they will need on their journeys (a jacket, a feather, magic words). They also test the protagonist's skills and bravery. Conversely, the characters' pets in these stories remain in the background, almost as nothing but props on the stage upon which other events take place. A dog may bark at a character's feet or a horse whinny in its harness as the focus shifts to the protagonist's actions. Pets serve as symbols and credible criteria of the empirical location. When the protagonist receives heroic characteristics, he generally also receives animals to help him and to assess his actions. Indeed, these stories are filled with echoes of beliefs regarding animal spirits and animals of the soul common in Sámi mythology and, to a greater extent, the shamanistic worldview. An animal spirit protects its own kind and people who rely upon it, whereas an animal of the soul is believed to represent an animal incarnation of the human soul (Pentikäinen 1995, 89–90; Pentikäinen 2006).

These stories contain a wide variety of fairytale fantasy characters, including trolls, the daughters of dusk, the sons of the northern lights, a black-cloaked

figure, and a witch doctor. They all have special powers that they either bequeath the protagonists or use against them. The awareness of the continued presence of these figures in the empirical world is characteristic of traditions in and among northern cultures and peoples (Valkonen 2003, 19). This gallery of characters and animals and the lively depiction of nature points to common Sámi beliefs, an animistic worldview, and the symbolism of witches' drums, all of which do not place humans at the centre of the universe (cf. Helander 2000; Pentikäinen 1987).

As represented in these stories, the border between humans and supernatural beings is constantly shifting. Protagonists can have supernatural abilities, or abilities that can be seen as such, for instance the ability to change form (*The Feather Gown*) or to speak with animals (*Hauen harteilla*). Subsidiary characters or adversaries may be figures that look like humans, though who, by virtue of their individual skills, are non-human (*Päiviö's Feast*, *The Feather Gown*). These stories portray a model of diverse interaction and a network of relationships, and they provide a dualistic image of the family. In the empirical North, the families in these stories consist primarily of parents and children as well as close relatives, both living and deceased. The family model presented in the empirical North could be called a traditional family, an institution, normalised by the relationship between man and wife and which includes children and close relatives (Nicholson 1997, 28–29, 31). This notion of the family belongs very firmly to a pre-industrialised era, to the institutions of the 19th century, its structures and ways of thinking, and to a religious worldview (Einonen and Karonen 2002, 7, 12). In addition to the family relationships between people, these stories depict a number of totemistic families established between humans and animals. For instance, in the story *On the Pike's Shoulders*, the witch doctor's sons are an eagle, a deer, and a pike. Alongside this he has help from a beaver breathing medicinal steam from his nostrils and the black dogs guarding the house. The stories present variations on the lost forms of social relationships that stress the various bonds between humans and animals, men and women. The nuclear family relations of the everyday, empirical North are thus varied in the mythical North.

The Northern Ethos

In our article, we have posited that, in children's fiction, location is constructed as both empirical and mythical spaces that often overlap with one another and between which a number of transitional stages establish themselves. We have also demonstrated how the empirical and mythical places

are constructed in these stories using three levels of localisation. These places are seen primarily as the 'now' of the story; secondly, they may be places to which the characters in the story aspire or destinations, and, thirdly, they may be constructed through a series of ongoing processes.

The story of *Riimurasia*, as quoted at the beginning of the paper, reveals that a place can be both strange and somehow familiar: places are constructed using widely recognisable visual and narrative elements, though given places may contain specific features that are only recognisable within a given cultural environment. In these stories, the models of place and identity grow partly from collective stories such as fairytales, myths and beliefs. The repertoire of northern places and identities are also affected by the concrete meanings attached to a place, for instance, fells, streams, sleds, as well as by various mental significances, such as notions regarding animals and the power of nature, attributes often associated with the North.

The dominant media helps to construct a global, homogenous children's media culture, represented, for instance, in Disney animations. The still-picture animations that we have examined here, however, belong to a culturally and geographically specific place and make full use of the imagery, themes, and language of the Finnish tradition. The experience of watching still-picture animations produces cultural memory (cf. Sturken and Cartwright 2009), which is passed from one generation to the next and which enables the construction of a locally rooted identity.

Places, locations and empirical spaces are both socially and culturally shaped; they are constantly being constructed and reconstructed through different visual performances, manners of speech, and rhetorical strategies (cf. Savolainen 2002, 40). The still-picture animations at the focus of this article help create cultural continuity and generally shared meanings attached to our understanding of the North. In this respect, the animations provide the keys to an understanding of the temporal and thematic changes in culture by presenting in a comprehensible form beliefs about specific places and forms of life, as well as the role these beliefs play in people's lives. Understanding the diversity of northern cultural associations educates (young) viewers and prepares them for encounters with the diversity found in different multicultural settings (cf. Timonen 2005).

At the same time, as these animations reflect culture in their own age, they are also imbued with the history of our understanding of the structure of the world and of humans' role within it, as cultural structures change in line with the structures of society. In this manner, the long waves of the past, as it were, 'flush' the thoughts and beliefs of the viewing public even as they live in the modern age, in the historical present (Knuuttila 1994, 24). A child sitting in

front of a television screen watching an animation is like a child sitting protected in a tent, gazing at the endlessness of the night sky through the chinks in the tent seams, surrounded by recognisable familial relationships and a map of images shared by society at large. The twinkle of the stars or the continuous provision of television programmes is like an endless chain of variations, the beginning and end of which no single viewer or producer can know. The makers of still-picture animations on television shape new stories using the material they have to hand and the expressions and subjects of a tradition that already exists. It is for this reason that those in charge of producing stories about the North and who oversee the ways in which such stories are produced, can have a direct impact on the kind of worldview and values that we attach to the North.

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List of Films (Still-picture animations)

Riimurasia (The Rune Box). 1993. In the series *Aarteet (Treasure)*. Pictures: Maileena Kurkinen, Text: Eija Timonen. Editor: Anna-Liisa Kirsi. Finnish Broadcasting Television. Yle. Channel 2, Lastenohjelmat (Children's Programmes).

Päiviön pidot (Päiviö's Feast). 1994. In the series *Maahiset (Trolls)*. Pictures: Maileena Kurkinen, Text: Eija Timonen. Editor: Anna-Liisa Kirsi. Finnish Broadcasting Television. Yle. Channel 2, Lastenohjelmat (Children's Programmes).

Hauen harteilla (On the Pike's Shoulders). 2004. In the series *Käsikäpälässä (Hand in Pawn)*. Text: Eija Timonen, Pictures: Pirkko-Liisa Surojegin. Editor: Anna-Liisa Kirsi, Producer: Jukka Nurminen. Finnish Broadcasting Television. Yle. Channel 2, Lastenohjelmat (Children's Programmes).

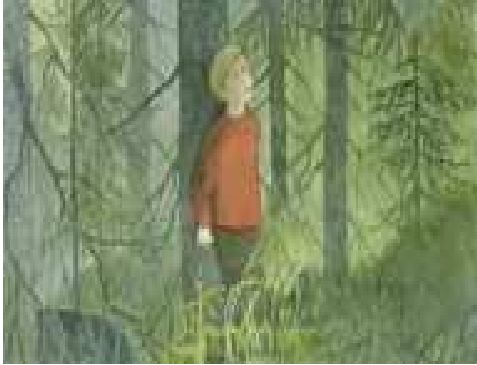
Sulkapuku (The Feather Gown). 2004. In the series *Käsikäpälässä (Hand in Pawn)*. Text: Eija Timonen, Pictures: Pirkko-Liisa Surojegin. Editor: Anna-Liisa Kirsi, Producer: Jukka Nurminen. Finnish Broadcasting Television. Yle. Channel 2, Lastenohjelmat (Children's Programmes).

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Figures 5–6. Maileena Kurkinen: Päiviö rescues Maaria in *Päiviön pidot* (*Päiviö's Feast*, 1994), Maileena Taneli Kurkinen: crossing the bridge in *Sulkapuku* (*Feather Gown*, 2004).

