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Kari Paakkunainen

Tauno Saarela

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PERSONIFYING POLITICS AND POLITICIZING PERSONS

Kari Paakkunainen and Tauno Saarela
University of Helsinki

Since the 1950s and 1960s, Western political science has promoted two myths. The first is the belief that the human sciences must follow the methodology of the natural sciences and employ the same truth conditions. This belief is a myth precisely because it is not possible in any science to begin from axioms about method and truth that are self-grounding or self-justifying. Rather, the validity of any statement in any science depends on its context. An attempt to write about any science without presuppositions would fail, because all meaningful statements have a deep linguistic history, and the interpretation of their meaning is an "endless task."¹ The other myth is that the classic texts of "political theory" are an actual historical tradition purveying meaning and significance across the generations; moreover that this is "A Great Discussion" continuing from philosophers of antiquity to modern political scientists, biographers and parliamentarians. But this belief is also a myth, precisely because the alleged tradition is in fact constituted retrospectively and analytically by academic writers who create it in the present but project it into the past.²

LANGUAGE AS A MEDIUM

An essential part of linguistic theory in modern hermeneutics is the proposition that language is a universal medium within which we understand ourselves and the world. We do this by using various perspectives and narratives, more specifically by using a variety of rhetorical styles and conventions. As a medium, language should not be understood as a strait jacket, but as inter-subjective semantic relations which make understanding possible but also limit it. Hans-Georg Gadamer expressed this aphoristically: ". . . [Be]ing that can be understood is language . . . [I]n language the reality beyond every individual consciousness becomes visible."³ There is no special test for objectivity; almost every narration has something to do with truth. This holds good for scientific, ideological and other narratives, all of which have their own special perspectives. Textual interpretations are always

part of some larger discussion and a dialogue of question and answer.

Thus there is a politics of interpretation or narration in biography. But this does not imply that we can necessarily identify narrative projects with specific political activities. There may be differences between intellectual and political narratives. The activity of narration becomes clearly political at the moment when the narrator claims authority over rival interpreters of events or personalities. Narrative constructions, including biographical ones, have specific functions in society and for the state. It is easy to see that in a highly bureaucratic state or in a totalitarian society the real enemy of meaning is the linguistic realm of "executive orders," "legal regulations," and "the party line."⁴

It is also true, however, that the identification of political options and the struggle to achieve them require meaningful narrations. These narratives legitimate the activities of political groups and the state itself.⁵ Politically relevant stories and popular tales are instrumental in persuading people and in motivating them to action. These narrative structures have to be familiar and inspiring. Here we have the possibility of political biography.

STORIES IN POLITICS

In this article we are inquiring into the conditions and methods of production of a special kind of biography, the political biography. There are numerous biographies—studies, popular books and articles—of Urho Kekkonen (1900-86) and Otto Ville Kuusinen (1881-1964), two "grand old men" of Finnish politics. Our problem is not to inquire into "what they really did," but rather to interpret the basic structures of these biographical accounts. In literary terms our inquiry asks, "What is the narrator's angle of vision?" "How does the narrator see the subject of study?" "How does the narrator present the biographical subject as a composite of available materials?"⁶ We have made problematic the relationship between narrative construction and political power.

URHO KEKKONEN

Although Kekkonen was the most influential Finnish politician after the Second World War, and although almost ten years have elapsed since he resigned the presidency, we are still awaiting a political biography. Politicians and scholars have so far concentrated on fragments, periods or aspects of his life-history. Yet there are many biographies of older politicians that refer to Kekkonen's life. Generally these narratives are very dull and

tautological.⁷ "Kekkonen and I" predominates in these presentations. They are rife with hindsight; and terms associated with Kekkonen, such as the "K-network" of old friends, "Kekkonen's heritage," "Kekkonen's political line," etc., are widely used.

Because Finnish political culture during the 1960s and 1970s became so strongly—we could even claim totally—identified with Kekkonen, political history is almost necessarily a history of Kekkonen. It is impossible to become detached from this. Kekkonen's contemporaries lived in the "era of one man's country."⁸ Kekkonen's political line was a doctrine of one man, and as he became older he began to repeat himself; then doctrine became liturgy. In literary terms we could express this as a transition from political narrative to textual icon. Stories have their transitive symbols and metaphors, but an icon is stable and independent; it has no need to refer to anything outside itself. Kekkonen's doctrine had its catechism and canons of interpretation, especially for the Paasikivi-Kekkonen policy, the Mutual Assistance Pact and the European Security Conference.⁹

The politically active generations of the 1960s and 1970s were socialized in the spirit of those authoritative doctrines. These generations supported the functions of the Finnish welfare state, but Kekkonen's étatism threatened their idealism. That is why the political biographies and assessments of Kekkonen's days in power are often schizophrenic. Many stories continue Kekkonen's history, mentioning the stable results produced by the "masterly Kekkonen," and his political strategy is known as the "art of the possible."

But criticisms of Kekkonen are still very undeveloped. For example, two important politicians of the Center Party, Johannes Virolainen and Ahti Karjalainen, potential but failed heirs to Kekkonen, have altered their views of the period. Karjalainen's assessment has features of a classical stroke of retaliation. He experienced a deception practiced on him by Kekkonen, and he retaliated by revealing certain delicate matters in Kekkonen's past. Virolainen has also distanced himself from Kekkonen. There are some indirect criticisms in his early writings, but his recent extensive autobiographical texts are explicitly critical.¹⁰ He tells of a rational and powerful statesman, Kekkonen, but uses his method of presentation to reveal the "weak side" of Kekkonen's "personality." Power networks appeared "secretive" and undemocratic; the "grand old man" was "capricious," "maneuvering," "unpredictable"—all those terms imply a feeling of disrespect and a judgment of inconsistency. Virolainen uses the same negative categories when he interprets the experiences of the 1960s and 1970s. His narrative is different from that of the

members of Kekkonen's political court. When a former foreign minister, Keijo Korhonen, deals with Kekkonen's weaknesses, he is forced to invert the course of his story, and he has difficulty getting a view of anything "painful" about Kekkonen.¹¹ But where are the critical intellectuals such as journalists and researchers who would stand at some distance from the étatist rulers of Finland? The intellectual and literary elite of Finland is remarkably small, and almost everyone knows everyone else. Everyone who has written something about Kekkonen—whether biographies or important articles—has had a role in Kekkonen's political networks. Some writers have been political opponents, but there are very few who could claim to be independent observers—perhaps only four or five people altogether. It is typical but regrettable that women are absent as interpreters of Kekkonen's career. It also seems to be very difficult for writers to keep any intellectual distance. To write of Kekkonen is to write of yourself. Paradoxically we are able to say that every Finn has her or his own Kekkonen.

In spite of Kekkonen's centrality in Finnish political life, writers and political commentators in Finland have long tried to avoid interpreting his life and times, especially during the 1960s and 1970s. Kekkonen's inner circle, above all his relatives, have interfered with research. An essential way to regulate the "economy of power" is to hide the documents. The Foundation for Presidential Archives in Orimattila allows only very few "trusted" people a right of access.¹² In the 1970s political scientists in Finland developed three research projects with public support. Two projects were associated with aspects of democracy and equality in Finnish political culture (the so-called DETA and TANDEM projects), and one concentrated on assessing the responsiveness of the Finnish political system (known as the RESPO project). DETA and RESPO avoided a study of Kekkonen's peculiar powers in politics; but the Marxists' TANDEM study construed the whole political history of Finland in terms of Kekkonen's political biography.¹³ For Marxists, too, the Kekkonen story was the foundation of Finnish history!

At the end of the 1960s and 1970s many conservatives considered Kekkonen too radical because of his "new left" contacts and opinions, which were in fact very few. But one of his contemporaries wrote in his diary: "The radicalization of Urho Kekkonen is an optical illusion; he seems to be transforming because he is not transforming in any way. The time is changing. And Kekkonen is the same radical and observer of the time as always before."¹⁴ But how is this stability in the Kekkonen story possible? One important but not complete answer is that Soviet

foreign policy demanded a very clearly and strongly personified authority in neighboring countries such as Finland. But another answer concerns the historical constitution of this personal authority. It is possible to distinguish five phases in the construction of the Kekkonen story.

(I) Oral Tales (1944-1956)

This was a time of orally circulated stories, tales and jokes. Kekkonen's whole personality was considered; tales associated with his drinking and sexual promiscuity, for example, were very popular. Kekkonen's own circle tried to interpret these stories in as favorable a light as possible (regarding them as tales of remarkable virility, for example). Political adversaries told of "weaknesses" and "inconsistency," suggesting that Kekkonen was an ambitious player lacking nationalist values and loyalty to close associates.

(II) *É*tatist Struggle (1956-1962)

This was a time of "anniversary publications" and internationally circulated stories, after Kekkonen's election to the presidency in 1956. The inner circle published a *Festschrift* for the 60-year-old Kekkonen, a book of twenty essays which promulgated the first and perhaps the most influential biographical narratives.¹⁵ In these carefully constructed myths we find the basic symbols of modern Finnish democracy. But academic contributors adopted the empirical orientation of "progressive" American social science, and certain aspects of Kekkonen's life were transformed in popular terms: "In Kekkonen we get a feeling of large forests . . . and the clear realism of the farmer."¹⁶

(III) Kekkonen As Initiator (1962-1970)

Kekkonen's initiative and authority in foreign policy were reflected in other areas of Finnish political life. New social problems and the modern welfare state changed Finnish reality very rapidly, and Kekkonen had an essential role in this. Kekkonen did not hesitate, but rapidly conceptualized new political strategies and coalitions of forces in Finnish politics. His authority made it possible for him to synthesize his own project with the larger project of modernization.

(IV) The Icon (1970-1981)

Kekkonen continued as the authoritative story-teller, and others had to follow his lead. During the 1970s he appeared as president of all Finnish people, but he also intervened in the research undertaken by social scientists into the legitimation of the Paasikivi-Kekkonen policy and into his part in constructing the great narrative of Finnish history.

(V) Narrative Inheritance (1981-Present)

Under President Mauno Koivisto's so-called "low profile" style of government, Finns are becoming accustomed to parliamentary rules and to pluralist and other more "open" narratives about politics. Criticism of Kekkonen's authority is increasing, but academic contributions to this reassessment have remained fragmentary.



Among literary authorities it is usual to analyze texts according to the method of presentation chosen by the writer, the so-called narrative self. Using this technique we can identify six types of narratives about Kekkonen.

(I) Narrative "Selves": "I" and "WE"

Most narratives in this class are dull and full of well-known anecdotes. Only a few strong players near Kekkonen (e.g. Arvo Korsimo) and among his opponents (e.g. Väinö Leskinen) have anything worthwhile to tell. We need the same kind of independence in biographies that we are able to find in the diaries of interesting authors (e.g. Matti Kurjensaari).

(II) Texts Written By Imaginary "Selves"

This rhetoric or style, employed mostly by Finnish intellectuals, makes it possible to humanize Kekkonen in an intimate but critical way. Kyösti Skyttä was one of the first to write "Kekkonen-fiction." His *If the President Could Keep A Diary* is enjoyable to read, as it is a fictitious diary purportedly written by a liberal intellectual, and it reflects Kekkonen's supposed every-day life in terms of his personality, contacts, and feelings. In his book *Oisko Maata Armaampaa* (the title is a line from a Finnish national

song), Skyttä fictionalized the presidential role, and dealt with most political problems in Finland fifteen years later. One of the most popular Finnish novelists, Paavo Haavikko, has addressed similar problems in his book *The Course of the Nation*, in which he creates a fictional history of an unknown country. In a paradoxical style, he presents Finnish wisdom—or a lack of it—and succeeds in maintaining his literary distance. Jörn Donner has written a fictitious diary of a president's mistress. This throws light, in an original way, on the intimate world of the "president," and it is no accident that the diary deals with a mysterious foundation which guards presidential documents. Kalle Kultala, a photographer, has published Kekkonen as *One of the Fates*. Like texts and narratives, pictures can be interpreted, too.

(III) The Observing Or Objective "Self": Popular Contributions

This class of books is very large, and the writers' abilities are varying. These writings, like the Finnish tradition of political biography, are very nationalist, but then so is the national culture.

(IV) The Observing Or Objective "Self": Contributions From Academic "Courtiers"

During the last three decades several books on Finnish foreign policy and the so-called official line have been published, and in those writings political scientists have traced Kekkonen's personal contributions. A member of Kekkonen's social network, Ari Uino, has written a dissertation on Kekkonen's youth. The book is full of interesting anecdotes discovered in the mysterious presidential archives. The basic metaphor of the work is Kekkonen's "organic development or growth" in political and social matters, so the young Kekkonen is portrayed as continuously widening his knowledge and abilities. This nationalist picture of Kekkonen is complete when we read in Uino's biography how Kekkonen linked together the positive ideas of the 1920s and 1930s—democracy, equality, nationalism and criticism of upper-class culture.

Juhani Suomi, the other researcher allowed to use archive material and to write official biography, has completed Uino's work up to 1950. Suomi writes only of the political Kekkonen as revealed in his documents, and he also favours unrhetoical, neutral language, and respects diplomatic and other conventions. It is no surprise that interesting breaks and reorientations in Kekkonen's career are missing. Yrjö Hakanen, a member of the

extreme left in Finland, has written essays on Kekkonen's ideology, but he has problems with hindsight, too. As in the TANDEM study there are no real political conflicts in Kekkonen's and Finland's history.

(V) The Observing Or Objective "Self":
Contributions From University Academics

Almost all of the academic contributors to the literature on Kekkonen place his story within the étatist culture of Finnish politics. But the most important difficulty with this approach concerns their inability to take up a position at all distant from their subject. In general we are able to claim that in Finland the left-wing and liberal contributors are better at putting some distance between themselves and the power struggles of Kekkonen's era than the nationalists or anti-nationalists. An international method of presentation for an international audience is the surest guarantee of a writer's distance. The early work of the Norwegian-born American Peter Krosby on "Kekkonen's Policy" is the best example of this orientation.

But an international context does not necessarily mean that historical evidence and Finnish peculiarities are absent. Osmo Apunen, for example, has two ways of considering the Kekkonen's years in politics: the perspective of international politics combined with classical concepts of political science, such as "realism" in the spirit of Niccolò Machiavelli and Heinrich von Treitschke. Apunen has also been an insider in Kekkonen's foreign policy administration. He analyzes, without traditional hindsight and conventional morality, the "unofficial" Kekkonen and the way he used power. Raimo Väyrynen and Harto Hakovirta have written very exact accounts of Kekkonen's role in international politics also.¹⁷ A central problem in many articles and publications by political scientists is their limited audience. In the spirit of Gadamer we could claim that they are "letters written to special friends."¹⁸ Väyrynen, for example, has published an interesting essay, inspired by Gramscian *trasformismo*, on Kekkonen's role in Finnish political culture.¹⁹

NARRATIVES OF OTTO VILLE KUUSINEN

There is only one biography of Kuusinen that deals with his whole life: *Escape to Russia: A Political Biography of Otto Ville Kuusinen*, by the American academic John Hodgson. We have also looked at some seventy-five articles that deal with Kuusinen.²⁰ Most of the articles were written between 1965 and 1975,

because during that period Finland experienced rapid structural change. The predominantly agrarian economy became industrialized; nationalism, a strong influence on Finnish culture since the civil war, became weaker; and communists were no longer excluded politically, but became part of the mainstream.

Approximately 70 percent of the articles were published by communists or in communist forums. Of the twenty-two remaining there are only six academic studies. It is rather odd that only one of them was published in a social-democratic magazine, although Kuusinen was for ten years a notable social-democrat. Instead, it is customary to see Kuusinen in the context of the international communist movement. Of the seventy-five articles, 47 (63 percent) study Kuusinen in that context; 24 (32 percent) see him merely in the Finnish context; and the rest are more general. It has also been customary to write about Kuusinen on anniversaries, so of the articles 33 (45 percent) were published in 1951, 1961, 1971 or 1981, on ten-year anniversaries of his birth. There were 15 articles written by women, among them a book by his ex-wife and two articles by his daughter.

THE SYMBOL OF FINNISH COMMUNISM

Kuusinen is almost always studied in the context of the international communist movement, including his relationship with the Finnish political context. This holds true especially for the official biographical reference books written in the 1930s and 1950s. They presented him "as a communist emigrant" who had "cut himself loose from his old native country."²¹ Or he was the man whom "the Soviet government positioned as head of the Terijoki government that was due to take power in conquered Finland."²²

The significance of these descriptions can be emphasized merely by changing the normal chronological sequence. Biographical reference books tend, above all, to say that having betrayed his native country twice, in 1918 and in 1939, Kuusinen belonged to the Finnish people only through his past. It is possible that Kuusinen is included in these works merely to continue the debate on who really belongs to the Finnish people. In these texts Kuusinen was more the symbol of illegal or excluded Finnish communism than a single person. Works of reference also stress the fact that Kuusinen was not an independent actor in history: "the drift of events took him toward the great fall." This is implied by the expression "the Soviet government appointed him," and is somewhat surprising, because during the 1920s and 1930s the influence of Finnish communists and socialists was over-empha-

sized in order to legitimate their oppression and to activate the extreme right.

THE "EMINENT" KUUSINEN

In this respect the "official" characterizations and the articles written within the Communist party were similar. Kuusinen had never been the chairman of the party, but in the articles written in the late 1940s and early 1950s he is presented as superior to other leaders who had died naturally or in the purges. Kuusinen had risen to leading posts in the Soviet Union and in the Soviet Communist Party, so he was more valuable for the Finnish party than communists who were merely local. These articles did not try to illuminate the history of the Communist party or Kuusinen's life story, although it was important for the party, after legalization in 1944, to demonstrate past success. Rather Kuusinen was promoted by obscuring the actual context; he was presented in relation to the Marxist-Leninist theory of history, not to the history of Finland or Soviet Union.

Accordingly, Kuusinen was called "the most notable theoretician in the labor movement in our country," and "one of the most prominent theoreticians in the international communist movement." As if to give these characterizations more weight, Kuusinen is described as "the distinguished propagandist of the doctrines of Lenin and Stalin" and as "a man who thoroughly knows the doctrines of Lenin and Stalin and applies them creatively." In addition Kuusinen was said to have been "among the first to realize the historic significance of the October Revolution," and "among the foremost to adapt the advice of Lenin and Stalin." "The party of a new type," the communist party, was said to have been founded on his initiative, and he was "the iron helmsman of the Finnish Communist Party." On his 70th birthday Kuusinen was described as "active in the fight for the bolshevization of communist parties, for the Leninist line against various opportunist deviations."²³ Although it is difficult to find as distinct a personality cult in the Finnish Communist Party as in the Soviet Party, where Stalin was glorified, the expressions of sentiment are similar.

But Kuusinen's "eminence" could also be presented indirectly. For example, he "helped" the Finnish communist party in various stages. In the late 1940s and 1950s, when one of the goals of Finnish communists and socialists was the liberalization of relations between Finland and the Soviet Union, Kuusinen is presented as a pioneer in promoting friendship between Finland and the Soviet Union. His participation in the Finnish Peoples'

Deputation in 1918 and in the Terijoki government in 1939 are also viewed in this context, and the contacts between Kuusinen and Russian revolutionaries 1905-18 are further emphasized.²⁴ Among Finnish socialists and communists there were many who remembered Kuusinen as a schoolmate or social-democratic party comrade, not as a star of the communist movement.²⁵ Sulo Wuolijoki, a schoolmate and student comrade, remarked that "under the guidance of Hertta Kuusinen" (Kuusinen's daughter, and a leader in the Finnish communist party), they "should write a biography of Kuusinen in three volumes, each of them consisting of more than two thousand pages." Kuusinen's contemporaries failed to recognize this as a facetious suggestion.

The articles written in the late 1960s and early 1970s, however, were directed towards Finnish society, as old nationalist values weakened. The Finnish People's Democratic League, consisting of communists and socialists, began to cooperate once again with the Social-Democratic Party and the Agrarian Party. In communist articles on Kuusinen this provided all the more reason to write about Kuusinen's life before 1918. Even the fiction published in Karelia, that is in the Soviet Union, described Kuusinen's early work in Finland. In the main, he was still depicted as an important theoretician, "a sower of Marxism" in the Finnish labor movement in the years 1906-8, but he was also presented as the draftsman of a constitution and as a partisan of independence.²⁶ Perhaps more important than the change of context was the fact that a typically Marxist-Leninist use of words tended to drop out of these accounts. So Kuusinen, the newspaperman, could be characterized as "like an old horseman, who presses the shaft of his whip and then, suddenly, lashes—and hard." Metaphors such as "his words were sharp as a bayonet" belong to a more traditional vocabulary, and Karelian expressions were inserted in the Russian tradition. So Kuusinen was "bubbling with curiosity and sparkling with the fire of knowledge and action"; he was "brilliant" . . . invincible . . . superhuman"; "his steel endured—it was tempered."²⁷ Although Erkki Salomaa argued that there was no straightforward Kuusinen line, the view that Kuusinen was above all an important part of the Marxist-Leninist tradition won out. Stalin was dropped from the Kuusinen story in the middle of the 1950s, and the contacts between Kuusinen and Lenin were stressed instead. As early as 1951, Lenin's characterization of Kuusinen as one who "knows and thinks, which is very rare among revolutionaries," was published, and thereafter repeated in all significant articles.²⁸ These contacts were emphasized in other ways, too. Kuusinen was "Lenin's student," "Lenin's co-worker," and then "a notable Leninist."²⁹

But Kuusinen's "eminence" could be presented in other ways, too. For example, the Finnish Communist Party was "directed by Kuusinen personally," and expressions such as "Kuusinen and the Swedish labor movement," "Kuusinen and the Hungarian Communist movement," and "the supporter of the French Popular Front" made it clear that Kuusinen had a high rank in the communist hierarchy. Kuusinen's superior position became so obvious that eventually the expression "discussion with Kuusinen opened new perspectives" was enough to signal his great influence to the reader.³⁰ These articles did not praise Kuusinen alone but also lauded the Communist Party and Marxism-Leninism. An article about Kuusinen might conclude with the words, "Marxism-Leninism, which comrade Kuusinen has taught us so well, is the safest signpost to the future." The name Kuusinen was linked to articles that dealt with "the crisis of capitalism" in the late 1970s, and its inclusion was enough to indicate that the writer continued along the Leninist line through Kuusinen's thought. Kuusinen had directed the publication of the authoritative *Foundations of Marxism-Leninism*, published in 1959, so Kuusinen and the Leninist line became inseparable. In the middle 1970s the Socialist Student Union launched a slogan, "Forward, along the Otto Wille Kuusinen road."³¹ This indicates that Kuusinen the Marxist-Leninist eclipsed other Kuusinen's, and his life was presented accordingly. However, it was rare to stress the significance of subjective choice. Expressions like "the struggles of the period took him along" or "at last he . . . grew into a revolutionary communist" were much more usual.³²

Although this line became prevalent, communists have had to change it in some respects. In the 1940s and 1950s it was customary to find revolutionary inclinations developing as early as possible, whereas in the 1980s it was possible to admit that Kuusinen had had "shortcomings" in his early activities with the Finnish labor movement. This was supposedly due to the fact that workers in the Finnish labor movement had not understood Marxism properly. Obviously Finnish communists and socialists did not want to study Kuusinen merely through Marxism-Leninism, but rather wanted to see him in the context of Finnish society, so a difference in emphasis such that "in difficult situations Kuusinen could not actually say what to do" could be accepted by all, as it did not touch Kuusinen the communist.³³

KUUSINEN AND I

In the 1950s Arvo Tuominen, the former general secretary of the Finnish Communist Party, also an official of Comintern and later

a Social-Democratic newspaperman and member of parliament, was the most prominent opponent of the cult of Kuusinen. Although his books present Kuusinen in the context of the international communist movement, they differ from communist-inspired articles. In spite of the fact that he belittles Soviet communism, Tuominen did not become identified with the anti-communism of Finnish conservatives. Rather he sought to justify the actions of Finnish socialists and communists in the 1920s and 1930s in order to distance them from Soviet communism. Tuominen wanted to separate his own political plans—the rejection of the communist party and the Terijoki government—from those of Kuusinen, and thereby to legitimate himself. Tuominen did not try to write a biography of Kuusinen but rather wrote of his cooperation and experiences with him in the 1920s and 1930s. The fact that it was Tuominen, not Kuusinen, who was the leading character, indicated a break with the “eminent Kuusinen,” who was something of a devil-figure. This strategy was also promoted by the fact that Tuominen described Kuusinen’s personal life and made him worldly. This included descriptions of his appearance—“a tiny, slightly crooked man who smoked all the time and who was eloquent in his speeches,” and of the way that he forgot the coffee pot on the stove so that the water boiled away and the pot was burnt.³⁴

Tuominen was not inspired by Kuusinen’s “eminence” in Marxist-Leninist theory, and he wrote sarcastically that “Kuusinen was a distinguished theoretician, the best in the world to quibble and to cut hairs from Marx’s beard,” and he also wrote that Kuusinen was “very slow” in his work. Tuominen also acknowledged that “during the years 1921-30 in the Comintern Kuusinen played a notable role as an independent theoretician and as a helmsman in international politics.” At the end of the 1920s, however, Kuusinen “locked his own opinions in a box or burnt them” and chose to serve the dictator Stalin.³⁵ Although Tuominen did not approve Kuusinen’s choice in serving Stalin, he regarded it as “rather understandable considering the circumstances.” However, he did not specify the circumstances, but referred to the fact that “not even Stalin’s adviser on ideological questions could be sure to wake up in the morning.” Tuominen does not, however, ponder any alternative solutions, nor does he criticize Kuusinen for not attempting to save Finnish communists from Stalin or even his own relatives during the purges of the late 1930s. He dilutes his criticisms by remarking that Kuusinen could not have done anything about this, but he is of the opinion that Kuusinen should have tried.

Through all this mild-mannered criticism Tuominen puts a favorable light on his own decisions compared with Kuusinen's; Tuominen rejected Stalin and tried to push Kuusinen to defend Finnish communists. In an atmosphere in which Kuusinen was regarded as a traitor, these hints were rewarded—Tuominen became a Social-Democratic member of parliament in 1958. By taking up what is strictly taboo for communists, the survival of Kuusinen in the purges, and by writing about how Stalin needed Kuusinen as an ideological specialist, Tuominen inadvertently contributed to the image of Kuusinen's "eminence." On the other hand, he explained Kuusinen's survival by a "cautiousness" that was morally doubtful, and so he clearly diminishes Kuusinen's reputation.

Although Tuominen's books broke up the image of Kuusinen's omnipotence, they also took advantage of it. For Tuominen the period Kuusinen spent in Finland in 1919-20 was especially good "material for a detective novel with its disguises, suicides and beautiful women." Accordingly his books belong to a class different from that of "official" biographies and reference books or other cult material purveyed by communists. Tuominen is part of a tradition of popular fiction that was very anti-communist in Finland in the 1920s and 1930s. In that respect, Tuominen's work is unusual, because the labor movement generally rejected popular fiction. In spite of that, workers read it, and it was for them that Tuominen wrote his book. In books written in the early 1970s Tuominen distanced himself from popular tradition, and his writings began to resemble academic studies, so the way he tells the Kuusinen story changes, too. Tuominen no longer presents Kuusinen's personal life but rather the life of a statesman. The negative characteristics—cautiousness and cowardice—that were earlier attached to Kuusinen then disappeared. Expressions like "a sharp intellectual," "a creative artist, scientist, theoretician, ideologist, tactician," "a psychologist who sensed, very easily, what a person was thinking," took their place. At the same time Tuominen pushed Kuusinen into the background; Kuusinen was "Stalin's adviser on ideological questions," but also wrote a speech for Georgi Dimitrov for the Seventh Congress of the Comintern.³⁶

Tuominen's earlier line on Kuusinen was continued by Aino Kuusinen, Kuusinen's ex-wife. In her book, published at the beginning of the 1970s, Aino recalls her life from the 1920s up to the 1960s. This book is as fragmentary as Tuominen's memoirs, and also takes advantage of the tradition of popular fiction. The leading character, of course, is Aino herself, but the principal supporting role belongs to Kuusinen. Despite all these similarities

Aino is much more critical of Kuusinen than Tuominen was at the beginning of his career. Aino attributes Kuusinen's survival to his cautiousness, but finds it a much more negative quality than did Tuominen. According to her, "during his life," Kuusinen "had cast his skin seven times like a snake" and had "oriented himself to the wind." She stresses Kuusinen's opportunism, rather than force of circumstances. She is also much more critical of Kuusinen's Machiavellian behavior, when he "wanted to intrigue . . . in the background, hidden from the looks of the people." On the other hand, she sees that behind the curtain Kuusinen was a leader: ". . . it was absolutely everything for him that his opinions, wishes and plans came true . . . but he did not object that others made his plans come true and received the credit for them." Thus Aino reverses—in the style of the spy novel—the Finnish conservatives' view of Kuusinen as a puppet of Stalin. Part of this narrative is that Kuusinen hated Finland, and in that respect she differed from Tuominen, who insisted that Kuusinen loved his country.³⁷

KUUSINEN AND ACADEMIC STUDIES

In the late 1960s and early 1970s the articles written about Kuusinen by non-communists changed their character. They were not written in the spirit of Finnish nationalism but were constructed instead from a perspective on socialisation, telling a story about a man making his way in the world. In spite of the change, many former approaches to studying Kuusinen were sustained; for example, he was still more important than any other leader of the Finnish labor movement who had escaped to Russia, and his role as a theoretician as defined by Communists and by Tuominen was accepted without question. But the cast of characters changed somewhat. In the Communist movement Kuusinen was compared to Lenin and Stalin, but for academics the young Kuusinen was studied in relation to Karl Kautsky, becoming "the little Kautsky." In addition to studying Kuusinen as a theoretician, academics studied him as a newspaperman, but he was still two-faced—radical in words, cautious in actions.³⁸

The fact that Kuusinen was chosen as a subject of study indicates that he was unquestionably accepted as "a great man." In that respect "the symbol of Finnish communism" and "the eminent Kuusinen" have survived. However, in the academic studies Kuusinen is made more worldly; he has a childhood, goes to school, becomes part of the Finnish labor movement and Finnish society.³⁹ The most significant of these studies is *Romanticism and Marxism* by Thomas Henrikson. In particular it deals

with Kuusinen's aesthetics and places him in the context of Finnish intellectual culture and international ideas at the beginning of the century. The book is an important study of Finnish national romanticism, of Finnish Hegelian philosophy, and of the significance of these ideas to Kuusinen's interest in Marxism.⁴⁰ This dissertation is a work of intellectual history, and is thus different from previous writings about Kuusinen. The concept of Marxism accepted by Henrikson, who was a Swede, was not as restricted as that promoted by Finnish communists. Henrikson, for example, emphasized the utopian side of Kuusinen's aesthetic concepts and presented them in the context of Western Marxism of the early 1960s. The resentment towards Henrikson felt by communists is due to the fact that Kuusinen was studied in a context that differed from their own, and moreover in relation to an interpretation of Marxism different from Marxism-Leninism.⁴¹

Hodgson also touched on a "taboo," perhaps in search of sensationalism. Kuusinen was usually seen as a decent father and husband, but Hodgson remarked that Kuusinen was "anything but 'an angel' toward women." In addition, he emphasized that Kuusinen wanted to have many women and claimed that he neglected his family. As to the rest, Hodgson sees Kuusinen as a "political bureaucrat" in the Soviet Union, not a theoretician, and so Kuusinen is judged to be not at all distinguished even among Comintern officials. In this respect the text is comparable to other Western histories of the Comintern, but in Finland this point of view, reflecting the author's orientation toward an American audience, seemed odd.⁴²

After the publication of a collection of articles by Kuusinen and various writings to honor the 100th anniversary of his birth, interest in Kuusinen has died away. The reason for that is above all the weakening of the Communist Party and of Marxism-Leninism. It also suggests that stories dealing with national "enemies" or men making their way up are losing their significance.

POLITICS IN THE BIOGRAPHIES OF KEKKONEN AND KUUSINEN: A DOUBLE OBITUARY

The manipulation and ordering of past events, significance, and potentialities by means of stories is an important part of the political struggle. The stories of Kekkonen and Kuusinen have played a central role in Finnish political history. Finnish political culture has been dependent on narrative lines concerning great men, men who became icons. Although these stories are the subject of dispute, they are rooted in other stories, for example in

fiction. The authority of the Soviet Union and the fear of it are reflected in both. It is interesting to discover that both stories are still very meaningful in politics, although Kekkonen wanted to be visible, whereas Kuusinen was largely invisible. Both were also made into literary characters, so it was easy to tell stories about them and to make them metaphorical.

Stories about Kuusinen gave Communists and Socialists an identity and an example. They were usually the audience for these stories, too, and their beliefs were thereby strengthened. But for the majority of Finns, Kuusinen was a danger. The significance of the stories about Kekkonen is more ambiguous, although the whole of the Finnish people was generally intended to be the readership. The story of Kekkonen unites more factors—the social question, the language question and the Russian question are resolved; but of these only the Russian question comes up in connection with Kuusinen. Kekkonen himself wanted to determine political offices and associations and so could conceptualize his power himself and thereby develop his own story. In a way, he determined himself as the state and identified himself with the national interest, so his story arranged this in relation to the Finnish people and to foreign countries, especially the Soviet Union. He even interpreted the history of Lenin's nationalities policy as a history of national self-determination. Thus he presented the Soviet Union as a model in neighborly relationships.

For Kuusinen, the most important part of his own story was not his life-history, which made him a personified icon, but rather his authorship of *The Foundations of Marxism-Leninism*. Paradoxically, Kuusinen's doctrines deny individual autonomy, and so deny the possibility of biography. Kuusinen was "distinguished" only as a theoretician, not as a politician. There are no utopians and politicians creating the future in Marxism-Leninism, or if there are, that role is reserved for Lenin and Stalin. Kekkonen was the molder of his own (and others') fortunes and of the state itself, whereas Kuusinen was "a torpedo directed towards the Soviet Union."

The stories studied here make use of the fact that a continuous, straightforward line is the ideal structure in a narrative, common in stories and in political biographies. In the literature, scientific studies about these lives as a whole are absent. This is due, in part, to the fear of "power politics," and in part to the concealment of the documents. Those who are allowed to write biographies are very often men who have political power and who belong to the very groups that surround their subjects. For these writers, contradictions, irrationalism, unconscious motives, intellectual life, and intimate or sexual dimensions

simply do not exist. Often it is only in fiction that political subjects can be described in a manner that is humanly and intellectually plausible, but there is a danger that in popularization biography becomes superficial. Before the age of electronic media politics was strongly personified, but now in a post-modern period, politicians have become independent and function as icons or images. Their problem is very often the lack of a plot and a meaningful story!

Kekkonen and Kuusinen still represent a challenge. Interpretations of their lives, even though fragmentary, demonstrate that political science, because of its internationalism and ability to distance itself from politicians, offers new possibilities for writing biographies. A conceptually sophisticated comparative approach raises questions concerning continuity in biography. Attention to symbols and stories dissolves the apparent harmony of these linguistic phenomena. Continuity in life is very seldom harmonious but consists of choices. After "the linguistic turn" we need to move beyond traditional biography in political science and to confront stories and biographies as linguistic phenomena rooted in political power.⁴³ We shall never be free from language and its conventions, but we shall free ourselves from stories and biographies—by telling and writing new ones!

NOTES

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² See John Gunnell, *Political Theory* (Cambridge, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1979).

³ Gadamer, *Wahrheit und Methode*, pp. 387-408.

⁴ See, for example, Martin Kohli, *Soziologie des Lebenslauf* (Darmstadt: 1978); Karl Löwith, "Weber's Interpretation of the Bourgeois-Capitalistic World in Terms of the Guiding Principle of 'Rationalization'," *Max Weber*, ed. Dennis Wrong (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1970), p. 108; Kyösti Pekonen, "Charismatic Leadership and the Role of Image in Modern Politics," *Studia Politica Jyväskylän*, no. 2 (1989), pp. 16-17.

⁵ Jürgen Habermas, *The Legitimation Crisis* (London: Heinemann, 1976), pp. 69-94; Reinhart Koselleck, *Vergangene Zukunft* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1979), p. 114.

⁶ Aarne Kinnunen, *Kertomuksen opissa. Avoimen maailman hahmotuksesta* (Juva: WSOY, 1989), pp. 186-192.

⁷ Ahti Karjalainen, *Presidentin ministeri: Ahti Karjalaisen ura Urho Kekkosen Suomessa* (Keuruu: Otava, 1989); Johannes Virolainen, *Muistiinpanoja ja myllykirjeitä* (Keuruu: Otava, 1984).

⁸ Paavo Haavikko, *Kansakunnan linja. Kommentteja erään tuntemattoman kansan tuntemattomaan historiaan* (Keuruu: Otava, 1977), p. 217 and passim.

⁹ See especially Urho Kekkonen, *Tamminiemi* (Espoo, Weilin & Göös, 1980); see, for example, Reima T.A. Luoto, *Sopimus ystävyydestä* (Tampere: Turvallisuuspoliittinen yhdistys, 1974); and *Urho Kekkonen: A Statesman for Peace*, ed. Keijo Korhonen (Keuruu: Otava, 1975).

¹⁰ Ahti Karjalainen, "Pääministeri," in *Urho Kekkonen: Taivalta, linjoja, näkökulmia*, ed. Eino S. Repo (Keuruu: Otava, 1960); Karjalainen, *Presidentin ministeri*; Johannes Virolainen, *Pääministerinä Suomessa: Poliittisia ratkaisuja vaalikaudella 1962-66* (Helsinki: Kirjayhtymä, 1969); Virolainen, *Muistiinpanoja ja myllykirjeitä*.

¹¹ Keijo Korhonen, *The Leader and the Man* (Kajaani: Kainuun Sanomat, 1987) pp. 74-81.

¹² See Ari Uino, *Nuori Urho Kekkonen: Poliittisen ja yhteiskunnallisen kasvun vuodet 1900-36* (Jyväskylä: Kirjayhtymä, 1985) pp. 5-6; Juhani Suomi, *Urho Kekkonen 1936-1944: Myrrysmies* (Keuruu: Otava, 1986); Juhani Suomi, *Urho Kekkonen 1944-1950: Vonkamies* (Keuruu: Otava, 1988).

¹³ Tandem. *Demokratian rajat ja rakenteet: Tutkimus suomalaisesta hallitsemistavasta ja sen taloudellisesta perustasta* (Juva: WSOY, 1977) pp. 321-2.

¹⁴ Matti Kurjensaari, *Syntynyt sivulliseksi: Näkyjä ja näkemyksiä 1960-1973* (Porvoo: WSOY, 1973) p. 159.

¹⁵ *Urho Kekkonen: Taivalta, linjoja, näkökulmia*.

¹⁶ Kustaa Vilkuna, "Suku ja koti," in *Urho Kekkonen: Taivalta, linjoja, näkökulmia*.

¹⁷ Kyösti Skyttä, *Jos presidentti pitäisi päiväkirjaa* (Porvoo: WSOY, 1973); Kyösti Skyttä, *Oisko maata armaampaa: Eli Suomalainen minä* (Porvoo: WSOY, 1977); Haavikko, *Kansakunnan linja*; Jörn Donner, *Presidentti* (Keuruu: Otava, 1986); Kalle Kultala, *Kohtalona Kekkonen* (Helsinki: Tammi, 1980); Kyösti Skyttä, *Presidentin muotokuva I-II* (Helsinki: Kirjayhtymä, 1969, 1970); Korhonen, *Urho Kekkonen*; Uino, *Nuori Urho Kekkonen*; Suomi, *Urho Kekkonen 1936-1944*; Suomi, *Urho*

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²⁰ John H. Hodgson, *Otto Wille Kuusinen: Poliittinen elämäkerta* (Helsinki: Tammi, 1974)

²¹ *Kansallinen elämäkerrasto* (Porvoo: WSOY, 1930), pp. 318-319.

²² *Suomen elämäkerrasto* (Porvoo: WSOY, 1955) p. 425.

²³ Inkeri Lehtinen, "Työväenluokan voiton julistaja," *SKP Taistelujen tiellä 1952*, no. viii (1952); Ville Pessi, "Otto Wille Kuusinen 70-vuotias," *Demokraattisen kansan kalenteri 1951* (1950); Mauri Ryömä, "Otto Wille Kuusinen Suomen ja Neuvostoliiton kansojen ystävyuden esitaistelijana," *Kommunisti*, no. 9 (1951); Elli Parkkari, "Otto Ville Kuusinen—SKP: n rautainen perämies," *SKP Taistelujen tiellä 1945*, no. i (1945); Sulo Suvanto, "O. V. Kuusisen kirjallisen tuotannon esittelyä," *Kommunisti*, no. 9 (1956).

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²⁸ Salomaa, "Usko Sotamies—Otto Wille Kuusinen"; Erkki Salomaa, "Vallankumousohallituksen jäsen," in *Otto Wille Kuusinen—suomalainen internationalisti*. ed. Marja Leena Mikkola; "Toveri Otto Wille Kuusinen 70-vuotias," *Kommunisti*, no. 9 (1951); J.A.Arbatov, "O.W.Kuusinen—etevä tiedemies ja marxismin teoreetikko," in *Otto Wille Kuusinen—suomalainen internationalisti*, ed. Marja-Leena Mikkola; Seppo Toiviainen, "O.W.Kuusisen elämäntyöstä," in O.W.Kuusinen, *Asianperiaatteellinen puoli: Valittuja kirjoituksia ja puheita vuosilta 1905-1918* (Helsinki: Kansankulttuuri, 1981); Ville Pessi, "Keskustelu O.W.Kuusisen kanssa avasi näköalojamme," *Kommunisti*, no. 10 (1981).

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³⁴ Arvo Tuominen, *Kremlin kellot: Muistelmia vuosilta 1933-1939* (Helsinki: Tammi, 1956) p. 175; Arvo Tuominen, *Sirpin ja vasaran tie: Muistelmia* (Helsinki: Tammi, 1956) pp. 87-8.

³⁵ Tuominen, *Kremlin kellot*, p. 255; Tuominen, *Sirpin ja vasaran tie*, pp. 310-11.

³⁶ Arvo Tuominen, *Myrskyn aikaa* (Helsinki: Tammi, 1970), esp. pp. 192, 204-10.

³⁷ Aino Kuusinen, *Jumala syöksee enkelinsä* (Keuruu: Otava, 1972); Tuominen, *Myrskyn aikaa*.

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