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The Effeminate Race? Ideas and Emotions in L. Onerva's Representations of Russianness¹

“We are getting flooded by Russians. [– –] And if we begin to mix with them, what kind of vigour have we left?” (L. Onerva: *Yksinäisiä* = Y 1917: 77–78.)²

“[N]ationality is the root of all evil. [– –] The national idea is only one hundred years old and it has led to a world war, so it should be condemned.” (Y 225.)³

In L. Onerva's (1882–1972) novel *Yksinäisiä. Romaani nykyajalta* (The Lonely Ones. A Novel from the Present, 1917), written and published just before Finland got its independence in December 1917 and plunged into civil war at the beginning of 1918, the relationship between Finnishness and Russianness is one of the central issues. *Yksinäisiä* is a novel of ideas, consisting mostly of dialogues, inner monologues, memories and polemical exchanges between the characters, one of them being a “hybrid” of Finnish-Russian origin. The ideas and opinions are discussed in a way that is pronouncedly polyphonic, to the extent that it clearly puzzled and provoked contemporary critics, as shown by a comment in the review penned by V. A. Koskenniemi (1917, my italics): “There are many things about which I don't share the opinion that I believe the author holds, *if I have read her in the right way*. [– –] But I don't want to convert a review of a work of fiction into a polemic against the author's opinions.”⁴

Throughout the nineteenth century and the early twentieth century, the concept of Finnishness was constructed mainly in opposition to the Swedish and Russian identity, as the famous phrase “Swedes we are not, Russians we do not want to become, let us be Finns” suggests.⁵ One of the typical features of the Finnish constructions of Russianness was a strong presence of – mostly ambivalent and negative – feelings,⁶

¹ I would like to thank the anonymous reviewers as well as Kati Launis and Arja Rosenholm for their comments. The article was developed in conjunction with my work within “Texts on the Move: Reception of Women's Writing in Finland and Russia 1840–2020”, funded by Emil Aaltonen Foundation.

² “Me hukumme ryssiin. [– –] Ja jos me lisäksi sekoitumme heihin, niin mitä ryhtiä on meissä enää!” All translations of the quotes from L. Onerva's works are mine.

³ “Kansallisuus on kaiken pahan alku. [– –] Kansallisuus-aate on vasta sadan vuoden vanha ja se on johtanut maailmansotaan, se on siis tuomittava.”

⁴ “Monessa asiassa olen toista mieltä kuin luulen tekijän olevan, jos olen häntä oikealla tavalla lukenut. [– –] Mutta en tahdo tehdä kaunokirjallisen teoksen arvostelusta polemiikka tekijän mielipiteitä vastaan.”

⁵ The phrase has been often ascribed to the poet and historian Adolf Ivar Arwidsson (1791–1858), famous for his radical political thinking, though there seem to be no evidence that he has ever written it.

⁶ The difference between feelings, emotions and affects has been often discussed in the recent research on the topic (see e.g. Ngai 2005; Lyytikäinen 2016). In her *Ugly Feelings*, Sianne Ngai (2005: 25–28) has mapped the distinction between emotions and affects according to the “subjective/objective divide, but also in terms of oppositions

relating to the popular imaginary of “the Russian nature” and drawing on contemporary philosophical, ideological and political debates. Various clichés, known from the Western (literary and other) discourses, naming and evoking strong emotions about “spiritually exalted Russia” and its “suffering endured by spiritual sublimation” (Beller and Leerssen 2007: 229), together with “primitive desires”, atavisms, Asian mysteriousness, irrationality, savagery and barbarism, effeminacy, sexual perversion, degeneration and various kinds of transgression were recycled in Finnish letters and other discourses. They enter into dialogue with the ambivalent image of Russia as Finland’s mighty and culturally superior ruler or oppressor on the one hand, and of the Russians as the inferior orientalized Other on the other.

In this article, I briefly discuss the image of Russia and Russianness in Finnish literature at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and then focus on L. Onerva’s work: first, on the short story “Manja Pavlovna” (= MP) from *Murtoviivoja* (Broken Lines, 1909) and, in more depth, on the aforementioned novel *Yksinäisiä*. L. Onerva’s treatment of Russian identity gives an interpreter of her work ample opportunity to see emotions attached to the ideas discussed as what Sianne Ngai (2005: 3) has called “unusually knotted or condensed ‘interpretations of predicaments’ – that is, signs that not only render visible different registers of problem (formal, ideological, sociohistorical) but conjoin these problems in a distinctive manner”.⁷ Following the insights of Vera Nünning (2017: 33), I conceptualize representation and evocation of emotions not as separate, but “as poles on a sliding scale, with some overlap in between, since emotions presented in texts may at the same time evoke readers’ emotions”.⁸ I will look into the way feelings are mentioned, presented and evoked in the text on the level of language and rhetoric as well as into how they are attached to the ideas, clichés and stereotypes (cf. Lyytikäinen 2016: esp. 42–45, 54–56) concerning the tension between Russianness, Finnishness and other ethnicities.⁹ In some cases, the debates on Russianness in the novel can be read as a pretext to discuss Finnishness and Finland’s place between East and West; however, the political *milieu* of the novel makes this discussion pertinent to the continuum of representations of Russia and Russians in Finnish culture.

like narrative/nonnarrative or semiotic/asignifying—for the idea that emotion and affect “follow different logics and pertain to different orders” (Ngai 2005: 26). However, Ngai (2005: 27) does not make that distinction herself. Neither does Vera Nünning (2017: 29), though she brings up the distinction between emotions and feelings; on the distinction, see also Lyytikäinen 2017: 248–249. In the present article, I also use the words more or less interchangeably.

⁷ Ngai is referring to Rei Terada (2001: 57) in *Feeling in Theory: Emotion after the “Death of the Subject.”*

⁸ Nünning (2017: 33) also reminds us that “we should be aware of the fact that readers’ inferences are necessary in order to imbue a given description with meaning”.

⁹ Given the way emotions are connected to the construction of identities, I do not see it as viable to distinguish between subjective emotions and shared, collective emotions. As Pirjo Lyytikäinen (2017: 249) argues, “[e]motions connected to language use and literary communication always have a certain shared nature”.

Images of Russia in Finnish Literature of the Early Twentieth Century and L. Onerva's "Manja Pavlovna"

Russia is present in early twentieth-century Finnish literature in various ways. As Kari Ketola (2007: 201) has pointed out, nineteenth and early twentieth century Finns took a wide range of approaches to Russia, from those filled with negativity and prejudice to those based on positive curiosity towards Russian culture. My concern here is the emotions evoked by literary representations of the late nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries. Russia is often referred to and some prose works are set there, with St Petersburg appearing especially significant,¹⁰ symbolizing the "big world", the "decadent" and "degenerate" way of life, as in Ina Lange's "Sämre folk." *En Berättelse*. ("Worse People." A Story, 1885), Minna Canth's *Agnes* (1892) or Eino Leino's *Seikkailijatar* (The Adventuress, 1913) (see e.g. Lappalainen 1999). Very often, Russia is represented by individual characters in prose works of the canonized Finnish-language writers as Eino Leino, Juhani Aho, Arvid Järnefelt or Ilmari Kianto. Characters standing for Russia tend to play the central role in works that invite allegorical reading in the given historical circumstances of the period of Russification around the turn of the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries. Examples include the mythical figure of Louhi as a hated foreign (Russian) aggressor and oppressor in Leino's *Sota valosta* (War for Light, 1898, see e.g. Lyytikäinen 1998: 37), or the figure of landowner, representing Russia, in contrast to the poor tenant farmer (Finland) in Järnefelt's *Maamon lapsia* (Children of the Earth Mother, 1905; see Isomaa 2009: 148–154, esp. 152). Järnefelt's allegory, in which he juxtaposes the promise Czar Alexander I made to Finland when it became an autonomous Grand Duchy within the Russian Empire in 1809, and the promise a landlord made to a tenant farmer, functions also on a meta-level: as a political allegory, the text is critical about the inconsistency of the political debate concerning the issue of Finnish autonomy and the position of Finland's tenant farmers vis-à-vis their landlord.

Though Russian women are often described as exotic and alluring, in some works by Finnish writers, it is suggested that a committed relationship with a Russian woman is incompatible with the demands of the (male) protagonist's *patria*, which destroys "his heart's feelings" ("isänmaa särkee väkistenkin sydämeni tunteet"), as in Ilmari Kianto's *Moskovan maisteri* (1946: 34). Many representations of Russians in Finnish works have been interpreted as manifesting "ethnic suspicion" that was often "part of the fascination with foreign exoticism" (Buchwald 1991: 106, 270). Russian elements and "temperament" were identified with extremism, be it the Russian revolutionary movement or Russian decadent art, often collapsed with the above-mentioned "Russian degeneration", something Finland was "to guard itself against"

¹⁰ For the historical account of the significance of St Petersburg in Finland's history see Max Engman's studies, e.g. Engman 2004.

(ibid., 270–271). In *Seikkailijatar*, Leino labels masochism as the “genuinely Slav vice” (“aitoslaavilainen pahe”), “explaining” it by the cruelties of Russian history, the many centuries of oppression, which “planted sick spiritual phenomena into the Slavic world” (“kylvänneet slaavilaiseen maailmaan sairaita sielullisia ilmiöitä”) and “prepared fertile ground for sadomasochist instincts” (“muokanneet sadistis-masokistisille vaitoille hedelmällisen maaperän”; Leino 1936: 79). Juhani Aho’s novel *Juha* (1911) has been interpreted as a mixture of the “traditional suspicion of Russia” (Buchwald 1991: 271) and Aho’s disillusionment with the neo-romantic movement of Karelianism, where the protagonist Juha stands for the Finnish virtues like honesty, solidity, loyalty and reliability (ibid., 92).¹¹ His wife Marja, the “russky” (“venakko”), “homeless russky” (“mieron venakko”), seen by the local Finnish community as “of another tribe, of black blood,” (“toisheimoisesta, mustaverisestä”; Aho 1969: 26, 28, 65) represents raw, unbound sexuality. Her seducer Shemeikka is shown as a treacherous imposter, who forces Marja to submit to a life in “uncivilized tyranny”, dominated by the “barbaric Russian sexual bonds” (Buchwald 1991: 271–272). The mixed feelings of fascination and fear evoked by these representations are in tune with the affects traditionally associated with Russia and the “Eastern Other” in general.

L. Onerva’s take on Russian characters in her early works also departs from oppositions, but of a different kind. The eponymous heroine of the short story “Manja Pavlovna” from the collection of stories *Murtoviivoja* is a noble woman, an exception among L. Onerva’s heroines, who are mostly middle-class women. “Manja Pavlovna” is one of the Finnish women writers’ prose pieces inspired by women’s role in the Russian radical movement, similarly to Maria Jotuni’s “Veripäivinä” (“Days of Blood”) from the collection of short stories *Kun on tunteet* (When You Have Feelings, 1913) (see Buchwald 1991: 199).

The story is set in Paris, where two Russian protagonists, Manja Pavlovna¹² and Dimitri Miljukoff,¹³ are involved in planning and plotting

¹¹ At the same time, the character of Juha is most complex, with primitive features, inclined to depression and capable of violence (see Rossi 2020).

¹² The choice of the name “Manja Pavlovna” is rather peculiar: in Russian usage, Manja is a folksy form of the name Marija and it would not be used with the patronymic (with possible exceptions in common usage); the correct or neutral form would be Marija Pavlovna. As such, the name is in contradiction with the heroine’s aristocratic background and it evokes a particular kind of effect in a reader who knows Russian and is familiar with Russian culture. It is, of course, a matter of speculation whether the choice was intentional. In any case, the fact that L. Onerva picked up this “dissonant” name for her character can be interpreted in line with Manja’s contradictory identity, her desire to be, as woman, a complex human being, with contradictions and discrepancies. Another explanation of the choice of the name Manja is a possible allusion to Marija/Manja, the unconventional and liberated heroine of Anastasiya Verbitskaya’s novel *Keys to Happiness* (*Ключи счастья*, 1899, in English 1999). The patronymic Pavlovna evokes the heroine Vera Pavlovna of the famous novel *What Is to Be Done?* (1863, *Что делать?*) by Nikolay Gavrilovich Chernyshevsky. I wish to thank the anonymous reviewer and Arja Rosenholm for bringing these points to my attention.

¹³ Also the name of the principal male character is significant: here, L. Onerva might have been inspired by the figure of Pavel Milyukov, a politician, the leading figure of the Constitutional Democratic Party and a journalist, who, by 1909, had fought for the freedom of the people both at home in Russia, and abroad. I wish to thank the anonymous reviewer for helping me to make this connection.

revolutionary activities. Princess Manja reproaches Dimitri who was unfaithful to her – he worships and respects her too much to indulge in “sinful acts” with her. Dimitri argues that he, a commoner, would be ashamed to engage in his “savage and wild lust” (“raakoja ja villiä mielihaluja”), belonging to the populace, with Manja, who is “so clean and cool, so eminent and wise” (“niin puhdas ja kylmä, niin korkea ja visas”; MP: 133). The melodramatic story recycles much of the stereotypical imagery of the *femme fatale* but, at the same time, it combines the “cult of individualism with the theme of eschatology and rebirth in revolutionary philosophy” (Buchwald 1991: 209). In this respect, the text can be read as one of L. Onerva’s variations on the theme of the New Woman with Nietzschean overtones, or on Nietzschean Overman in the figure of the New Woman.¹⁴ Though the short story consists of dialogues between Manja and Dimitri, Manja’s voice dominates, and the reader learns that she does not want to be reduced to a symbol or icon of a revolutionary Madonna, a sacred virgin of the revolution. In the Nietzschean spirit, she refuses “the idea of life without life, the theory of humanity without the proper humanity” (“Elämän-ajatus ilman elämää, ihmisyyden teoria ilman omaa ihmisyyttä”; MP: 128), but all that explicitly as a woman, insisting on being seen as complex as men are: “I am a living human being, in whom there is everything, everything!” (MP: 129.)¹⁵

Reading the story as New Woman fiction is perfectly justifiable, but forgetting the Russian element makes the interpretation much less interesting, even deficient. The fact that Manja is a Russian princess coming from a society based on serfdom (abolished only decades earlier), confronted with the needs of the Russian populace in the atmosphere of ecstasy of revolutionary transcendence, allows L. Onerva to explore extreme oppositions of “high” and “low” in the manner that would be difficult in a purely Finnish setting. The exaggeratedly melodramatic tone, the strong emotions like erotic passion, shame, “strong and cruel lust” (“väkevää ja julmaa pyydetä”), as well as the mixture of love and hatred (“rakkauden ja vihan risti-himosta”; MP: 138), are both depicted and directly named in the text, evoked also by the frequent use of exclamation marks or ellipses that suggest the characters’ exalted, fragmentary way of expressing themselves. These narrative strategies are in tune with the stereotypes attached to Russian characters in non-Russian novels (cf. Dubova 2009). However, Manja is a strong character, her major attributes being wisdom, sangfroid, analytic thinking and ability to indulge in purely cerebral lechery, reserved usually only for men in *fin de siècle* literature (see e.g. Parente-Čapková 2014). In this she differs from representations of the divine Sophia¹⁶ and from one-dimensional Russian *femmes fatales* like Eino Leino’s Zaida in *Seikkailijatar*, four years

¹⁴ By “New Woman” I mean all *fin de siècle* figurations of woman originating from the urge to create new images and models of womanhood, different from the “old” ones. L. Onerva’s most notable Nietzschean New Woman is the eponymous heroine of the novel *Mirdja* (1908; see e.g. Parente-Čapková 2014).

¹⁵ “[M]inä olen elävä ihminen, jossa on kaikki, kaikki!”

¹⁶ Sophia as the Eternal Feminine and Divine Wisdom is a strong presence in Russian Symbolists’ works. On the role of Sophia in Vladimir Solovyev’s and Alexandr Blok’s writings see Buchwald 1991 and 1996.

later. The association of Russian characters with effeminacy is thus questioned, as well as other simplistic gender identifications like the ideal of “purity” versus “animalistic” aspects of sexuality in Russian female literary characters. In this respect, L. Onerva’s short story invites ironic reading of a highly intertextual nature;¹⁷ the opposites that are discussed and subverted in the text do not stand for the opposition between Finnishness and Russianness.

The intertextual reading of “Manja Pavlovna” should include complex literary female characters from Russian literature written by men and women, and the ideas and emotions attached to them. It is especially interesting to compare L. Onerva’s Nietzschean heroines with those of the versatile Russian writer Anastasiya Verbitskaya (1861–1928).¹⁸ Well aware of writing about the Western European New Woman, Verbitskaya “combined highbrow political, philosophical, and aesthetic concerns with frequent, titillating scenes of sexual seduction” (Rosenthal s.a.). In her radical novels of ideas, she dealt with topical debates, including those on national movements, Social Darwinism, the alleged emasculation of culture, Anti-Semitism, the Overman, and meanings of art, all through the gender lens or, explicitly, from the viewpoint of the modern woman, coupled with social consciousness (Rosenholm and Savkina 2012: 199). Thus her novels transcended her times (Marsh 1996: 199). Unlike L. Onerva, Verbitskaya was mostly seen as an author of popular fiction, but her melodramatic mode and emotionally charged writing about ideas is, in some ways, similar to L. Onerva’s style.

Ideas and Emotions in The Lonely Ones: Race, Ethnicities, Identities

The oppositions between Finnishness and Russianness play a visible role in *Yksinäisiä*. The novel was written in the second half of the 1910s, that is, it belongs to L. Onerva’s less-researched *œuvre*. In terms of research, L. Onerva’s work from 1915 on has remained overshadowed by her early work (ca. 1904–1915) which has been subject to scrutiny during the recent decades.¹⁹ While L. Onerva’s early work is marked, both stylistically and thematically, by *fin de siècle* artistic currents such as symbolism and decadence, *Yksinäisiä* deals with what can be called *fin de siècle*

¹⁷ I am indebted to Arja Rosenholm for pointing this out to me. On the central role of irony in L. Onerva’s work, see Parente-Čapková 2014 and 2019.

¹⁸ I am indebted to Arja Rosenholm for pointing out to me the similarity between L. Onerva’s “Manja Pavlovna” and Verbitskaya’s writings.

¹⁹ In the interwar period and during the first decades after the Second World War, it was L. Onerva’s – early and late – poetry which was written about and appreciated. Since the 1980s, L. Onerva has been a subject of feminist literary criticism which lifted her from the margins of the Finnish literary canon (see e.g. Karttunen 1989; Lappalainen 1992; Rojola 1992). Her role in Finland’s early twentieth-century literature, namely in decadence and symbolism, has also been foregrounded (see esp. the studies of Lyytikäinen, e.g. 1997; 2003). Of L. Onerva’s early work, her novel *Mirdja* (1908) has received major attention (see esp. Lyytikäinen, e.g. 1997, and Parente-Čapková, e.g. 1998; 2003; 2014). For more reception of L. Onerva’s writing, see Parente-Čapková 2014: 27–34).

or decadent themes on the level of ideas. The work easily falls into the generic category of the novel of ideas, a genre defined by J. A. Cuddon (2013: 481) as “a vague category of fiction”, in which “conversation, intellectual discussion and debate predominate, and in which plot, narrative, *emotional conflict* and psychological depth in characterization are deliberately limited” (ibid., my italics). Cuddon cites the novels of Aldous Huxley; in the *fin de siècle* literature of Finland, Arvid Järnefelt’s novels have been brought up as a major example (see Hosiaisuus 2003: 18–19).²⁰ Some Finnish reviewers have considered the genre as alien to the Finnish-language literary tradition (see Säiniö 2002: 107–109). A contemporary reviewer (R. F.) of *Yksinäisiä* labelled the novel a *roman conversant*, i.e. a conversational novel consisting mainly of dialogues, and the style of the conversation as “naive and bookish” (“naivista paperisesta konversationityylistä”; R. F. 1918: 121).

In general, Cuddon’s definition holds for *Yksinäisiä*, apart from the limitation of emotional conflict. The discrepancy between ideas and emotions was a view typical of New Criticism, castigated by critics who emphasized the continuity of ideas and emotions. As Lionel Trilling (2008) put it in his “Art and Fortune” (in polemic with T. S. Eliot), “Plato was right when in *The Symposium* he represented ideas as continuous with emotions, both springing from the appetites”. In *Yksinäisiä*, emotional conflict and emotion in general is central, directly connected to the ideas brought up in conversation between the characters (as elsewhere in L. Onerva’s prose works). Ideas, for their part, are often described with poetic and emotionally loaded terms, such as “great and beautiful” (“suuren ja kauniin ajatuksen”; Y: 333).

The frequent use of dialogues in *Yksinäisiä* is a typical feature of L. Onerva’s prose, both her novels and short stories. Hence the narrative is strongly mimetic; diegetic passages are mostly incorporated in the speech of the characters. In L. Onerva’s novel *Mirdja* (1908), dialogues alternate with spoken or inner monologues, pursuant to the decadent style (Parente-Čapková 2014: 88–89); in *Yksinäisiä*, we find diary entries (Y: 43–53), evoking the style of inner monologues. Readers’ feelings are stimulated by emotionally charged thoughts and ideas of the characters, by “relationships of contrast and correspondence between different characters” (Nünning 2017: 40) as well as by stylistic devices. All this happens mostly on the level of discourse, less on the level of plot. Though *Yksinäisiä* lacks the more pronounced features of decadent style like the cultivation of the oneiric and the bizarre, it resembles decadent texts in downplaying the importance of the plot, and in its ecstatic way of expression, typical also of *Mirdja* and “Manja Pavlovna”, abundant in intense imagery, exclamations and invocations. Some of these feelings and affects are connected to the Russian origin of one of the main characters, expressed by both the characters themselves and the heterodiegetic narrator.

²⁰ For a thorough analysis of generic issues in Järnefelt’s novels against their intertextual background (discussing Järnefelt’s *Veneh’ojalaiset* from 1909 as a thesis novel) see Isomaa 2009. For a more general discussion on genre and emotions see Isomaa 2016.

There is no one protagonist in the novel, but a group of central characters and some secondary characters orbiting around that group. The characters represent various social strata from poor office clerks and farmers to merchants, medical doctors and judges; there is also a journalist, an artist and a decadent dilettante, indulging more in thinking and pondering than in implementing his ideas and plans. The ideas discussed, apart from Finland's relationship to Russia, concern Finnishness as the basis of the Finnish national movement and of Finnish independence. War (both in general and the First World War in particular) is debated in relation to the need for armies and revolution. Pacifism and Tolstoyism, social justice and socialism and ways of achieving them, women's emancipation and gender equality, religion and alternative spiritual paths are also the subject of various exchanges throughout the novel.

Most of the characters are Finnish-speaking Finns, like the two young men whom the reader meets at the very beginning of the novel: the passive idealist Viljo Seipi and a more cynical and active Simo Vaskio. There is no Swedish-speaking character, though one of the central characters, Pentti Linna, is referred to as changing his surname from a Swedish one to a Finnish one, as was the habit among nineteenth-century patriots in Finland. There is one Estonian and one half-Russian character; their function includes defamiliarizing the notion of Finnishness and bringing in the Finns' encounters with their neighbours. Both characters are women, serving as certain types of the New Woman figure. The Estonian Salme is a divorced independent woman, pursuing her career in business and law. She "almost suffers from the naive softness of the Finns," ("melkein kärsinyt suomalaisten naivista pehmydestä") feeling divided between her patriotic feelings, the international socialist struggle and her affection for the Finnish "national poet" Oula Kuutti.²¹ The half-Russian character, an enigmatic young woman called Vera, is a *femme enfant* typical of the literature of the first decades of the twentieth century, born from the union of Oula Kuutti and a Russian woman, Varvara, who died long ago. The "national poet" has been "publicly shamed" because of having entered in a serious relationship with a Russian woman, "having married a russy" during the "worst years of [Russian] oppression" ("juuri pahimmat sortovuodet menossa"; Y: 24). The ideological, mental and emotional world of those who had shamed him is shown by means of the character of Pentti Linna, a medical doctor and conservative politician, indeed, the head of a conservative party. Linna is a patriot and a patriarch with a large family (but, at the same time, a hypocrite who indulges in affairs with women), famous for hating foreigners, (emancipated) women, and socialists. When arguing with his sister, Pentti claims:

If it were up to me, I would give no apartment to any Russian, no rights, I would allow no actors to perform, nor musicians or singers, I would let no merchants

²¹ The character of Salme Tamm is complex and very significant. Given L. Onerva's subtle and nuanced way of treating Salme's dilemmas, it enables the reader to see the tension between Finnish and Russian elements in a new light. However, to maintain my focus, I will not be dealing with this aspect of the novel in detail here.

trade, I would forbid the public to watch. Since the more respectable they become here, the more they are flooding our country. Soon, it will be a struggle to pick us Finns out from the crowd. We are drowning in Russians. What a deplorable sight the Finnish capital offers us in this respect. How irritatingly the incessantly expanding drone of the Slavonic language drums into our ears and hearts. (Y: 77.)²²

Pentti's outburst reads as a textbook example of xenophobia and ethnic hatred, using ancient rhetorical devices such as repetition or anaphora, metaphors like flood and drowning, or, as more current use has it, the "inundation metaphor" (cf. e.g. Lee 2007), as well as referring to the Eastern neighbour as "the elephant" who is too big, or as a "giant monster" who will trample the Finns (Y: 64, 65), and expressively degrading the language of the group in question, as quoted above.²³

Pentti Linna uses also the famous paradoxical metaphors of the mixture of primitivism and degeneration, as used vis-à-vis the Russian culture. This is an alleged blend of sickly over-refinement and oversophistication on the one hand, and the brutish and archaic on the other: "The Russians are rotten before they have ripened. And a human being inherits his racial essence physically" (Y: 78).²⁴ Pentti seems to be obsessed with the fear of "mixing" with Russians, leading allegedly to "degeneration" and the pollution by the "sick Russian blood", which was a commonplace in contemporary turn-of-the-century discourses, reflected in literature (see e.g. Molarius 2003: esp. 132–136):

And if we, on top of all that, mix with them, what dignity are we left with? Such crossbreeding does not, by the way, bring us any advantage. It leads to degeneration, to family decay [– –] The embryos become feeble, lustful, treacherous, passive, spineless creatures, rootless wretches; the result is an effeminate race. The feminine principle dominates in Russia, also in men [– –] If it was up to me, I would give the order to murder all the foetuses of that Slavonic-Finnish mixed race! (Y: 77–78.)²⁵

We can call this an "eugenic discourse"; it is full of colourful language that appeals to emotions, evoking the debate on "racial hygiene" ("rotuhygienia") that was lively during the first decades of the twentieth century and, in Finland, culminated with legislation on sterilization in the 1930s (see e.g. Mattila 1999). Though Linna's rhetoric is exaggerated to the point of parody, reading these lines just over a

²² "Jos minusta riippuisi, en antaisi asuntoa yhdellekään venäläiselle, en oikeuksia min-käänlaisia, en sallisi näyttelijäin enkä soitto- ja laulutaitelijain esiintyä, en kauppiaiden tehdä kauppaa, kieltäisin heitä yleisön. Sillä mitä parempana heitä täällä pidetään, sitä enemmän heitä tänne tulvii. Meitä suomalaisia saa pian enää hakemalla hakea joukosta. Me hukumme ryssiin. Minkä kurjan näyn tarjoakaan jo Suomen pääkaupunki siinä suhteessa. Miten ripoo korvia ja sydäntä tuo slaavilaisen kielen paisuva sorina!"

²³ The degradation of languages other than one's own has always been commonplace, both in popular rhetoric and in literature. In the Finnish context, one can recall similar ways of demeaning "foreign" languages e.g. in the way the "folk poet" Paavo Korhonen alias Vihta-Paavo degraded the Romani language in his "Runo mustalaisista" ("Poem about the Gypsies" 1835) (see e.g. Parente-Čapková 2011: 10–11).

²⁴ "Venäläiset ovat mädäntyneet ennenkuin he ovat kypsyneet. Ja ihminen perii rotu-olemuksensa ruumiillisesti [– –]".

²⁵ "Ja jos me lisäksi sekoitumme heihin, niin mitä ryhtiä on meissä enää! Tuo ristisiitos ei ole sitäpaitsi rotuhygienian kannalta ollenkaan edullinen. Se vie degeneratsioniin, suvun rappeutumiseen. [– –] Sikiöistä tulee veltoja, nautinnonhimoisia, petollisia, passiivisia, ryhdittömiä olentoja, juurettomia raukkoja; effemineerattu rotu siitä tulee. Venäjällä valitsee naisellinen prinssiipi, miehissäkin. [– –] Jos minusta riippuisi, surmauttaisin kaikki tuon slaavilaisuomalaisen sekarodun sikiöt!"

century later feels chilling in the light of the subsequent trends of “race betterment” with its gaudy rhetoric and allusions ranging from religious discourse to war imagery (cf. Hasian Jr. 1996: e.g. 25), aiming to provoke emotions of fear, anger, disgust and rage, of longing for some kind of most violent revenge. The aforementioned metaphor of flood, used in conjunction with the image of the crowd, is more than typical, as well as their combination with the metaphor of “contagion” or “infection” by means of “crossbreeding”. As Schnapp and Tiers (2006: 233) claim (referring to the ideas of Gustav Le Bon, author of a seminal work on crowd psychology), with

[t]he biological metaphors, which flourished especially in the imperialist climate between the 1870s and World War I, crowd psychology contributed the ideas of psychic contagion, emotional infection, and suggestion of metaphors for the “weak subjectivity” of certain groups and categories. Le Bon was not alone in claiming that “the opinions and beliefs of crowds are specially propagated by contagion, but never by reasoning.”

The construction of the Russians as “an effeminate race” was also a commonplace in the way the Other (“Oriental” or “orientalized” in the broad sense of the term) was constructed – not only – in Finnish contemporary discourses (Anttila et al. 2009). Femininity was hierarchically inferior to masculinity, and, in the form of male effeminacy, associated with emasculation, weakness and degeneration, and thus danger to the “healthy” development of society. The concept of degenerate effeminacy was attached to various peoples in various contexts and developed “scientifically” by contemporary thinkers like Otto Weininger, who claimed the “female substance” or feminine principle was amoral, illogical, passive and unproductive, and described Jews as “saturated in femininity”.²⁶ Pentti Linna seems to know the discourses defaming the Jews, but still, anything is better than the Russians: “No, no, rather a drop of Viking blood into us, or why not even Jewishness...” (Y: 78).²⁷

The “Viking blood” seems to point to Finland’s ties to Sweden. It can easily be read as authorial irony, highlighting the narrow-mindedness and ignorance of “racial ideas” in general, given the role the Varangian Rurik dynasty played in the history of Russia.²⁸ However, Linna is obviously not aware of this; from a point of view of a Finnish language patriot, “mixing with Swedes” is obviously undesirable, but still a lesser evil than mixing with Russians. As Rantanen and Ruuska (2009: 55) have pointed out, Finland’s marginal position in Europe, lack of statehood till 1917 and the way the Finns, the “unknown people on the periphery” (Kemiläinen 1993: 406) had been “constructed in the hierarchy of peoples and ‘races’” (Rantanen and Ruuska 2009: 55),²⁹ lead to a mechanism of denial of their proper problematic status. That was one reason why Finnish public and scholarly discourse insisted so firmly and with emo-

²⁶ As quoted by Bram Dijkstra (1986: 220–221) in *Idols of Perversity. Fantasies of Feminine Evil in Fin-de-Siècle Culture*.

²⁷ ”Ei, ei, pikemminkin viikinkiverta meihin pisara, tai miks’ei vaikka juutalaisuutta...”

²⁸ I wish to thank the anonymous reviewer for this observation.

²⁹ For the earlier research on race theories and national identity in Finland, see Kemiläinen 1993; for more, especially concerning the Sámi, see e.g. Isaksson 1996; Lehtola 2012 and 2015.

tionally charged zeal on the Finns' affinity with the West and distancing itself from the East. In many contemporary debates, the "Western tradition" and the Western dimension of Finland's history was (over)emphasized, to counterbalance the fact that the political power was in the East. The border between East and West had to be drawn much more sharply than before. At the same time, the zeal to belong to the West meant reinforcement of ideas by which Finland could justify its internal colonialism. (Ibid.)

As shown at various times, colonialist and racial discourses were known in early twentieth-century Finland and were employed and applied to the domestic issues in myriad ways: as a critique of the Russian imperialism, but also to other and orientalize the Finns' "domestic" others (Rantanen and Ruuska 2009: 56) including the Sámi and Roma, in the spirit of what has been called *colonial complicity* (see Keskinen et al. 2009; Parente-Čapková 2011). The heady mixture of affects attached to all these ideas and discourses manifests the complexity of the historical context in question and the hierarchies of the respective identities. Indeed, Simo Vaskio, who talks about the private life of Oula Kuutti, refers to his possible Sámi origin (discernible from his first name): "Do you find Kuutti beautiful? That cock-eyed Lappish hound, that crooked nose! Ha ha!" (Y: 23).³⁰ Vaskio refers to the popular imagery of the alleged appearance of the Sámi, expressing his superiority; in this case, the emotions evoked by his "humorous" use of physical metonymies and animalization are not fear and hatred, but amusement and contempt. The need to draw a firm line between the Finns and the Sámi can be, once again, read as a comment on the contemporary debates about the "racial origin of the Finns" (namely the speculations about their "Mongolian origins"), and European ideals of beauty (see e.g. Kemiläinen et al. 1985; Kemiläinen 1993). The Sámi had been labelled as a "pathological", "atrophied and primitive race" already in the nineteenth century, including a speculation that they were "degenerate, degraded Finns" (Isaksson 1996: 65–66). It is symptomatic that in his thoughts, Oula Kuutti himself refers to his beloved late Russian wife Varvara as a "ripe, golden fruit of the South" ("etelän täyskypsä, kultainen hedelmä"), who looked at him as a "noble purebred animal" looks at an "ugly primitive creature" ("jalo rotueläin alkurumikkoon"), a "sterile dwarf shrub of Lapland" ("Lapin hedelmättömään vaivaispensaaseen"; Y: 182).³¹

Women and Complex Emotions

In terms of ideas, ideology and gender, as well as in terms of emotions, Pentti Linna's counterpart is his sister, Kaarina Linna, the head of the Peace Party, a feminist and a vegetarian. She acts as Vera's mentor and protector and her views (together with those of Viljo Seipi and some of Vera's) seem to be closest to the author's. She opposes her brother

³⁰ "Onko Kuutti mielestäsi kaunis? Tuo vinosilmä, Lapin kyttä, tuo kippuranokka! Ha ha!"

³¹ "Kuutti's surname (meaning "seal pup" or "puppy") further contributes to this grotesque imagery.

Pentti, who claims to be deeply ashamed that they are siblings. Pentti presents Kaarina's pacifism as "a typical fruit of the female lack of logic" ("naisellisen epäloogisuuden tyypillinen hedelmä"; Y: 56–57), especially when it is necessary to fight for independence, to combat the "feeble bandit state" ("veltto rosvovaltio"; Y: 60), when "the people should be gathered into unanimous defence stance, to gain a war outfit of their own" since that of the "Finnish army is the most burning question of the day. Until we have it, Finland does not count for anything" (Y: 58).³² Though a medical doctor, Pentti legitimizes killing and wars (Y: 56–57). His excited speech, spiced with war metaphors and expressive words (e.g. "terrible", "hervittävä"), tends to culminate with exclamations like "Shame! Shame! Unprecedented shame!" (Y: 64.)³³ when he reacts to Kaarina's plea concerning the Russians' humanity and maintains that the Finnish women's view of the Russians as their "human brothers" implies consorting with them. Shaming women who have relationships with "the enemy" is part of a long tradition of discrediting women, including their different opinions, through a direct causal link between shame to rage (Misheva 2000: 44–47); here, rage culminates in the "punishment of shaming".

Pentti's way of inciting negative emotions contrasts with Kaarina's calmer, at times slightly ironic or amused way of expressing her thoughts. However, as a literary character, Pentti is not a total caricature. He assures Kaarina of his preference for peace negotiations over war – he just does not believe that the time is ripe for that (Y: 65–66); those are utopias, noble purposes which, in practice, turn into shame (Y: 69). However, Kaarina and other women in the novel accuse Pentti, as well as men in general, of hypocrisy, corruption and dishonesty. Kaarina claims that it is usually men who corrupt women and, besides, Finnish men have always enjoyed company of Russian women – ballerinas, actresses, singers or officers' wives (Y: 74).

Most of the time, Kaarina sounds like the voice of reason, though a rather idealist one. Once again, Pentti appears much more dominated by his (mostly negative) emotions than Kaarina does. Pentti claims that his sister constantly irritates him (Y: 79), he is puzzled and exasperated by the way Kaarina is "too sentimental and too independent at the same time" ("liian tunteilevainen ja liian itsenäinen yht'aikaa"; Y: 67) and, together with the poet Kuutti, they express their longing for the time when it was possible to understand woman, "the comprehensible incomprehensible, as the men and poets had created her" ("se käsitettävä käsittämätön, miksi miehet ja runoilijat ovat hänet tehneet"; Y: 189).³⁴ However, though Kaarina sounds highly critical of racial/ethnic hatred and the instigation of fear and disgust, she falls into the

³² "[M]eidän on koottava kansa yksimieliseen puolustusasentoon, saatava omat sotavarustukset. [– –] Suomalainen sotaväki on päivän polttavin kysymys. Niin kauan kuin meillä ei ole sitä, ei Suomi mahda mitään."

³³ "Häpeä! Häpeä! Ennenkuulumaton häpeä!"

³⁴ This exchange between the two men echoes Romantic and *fin de siècle* figurations of the Eternal Feminine, an ideal created by men ironized also elsewhere in L. Onerva's fiction.

trap of mystifying Russia in her attempt to create positive emotional energy: “Western formalism and the mechanical world view long to be embraced by the Oriental spirit in order to create the new human being of the future” (Y: 78).³⁵

The emotionally coloured (positive) mystification of Russia culminates in the speech of Kuutti’s daughter Vera, the “crossbred” individual herself. She is a Finnish-speaking young woman, aware of the present political situation in Finland, but, because of the painful memories of the wrongs that her mother and father had to endure due to people like Pentti Linna, she claims she could not become a “Finland hero”, i.e. she could not dedicate herself to the Finnish patriotic mission. Neither could she become a “humanity hero” like her foster mother Kaarina. In her speech, she defends Russia with much love and devotion, recycling, however, the imagery mixing immaturity and degeneracy: “Humanity, humanity, what an empty word here, There was plenty of it in Russia! I think that it can exist nowhere else but there. Why, oh why do they despise Russia here, is it because it is unfortunate? Why do people laugh to its degeneration, when it is still rubbing the sleep from its eyes!” (Y: 210–211.)³⁶

Vera talks about “sacred Russia” and the Russian soul, which refers to the Russian national identity and in which the “emotional, the sentimental and the spiritual are associated with femininity” and maternity “in the western patriarchal narrative” (Dubova 2009: 86), as it is also in Vera’s family, both literally and metaphorically: “Nobody has got such a boundless soul, so rich in suffering and pleasure as the Slavs. Oh, how small and limited my father feels compared to my mother!” (Y: 95.)³⁷ Vera’s speech is mostly excited and full of exclamations; she can be easily seen as an example of “exaggerated emotional expressiveness” that Sianne Ngai (2005: 94) has called “animatedness”, a “marker of racial or ethnic otherness in general”. Vera is described as more than sentimental, she “laughs wildly” (“nauroi hurjasti”; Y: 106) and her voice “breaks down hysterically” (“ääni särkyi hysteerisesti”; Y: 105). Nevertheless, some of her utterances are much less emotionally loaded than others. At times, she speaks as a partial outsider, who is able to see clearly the absurdity of the search for “pure” Finnishness:

But what right has he, the doctor, to direct his nationalist zeal against the mixed race, if he is it himself! Is he more Finnish than me? He is a name changer, as I am! A pretender, a national pickpocket, a cultural migrant, just like me! Him from the West, me from the East, that is the only difference. A grafted branch like me. [– –] You see, I, I do not hate mixed race. I just want to oppose the doctor’s stance and claim that a Russian Finn is at least as close to the fundamental Finnishness for which he fights so ardently, as the Swedish Finn is. What right does he have to take

³⁵ “Länsimainen formalismi ja koneellinen maailmankatsomus kaipaa itämaisen hengen syleilyä luodakseen uuden tulevaisuuden ihmisen.”

³⁶ “Minusta ei ole Suomi-sankariksi!”, “Ei ihmisyyssankariksi kuten täti Kaarina!” “Ihmisyys, ihmisyyys, miten tyhjä sana täällä. Venäjällä sitä oli! Minusta sitä ei yleensä voi olla muualla kuin Venäjällä. Miksi, oh, miksi täällä Venäjää halvennetaan, sen vuoksi että se on onneton! Miksi nauretaan sen rappeutumiselle, kun se vasta hieroo unta silmistään!”

³⁷ “Ei kenelläkään ole niin rajatonta, niin kärsimyksestä ja nautinnosta rikasta sielua kuin slaaveilla. Ah, kuinka isäni tuntuu pieneltä ja rajoitetulta äitiini verrattuna!”

the lead in this country and forbid us, the other migrants, to do the same? And me, I am a daughter of a Finnish poet. (Y: 104).³⁸

Vera goes on, questioning, rather logically, the principle of patronymic surnames as such, the practice of obliterating women's names and the impossibility of matrilineage. She explains that she purposely took the Finnish surname "Soroinen", with the -nen ending, frequent and typical of the allegedly "folksy" ("kansanomaisia") Finnish surnames, but, as she claims, despised by the snobbish and hypocritical "high level patriots" ("korkeat kansallismiehet"; Y: 107). These national zealots would never choose such surname, because, as Vera claims, they want their names

to look adopted, mysterious, an allusion to a kind of sacrifice in the name of the nation, a kind of a noble foreignness, ha ha ha! [- -] I, a stranger, as you vilify me, have more inner pride than you, I chose this despised surname with the -nen ending to be my name (Y: 107).³⁹

Eventually, Vera's intense feelings, the mixture of resentment, rage, desire for revenge provoked by the shame suffered by her family, with her desire for love, lead to catastrophe – as is often the case with "animated" characters like her. She is shot dead in unclear circumstances with the revolver belonging to Pentti Linna, who, ironically enough, becomes infatuated with her. Another apparently tragic irony or irony of fate is the fact that the shame Vera had suffered is subsequently inflicted on Pentti Linna with his passion for taking up arms; he is forever suspected of somehow playing a key role in Vera's violent death. Though this melodramatic tragedy does not close the novel, it is one of its culminating points.

Conclusions

The ideas discussed in L. Onerva's "Manja Pavlovna" and in her conversational novel of ideas *Yksinäisiä* are in the foreground of both texts, but not at the expense of emotions, whether those evoked in the reader, or named and described in the text – mostly in the direct speech of the characters, but also by the narrator. On the contrary, ideas and emotions are inseparable, showing the author's way of "thinking the aesthetic and the political together" (cf. Ngai 2005: 3). The emotions

³⁸ "Mutta mikä oikeus on hänellä, tohtorilla, kohdistaa kansalliskiihkonsa sekarotua vastaan, jota hän itsekin on! Onko hän sen suomalaisempi kuin minä? Nimenmuuttaja on hän kuin minäkin! Luisuja, kansallinen taskuvaras, sivistyksen siirtolainen, niin kuin minäkin! Hän lännestä, minä idästä, siinä ero. Oksastettu vesa Suomeen on hänkin. [- -] Näes, *minä*, minähän en vihaa sekarotua. Tahdon vain vastustaa tohtorin kantaa ja väittää, että venäläis-suomalainen on aina yhtä lähellä sitä perisuomalaisuutta, jonka puolesta hän kiivailee, kuin ruotsalais-suomalainenkin. Mikä oikeus on juuri hänellä ottaa ohjaket omiin käsiinsä tässä maassa ja kieltää se muilta siirtolaisilta? Ja minä, olenhan minä suomalaisen kirjailijan tytär." (Emphasis in the original.)

³⁹ "[N]äyttäisi otetulta, salaperäiseltä, vihjaisi johonkin kansalliseen uhrautumiseen, ylhäiseen vierasperäisyyteen, ha ha ha! [- -] Minulla, muukalaisella, joksi te minua parjaatte, on enemmän sisäistä ylpeyttä kuin teillä, minä valitsin nimekseni tuon halveksitun nenpäätäisen." (Emphasis in the original.)

in L. Onerva's prose are, as always in literature, created in language, by means of rhetoric and narrative strategies, figures of speech and images (see e.g. Lyytikäinen 2016: 42). The excited tone of many of the characters' utterances and "speeches" is indicated by frequent use of exclamation and question marks.

The (negative) emotion or affect most often mentioned explicitly in conjunction with Russianness in *Yksinäisiä* is shame, which emphasizes the central role of shame in shaping any identity. The deeply personal, individual and societal character of shame, an affect which derives from and aims at sociability and bonding (cf. Lehtinen 1998: 141–142; Williams 1993: 83) manifests its central importance in constructing national and other communities and identities, the personal and collective "we" in opposition to "them". Shaming as punishment, usually for a union with a Russian person, also plays an important role within the strategy of regulating national identity. Other emotions closely connected to hierarchies between national, ethnic, and gender identities are often present in constellations of two or more, like suspicion and fear, mingling with fascination; attraction and repulsion or disgust; love and hatred; rage and kindness or meekness; contempt and amusement. Here, L. Onerva's text enters into direct dialogue with earlier and contemporary representations of Russia, Russians, and Russianness in Finnish literature.

Gendered aspects of the identities are also hierarchized; the Russian element is labelled as feminine or effeminate and the Finnish element tends to be represented as masculine and healthy. However, binary oppositions cannot be found in L. Onerva's text and the hierarchies are often disturbed. The emotions and qualities labelled culturally as feminine or masculine and the ideas attached to them are promoted by both male and female characters. As Lea Rojola (1999: 169) has pointed out, L. Onerva's novel adopts a critical stance towards the nationalism based on the ideas of racial hygiene and military zeal as professed by Pentti Linna. Linna's views express various "ugly feelings" and show how processes of aversion and exclusion work (cf. Ngai 2009: 12), highlighting the impossibility of separating individual and shared, collective emotions.

It is not difficult to guess which opinions and ideas are closest to the author's (ks. Rojola 1999: 169), especially when read within the intertextual framework of L. Onerva's (fictional and non-fictional) *œuvre*, with its concern for women's rights, social justice, tolerance and pacifism. Given the clear stance against racial and other ethnic labelling, the concern with complexity and intersections of all identities and the stance against the ban on racially, ethnically or culturally "mixed" unions, we can trace inspiration from thinkers like Herbert Spencer who considered "cultural hybridization" mostly in positive terms (cf. Jusová 2005: 19).⁴⁰

⁴⁰ L. Onerva read Spencer at a young age in Swedish translations (Nieminen 1982: 21). For a thorough and complex analysis of the English-speaking New Woman Writers' way of relating to (British) colonialism and the discourses on race and eugenics, see e.g. Jusová 2005.

However, the constellations and entanglements of ideas, emotions, gender and other variables are very complex, given the way the female characters recycle the metaphors and stereotypes of Russianness, even when attaching positive emotions to them. Moreover, Vera Soroinen's "animatedness", evoking portrayals of hysteria, remains one of the most ambivalent elements in the novel. The complexity is further enhanced by L. Onerva's use of irony, or, one might say, by the possibilities of ironic reading arising from the text. The omnipresent possibility of ironic distance is intertwined with the emotional appeal of many ideas and views presented in the novel. This intrinsic and complex entanglement of ideas with emotions shows the necessity of revaluing the generic and gender characteristics of the novel of ideas vis-à-vis the use of the narrative mode of melodrama, which appeals directly to the reader's emotions,⁴¹ shaking readers into an awareness of various forms of prejudice, and making them react intellectually as well as emotionally.

Careful contextualization of the representations of Russianness and the related ideas and emotions always need to be framed by historical events. The role of Russian soldiers and of Germany in stirring up potential civil war among the Finns is repeatedly discussed in the novel (Y: 170, 177, 230, 241). In these dialogues, the (often emotionally charged) representations of the respective nationalities seem to pale before the growing horror of that "terrible slaughterhouse", the war of "all against all" (Y: 177).⁴²

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⁴¹ For the appeal of the melodramatic mode to readers' emotions, see e.g. Rossi 2009: 174–175. For the discussion of the way 19th century thesis novel and drama strove to influence moral views of the audience by evoking its emotions related to the contemporary values and norms see Isomaa 2016: esp. 66.

⁴² "[K]aamea teurastus"; "kaikki kaikkia vastaan".

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