Shame and desire. Intersubjectivity in Finnish visual culture

Laine, T.K.

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Introduction

The Other is indispensable for my own existence, as well as to my knowledge about myself. This being so in discovering my inner being I discover the other person at the same time, like a freedom placed in front of me which thinks and wills only for or against me. Hence, let us at once announce the discovery of a world which we shall call intersubjectivity.  

Jean-Paul Sartre, Existentialism & Humanism
Intersubjectivity in the Finnish Visual Field

Finland is a country that is isolated with regard to its geographic, linguistic, political and cultural position, and its national cinema is largely unknown or ignored in the rest of Europe, with the exception of strange documentaries (such as Kiti Luostarinen’s *Gracious Curves* (1997), Anu Kuivalainen’s *A Black Cat on the Snow* (1999), Mika Ronkainen’s *Screaming Men* (2003)) and strange feature films by Aki Kaurismäki (*Shadows in Paradise* (1986), *Leningrad Cowboys Go America* (1989), *I hired a Contract Killer* (1990), *The Man without the Past* (2002)). The common feature of both of these is that they produce odd, awkward forms of spectatorship. On the one hand they fascinate the spectator with their postmodern irony, on the other hand they make the spectator face lifestyles that are not easily acknowledged to exist within other European cultures. On the one hand they encourage the spectator to relate emotionally with the characters that are represented in them, but on the other hand they distance the spectator with their self-reflectivity and highly ‘staged’ mise-en-scène. They can, therefore, be described through the concept of otherness in the context of Cinema Europe, a concept that is historically, socially, and psycho-dynamically grounded in Finnish national imagery as well, in so far as the ‘national’ is concerned with the relations between groups that define each other through relations of the self and the Other, of the centre and the periphery.²

Beyond the cinematic context, then, the Finnish nation can be characterized as ‘Other’ as well; as I shall show, otherness in relation to other European nations has been a constitutive element in the Finnish identity, while the people and cultures of other European countries have represented to the Finns an ideal they have strived to achieve. But Finland is marked by otherness within its own geopolitical situation too: since the 1990s, more than any other European nation Finland
is becoming increasingly economically divided as a result of the economic integration between European nations and structural change that took place in Finland much later than in the rest of Europe. Old industrial companies suddenly stopped growing, people became unemployed and moved from the rural areas to more prosperous regions where work could be found in the service industry, information technology and finance. Finnish otherness manifests itself both in the way the Finns experience themselves as Other in relation to other European nations (otherness from without) and the way in which the Finns seek to exclude their own deviants (otherness from within).

With few exceptions, some of which will be my case studies, contemporary Finnish cinema has not reflected on or reacted to this cultural specificity. Instead, it has once more turned to monumental epics and national-romantic themes as in the war films Talvisota (The Winter War, 1989) Rukajärven tie (The Ambush, 1999) and nostalgic representations of Finland before ‘the loss of innocence’, like Onnen maa (The Land of Happiness, 1993) and Kivenpyörittäjan kylä (The Last Wedding, 1995)—but without any postmodern irony—or bland comedies/dramas of young and beautiful city people like Levottomat (Restless, 2000) and Kuutamolla (Lovers and Leavers, 2002). Dominant Finnish cinema, then, seems to be either nonrepresentative and unrealistic in its cultural specificity or too reflective of Hollywood influences. Therefore, in order to theorize about ‘otherness’ as the national specificity of Finnish cinema (and Finnish visual culture in general), the concept of ‘the national’ needs to be re-thought. The national is not merely the question of films produced within the nation, or the way in which economic, technological, and ideological factors affect national cinema, or the way in which historical, cultural and/or fictional concepts of national identity are constructed through cinema. Instead, it can be seen against the self/Other relationship that manifests itself both in the way in which the film epitomizes this
relationship and in the way in which the spectator relates to the film emotionally and intellectually.

But where can we turn in the field of visual studies to discuss spectatorship and national identity in the context of understandings and misunderstandings, fascinations and rejections, involvements and indifference that exist throughout the locus of seeing and being seen? The most important theories of film spectatorship, psychoanalytical and cognitive theories, often do not take the social dimension of spectatorship adequately into account. Instead, they often assume an ideal spectator, and so cultural, and historical questions of spectators’ (emotional) responses are neglected. On the other hand, in the Cultural Studies approach ‘culture’ is offered as a kind of explanatory category into which all individual meanings can be fitted. Yet particular cultural symbols appeal to particular individuals not because people’s psyches resonate with some cultural meanings but because they can personally employ these symbols with their own psychobiographically particularized cultural meanings. Cultural symbols operate on the inter-subjective level, simultaneously on the cultural and the individual plane; neither can be reduced to the other.\(^6\)

In order to explain the oddities of Finnish visual culture, the most relevant approach seems to be to focus on the relationship between the self and the Other through the Sartrean concept of *intersubjectivity*, the concept that deals with both the individual and the sociohistorical dimensions of subjectivity. Since subjectivity exists in the signification of others, the subject’s being in the world can have meaning through self-awareness of his or her presence to the others in the social context. This social dimension of subjectivity can be extended to the cinematic experience as well. In several ways, films can look back at the spectators, and, in so doing, films can shape, modify, and define spectators’ relationships with others within and across social communities. Films look back at the spectator, evoking emotions that promote the reciprocal exchange
between the subject and the ‘object’ of look in the context of the social. As Sartre has shown, emotion is an orientation towards the world and an embodiment of the world and it cannot be reduced to the one or the other. This is why emotional processes resonate with cultural meanings, even though they are individually embodied, and the same can be claimed for emotional processes in the cinematic experience. Furthermore, there are more or less introspective emotions. There are emotions that are sustained through a process of taking the standpoint of others on oneself in the context of the social. The (anticipated) encounters with others are from the start more intrinsic to emotions like guilt, shame, embarrassment or pride than to emotions like fear, joy, disgust, surprise, anger, or sadness. Of all the so-called social emotions, shame most directly reveals the intersubjective foundations of individual existence, as shame is simultaneously an interpretive process, a way of seeing oneself from the standpoint of others and a sensed inability to take control of one’s identity and organize a response. In shame there is a sense of being before the community without being part of the community unlike in embarrassment and pride, or even guilt (in which the focus lies on the action one has committed instead of on the self).\(^7\)

Shame, therefore seems a type of social emotion best suited to open up cinema spectatorship to the new kind of theorization this thesis hopes to offer.

By focusing on the issues of spectatorship and emotions within the terms of the social and the intersubjective, this thesis proposes an insight into a Finnish visual culture that is not interested in the question of national coherence but in the question of addressing the spectators to re-think the ways in which their social world is constituted. The focus of this thesis is thus not rigidly within the problematics of national cinema even though the concept of cultural specificity is important to the course of my argument. Rather, the focus lies on issues of intersubjectivity within a Finnish context. Furthermore, as intersubjective existence (the
borderline between the self and the Other) can be discovered in the emotion of shame, and as shame as a mode of social engagement has a long history in Finland, this thesis focuses on the way in which shame as a master narrative is circulated in Finnish cultural context and national imaginary. In reading Finnish film through the theories of intersubjectivity, I hope to make certain patterns of problematic relationship with the Other in Finnish culture visible, but also to make a contribution to more general understanding of the different ways in which we can be engaged in contemporary visual culture. Although the course of the argument is based on viewing large amounts of Finnish films, documentaries, and works of different photographers, the argument in this thesis is developed through a close textual analysis of a sample of Finnish visual culture that covers both feature films, documentaries, installation art as well as photographs from the 1990s, the period during which Finland was joined to Europe, through a national fiction that rooted shame in Finnish national imagery much in much in the same way as it did in the 19th century. But before I get to the point, I wish to provide the reader with a brief overview of theoretical traditions in film studies followed by my grounds for proceeding the way I do.

**Intersubjectivity in Film Studies**

As stated above, the concept of intersubjectivity deals with that dimension of the self that links the subject immediately with the relational, interpersonal world, where the ‘outside’ of the collective experience becomes the ‘inside’ of the subject’s psychic life. This means that in order to fully understand subjectivity, one has to take the subject’s relationship with the Other into consideration. This relationship is not merely an external one; it contributes to the core of subjectivity itself.
The intersubjective perspective in visual theory, then, suggests that in contemporary visual culture the traditional, dialectical poles of inside and outside, subject and object, seeing and being seen seem no longer to be valid. The status of the object and the subject of the look are interchangeable: we are surrounded by images that look back at us, aggressively, seductively, provocatively, indifferently. Images look back at us, simultaneously constituting and transforming the discourses (the mediations of ‘reality’) that define the ontological distinction between ‘the self’ and ‘the Other’, engaging us in new kinds of intersubjective relationships across social communities. This is the debate regarding visual culture around which this thesis revolves. But how can we theorize this new way of looking that we find not only in movies, but also in installation art, photography, reality television, the city, the street, in chance encounters, and in our more private, intimate relationships?

Psychoanalytic film theory, for instance, heavily epitomizes the concept of look, and in particular the way in which the look and the phenomenon of cinema relates to the psyche of the individual spectator. Cinema is seen as a Kleinian ‘good object’, granting the spectators what they unconsciously desire and disavowing that there is any lack. Cinema produces satisfaction by allowing the spectators to identify with their own vision as ‘omniscient’, and by inviting the spectators to project their ego ideal onto the film characters. In this way, cinema offers the spectators the illusion of pre-Oedipal (the stage in which the infant’s sense of self is not yet wholly individuated), Imaginary wholeness; and cinema as Imaginary is identified as the ideological function of cinema. However, since cinema is always already Symbolic (the order of language and the societal imperatives of ‘the law of the Father’), it also introduces a rupture in these Imaginary processes and re-establishes the lack by producing the good object as lost.

Psychoanalytic film theory, then, strives to show how cinema has the power to take advantage of the
subject's basic desire to look and his or her drive for wholeness through situating the spectator at the 'omniscent' position, at the centre of vision. This idea of the so-called 'interpellation' was introduced in film theory by Jean-Pierre Oudart and Jean-Louis Baudry, and it was borrowed from Louis Althusser’s political reading of Jacques Lacan: just like language in Althusserian thinking, cinematic experience (the way in which the spectators experience the tension between the narrative content and cinematic texture of the film) is ideological in nature, because the spectators are blind to the fact that their knowledge (and their way of looking) has already been produced in a certain (ideological) discourse beforehand. The quest in psychoanalytic film theory is to find out how cinema works on the spectator as a subject of desire, what is the ideological function of cinema, and what might be the alternatives (e.g. a Brechtian ‘deconstructionist’ cinema à la Jean-Luc Godard). In this way, psychoanalysis epitomizes the desire to look and the illusion of the transcendental gaze, but it does not allow the returned look that would allow one to see oneself in the Other’s eyes. In other words, it is all about ‘the subject’.

Kaja Silverman has noted this problem by positing a different kind of being-in-the-world as spectators. By confronting psychoanalysis with the ideas of Martin Heidegger and Hannah Arendt, Silverman inquires into a more useful theory of intersubjectivity in visual culture:

The concept of [being-in-the-world] makes visible something which psychoanalysis has functioned to make invisible: what it means for the world that each of us is in it. (...) Since Lacan, those of us working within that discourse have begun to understand that subjectivity pivots around a void: that each of us is in a sense no-thing. However, we have not learned to hear the call to Being which echoes out of this void. We have not
yet understood that the ‘no-thing’ links us inextricably to the world we inhabit, and makes its affairs ours as well.12

According to Silverman, we are world spectators insofar as we can only see from a certain position in the world: “The ‘there’ from which each of us looks is finally semiotic; it represents the unique language of desire through which it is given to the subject to symbolize the world.”13 Furthermore, we can only appear in the world insofar as we are seen by others in it: “We can appear, and so to Be, only if others ‘light’ us up. To be lit up means to be seen from a vantage point from which we can never see ourselves.”14 Silverman does not, however, challenge the basic Lacanian premise of the look that subscribes to the fundamental lack. The world spectator remains to be a subject divided in language. Furthermore, in this new way of looking we are not merely spectators: we participate, we are challenged, we have to respond. This look is reflective and self-conscious, and has a strong bodily and social dimension, and thus the concept of the look in psychoanalytic film theory needs to be re-thought.

The most thorough critique of psychoanalytic theories of spectatorship has come from cognitive theorists.15 In this critique, the emotional context seems to be specially relevant, as an answer to the demand of a film theory that would not rely only on “one main function; unconscious sexual desire.”16 Cognitive theorists of cinematic emotions concentrate on the ways in which emotional response is mediated through film narrative: as Ed S. Tan has put it, cinema is an ‘emotion machine.’ The cognitivists explore the way in which film narrative is structured in order to activate the spectator’s understanding of the cinematic event as emotionally relevant, after which their evaluation of the event becomes emotionally charged. The process of evaluation is related to the spectator’s understanding of how the film character appraises the event emotionally, and how this
appraisal is intelligible in the situation in question. The situational meaning in turn forms the basis for the emotional response in the spectator that is then felt as a concern for the sympathetic film character and as a change in action readiness (the urge to do something for the character). According to Torben Grodal, for instance, the situational meaning in the film experience renders emotions to motivational forces for potential actions:

[The emotions] guide the simulation of action tendencies, vividness and salience which focus attention, and feelings of familiarity and unfamiliarity that influence our response to characters and scenes. It follows that the film-viewing experience must be described as a process, a mental flow, with bodily reactions as sounding boards.\footnote{17}

Furthermore, the film narrative 'addresses' the concerned spectators in their imaginary role as physical witnesses to the events of the fictional world, and triggers emotional responses in the spectators by guiding their attention to the significance of an event that is related to a certain emotion. According to Tan,

[T]he situation addresses viewers in their imaginary role as witnesses to the events of the fictional world. And it is to this situational meaning structure that the [emotional] components are related. Thus urgency signifies that in the eyes of the viewer it is high time that something is done by or on behalf of the protagonists with whom the viewer sympathizes, regardless of whether the protagonist himself or herself shares that urge. But the component controllability is always minimal: the viewer can do nothing. It is this condition that guarantees safe involvement.
In the traditional feature film, the essential characteristics of film technique are placed entirely at the service of the diegetic effect. As a privileged witness, viewers are allowed to see precisely what they need to see, at precisely the moment they need to see it. (...) And what is dramatically important is determined by the situational meaning structure, that is, the meaning of the story event that is related to a certain emotion.¹⁸

The spectator as a ‘physical witness’ is then a ‘product’ of narration that addresses the spectator as witness to the film events. In the structure of film narration, the spectators are kind of narratees or confidants, who are never under the illusion that they are omnipotent and able to ‘control’ the image, as is the ‘voyeur’ in psychoanalytic film theory. In the process of narration, films cue emotional responses (action tendencies) in the spectator that direct the spectator’s (bodily and mental) attention toward a character, an object, or an event in film, and provoke (blocked) action toward that character, object or event. Emotions are functional action tendencies—shaped by situational expectations—that in the cinematic experience motivate the spectator toward understanding the characters’ actions and goals, or the significance of an object or event. The cognitive approach thus tends to see emotion as functional and rational cognitive ability to cope with a situation that is developed through evolution as a tool that has survival-value—emotions orient us in our environment, help us to evaluate our world and react to it more quickly—and the spectator’s ability to simulate emotions in allegiance with the film characters is based on the same ability. From the cognitivist perspective, then, it is important to study the ways in which films cue emotional responses, in terms of goals, judgements, beliefs, and motivations (to name a few), because it gives a clearer understanding
of the emotional process of watching a film, and of how cognitions guide that process.

The cognitive approach may, however, be criticized for drawing too artificial a parallel between emotion and cognition. Cognition is, indeed, linked with emotional processes and they do interact in the narrative flow. Yet cognition is not the most crucial component of emotion, and neither can emotions be reduced to such a component: emotion is not identical with cognition. As Michael Stocker claims, by reducing emotions to cognition we disregard affect—the element that puts the ‘motion’ in emotion—and define emotions, of all things, as lacking emotionality: “Affectivity cannot be explained away, accounted for, or described just in terms of nonaffective worlds and nonaffective judgements.”

While it is true that cognitions (evaluations, beliefs, concerns, assessments and attention) are important constituents of emotions, and that those constituents typically account for having an emotion, they do not cause or guarantee the emotion.

The cognitive approach may also be criticized for holding too static and rationalistic a perspective on emotions. While it is generally acknowledged that social and cultural features may shape the emotions in various ways—theorists like Noël Carroll and Susan Feagin, for instance, emphasize that in the cinematic experience, emotions are aroused when the cinematic text mobilizes the spectators’ ‘pre-existing dispositions’ or ‘affective sensitivities’ to certain cultural values. Little sense is given of how emotions arise within the social field. Instead, as Deborah Lupton has put it, the emotions are treated as “somewhat sterile entities” that are “the outcomes of a logical sequence of information processing such as is performed by computers.” Emotions cannot always be rationalized (even while they motivate human action); they can be multiple, contradictory, irrational, and inexplicable. It would seem that several cognitive scholars studying emotions would agree with this
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Cognitive scholars tend to discuss emotion states in terms of goals, objects, characteristics, behaviours, judgements, and motivations. Necessarily this means that these scholars tend to break down emotions into component process, and this process of dissection is central to a cognitive perspective on emotion. (...) But these feelings cannot be dissected without doing violence to the emotional experience.

This suggests that the emotional experience cannot be so direct and unmediated as the cognitive film theory of emotions tends to assume in its emphasis on the spectator's emotional response that is felt as a concern for a particular character and as a change in action readiness. This approach, however, allows the cognitivists to gain insight in the specific emotional processes and subprocesses in the cinematic experience that are cognitive, rationalistic and instrumental, as well as in the ways in which films cue the emotional responses through genre conventions, narrative and stylistic elements (such as music and facial expression).

What is needed, then, is a theory of subjectivity that avoids these difficulties associated with the subject of psychoanalysis and cognitivism, and that provides some sense of the intersubjective and socio-historical processes that unifies the subject and the world. Therefore, the most relevant thinker for the intersubjective visual culture would seem to be Jean-Paul Sartre, who, in his philosophy, wishes to discover the structure of subjectivity within the world through the concept of intentionality. For Sartre (as for Edmund Husserl before him), human consciousness is always consciousness of the world, and it is directed toward the world. There is no consciousness on the one hand and a world on the other as two closed entities "for which we
must subsequently seek some explanation as to how they communicate.”

This means that the core of human subjectivity is not to be found behind consciously lived experience (for instance, in unconscious urges), but rather within that very experience of the world. In Freudian psychoanalysis, there is no intentionality to be found. Instead, the explanation of human motivation lies in unconscious desire. Sartre objects to this kind of determinism by arguing that desire as a lack of fullness is not to be discovered in libidinal drives, but in the relationship with the subject and the world. As Betty Cannon puts it, Sartrean consciousness is

an openness toward Being, a desire or lack of a future fullness rather than a self-contained, intrapsychic system. (...) The human being is not a bundle of drives but rather the assumption of a position on Being. Consciousness implies its partner, the world.

Another crucial difference between Sartre and psychoanalysis is that in the latter the ultimate goal for the subject is the pursuit of pleasure (the pleasure principle), while for Sartre it is the attempt to create value for one’s life and get a sense of self through connecting with the world; through ‘sculpturing’ one’s figure in the world. The subject’s sense of self in the world and his or her connection with the world are identical: without the world these is no subject; without the subject, there is no world. Consciousness, for Sartre, is then a desire for fullness, but it manifests itself in the subject’s intersubjective relationship with the world, not in the intrapsychic lack upon which the subject is founded. This desire is not sexual in its nature (although it can manifest itself as sexuality), but a socialized need (since it gains its significance in the intersubjective world).
For Sartre, it is through the experience of shame that the subject is revealed to him- or herself as existing for others. In shame, there exists a (pre-reflective) consciousness of self as existing for oneself and for others. Through an experience, which Sartre calls the look of the Other, the (pre-reflective) consciousness makes the self present as an object in the world, as an object for the Other; not directly, and not as an object for consciousness, but “in so far as the person is an object for the Other.”

It is in my being as an object for the Other that I am able to experience the Other as a subject; not simply as an object in the world, but as a conscious subject like the subject him- or herself. This aspect of my being is revealed to me through the look of the Other. As the look reveals another subject, it also reveals the subject’s own status as an object under the look of that other subject. While in psychoanalysis other people are not important as subjects, but only as ego-constituting and need-gratifying (or frustrating) objects for the narcissistic subject, for Sartre the relationship with the Other defines the subjectivity insofar as the look of the Other reveals that the subject has his or her foundation outside him- or herself, outside his or her own consciousness, in the Other. Furthermore, the subject’s relation with the Other is not simply external, but the Other affects the subject’s being in such a way that the relationship becomes a reciprocal internal relationship of being to being. I am what I am for the Other and never for myself. But although the Other’s look determines my being and gives it a nature, an ‘outside’, “that very nature escapes me and is unknowable as such.”

This means that subjectivity is shaped in and through an intersubjective relation between the self and the Other, as the version of the subject’s identity that he or she can observe is an ‘objectified’ version, a representation of the self that is shaped in anticipation of how the subject would be viewed from the Other’s point of view.

In the cinematic experience, the look of the Other can then surprise the spectators by confronting them
with their own look, thereby disrupting the 'illusion of imaginary unity' assumed in psychoanalytic film theory. This is a situation that the spectators anticipate, as it suggests that their position is always and already inscribed within the film, that the spectators' 'desire to look' is being observed by the Other. The look prevents the spectators from looking from an omnipotent position and disturbs their relation to the film. The spectators now have to think of themselves in an unsatisfactory relation to the others (or the consciousness of the others), exposed to the eyes of the others within their own field of vision. As a result, the spectators are able to experience the Other not as an object of the look, but as a conscious subject that is able to reduce the spectators to objects. The spectators become aware that they exist for others just like the others exist for them. By pointing at the relationship between the subject and the Other, Sartre's discussion of the look allows one to abandon the model of spectatorship that is based on the opposing positions of subject and object, active and passive, seer and seen.

Even though Sartre posits his analysis of subjectivity as ontological, it is by no means essentialist or ahistorical. Subjectivity exists in the signification of others, is informed by the encounters with others. 'Self' is not an inner essence to be realized, but a possibility as discovered in the relationship with the social world. But how can we limit the field of inquiry into intersubjectivity within the social field? The most appropriate way seems to be to look at how emotions pinpoint prevalent modes of looking or ways of seeing and being seen, since emotions promote the continuous exchange between the 'outside' (the position from which the subject is seen) and the 'inside' (the position from which the subject looks). Among the emotions we might invoke we could select pride (strong social dimension), or anger (strong bodily reaction), or greed and covetousness (strong relation to the object), but the one which best displays the features of intersubjective, social, bodily,
and ocular engagement would seem to be shame. Unlike less ‘introspective’ emotions (like fear, joy, disgust, surprise, anger, or sadness), shame is profoundly embedded in the social, while at the same time it is a fundamentally subjective feeling.

But shame differs also from other socially introspective emotions, even though it can be associated with them. Michael Lewis has provided a useful four-feature phenomenological definition that distinguishes shame from emotions like pride, shyness, empathy, guilt, or embarrassment. First, the desire to hide or to disappear is a very important feature in the phenomenology of shame which distinguishes it from pride. The second feature of shame is intense pain and discomfort which distinguishes it from embarrassment and shyness (which can be partially pleasurable feelings). The third feature is the feeling that one is inadequate and unworthy. Shame is an evaluative statement by the self in relation to the self, and this distinguishes it from guilt which is an evaluative statement by the self in relation to an action one has committed. And four, in shame we become the object as well as the subject of shame which imprisons the subject in the complete closure of the self-object circle. In guilt, by comparison, the self is the subject, but the object is external to self, since the focus of guilt is upon the action that does not meet certain cultural standards. The fact that shame is a painful emotion that revolves around the status of self in the field of the social enables the subject to understand his or her own conditions of existence and possibly to renegotiate his or her relationship with the social anew. Hence, it is shame that this thesis will concentrate upon, in order to work out the core nexus of this new type of engagement with visual display, with visual objects, or people-as-objects, and the look with which they respond to our looking.
Finland as Shame Culture

But shame as a cultural emotion, as a mode of social engagement and intersubjective ‘bonding’ has a long history, and perhaps nowhere more so than in Finland. Finnish national identity has in rather specific ways been shaped in the 19th century around notions of shame, which are well-understood by the Finns themselves but not always by outsiders. In his comprehensive research of Finnish psychohistory, Juha Siltala traces Finnish cultural discourse back to two turning points—religious and political—as moments in the history of cultural development that rooted shame, shaming, anxiety, humiliation, and jealousy in Finnish mentality. The religious turning point is situated in the first half of the 19th century, in the Finnish revalist movements and in the changes in the conditions of subjective self-esteem within them. The political turning point is situated in the late 19th century, in the awakening of national consciousness and the changes in subjective ideals and needs.

Siltala suggests that the need for revalist movements occurred spontaneously everywhere in Finland in the 1770s, after the economic changes that created poverty, disturbed the traditional ways of living, created individual rivalry, and blurred the position of the family. These changes upset people’s external limits of subjectivity, which caused distress and anxiety. The religious revalist movement, ‘pietism’, provided a channel where people could express this distress and anxiety, and addressed the people’s need for firm boundaries of subjectivity. In this way, according to Siltala, the revalist movement became a justification for the subject’s existence, because it represented security for the subject. The most powerful figure in the Finnish pietism, was Paavo Ruotsalainen (1777-1852). His charisma was based on his ability to transform the anxiety of his contemporaries into a Christian struggle for salvation. He integrated the loneliness and help-


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lessness into a salvation discourse in such a way that it became a confirmation of one’s subjectivity against internal and external threats.

Joining the group meant that the subject had to make a distinction between his or her former and new life. Beautiful clothes were burned (because, as the old phrase still goes, “only ‘ugly’ people show off their clothes”) in order to indicate that the subject did not aspire after the material satisfactions of life on earth. Dancing was prohibited, because it was sexually arousing, and theatre plays were forbidden, since they caused emotional stress, chasing away the Holy Spirit that got disturbed by passion, wrath, and vehemence. Science, arts, and beauty had their roots in the sin of pride, and were therefore shunned. Science could not be practised because it disrespected God’s work. Art and beauty obscured the true qualities of the world and were pleasurable; art could therefore not be regarded as a Divine manifestation. Wealth was suspect because it gave the subject security on earth and reduced his or her dependency on God’s judgement and mercy. Even work had merely a therapeutic function; it helped to protect the subject from Satanic temptations, but had no intrinsic value. But the biggest of all sins were pride and ambition. Who asked for pride always received shame. What the subject had to defeat was not first and foremost carnal—the demands of nature were in fact accepted as being too powerful to be controllable by humans—but his or her own opinions and self-esteem.

For this reason, it was also dangerous for the subject to ‘master’ him- or herself through virtuousness, since the subject had to remain worthless before God. Even Ruotsalainen did not want to be regarded as a ‘holy man’ but as a ‘peasant’, living according to peasant customs and culture. He also surrendered to the temptation of alcohol in order to keep himself ‘weak in flesh’ and not to practise virtuousness. In Ruotsalainen’s thought, sinners are in a better position to become enlightened than persons who are able to control
themselves, and to be treated as a worthless sinner is a necessary part in the righteous path:

> Your time is short, but their time is long; you shall soon be admitted from shame and ache to honour, but they shall end up from honour and satisfaction to shame and ache.\(^{30}\)

In pietism it was thus a sin to behave righteously, and shameful to have a good opinion of oneself, because it was not in harmony with the values of the group. Shame was a sign that indicated that the subject has a sense of sin, but it was also a form of interpellation that expressed that it was better for the subject to give up his or her self-value and sacrifice him- or herself for the group, to see him- or herself as worthless compared to the group. In psychoanalytic language, this kind of identification with the group signifies an attempt not only to avoid conflicts with the group, but also to overcome the lack by uniting with the omnipotent group. But the situation is also masochistic: the subject was expected to throw him- or herself entirely at the mercy of the group/God.

However, in this form pietism could not last long. Its negativity towards the world had a ruining effect on people's mental health and on their culture. All scientific civilization, all arts, all noble aspirations were considered coming from Satan and therefore condemned. The view of the world in pietism was contradictory and dualistic; for instance Elias Lönnrot and J.L. Runeberg found it impossible to strictly separate God from everything profane when, in their view, the role of civilization was to bring divine and profane closer to each other.\(^{31}\) The religious authorities objected to the 'artificial norms' of the revivalist movement, which allowed people to live in sin and still think they were Christians. The shame discourse in pietism went so far that it became humanly impossible, and it no more corresponded to everyday experience. The shame discourse that served to support the religious institution of pietism could eventually not
entirely control the individuals’ subjectivity, although it did leave its traces in the national imaginary.

Furthermore, the rising national intelligentsia in Finland was afraid that the religious revivalist movement would conflict with the creation of a Finnish national unity. Therefore the revivalist movement was persecuted both administratively and legally. The autonomous bureaucracy that ruled the grand duchy of Finland was also afraid to lose its relative independence from the Russian Empire. Since the religious movement arose within the Finnish people, it could have been considered as rebellious activity by the Empire. But at the same time the revivalist movement was seen as a possibility to restore the much needed national unity. Therefore pietism and the official church started to get closer to each other after 1842. Bourgeois virtues like industriousness and restrained behaviour followed from this, and the temperance movement flourished. Alcohol became sinful, because one who was filled with ‘spiritus’ did not long for the inspiration of the spirit, but was feeding oneself with a devastating substitute.

The construction of the political subject in the national-romantic movement resembled the religious awakening. Its ideology was both to avoid conflicts within the group and to sacrifice oneself for the nation. The subject had to work for the common good of his or her own free will. In this project the national philosopher J.W. Snellman (1806-1881) appealed to Immanuel Kant’s ethics of responsibility, in which patriotism was equated with the sacrificing of the individual’s interest for the nation. For Snellman, a moral and free subject arises in the national spirit, as the subject sacrifices him- or herself for the common good. Then the subject’s actions would transform from materialistic into nationalistic, ethical. The national-romantic idealism was created through emotions and ethics that were attached to the nation and the nation only; but only on the terms of ‘the national-romantic elite’, which imposed its idealism on the lower classes. The national-romantic elite demanded every-
body to subscribe to the same values, and this is the reason, according to Siltala, why the Finns do not tolerate differences even today.

The ideal of a morally perfect nation led to the situation in which subjects were expected to ignore their own emotions as motives for action. This resulted in a conflict between individual and national subjectivity which the subject nevertheless experienced as an inner conflict, loaded with a repressed anger, anxiety and shame that had to be denied, so that the subject could fulfil his or her role as a 'good citizen'. Ernest Gellner has emphasized the significance of the nation as an artificial and arbitrary construction, through which the elite inflicts its own values upon others and persuades them even to die for these supposedly valuable myths. In Finland, the national ideals were needed in order to keep the people and the subgroups together as a whole, and to render the (economic) development of the nation significant on the subjective level. 'The birth of the Finnish nation' has therefore often—at least during the past 30 years—been regarded as an integration that the national-romantic elite imposed according to its own, novel interests caused by industrialization and modernization. According to Siltala, nationalism justified the economic hegemony of the elite, and created solidarity despite the constantly worsening class conflicts and, in fact, social problems were regarded merely as a sign of the degeneracy of the people.

Independent subjectivity with the feeling of togetherness was—and is—not simultaneously possible in Finnish culture. The nationalistic discourse became the framework for individual subjectivity as well. Anxiety and concern about the nation, for instance, is then experienced on the subjective level, and this is why, according to Norbert Elias, the national discourse is always and already intertwined in the subjectivity of the citizen. This is not a question of merely identifying with the 'national fiction'. According to Siltala, the development of Finnish subjectivity was from the beginning tied
to the idea of nationhood, which was experienced as a part of the self. Being part of the nation defined one’s subjectivity; any contradiction between individual desire and the national ideals was not tolerated and resulted in shame and shaming. The national ideals were transformed from one generation to another through upbringing. According to Arja-Liisa Räisänen, the national ideals were in one way or another connected to the concept of the family as the pillar of the Finnish nation. For instance at school the national-romantic principles were mediated according to the following attitude:

In history we teach how replacing one’s own interests with the common interests is the first virtue of the citizen; that luxury, idleness and sensuality lead both the nation and the individual to ruins and that on the contrary the simplicity of one’s manners, frugality and alert energy build both the happiness of the individual and the nation. But what shall we do in order to invite the students to follow these principles, to sacrifice their own interests or even their whims for the common good, to be careful with the sensual lust in their lives and to oppose it in their environment, to practice frugality and alert energy?

According to Räisänen, family was the means to preserve the nation, and in this process children were being shamed in the same way as their parents were being shamed by the national-romantic elite if they did not adopt the national-romantic values. Since those values had become significant on the level of the self in the national-romantic process, the inability to follow those values was considered as a failure of the self, which arouses shame.

Shame, then, was rooted into Finnish mentality from early infancy and imposed from above to below;
with the ideal of ‘the good Christian and the good citizen’. A third aspect in the construction of shame and the sense of inferiority in the Finnish mentality was racism. The Finns experienced racism both from the national-romantic elite and from the outside. The elite considered the common people to be basically stupid and clumsy, and this resulted in the formation of two separate groups. The civilizing process of the elite did not share the same cultural ground with the common people, who were regarded as separate, mentally colonized ‘others’. In his adaptation of Aimée Césaire and Leopold Senghor’s metaphor of Présence Européenne in the Afro-Caribbean context, Stuart Hall has shown how the power of Présence Européenne is about exclusion, imposition and expropriation. Even though an Afro-Caribbean subject is often tempted to identify that power as wholly external—as an extrinsic force—it has in fact become a constitutive element in the Afro-Caribbean identity. The same could be applied to Finnish culture: the ‘European’ elite had the power to make the Finns see and experience themselves as ‘Other’. This kind of thinking pattern is difficult to unlearn, since the values that are accepted and seen in an idealizing light are abstract and imposed from above. Furthermore, it is difficult for the subject to accept and identify with values that differ from these accepted values; instead, those different values are projected outside. According to Fred C. Alford, it is in this kind of process, where subjectivity is imprisoned in the web of abstract ideals that the subject loses his or her sense of self, and is not able to recognize his or her own emotions.

On the other hand, the people and cultures of other European countries represented to the Finns a fantasy-like ideal that they strove to achieve. As Siltala claims, Finnish subjectivity was thus from the very beginning apologetic, and in order to rise to another level, the Finns were expected to abandon their own national identity, not to integrate it with the ideals from above. This view was reinforced by the fact that the
Finnss did not have an established and independent state, a tradition of high culture, or kindred nations. And as if that had not been enough, scholars such as the German cell pathologist and anthropologist Rudolf Virchow and the Swedish anthropologist Gustav Retzius classified the Finnish ‘race’ in the mid-19th century as a primitive one, in which state the ‘Germanic race’ did not want to slide back.

According to Axel Honneth, this is a form of disrespect that entails negative consequences for the social value of individuals or groups:

[A] person’s (...) ‘status’ refers to the degree of social esteem accorded to his or her manner of self-realization within a society’s inherited cultural horizon. If this hierarchy of values is so constituted as to downgrade individual forms of life and manners of belief as inferior or deficient, then it robs the subjects in question of every opportunity to attribute social value to their own abilities.41

As is the case in Finnish culture, the subject is humiliated and oppressed by a sense of inferiority because the subject experiences not being regarded in terms of how he or she wishes to be seen by the others. Finnish shame, then, is not first and foremost a result of violating the social norms (as it might have been the case in the era of religious revivalism), but as a result of a denial of social respect. Yet as a result of having his or her ‘ego claims’ disregarded, the subject may come to realize that his or her sense of self is constitutively dependent on the acknowledgements of others. This realization, as Honneth claims, may become a political motive for a struggle for approval.

This was (and is) the cultural discourse within the Finnish community that both described and prescribed how its members should engage with it, and what roles they should envisage for themselves. These
kinds of subject positions deliberately obscure the diversity of the people, as well as their actual experiences, in favour of constructing an idealised model of a ‘citizen’. Nevertheless, the intent of this thesis is not to explore the actual diversity of ‘Finnishness’ (based on generation, class, of gender difference, for instance), but to study the ways in which particular Finnish artists and filmmakers have responded to and re-articulated the cultural discourse I have described above in order to produce more permissive modes of subjectivity. I shall investigate what I consider the most interesting and least theorized aspects of these films, documentaries, photographs, and video installations, namely the strategies they use to epitomize and re-articulate Finnish intersubjectivity. This thesis, then, is a critical discourse that draws on the points of view I have inhabited, both as a social subject and as a film spectator.

The Present Day

In the last 20-30 years, Finland has undergone another social revolution, not least by having become economically successful, but also in having undergone great social shifts, as more people live in cities, and information technologies have taken over from more traditional industries and artisanal occupations. Age-old lifestyles have been disrupted, and new patterns of sociability, sexuality, and subjectivity are beginning to emerge. According to Siltala, the situation in Finland has become more complicated as people are now being subjugated by individualism instead of the collective (religious or national) ethos. In Finland, formerly a society of estates now transformed into a class society, it can now be seen that the bourgeois norm of individualism produces suffering rather than liberation. The religious and national movements at least provided the subject a safety net, but as they no longer exist (at least
not in the same scale), the subject now has only him- or herself to rely on, even in situations where the subject has no control over his or her own life. Individual competence and positive thinking have become a collective necessity, and the subject unable to adapt to this system may become an ashamed, marginalized dropout who imagines everyone else being efficient and happy. For Siltala, the ideal of the independent subject that is in control of his or her own life covers a meta-ideology that makes people run in a standardizing rat race, reaching out for their longed-for individual self-fulfilment.

However oppressive the religious revivalism and the national-romantic movement in Finland used to be, at least the subject was not left alone unsupported by the community. Siltala reminds us that these movements must be seen in their historical context. For instance, during the national-romantic aspirations, Finland became part of Russia, and as those aspirations grew stronger, Russia tightened her grip on Finland. The concept of Finland as the ideal fatherland was necessary for Finnish subjectivity; it was a concept the subject could easily relate to. And since it was also connected to the idea of communality, it invited the subjects to participate in the national-romantic process. The subject could feel safe participating in this process, unlike in the contemporary, postmodern Finland, in which the subject finds a place in the community through participating in the economic growth, sometimes through almost impossible individual challenges.

For Siltala, the religious and the national-romantic movement were cultural solutions through which it is possible to conceptualize the contemporary mental exercise of power. The ambivalence in Finnish mentality toward success and the suspicion of positive emotions that haunt the subjects can be at least partly based on the fact that the Finnish revivalist movements did not find a way to move back and forth between independence and regressive dependence. In Finnish
culture it is not accepted that in reality success and failure alternate. There is no cultural field in which weakness and power could in a humane way alternate as normal states of one and the same subject. The winners and the losers belong as it were in different realities. On the one hand the subject is expected to be successful, on the other hand the subject is not allowed to succeed:

While the norms of both the religious reviver movement and the national awakening remain in history, the (post)modern subject, free from firm institutional models of living, stands on a normative minefield, too much afraid of the explosion to be able to budge...

According to Siltala, the Finns—who now want to be regarded as ‘world citizens’—are more and more afraid of failure. Finnish subjectivity is now framed either by individual accomplishment or by failure, and the ‘winners’ tend to project failure onto the ‘losers’, so that it becomes a ‘natural’ feature of the ‘Other’. The contemporary version of the Calvinist struggle for salvation is a struggle for competence, where the winners and the losers are categorized as separate. This ‘natural’ separation conceals the ideological and psychological mechanisms through which the winners get reinforcement for their self-esteem at the expense of the losers. Combined with the market ideology, the Finnish struggle for accomplishment now gives individuals the full responsibility for their failure. For Siltala, the modern myth of the equal starting points in Finnish culture seems to be merely a thin layer covering the old belief in ‘natural inequality’ of the people that was present in the national-romantic era.

It is therefore interesting to investigate how this culture, with its strong reliance on shame in order to police and discipline, but also to subjectify its communal life has developed a special kind of intersubjectivity, and how its artists have responded to the new ways of
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looking and seeing. This thesis is therefore a series of case studies of different Finnish films, documentaries, video installations, and photographs. In each case, the thesis will show how key areas of Sartre’s theory apply to the work in question and reveal the social dynamics and affective bonds within the film (or documentary, video art, photography) and between film (or documentary, video art, photography) and spectator to be regulated, but also intensified, by shame.

The Course of the Argument

Focusing on the emotion of shame in the spectator’s engagement with Finnish visual culture, this thesis proposes an insight into the ways of looking and being looked at within the terms of the social and the intersubjective. The primary thesis is that, in contemporary visual culture, the traditional juxtapositions of self and Other, subject and object, seer and seen, active and passive, observer and participant, knower and known are no longer sufficient grounds for theorizing cinema spectatorship in the context of the national. In order to conceptualize this new way of looking, one needs to create a ‘third position’ that is able both to break up the traditional juxtapositions of subject and object of the look and to maintain the tension that underlies them. Because shame can be seen as a realm of intersubjectivity, I shall draw particular attention to shame and the way in which it is founded in the relationship between the self and the Other. It is the subjectivity involved in the existence of others, the social (rather than ontological) dimension of (inter)subjectivity in the Finnish context that this thesis will concentrate upon. As stated above, shame is a social emotion, a mode of social engagement in which intersubjective existence can be discovered, and hence this thesis focuses on the way in which shame circulates in
Finnish visual culture, and the way in which it relates to Finnish national imaginary.

To make my case, I bring in the issues of the relationship between the self and the Other, communal identification, affect, and the bodily nature of (inter)-subjectivity. In the end, I hope to have presented a model of spectatorship that is able to explain the peculiarities of Finnish visual culture that are historically, socially, and psychodynamically grounded in the Finnish national imaginary. Furthermore, I hope to have shown how different objects of visual culture both engage us in new kinds of relationships with and distance us from the visual world so that they invite us to understand its conditions of existence. The argument consists of three interrelated questions. First, in what way does the subject depend on the Other for his or her being in the visual field? What is the constitutive function of the look of the Other for the subject sense of self? Second, to what extent is the constitutive function of the Other to the self limited to the threat (of the Other’s look)? To what extent is it possible to recognize and respect the freedom of the Other in the field of vision? Third, what is the dynamic relation in the self between the self as consciousness and the self as body? What are the possibilities for re-negotiating one’s relation with the visual world especially when it comes to encountering the world through emotion, as a bodily subject?

My study consists of four chapters, of which I shall give a brief description below. In chapter one, I shall introduce Sartre’s original discussion of inter-subjectivity through voyeurism and shame, as structures that exemplify the way in which we are related to others. I shall show how these structures are epitomized in my case study Sin—A Documentary on Daily Offences (Susanna Helke and Virpi Suutari, 1996), and how the documentary re-determines the nature of cinematic experience in the scopic field, and re-defines the politics of looking involved in it, by turning the spectators into objects (of the Look) for themselves. I shall show how a
film can reflect the spectators’ look back onto themselves, making a spectacle out of the spectators, reducing them to shame, and thereby revealing that they possess an identity imposed from outside of themselves. But whereas for Sartre this is a threatening situation, I shall argue that it echoes a possibility of filling in the void between the self and the Other. Viewed from this perspective, shame is not only a symptom of the threat that the Other represents to the foundation of the subject, but also a symptom of hope for positive reciprocity.

In chapter two I shall examine the Sartrean notion of communality in *Critique of Dialectical Reason* in order to formulate a model of intersubjective cinematic identification. I shall argue that there is no space for the Other in the psychoanalytic concept of identification. The concept of identification that is based on the Lacanian mirror functions merely in an adoption of the image of the Other where there should be the self—it does not refer to the discovery of the other person as a conscious subject. By contrast, I shall argue that the structure of identification is triadic instead of a two-way mirror, and it is dependent on the communal look of the third Other. The triadic structure renders the process of identification necessarily social, and it is this social context that allows for authentic relations with others, since it reveals the dialectical nature of intersubjectivity, the condition in which the subject is both an object taken and a subjectivity in the process of defining him- or herself.

In the cinematic experience, then, it is both the spectator and the character that form an intersubjective relationship under the regime of the social eye. This I shall show in my case study on Aki Kaurismäki’s film *Drifting Clouds* (1996). In this case study it can be seen how the spectators constitutes themselves as historical subjects through identifying with others under the determining social eye. This identification takes place beyond the simplistic idea of text-context relations, on a more complex interactive and intersubjective level. This
notion can be extended to the psychoanalytical concept of abjection, and this is why the thesis takes a psychoanalytic turn in chapter three. Abjection touches upon the concept of intersubjectivity in a way that allows for appreciation for the subjects who are denied recognition in a community. I shall show that shame functions in the same way as abjection insofar as it creates asymmetry and instability of identification in the subject, providing a critical resource for the subject to re-articulate the communal terms of his or her identity. This I shall show with a case study on the images of the Finnish photographer Pekka Turunen.

In chapter four I shall discuss the concept of body as the realm through which the subject is able to encounter the intersubjective world, as a bodily subject. In order to exist in the world, the subject has to possess a dimension that goes beyond consciousness, and this dimension is the body. The subject is, on the one hand, an object in the world, and on the other hand something directly lived by consciousness, in a *dialogical* relationship with the world. As Vivian Sobchack has shown, the same phenomenon occurs in the cinematic experience, since it is not a closed system of subjects and objects, but a dialogical space of two (or more) subjects.° In this intersubjective space of the external and the internal world, emotions play a crucial role. Emotions promote the continuous exchange between the ‘outside’ and the ‘inside’: it is through emotions that the subject embodies the social world. Emotion is an orientation towards the world and an embodiment of the world; therefore emotions are always at the same time social and subjective investments in the world. Through embodiment, emotions operate simultaneously on both the social and the subjective level, and neither can be reduced to the other. Emotional processes, then, resonate with cultural meanings, even though they are individually embodied and created from within, and the same can be claimed for emotional processes in the film/art experience.
In this process, shame is an essential emotion, since it is an emotion that is profoundly embedded in the social. In shame, an immediate and embodied intersubjective field or framework can be seen; that is, the manner in which the subject apprehends him- or herself being seen by others is the equivalent of a projection of the external world onto the subject’s psychic self and vice versa. Shame, then, arises from our capacity to shift our viewpoint outside ourselves, forming a frame in the web of our psychosocial existence that reveals the way our experience of the social world is structured and given meaning to. I shall argue that in the cinematic experience, like in shame, the spectators can perceive the film from an outside point of view, while at the same time they are invited to experience the film from within. I shall illustrate this by examining the way in which Eija-Liisa Ahtila’s video art—and especially her If 6 Was 9—epitomizes the intersubjective frames of human existence and the emotion of shame. In If 6 Was 9, the emotion of shame can be seen to constitute an intermediate position between the spectator and the film, a position that maintains the tension between the self and the Other. This position is at the same time ‘transparent’ and re-orienting itself towards the world: a possibility to rearticulate the terms of the social network after which something new may emerge.

Shame, then, is not ‘only’ an emotion, it is also a concept. To understand a concept is to place it in a theoretical framework of interlinked concepts. For me, making sense of the relationship between the film and the spectator through shame is to make sense of hitherto non-explored aspects of cinematic subjectivity that shed light on the intersubjective nature of cinematic experience, and on the national character of new Finnish cinema. So although this thesis has limited itself to one specific emotion and to a body of work coming from one single European nation, it is the contention of the thesis that the concepts here highlighted, and the recourse to Sartre’s theories can actually redirect and invigorate the
study of national cinema and the new forms of spectatorship in visual culture much more generally. In the end, it hopes to have made a contribution to understanding why and how we are ‘interpellated’, fascinated, but also so much involved by contemporary visual culture. It will hopefully also explain why traditional theories of disembodied, a-social or gendered theories of spectatorship are insufficient for understanding the changes taking place in our visual field, but also how this visual field is shaping our intimate relationships, so that even philosophers will have to pay attention to this image, which refigures public and private, self and other, subject and object, individual and the community.

4 An explanation, given by many Finnish film historians, why Finnish national cinema keeps on turning to national-romantic themes is that it from the beginning was harnessed to serve national-romantic purposes. At the time of early cinema, Finnish cultural life was in a state of fermentation; nationalism came together with new forms of art, continuing to create national (high) culture, the process that had already started early in the 19th century. Nationalism in Finnish film production was then also a manner to elevate the new artform among the established high arts. See, for instance, Kari Uusitalo, *Meidän polkamme: Suomalaisen elokuvan perustajajoki Erkki Karu ja hänen aikakautensa*. (Helsinki: Suomen elokuva-arkisto, 1988); Åri Honka-Hallila, “Elokuvakulttuuria luomassa.” In Åri Honka-Hallila, Kimmo Laine, and Mervi Pantti (eds), *Markan tähden: Yli sata vuotta suomalaisia elokuuhistoriaa*. (Turku: Turun yliopiston täydennyskoulutuskeskus, 1995). This tendency in Finnish national cinema was criticized severely in the 1960s by the young filmmakers
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that were to form the hard core of the ‘Finnish New Wave’. Finnish national cinema was accused of being heavily patriarchal and elitist, given from above to below. However, the dynamic process of change in the 1960s ended abruptly after only a few years, and so the active sociality remained merely a lost historical opportunity in Finnish national cinema as well as in Finnish cultural life in general. See Mervi Pantti, *Kaikki muuttuu... Elokuvakulttuurin jälleenrakentaminen Suomessa 1950-luvulta 1970-luvulle.* (Jyväskylä: Suomen elokuvatutkimuksen seura, 1998).


8 For Melanie Klein, the mother’s breast is the metaphor for both the ‘good’ (when it produces satisfaction) and the ‘bad’ (when it denies satisfaction) object for the infant in the pre-Oedipal stage. According to Klein, this process is replayed throughout adulthood by the unconscious defence mechanism against the lack. These mechanisms include projection (projecting the ‘good’ and the ‘bad’ aspects of the inner self onto something or someone in the ‘external’ world), introjection (taking the ‘good’ and the ‘bad’ from the ‘external’ world into the self), and projective identification (recognizing the ‘external’ parts of the self in the other, but not as originating within the self). Melanie Klein, *Envy and Gratitude and Other Works 1946-1963.* (London: Hogarth Press, 1979). On cinema as a good/bad object, see especially Christian Metz, *Psychoanalysis and Cinema: The Imaginary Signifier.* Trans. Celia Britton, Annwyl Williams and Ben Brewster. (London: Macmillan Press, 1982).


Except in the Lacanian gaze of the Big Other (the gaze imagined by the subject in the Symbolic field) and in Laura Mulvey’s erroneous analysis of ‘returning the gaze’.


Silverman, World Spectators, p. 23.


Grodal, Moving Pictures, p. 228.


Tan, Emotion and the Structure of Narrative Film, p. 55.


Jean-Paul Sartre, Being and Nothingness: An essay on Phenomenological


25 This desire is motivated by the need of being in the world as a free consciousness, a need to be one’s own source of being, a ‘God’ (the creator of one’s own foundation). This desire is, of course, impossible to fulfill, because it presupposes an impossible proximity with the world, a consciousness without intentionality. Therefore, Sartre concludes: “man is a useless passion.” Sartre, Being and Nothingness, p. 784.

26 Sartre, Being and Nothingness, p. 349.

27 Sartre, Being and Nothingness, p. 352.


30 Siltala, Suomalainen ahdistus, p. 152, quote translated by TL.

31 Elias Lönnrot (1802-1884) and J.L. Runeberg (1804-1877) were two of the most important figures in the Finnish culture of the 19th century and in the Finnish national-romantic movement. Elias Lönnrot collected the Finnish national epic Kalevala, and J.L. Runeberg is the Finnish national poet.


33 Yet many historians argue that the relation between the individual and the nation is a process, and not entirely ‘imposed from above’. For instance, Finnish historian Ilkka Liikanen acknowledges that while the Finnish national revivalist movement in the beginning invited the people to adopt the values of the elite, the people also moulded those values according to their own needs. See Ilkka Liikanen, Fennomania ja kansa: joukkojärjestäytymisen läpimurto ja Suomalaisten puolueen synty. (Helsinki: Suomen historiallinen seura, 1995).

34 This conflict culminated soon after Finland achieved independence, when the civil war—‘the brotherly war’—broke out between ‘thereds’ (the radical wing of the social democratic party) and ‘the whites’ (supporting the government and the conservatives). The civil war ended in May 1918 with the victory of the government troops, after which everything was done in order to root out the red elements from the nation. As the Second World War broke out, the conflict was
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seemingly forgotten, and the bitterness of the reds was suppressed. It was only in the 1960s that the discussion about the class struggle in Finland was opened up again.


37 Quoted in Siltala, *Valkoisen äidin pojat*, p. 658, quotation translated by TL.


39 Indeed it seems that the sense of inferiority in relation to the other European people has lasted until the present day—still in the year 2001 Anneli Sundberg, a political columnist in the biggest newspaper in Finland, writes how Paavo Lipponen, then the prime minister of Finland, on Europe Day “encouraged us to puff out our chests because the Finns are as good Europeans as everybody else…” Anneli Sundberg, “Ohho mikä viikko!” *Helsingin Sanomat*, 13.5.2001.

40 Fred C. Alford, (1989) *Melanie Klein and Critical Social Theory: An Account of Politics, Art, and Reason Based on Her Psychoanalytic Theory*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989). Eino Leino, a famous Finnish poet, wrote about the same thing already in the beginning of the 20th century. According to Leino, the ‘construction’ of Finnish identity started too late, in the transition period from the submissiveness to Sweden to the submissiveness to Russia. In order to make the readjustment easier; the subject was encouraged to wipe away his or her personal emotions. As a result, “a conventional subject with double standards” was born. See Eino Leino, *Olli Suurpää*. (Helsinki: Otava, 1908).


42 Michael Lewis claims that as the individuals have rid themselves of the religious institutes are capable of absorbing shame and as they simultaneously have turned personal freedom, has Western culture become more shame-driven than ever: “We stand alone and more focused on ourselves than we have ever been. We sense in this condition a powerful freedom to be what we want, yet, at the same time, we are unhappy. Freedom to succeed is also freedom to fail. The self must often bear the blame for such failure. Shame, then, as a close shadow, haunts us, and we fear it.” Lewis, *Shame*, p. 231.

43 Finland got her independence only after the Bolsheviks rose to power in Russia in 1917, but immediately after that the civil war
broke out.

44 Siltala, *Suomalainen ahdistus*, p. 432, quote translated by TL.

45 In Lacanian psychoanalysis, the big Other (*le grand Autre*) has a more important role in the development of intersubjectivity than the other persons (the Sartrean Other).
