The interplay of memory and matter: narratives of former Finnish Karelian child evacuees

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Abstract: After the Second World War Finland had to cede territories to the Soviet Union, and Finnish people from those areas were evacuated. In this article we analyse the narrated memories of former Karelian child evacuees. We focus on the sites of memory and the materiality of memory practices as they are reflected in these narratives. In the article we examine how narrated memories, both written and oral, are formed in the interplay of embodied recollections of the childhood evacuation, with the intra-action of matter such as sources and mementos, and immaterial things such as affects and emotions. We conclude that things and matter are agential in six ways in narrated memories.

Key words: memory practices, site of memory, oral and written narratives, childhood evacuation, human-matter intra-action

Introduction

Between 1939 and 1944, Finland fought two wars against the Soviet Union, which both led to the cession of parts of the Finnish Karelian region to the Soviet Union. After the Winter War (1939-1940) the first mass evacuation of Karelian people took place. During the Continuation War in 1941, Finland gained back the ceded areas in Karelia and the majority of the evacuees returned to their homes. The Second World War in Finland ended in 1944 and for the second time areas were ceded to the Soviet Union. This time the displacement occurred for good and 430,000 evacuees had to leave their homes. The border was closed in the autumn of 1944, and a large part of the ceded area remained inaccessible to outsiders until the late 1980s and the collapse of the Soviet Union.

We focus on the narrated memories of former child evacuees and ask how these are formed in the interplay of the social, the spatial and the material. Understanding different intra-agencies that things and matter have as part of the narration of place memories requires a multidisciplinary methodological framework and diverse empirical materials. The methodological framework here builds upon theories of oral history, cultural memory studies, folkloristic narrative research, human geography and relational materialism. Drawing on the works of Alessandro Portelli, Elizabeth Tonkin and Molly Andrews among others, we consider oral history sources as narratives. As Portelli points out, ‘the analysis of oral history materials must avail itself of some of the general categories developed by narrative theory in literature and folklore’. In addition to oral materials, we extend this notion to written materials.
Following Paula Hamilton and Linda Shopes, we aim to interrelate viewpoints of oral history research with cultural memory studies. In addition, we suggest that memories are considerably more than just social entities that are interconnected with broader social and cultural memory. Narrated memories, both written and oral, are not only formed as products of dialogue between human subjects or as part of a dialogue between ‘texts’ as oral historians maintain, but also in the intra-actions of body and matter. In order to clarify this, we focus on the role of things and matter in the construction of narrated memories. Furthermore, we analyse the engagement between narrated memories, matter and bodily affects and suggest that investigation of the discursive-material nature of memories is a key to deeper understanding of the affectual dynamics of remembering, telling and writing.

The research materials analysed here consist of both written reminiscences and oral history interviews of former Karelian evacuated children. The narrators were at the time between seventy and eighty years of age. The written memories analysed by Ulla Savolainen are responses to the thematic collection of childhood evacuation journeys organised by the Folklore Archives of the Finnish Literature Society in Helsinki and the Finnish Karelian League in 2004, sixty years after the evacuations. The collection contains 182 accounts, altogether 1,906 pages. In Finland, different campaigns and competitions for collecting autobiographies, memoirs and testimonies on a given theme are a popular way of gathering research material and documenting experiences of past events.

The interviews were conducted by Anna-Kaisa Kuusisto-Arponen in two regions of Finland, and a total of thirty-one former Karelian child evacuees were interviewed in 2005-2006. The narrative interviews were based on a few open-ended questions about childhood recollections before, during and after the war, and descriptions of the Karelian home, friends, school and other activities. The interviews were recorded and lasted between forty and 120 minutes.

Sites of memory: connecting body, narrative and spatial experience

Sites of memory, a concept originally developed by Pierre Nora, has been largely applied but also criticised in the field of cultural memory studies. In this article, sites of memory as socio-spatial constellations are understood in two ways. First, sites of memory are understood as meaning-carrying linkages between tangible reference points and memory. As widely observed in folklore studies, anthropology and narrative research, memories and narratives of the past require points of reference, sites of memory of a sort, which can be particular named places, but also objects or documents, dates or crystallised and often-repeated stories, or even mindscapes. The significance of these tangible marks, these sites of memory, is dependent on their presence both in the past and the present. They represent and remind of the past and above all testify to the existence of the past in the present. Sites of memory support and sustain memories and narratives but correspondingly their relevance as sites of memory is conditional on the narratives and memories related to them.
Second, our conceptualisation of sites of memory makes use of the geographical understanding of place as a process of constructing and helping people to make sense of the world. Geographical literature highlights how personal and shared memory practices are embedded, yet they move in and through a range of spaces, bodies in motion, emotional attachments, social movements and wider transcultural networks. Thus, memory practices and narratives are never only ‘located’ in physical space, but are on the move through personal and shared emotions, memories and affects. This means that neither memories nor sites of memory can be understood as fixed entities.

Oral and written narratives of memories materialise in relation to multiple sites of memory. Sites of memory have a particular appearance in the temporal structure of narrated memories. They cause a breakage in the syntagmatic chronology of the narrative when the narrator deviates from the plot and associates memories with others related to different events and times. These associations between memories from different times are based on paradigmatic logic, which means that even though they belong to different times and events, they are still related to the same particular site of memory and thus share a connection. Written memories are more likely to combine events along syntagmatic chronology while oral narratives tend to select events based on paradigmatic similarity. In addition, psychological research on memory has discovered that things and matter often serve as psychological triggers for memories and thus function as narrative tools in paradigmatic organisation. This is quite often witnessed with traumatic memories, in particular. For example, scents, smells, taste and kinesthetic imageries can create associations between different times and places.

According to Karin Hultman and Hillevi Lenz Taguchi, ‘multiple forces are at work in the construction of the world where discourse is only one such force’. Leaning on this idea of relational materialism, we propose that narrated memories are only one part of memory work and commemoration practices. Memories are always more-than-social and involve more-than-human encounters. However, we do not suggest that these material agential formations would have social or political capabilities as such and by themselves. In the field of oral history, this is a crucial notion in two ways. First, narrated memories should not be understood as strictly discursive ways of knowing. Second, we emphasise that writing and telling are always material-discursive practices, and understanding the full potentiality and affectual capability that lie in things and matter is still often underresearched in oral history tradition. This is even more apparent in the study of childhood memories.

As Pauliina Rautio and Joseph Winston argue, children often sustain openness to their material environment and thus relate to it in creative rather than fixed ways. This means that children especially take into account the more-than-human elements in their daily environment through doing and being. Consequently, our research does not only ask what things or matter are, but also how they are in memory narratives. We acknowledge that sources and mementos, for example, are commonly used in narratives, but their affectual potentiality requires a closer analysis. In our empirical analysis, we trace sites of memory and the ways through which material-discursive understanding of childhood events and the evacuation experience in general are narrated, the kinds of roles matter assumes in narrated memories and the points and moments of human-matter intra-
action. By adding these views to the analysis of narrated memories it is possible to understand how the narrated memories and matter intra-act.

**Materialisation of memories in written narratives**

In the written narratives of Karelian child evacuees, sources and mementos function as sites of memory. Source is a general term for the documents and literature which the writers use in order to construct their narratives about the childhood evacuation. Sources and mementos represent and evoke past events and places. Sources, defined loosely, can be personal ones such as old photographs or letters, or they can be similar to the sources used by professional historians such as references to literature about war history. Sources are frequently used in written accounts to give detailed information about dates and place names. Mementos are the concrete objects which the writers refer to in their accounts. Sources and mementos serve manifold and sometimes similar functions in the practices of memory and in written and oral narrating, and as such reflect sites of memory in operation.

The first function of sources is to give the narrative more credibility. When an exact time, place or name is given in the source, it serves to convince and provide evidence of a ‘true’ experience. Second, the utilisation of sources aims at showing the collective nature of past events, memories and narrating. Exact dates, named places and events suggest the relatedness of subjective experiences, locating them inside shared histories and fixing them to known geographical locations. Journey routes and the sites of homes are often specified in the narratives of the Karelian evacuees, and events relating to particular locations are concurrently aimed at situating precise moments in time. Named places, events and exact dates are modes of meaning that attract other memories and narratives. They have gathering power and the potential to act as collective points of reference in the narrative and in memory. Third, sources function as tools for organising the memory and narration. They provide writers with a point of reference or a basic structure, to which they can attach their own memories and build a narrative about the past. Eini, born in 1930, uses several kinds of sources, including books and letters, in the construction of the narrative of her evacuation journey:

The family, which this narrative is about, lived before the wars in the Konnitsa village of Pyhääjärvi in the county of Viipuri. According to the church register, approximately 8,000 people lived in the villages of Pyhääjärvi, of which 127 families and 661 people lived in Konnitsa. Konnitsa was the second largest village of the parish. The parents and grandparents of the narrator lived in Kunnianiemi 2, which was one of the oldest residential areas. The book, Pyhääjärvi of Viipuri County. Periods in Kannas (1950), written by Impi Wiikka, MA, uses for example Inkeri Koivusalo’s study, written in the University of Turku in 1929: The Area of Lake Pyhää – Lake Kiima in the Parish of Pyhääjärvi V. 1. Cultural Geographical Report (manuscript).

When using history books as sources, Eini’s point of view and the content of her story are impersonal and distant. For example, she refers to herself in the third person as the ‘narrator’. In this case, the sources provide her with information she does not otherwise have. Hence, the sources
enable her to recount the broader context of the evacuation journey. In addition, Eini uses the sources to form an interpretive framework for her writing. References to the sources guide the reader to interpret the narrative as a fact-oriented narrative of history. This example shows that sources do not only add content into the writing, but they partly define the communicative function of the writing and the message the writing conveys. They relate to the writer’s intentions and goals of presenting the past in a particular manner and in the selected framework. Thus, Eini constructs her writing like a historian by using source materials.

In the following example, the same writer utilises her father’s letters to construct her narrative about the evacuations. She had corresponded with her father who had to work in a different part of Finland because of the war. Eini’s father’s letters form the basic structure of the narrative, and her personal observations are often comments on the letters rather than her personal memories, which, she confesses, are poor. The letters give her knowledge of the family’s whereabouts during the evacuations and explanations for their constant moving. Most importantly, the letters clearly represent a site of memory. They are tangible objects supporting and sustaining memories and narratives, but their significance as sites of memory is dependent on the memories attached to them, and that significance relates to the present moment too:

Most of these wartime letters our father sent to Keuruu still exist. I have been handing them over to the county archives of Mikkeli since the mid-1990s, where they have been indexed and received. I realise that from a young age I have tried to record the memories of my own life as well as those of my family during the war. So I can tell you here that in 1945, when my father and I had to separate from the rest of the family because of school, I went to a bookshop and bought a small notebook. On its cover, it says: ‘MY FRIENDS’. Arts – Helsinki. Tilgmann PLC [name of the publisher of the ‘My friends’ notebook].

The example shows first that the father’s letters function as rhetorical tools supporting the writer’s authority and agency as someone who can and does tell us about the past. And second, it very clearly indicates how the father’s letters have a role in explaining features of Eini’s personality especially related to reminiscing and history telling. She underlines how already during wartime, she understood that she was living in historical times, making her experiences important enough for documenting. This example provides a central clue as to how matter and narrative intra-act. The evacuation narrative, together with the sources that the writer uses, builds a metanarrative, a story about telling a story about her personal past. In addition, the intra-action between the narrative and the source materials creates a continuum between the writer’s self in the past and in the present. In this case, the different sources represent the family members who were physically away at the time the account describes. As intra-active agents, the narrative and the sources embody distant family members in memory by including them into Eini’s narrative about the evacuation. The writing does not only contain her personal experiences, but through this intra-action of matter and memory, it also becomes a narrative of family bonds and togetherness.

Mementos are metonymical objects, which means that they are parts of a greater whole. For the Karelian evacuees, mementos represent and constitute Karelia, their home and the evacuation
journey. For another writer, Anna, born in 1929, a lilac cutting represents both her home in Karelia and the moment of leaving that home as her evacuation journey begins:

On the verge of tears, I looked […] at my blossoming garden once more, maybe for the last time. Lilacs had just blossomed and I had taken one fragrant cutting with me as a memento of my home. I had that cutting, dried and pressed, as a memento for many decades, until it disappeared in the course of time.32

This excerpt is an example of how a memento operates as a site of memory, in which the intersection of two different logics of narration – syntagmatic chaining and paradigmatic grouping – unfolds. When the writer proceeds to a certain point in the syntagmatic plot of the evacuation narrative, the point at which the lilac cutting – the memento – appears, she paradigmatically associates that with later times. These later times belong to the same narrative about Anna’s evacuation journey because they relate to the very same memento, the lilac. The material object, the memento, continues its agency because of the intra-action between the narrative and matter, even though the actual lilac cutting no longer has any material presence. This demonstrates the affectual capacity that matter carries even at the time the material object itself has become immaterial.

Former Karelian evacuees also create and discover places through mementos when they visit the sites of their former homes decades after the wars. It is very common for evacuees to bring back home, for instance, items such as sand, stones or plant roots and cuttings from Karelia to remind them of their old home. Intriguingly, the transportation of these objects is not only one-way traffic, as Karelian evacuees may also bring objects from Finland to Karelia. A woman writer called Raisa, born in 1927, writes:

I had with me two pairs of my mother’s shoes, which I left there. Imagine how happy I was. I said Mother does not need her shoes anymore but they are stepping around there in our home garden, even though she never got back there herself.33

This extract clearly illustrates how matter (two pairs of shoes) and the narrative have mutual performative agencies. First, the shoes are used as a way to convince the reader that the writer’s mother, who had already passed away, had once walked on Karelian home soil. Then, the shoes acquire a different agential feature: they return to a particular place. This way Raisa feels that part of her mother returns to this place even though that was never possible during her life. Further, the two pairs of shoes continue their agential performative intra-activity when Raisa claims that the shoes are stepping around the garden. The narrative and the shoes act as mutually agential. This intra-activity has a personal meaning as it reasserts the family’s connection with the place of home in the lost Karelia, but it is also political. The affectual intra-action between the narration and the shoes aims symbolically at reconquering the site of home and the memory.

**Affects, emotions and bodily memories in oral narratives**

The evacuation journey, places of refuge, the return to Karelia, the second evacuation and adjustment to a new home form the basic syntagmatic structure for the oral interviews. The
narrators’ descriptions of the home, landscape and village or town where they lived during their childhood in Karelia were usually very vivid. Frequently, the details of the lived places, including non-human features such as farm animals or plants, were put in places through the cartographic mindscape of the childhood environment. These multiple familial sites of memory form the most intimate socio-spatial spheres of belonging, in Casey’s terms ‘thick places’. In the interviews, these were the sites that were said to be missed the most during the evacuation and even after decades of permanent settlement within the current borders of Finland. Thus, these places carry the embodied sense of place, familiarity and particular unity of self and place, in other words being in the world. Aino, who was four years old at the beginning of the Winter War, spoke of her memories of Karelia in this way:

*Anna-Kaisa*: *When you think of your home in Karelia, what comes to your mind first?*

Aino: I think it’s related to buildings... and, well, landscape too, because the cellar was a bit further away, on the other side of the road. And then there was this little hill and a beautiful birch forest. When I was a child, I often walked in that small forest and there were wild strawberries there in the spring and I also collected those small birch leaves... Oh, but it can’t have been [spring] because you wouldn’t have had strawberries yet... Anyhow, I used to take those leaves and with my thumb, squashed the strawberries onto them and imagined they were my strawberry pies. Things like that have somehow stayed in my mind. And so the garden and our house, those are in my memories... and the sheep in the pen.

The quotation illustrates how the daily environment and places of play have become embodied through walking, wondering, touching, seeing, sensing and being. This embodied knowledge of places is a crucial element in all narrations of the former Karelian child evacuees. As this example demonstrates, Aino, now an elderly person, simultaneously reflects on her memory of childhood strawberry picking and her present understanding of when the strawberries actually grow, realising that her situating the memory in time is not accurate. Through her bodily experience she clearly recalls how the event happened; yet the temporal confusion does not alter the significance of the experience. This is the way through which bodily senses and tactile memories support the narrativisation and discursive production of sites of memory, even though absolute time, historical facts or other contextual features might not do so. Embodied knowledge disentangles from the restrictions of factual reality and the narration transforms the mindscape as a site of memory.

On the other hand, the actual evacuation journey and temporary residences were often described in a very different, more vague, tone. This social and spatial ambiguity should not be seen as an ontological condition of particular places, but it was born out of the often chaotic journeying, and the experience of forced displacement and the traumatic events of war. In addition, the narrators frequently described how during the evacuation they often found it difficult to feel a sense of belonging, which sometimes continued for years after their permanent resettlement. So it is not only as Cameron Duff argues that such ‘thin places offer nothing to hold the self in place’ but that in these situations the self is actively protected by engaging in practices of not belonging. This clearly indicates that spatial being is formed in the interconnections of affectivity, body and material practices. The choice of not belonging is an affectual emotive-spatial practice because it
invokes action potential to respond to the multiple and contradictory feelings arising from the evacuation.\textsuperscript{37} In what follows, we discuss how this kind of action potential of the body, together with several memory practices, are at the core of making, discovering and narrating the sites of memory.

Figure 1: On an evacuation journey (SA-Kuva)

In oral narratives, matter and things are used in a similar manner to written narratives: to witness, support, frame and present something that was not present at the time. Below, we introduce two more ways in which things and matter have agential features in many narrated memories: affectual capability and emotional surprise. First, we discuss the agential and affectual capabilities of matter. The following extract illustrates how a laundry basket creates affectual ties between two young Karelian brothers fleeing the war in 1939:
So she [mother] had packed a kind of laundry basket and filled it with... whatever it was. We children didn’t know what it was then. Then she had wrapped a thick sheet around it and zigzagged a laundry rope around it. And then our mother told us: ‘You boys take care of this basket, no matter what happens. Remember that you carry this basket! I will take care of your little sister and my handbag, and you will not take your hands off the basket in any event.’ Then, at night we left to get to the Korpioja train station. I dragged the basket along with my brother. We took it with us to an army truck even though it was a bit tough because there were so many people. When we got to the station, everything was totally dark. Then there were some men with torches because lighting a fire was forbidden [due to the threat of air bombings]. They showed us the way. Then one of these station men saw my brother and me dragging this basket. The man told us: ‘That thing won’t fit into the cattle van.’ He took the basket and threw it down the hill. Well... but we had promised our mother that we would take it, take care of it... After the man had walked away, we rushed down the hill and dragged the basket back onto the platform. Then there was this rather big lady at the door of the van who very kindly helped us to lift the basket into the train. So, that’s how we got it with us.  

The laundry basket acts as a more-than-human encounter in this narrated memory. Tapio, who was nine years old at the beginning of the Winter War, and his brother took care of the basket because they were loyal to their mother. Loyalty is the conscious effect that makes the boys carry the basket, rush after it when it is thrown off the platform and try to wrestle it back to the evacuation train. There are also other agential features. In the narrative, the basket is a paradigmatic feature, which bridges the fragments of the memory of the evacuation. Through the bodily work that was required to carry the basket, Tapio organises the past, lived experience. In a way, the he is thinking with the basket. This type of material-discursive imagery is frequently used in oral narratives.

The human-matter agential power becomes even more obvious a bit later in the narrative when the basket reappears. This time the basket keeps the boys together when they suddenly find themselves momentarily separated from their mother. When the evacuation situation turns chaotic because of an air raid alert, the basket still needs to be taken care of. As one boy cannot carry it alone, the basket actively ties the boys together forming the brothers-basket agential unit. Thus, the laundry basket is not a passive element. The basket becomes a connecting feature, a comforting object that requires bodily work. It is an affectual element in the event and in the narration of that event. Tapio continued:

But then suddenly the sirens started to wail...Through loudspeakers, they shouted that everybody has to take cover. I remember myself with that laundry basket, and I didn’t know where our mother had gone because we couldn’t see anything in the darkness. We’d seen a bridge a bit further on and so my brother and I decided to go there. So we dragged the laundry basket along with us and went under the bridge to hide. And only when the danger was over did we go looking for our mother.

The extract above does not mention fear but confusion. It illustrates how the laundry basket and the brother were with Tapio at that moment of time, and this way the confusion was resolved. Hiding
under the bridge and taking the basket there became the vital task for the brothers. The narrative recollection of this moment is based on the material performativity that enables Tapio and the researcher to discursively visit those vivid events of the evacuation.

The final defining feature that things and matter have in narrated memories is their quality of emotional surprise. In the following example, Oiva, who was fourteen years old at the time of the second evacuation in 1944, was travelling with his father. Among the very detailed descriptions of the actual journey to their place of refuge, he mentions several times how they lacked food and felt hungry. In the interview, there is an intense emotional episode starting with the Oiva explaining how he had tried to convince the staff at the train station to make a phone call to their next stop and inform them that the evacuees needed something to eat. At this point he tells us how rude the adults were, not listening to him. He then continues describing the evacuation journey, but all of the events he takes up relate to hunger. Oiva explains how eventually they were given some pea soup and bread: ‘We had to walk about ten minutes from the station and then there was this basement where they had made soup and bread, but had no butter though. It tasted so good.’

Even though the narrative about the evacuation journey seems to be grounded on the syntagmatic chaining of being on the move from A to B, the following episode illustrates that actually hunger and its emotional burden operate as a trigger and are used as a tool for the paradigmatic grouping of the narrative. This becomes painfully evident during the few minutes of the interview:

[Oiva and his father had met a former soldier and let him ride in the horse cart with them].
Oiva: My father was looking at the bag and asked: ‘What have you got in that bag?’ ‘Some food, why do you ask?’ the other man replied. My father said that we hadn’t got any food, that everything was gone. At that point the man threw his bag to us and said: ‘I’ve got some bread and butter here.’ He had this enormous round loaf of bread. [Shows with his hands and imitates putting butter on the bread.] This is how he took half of the bread and put butter on it. It was the best… I’ve ever had… [Begins to cry; a twenty second silence in the recording.]

Anna-Kaisa: So these are still very strong, these memories?

Oiva: Yes, I can’t help myself… I can’t do anything about this… I can’t handle it [speaks and cries].

Anna-Kaisa: And you shouldn’t have to. These emotional memories are the kind of things that quite often stay in your life and affect it very much.

Oiva: Yes, so it is. So many things and recollections have returned to my mind [still crying]. I haven’t got rid of them like… and sometimes these things come from somewhere. This kind of journey, we have come this far, we have come here. That really hurts me so so much and that’s why I’m not able to laugh at it. That’s something this journey has done to me… [speaks very quietly].

It was not the actual travelling or being on the move that distressed Oiva the most but the constant hunger that he had felt as a young boy. The intensity of the emotional experience was still
surprising to him. These kinds of emotional episodes affect the flow of oral narratives and quite often redirect the discursive practice. In this manner, things, matter and emotions are entangled with the discursive and create space for surprising elements and unexpected explanations for using particular analogies that appear repeatedly in the narration. The illustration above is an excellent example of bodily and situational memories that cannot be actively recalled but surface involuntary. These kinds of intrusive and inexplicable memories of forced displacement have affected some child evacuees’ later life and orientation to other meaningful places, sites and events. Thus, it is even more important to understand the narratives of childhood evacuation in two ways: as having both discursive-material and affectually embodied implications for subjective and collective memory practices.

Figure 2: Eating and resting on an evacuation journey (SA-Kuva)
Conclusions: alliance of memory and matter

In this article we have analysed the written and oral narratives of former Karelian evacuated children. In the field of oral history and narrative research, there has been a great deal of interest in the interactive nature of narrated memories. This means that the narratives are products of a dialogue between the narrator and the interviewer (or an audience of a sort), and that they always relate to other narratives and interpretations of history. Here, we have expanded the above argument and illustrated that socio-spatial sense making, thinking about and reflecting on childhood memories of evacuation are not exclusively based on discursive understanding and knowledge production in social encounters between individuals. We propose that narrated memories are always material-discursive. Discourses do not only affect matter, but matter also has an agential role in narrated memories.

We have shown how things and matter intra-act with the narratives of memory. In practice this meant tracing the events and episodes in the narratives that utilised non-human, material and immaterial features in the construction of memories. We found that former Karelian child evacuees used matter in various ways in their narrativisation. Sometimes they referred to additional sources only as a way to prove the historical accuracy of some event. On other occasions, evacuees treated things and matter as human-like participants or engaged affectually with them. This notion is not only restricted to memory work related to childhood experiences. However, it may more frequently occur in such settings because the frame of childhood brings elements of playfulness into narrations even in the case of the now adult narrators recounting their war and evacuation memories. Moreover, playfulness is one way to act back to the world and challenge the current state of things. Therefore, childhood memories are never separable from the particular moment in the present.

We have shown that there are six ways the material-discursive intra-actions appear in narrated memories. First, things and matter are used to witness how, when and in which way history happened, according to the narrator. Second, they provide an interactive frame that promotes both the creation of the narrative and the interpretation of the narrative as a certain kind of account of the past. Third, they represent something that was missing when the event took place or later at the time of the telling or the writing. In this way they confirm the link between the past and the present. Fourth, they give structure to the narrative. Fifth, matter is mutually agential and performative in narrated memories, and sixth, matter carries affectual and emotional capabilities that may create surprises in narratives.

We suggest that by focusing on discursive-materialities and by adapting new methodologies in the research of narrated memories we attain deeper understanding of the affectual dynamics of remembering, telling and writing, and can create new openings in oral history research. It becomes possible analytically to demonstrate how narrated memories are in constant flux and that narrators and the events need to be seen as simultaneously human and more-than-human encounters. As our article shows, this means that narrated memories create an interplay with matter and things.
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Notes


7 These written accounts formed the primary research material of Ulla Savolainen’s PhD thesis (2015).

8 The interviews were conducted by Anna-Kaisa Kuusisto-Arponen for her postdoctoral research project (2004-2008), funded by Academy of Finland.


21 Savolainen, 2015, pp 218-234.


26 SKS. KRA. LEM, p 195. (Pseudonym Eini)

27 See Portelli, 1997, p 27.


31 SKS. KRA. LEM, p 202. (Pseudonym Eini)

32 SKS. KRA. LEM, p 1524. (Pseudonym Anna)

33 SKS. KRA. LEM, p 1488. (Pseudonym Raisa)


35 Interview with respondent number nine/Kymenlaakso, interviewed by Anna-Kaisa Kuusisto-Arponen, 19 October 2005. (Pseudonym Aino)


38 Interview with respondent number one/Kymenlaakso, interviewed by Anna-Kaisa Kuusisto-Arponen, 25 November 2005. (Pseudonym Tapio)

39 See also Noora Pyyry, "Sensing with" photography and “thinking with” photographs photographs in research into teenage girls' hanging out', *Children's Geographies*, vol 13, no 2, 2015, pp 149-163.

40 Interview with respondent number one/Kymenlaakso, interviewed by Anna-Kaisa Kuusisto-Arponen, 25 November 2005. (Pseudonym Tapio)

41 Interview with respondent number one/Pirkamaa, interviewed by Anna-Kaisa Kuusisto-Arponen, 2 September 2006. (Pseudonym Oiva)


