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Jaakko Seppälä

FINNISH FILM STYLE IN THE SILENT ERA

This chapter traces the changes that have taken place in the style of Finnish silent fictional films and their connections to national and international cultural flows. Film style is best understood as the systematic and significant use of the techniques of the medium, as David Bordwell (1997: 4) defines it. I analyse Finnish films in their transnational context by means of classifying, measuring and verbally describing their stylistic characteristics and comparing the findings to foreign cinemas. This will reveal similarities and differences, which enable me to assess how unique Finnish silent cinema was and to what extent foreign cinemas affected its stylistic development. The vast number of films Finnish filmmakers can be expected to have been aware of and the small number of available studies on the style of small nation cinemas are complicating factors. They can be overcome by concentrating on potentially influential individual films, which can be traced from contextual sources like film magazines, and widespread stylistic trends. The two styles that Finnish films are compared to are the tableau style and the classical style. The former is the style that was globally used prior to the 1910s when the classical style was developed in Hollywood from where it began its spread. The overall goal in this chapter is to assess to what extent Finnish silent cinema developed from the tableau style towards the classical style. What follows is not intended to be a comprehensive history of the style of Finnish silent film, but one that provides insight into its development and transnational nature.

Supplementing Images with Words

Intertitles are texts that do not belong to the diegesis of a film and this is where they differ from inserts like letters that belong to the story world. The first Finnish fictional film to contain intertitles was the short slapstick comedy *The Calf's Tail* (*Vasikan häntä*, 1908), which was the second fictional film made in this country (Salmi, 2002: 75–76). On the basis of its synopsis, on which the analysis has to be based, as the film does not survive, *The Calf's Tail* differed from its predecessor, *The Moonshiners* (*Salaviinanpolttajat*, 1907), in that it contained spatiotemporal transitions. Expository intertitles that are enunciated outside the diegesis were needed to make the transitions understandable.[1] Because Finnish language intertitles were a new phenomenon and therefore a

[1] Internationally such intertitles were typically used to either establish the situation or to summarise the upcoming action (Chisholm, 1987: 137–142).

linguistic attraction, they were mentioned in film advertisements. This indicates that written language can function as an index of national identity in the context of a silent fictional film.[2]

At the time of *The Calf's Tail's* production expository intertitles were more common than other forms of intertitles on both sides of the Atlantic. In the American fiction film the shift in the early 1910s towards a more psychologically based narrative and the classical style affected the types and uses of intertitles. By the late 1910s dialogue intertitles had outnumbered expository intertitles (Thompson, 2002: 188). Dialogue intertitles belong to the diegesis, as they are a way of conveying the spoken words or unspoken thoughts of characters to audience members. As they are motivated by the actions of characters their increasing use made cinematic narration less self-conscious. Within the classical style the story emerges above all from the action and dialogue of the characters whereas in pre-classical films, like *The Calf's Tail*, the story is firmly fixed to the narrator's point of view. After the premises of the classical Hollywood style had been laid, the role of expository intertitles changed. In the classical cinema they are used not so much to summarise action, as to introduce characters, give an indication of the situation and tell how much time has passed between scenes (Thompson, 2002: 185).

The first Finnish fiction film to make extensive use of intertitles was probably *Sylvi* (1913), a film shot in 1911, which was advertised as an hour-long art film (Salmi, 2002: 58). The film has not survived, but some fragments, which were, perhaps, used in the film, remain. Whether the film contained dialogue intertitles is unlikely.[3] *Sylvi* is based on a play of the same name written by Minna Canth, from which dialogue could have been taken. However, the film was made in the style of Le Film d'Art productions and Danish art films (Salmi, 2002: 96 & 108), especially *The Abyss* (*Afgrunden*, 1910) that displays letters but no dialogue intertitles. As fiction film production had only just begun in Finland and filmmakers were still inexperienced, *Sylvi* is likely to have been stylistically conservative rather than innovative. *Sylvi's* expository intertitles were probably so-called 'giveaway titles' which appeared before the shots to which they referred to. In *Olli's Years of Apprenticeship* (*Ollin oppivuodet*, 1920), a later film directed by Teuvo Puro, even dialogue intertitles are giveaway titles, which, at times, makes it difficult for the audience to know who is uttering a given line of dialogue. The giveaway title is a pre-classical convention, as its use further

[2] When foreign language intertitles began to be translated to Finnish, probably around 1910, this attraction lost much of its appeal. Before that lecturers translated foreign language intertitles.
[3] The first Finnish film that unquestionably contained dialogue intertitles was *When Luck fails* (*Kun onni pettää*, 1913). When the film was released the nature and quality of its dialogue intertitles became a matter of debate: Some commentators were of the opinion that the dialogue titles were written in bad Finnish. (Salmi, 2002: 63)

enhances the feeling that the given story is being told by a narrator. This seems to have been the last instance in which such intertitles were widely used in a Finnish fictional film. It is highly unlikely that Puro was more radical in his practices when *Sylvi* was made.[4]

The developments in the use of intertitles in Finnish fictional films can be studied with sufficient accuracy from 1920 on, as the majority of the films made in the decade survive. As filmmakers turned increasingly towards literature and theatre as a result of which films became longer and more nuanced, the number of intertitles probably increased. Table 1 shows the number of intertitles per 500 shots in Finnish fictional films made in the 1920s.[5] The column titled 'intertitles', shows the total number of intertitles in the film. This is followed by three other categories: 'expository intertitles', 'dialogue intertitles' and 'other intertitles'. Letters and telegrams, unless presented as inserts (texts that belong to the diegesis), have been categorised as dialogue intertitles, because they can be thought of as relayed dialogue. The last category, 'other intertitles', consists of title cards, credits and other such texts.

Table 1: Intertitles in Finnish fictional films[6] per 500 shots

Film	Year	Intertitles	E. intertitles	D. intertitles	Other
Olli's Year's of Apprenticeship	1920	113	47	64	2
The Kiljunen Boys at School	1921	166	45	89	22
Anna-Liisa	1922	138	25	109	5
The Logroller's Bride	1923	108	25	83	1
The Village Shoemakers	1923	116	16	95	5
When Father has Toothache	1923	69	6	62	2
Evil Spells	1927	82	27	53	2
The Oaf	1927	87	3	79	5
The Young Pilot	1928	72	6	59	6
The Log Drivers	1928	97	5	88	4
Our Boys	1929	74	14	52	8
The Supreme Victory	1929	75	5	60	10

The numbers in table 1 indicate that the use of intertitles in Finnish fictional films decreased towards the end of the 1920s, suggesting that Finnish filmmakers followed the international tendencies. Whereas *Olli's Years of Apprenticeship*, which premiered in 1920, has 113 intertitles per 500 shots, *The Supreme Victory* (*Korkein voitto*), which premiered in 1929, has only 75, which

[4] One possibility that needs to be taken into account is that that the intertitles were actually made by Frans Engström in 1913 when *Sylvi* was released.

[5] The number of intertitles in each category is multiplied by 500 and then divided by the number of shots in the film, so that the films may be compared with one another.

[6] *Olli's Year's of Apprenticeship* (Yle Teema, 12.12.2009), *The Kiljunen Boys at School* (DVD, archival working copy), *Anna-Liisa* (DVD, archival working copy), *The Logroller's Bride* (Yle TV1, 11.1.2012), *The Village Shoemakers* (Yle TV1, 30.4.2012), *When Father has Toothache* (DVD, archival working copy), *Evil Spells* (Yle Teema, 5.12.2010), *The Oaf* (DVD, archival working copy), *The Young Pilot* (Yle TV2, 20.8.2011), *The Log Drivers* (DVD, archival working copy), *Our Boys* (DVD, archival working copy), *The Supreme Victory* (Yle Teema, 6.1.2009).

is almost one third-less. These numbers show that Finnish filmmakers did not strive for intertitle-less films like some American and German filmmakers they admired. In the mid 1910s many believed in the United States that a film with no intertitles was the ideal (Thompson, 2002: 186). Intertitles, it was argued, interrupted the narrative flow and indicated filmmaker's failure to convey meaning by visual means (Bowser, 1994: 140). The ideal was most famously realised in Weimar Germany in chamber films *Shattered* (*Scherben*, 1921) and *The Last Laugh* (*Der letzte Mann*, 1924).[7] Hollywood filmmakers of the 1920s found intertitles a precious tool for conveying plot information, clarifying spatiotemporal relations, intensifying intended emotional responses and presenting psychological states (Brouwers, 2010: 105). In addition, they realised that cleverly written intertitles contributed to the qualities of the film. The 'Loos-style' intertitles, named after Anita Loos who was recognised as their inventor, 'represent a narrating voice which goes beyond the neutral stating of facts' (Thompson, 2002: 186).[8] Such intertitles are rare in Finnish films and most of the surviving examples can be found in the films that were made in the late 1920s; that is, some ten years after their invention. One illuminating example is found in *The Young Pilot* (*Nuori luotsi*, 1927). In it a village drunkard is introduced with the following expository intertitle: 'Pilot Akseli Rasi, whose love boat had once hit the rocks, was now drinking and wandering, so that he himself was sometimes in need of a pilot.' The narration makes a humorous comment on the state of the character, adding an extra level of meaning to the film. *When Father has a Toothache* (*Kun isällä on hammassärky*) and *A Tech Student Film* (*Polyteekkarifilmi*), made in 1923 and 1924, respectively, contain intertitles written in the comic mode. I see them as predecessors of the 'Loos-style' titles in the Finnish context.

At the turn of the 1920s the number of dialogue intertitles in Finnish fictional films had exceeded the number of explanatory intertitles, and towards the end of the decade the dialogue intertitle became ever more dominate, as one can see from table 1. The changing ratio of expository and dialogue intertitles corresponds to that of Hollywood films, but in Finland the change happened a few years later. Hollywood films probably accelerated the change, as the number of annually imported American films overcame that of all other films put together in 1923 (Seppälä, 2012: 41). The result was that Hollywood films soon came to be seen as the universal standard against which other films seemed to be special cases in good or bad. Some Finnish fictional films differ from the Hollywood model in that they feature an exceptionally high number of expository intertitles in

[7] Besides title cards, the number of intertitles in these films can be counted on one hand.
[8] A well-known example of a Loos-style intertitle that inserts mood and atmosphere is found in D. W. Griffith's *Intolerance* (1916): 'When women cease to attract men they often turn to reform as a second choice'. *Hoodoo Ann* (1916) contains the following intertitle: 'A casual and mysterious stranger, whom we advice you to keep in mind'.

relation to dialogue intertitles. These include *Olli's Years of Apprenticeship*, *The Logroller's Bride* (*Koskenlaskijan morsian,* 1923) and *Evil Spells* (*Noidan kirot*, 1927). At the other end of the spectrum are *Anna-Liisa* (1922), *The Village Shoemakers* (*Nummisuutarit*, 1923), *The Oaf* (*Vaihdokas*, 1927), *The Young Pilot* (*Nuorit luotsi*, 1927) and *The Log Drivers* (*Tukkijoella*, 1928).

Puro's *Olli's Years of Apprenticeship* contains 47 expository intertitles per 500 shots, and *Evil Spells* 27 expository intertitles per 500 shots (in both cases the actual number is 50). During the seven years that passed between the premieres, the expository intertitle became sparser, as indicated by the ratios. However, in both cases the number of both types of intertitles used is exceptionally high. Puro decreased the use of expository intertitles towards the end of the decade, but in these films he relied on them more heavily. Things become more complicated when one examines Puro's *The Oaf*. This film contains as few as 3 expository intertitles per 500 shots (the actual number is 4), even though the film premiered the same year with *Evil Spells.* This discrepancy is something the notion of personal style, taken at face value, does not explain.

Both *Olli's Years of Apprenticeship* and *Evil Spells* are adaptations of novels, but *The Oaf* is based on Selma Anttila's play. It was Puro's willingness to create a faithful adaptation of the play that led him to rely heavily on dialogue intertitles. Anni Swan's novel *Olli's Years of Apprenticeship* and Väinö Kataja's novel *Evil Spells* do not contain nearly as much dialogue as plays do. When it comes to these two films, Puro's willingness to be faithful to the original works was the cause for the use of a high number of expository intertitles. That way he was able to give these films a literary feel. In short, Puro wanted the intertitles of his films to reflect the nature of the works on which the films were based.[9] As a similar pattern can be found in the films of Erkki Karu, rather than a trait of personal style, this should be thought of as a more general stylistic feature prevalent at that time in Finland. In Karu's films the highest number of expository intertitles can be found in *The Logroller's Bride*, an adaptation of a novel, whereas *The Village Shoemakers* and *The Young Pilot*, adaptations of plays, contain only few explanatory intertitles.[10] Such faithfulness to the authors who had created the original works, which was also demanded by critics (Seppälä, 2012: 155), needs to be seen as one characteristic of the Finnish group style of the 1920s. The move towards a heavier

[9] Puro's *Anna-Liisa* is an exception to the rule though. *Anna-Liisa* is based on a play written by Minna Canth but it contains even 25 explanatory intertitles per 500 shots, a lot more than *The Oaf*. Two things explain the disparity. *Anna-Liisa*, first of all, is five years older than *The Oaf*. It was made at a time when expository intertitles were common in all Finnish films. The other thing is that *Anna-Liisa* contains 109 dialogue intertitles per 500 shots. The number is higher than in any other Finnish film of the era. In other words, *Anna-Liisa*, being a Puro film based on a play, is dialogue heavy, just like *The Oaf*.

[10] When it comes to Erkki Karu's films, the exception is *Our Boys*, which is based on an original screenplay. It contains a high number of expository intertitles that were needed to motivate the use of newsreel footage.

reliance on dialogue intertitles was not as clear-cut in Finland as Thompson claims it was in Hollywood.

Following the examples set by their Swedish counterparts and the advice of local critics, at the turn of the 1920s Finnish filmmakers turned to canonised literary works (Seppälä, 2012: 150–159). But whereas Swedish filmmakers adapted Scandinavian literature, Finns relied solely on Finnish fiction.[11] The collective national spirit was high in the newly independent country and this led filmmakers to create films in which national themes and nationally loaded images were vivid. In his study of Karu's *The Village Shoemakers* Ari Honka-Hallila (1995: 182) argues that 'of the 146 dialogue intertitles in Karu's film 133 were taken from the play as such or as slightly altered, the silent film thus honouring [Aleksis] Kivi's language'. In some cases the adapted lines of dialogue were slightly altered to suit the narration of the film better, in some cases for more ambivalent reasons. The convention of including some of the original dialogue in the film adaptations' intertitles for the audience to recognise and enjoy was presumably adapted from Swedish films of the golden era. As Eirik Frisvold Hanssen and Sofia Rossholm (2012: 150) argue, the 'use of direct quotations implies a notion of "double authorship" underlining [the literary author's] authorial presence',[12] which is what Finnish filmmakers sought to achieve. In both countries artistic quality was synonymous with literary quality (Furhammar, 2010: 87; Pantti, 2000: 34–35).

Finnish fictional films of the 1920s are intertitle-heavy. In the United States, already in the transitional period, the tendency was to use expository intertitles only when necessary for the proper understanding of the film (Keil, 2001: 61). Finnish filmmakers did not shy away from expository intertitles in the early 1920s, no matter how superfluous they were. In *The Logroller's Bride*, for example, intertitles like 'Hanna couldn't sleep either' and 'Iisakki felt he loved his child more than ever before' do little to advance the story or to establish clear spatiotemporal relations. They convey information, but that same information is also conveyed via the mise-en-scène. Towards the end of the decade such use of intertitles decreased significantly, which is a further indication of the move towards the conventions that had been recently established in Hollywood at the time. In most Finnish fictional films expository intertitles serve narration even when they are redundant, but some of them are confusing, if not misleading. In *The Logroller's Bride* expository intertitles are used to

[11] In this particular sense Finnish cinema was more national than that of Sweden. The only exception to this rule was Axel Jäder's novel *Brottsjöar* (1891), which was adapted in Finland in 1911 but never released (Salmi, 2002: 110 & 113).

[12] The intertitles in Victor Sjöström's *Terje Vigen* (1917) are by and large true to the wording of Henrik Ibsen's poem on which the film is based (Florin, 2003: 64) and in Mauritz Stiller's *Sir Arne's Treasure* (*Herr Arnes pengar*, 1919) each intertitle is taken word by word from Selma Lagerlöf's novel (Furhammar 2010, 89).

introduce the main characters and the actors playing them. This is a classical convention that helps one to keep the characters in mind and raises expectations about their roles in the story. One of these intertitles says 'Grandma Anna – Kirsti Suonio', even though the character is not of the slightest importance or relevance to the story. The only reason for introducing the supporting character is the actress playing the role. Suonio was a respected actress of The Finnish National Theatre during the years 1891–1930. Conventions such as introducing distinguished actors in supporting roles with intertitles were a far cry from the idea of silent cinema as a universal language, as they did little to serve cinema audiences who were unfamiliar with the names of the Finnish national stage. It is probable that such intertitles were edited out of copies shown to foreign audiences. These intertitles, like direct quotations from the canonised literature, indicate that filmmakers used written Finnish as an index of national identity.

The Persistence of Large Shot Scales

Most fictional films looked stylistically the same around 1908 no matter where they were made (Bordwell, 1997: 1). The actors were arranged in a row standing far away from the camera and unless the film was shot outdoors, there was a canvas background drape with painted-on décor while the camera remained static for the complete duration of the shot. *Sylvi's* (1913) fragments, which were shot in 1911, suggest a reliance on this tradition of tableau staging. The scene where the titular character, a young woman who ends up poisoning her much older husband Axel for the love of another man, learns about her husband's bottle of strychnine is exemplary of the film's use of such a cinematographic style. The scene takes place in a room with the two characters (figure x). As they are portrayed in a long shot, their facial expressions and refined gestures are hard to see. The scene also lacks depth, which Bordwell (1997: 1) identifies as one key characteristic of the tableau films made in 1913 and later. Yet, painted backdrops, which belong to the older tradition of tableau staging, are not used either: the filmmakers relied on constructed coulisses. Even though there is much space around the characters, it goes largely unused unlike in many tableau films that use constructed coulisses. As all action takes place in the middle ground, the scene looks flat.[13] Due to the mentioned characteristics, Sylvi is best understood as a transitional film, a midpoint between flat and deep styles of tableau staging.

[13] At the turn of the 1910s the use of foreground space was also avoided in such landmark films as *The Abyss* (*Afgrunden*, 1910).

Most of the surviving shots in *Sylvi* are long shots. These shots, in which the actors are visible from head to toe with some space around them, were typical in the early 1910s, as most European and Russian cinematographers preferred distant front lines (Bordwell, 1997: 184). They placed their cameras so that even the actors closest to the camera were shown in their entirety. *Sylvi* belongs to this tradition, as even the smallest shot scale in it is the full shot.[14] In it characters are seen full length, but there is hardly any space around them. Due to the reliance on large shot scales many narratively significant details, such as the bottle of strychnine Sylvi discovers, are difficult to see. This diminishes their dramatic impact. The courtroom scene in which Sylvi is sentenced for killing her husband makes a good use of the full shot, as it does a better job than the long shot in depicting head movements and facial expressions. Aili Rosvall, the actress playing the protagonist, stands still in the courtroom struggling to look bravely ahead. Rosvall makes tiny movements, as if trying to lift her head from time to time. As the sentence is read, she gradually lets her head drop towards the ground. Had the sequence been shot in long shot these expressions would not be this vivid and the scene would lose much of its emotional content. This shows that the director of cinematography Frans Engström understood how the drama could be supported through shot scales.

In the ball sequence Sylvi behaves flirtatiously in the company of a young man she loves. In the foreground an adjoining room can be seen where the drama takes place whereas the background contains an opening, which allows a view of a hall where various couples dance (figure x). According to Barry Salt (2006: 248), such use of deep staging is fairly common in European films of the time, but rather rare in American films. Directors working in the United States moved action to adjoining places with cuts and changes in camera position. *Sylvi's* links to the theatre, such as the dynamic set, somewhat horizontal staging and the use of static long shots, were presumably intentional.[15] As such the film was characterised by what can be called cinematic theatricality. As Ben Brewster (2006: 49) says, such film style was often favoured because it was easily assimilated into discussion using the familiar and prestigious terms of the legitimate theatre. This is a further indication that *Sylvi* was a representative of the European tradition of filmmaking.

While the tableau style was reminiscent of theatre, it offered some unique cinematographic possibilities. Bordwell (2005: 62–64) sees the way of blocking and revealing as the aesthetic strength of the style. On the basis of the surviving fragments, this convention was not used in *Sylvi*.

[14] In one of the long shots in *Sylvi* actors move towards the camera until they are momentarily portrayed from their chests up.
[15] Two of the three filmmakers, Teuvo Puro and Teppo Raikas, were Finnish national theatre actors.

In Bordwell's view (2005: 60), tableau filmmaking resembles theatre but also significantly differs from it:

> Theater staging, working within a wide and shallow rectangle, tends to be spacious and lateral, spreading the figures out to accommodate many sightlines. By contrast, thanks to the laws of optics, the film camera captures a pyramid chunk of space, with the tip of the pyramid at the lens and the playing space radiating out from there [...]. Since the camera views a unique configuration of bodies in space, you can not only pack the shot with many figures and objects. You can move each one as slightly as you like, blocking or exposing whatever area is necessary, all in the confidence that, in contrast to the live-theatre situation, every viewer can easily notice the changes.

In *Sylvi's* ball sequence the actors in the adjoining room move from time to time to block and reveal dancers in the background. These are undoubtedly instances of blocking and revealing, but they do not add anything to the drama of the film as nothing narratively important happens in the background; though, it is possible that Axel was to be seen in the background space in the original film and this enhanced the tension. *Sylvi's* fragments do not contain flow of depth patterns that would highlight first one narratively significant action and then another. This is where *Sylvi* differs from the well-known films of Victor Sjöström, Yevgeni Bauer and other European masters. Here one needs to remember that the film was shot in 1911; that is, two years before the year of wonders 1913 when many masterpieces were made (Bordwell, 1997: 191) and *Sylvi* premiered.[16] Cinematographically, the film is closer to Le Film d'Art productions like *The Assassination of the Duke of Guise* (*L'Assasinat du Duc de Guise*, 1908) and early Danish art films like *The Abyss*.

Finnish films of the 1920s are cinematographically different from *Sylvi's* fragments. These later films, and especially the ones made in the late 1920s, make systematic use of all shot scales except extreme close-ups. Finnish filmmakers had begun to rely on editing and were moving further away from the tableau style. In this they followed international trends. In 1919 in most films, no matter where they were made, scenes were broken down into several shots (Bordwell 1997: 1). Editing based Hollywood films had become a major force in the film world and they had begun to influence

[16] By this year various European filmmakers working in the tableau tradition had learnt to make subtle use of the tactic of blocking and revealing. One of the now recognised masterpieces that saw its premiere in 1913 was Victor Sjöström's *Ingeberg Holm*. Unlike the Finnish filmmakers two years earlier, Sjöström makes extensive use of the foreground space, often cutting his actors off from their thighs. Furthermore he relies on deep staging, which allows him to move his actors towards the camera and away from it, blocking and revealing items and other actors as the drama requires. The use of tableau style in *Sylvi* was not of this level of sophistication.

the development of Finnish cinema, both directly and indirectly.[17] Table 2 shows the number of different shot scales in Finnish films of the 1920s per 500 shots.[18]

Table 2: Shot scales in Finnish fictional films[19] per 500 shots[20]

Film	Year	ELS	LS	FS	LMS	MS	MCU	CU	ECU
Olli's Years of Apprenticeship	1920	35	89	102	97	33	23	2	0
Anna-Liisa	1922	41	58	166	59	32	6	1	0
The Logroller's Bride	1923	68	75	83	74	45	40	2	0
The Village Shoemakers	1923	125	47	62	47	55	36	8	1
When Father Has Toothache	1923	3	9	198	85	88	35	9	3
Evil Spells	1927	41	51	66	78	77	62	42	1
The Oaf	1927	20	49	87	74	81	70	31	0
The Young Pilot	1928	94	62	85	42	83	23	34	1
The Log Drivers	1928	32	71	65	62	68	62	42	1
Our Boys	1929	122	81	41	30	33	39	80	1
The Supreme Victory	1929	57	60	81	76	35	45	52	15

In the 1920s the most common framing used by Finnish filmmakers was the full shot. Some film scholars, most notably Barry Salt, do not use the category of long shot as I have defined it (human body and some surroundings). Instead they include both full shots and long shots in the category of the long shot. According to that definition the category of long shot would comprise as much as 38% of all shots in Finnish fiction films of the 1920s. The shot scale data that Salt has collected to his database (http://www.cinemetrics.lv/satltdb.php) indicates that the long shot, as defined by Salt, was the most common shot scale in Hollywood films as well. Nevertheless, only 23% of all shots in Hollywood films of the 1920s are long shots. This is a significant difference to the Finnish films of the 1920s in which that number is 15% higher. Salt's data also indicates that the long medium shot was almost as common in Hollywood as the long shot. Long medium shots and medium shots came close after. As table 2 indicates, this was not the case in Finland where filmmakers found it a great

[17] Cinematographic influences did not come solely from Hollywood, but also from European films that had began to resemble them.

[18] The standardisation enables one to compare one film with another and, as Barry Salt (1992: 142) importantly points out, 'gives a direct measure of the relative probability of a director choosing any particular closeness of shot'.

[19] *Olli's Year's of Apprenticeship* (YLE teema, 12.12.2009), *Anna-Liisa* (DVD, archival working copy), *The Logroller's Bride* (YLE TV1, 11.1.2012), *The Village Shoemakers* (YLE TV1, 30.4.2012), *When Father has Toothache* (DVD, archival working copy), *Evil Spells* (YLE Teema, 5.12.2010), *The Oaf* (DVD, archival working copy), *The Young Pilot* (YLE TV2, 20.8.2011), *The Log Drivers* (DVD, archival working copy), *Our Boys* (DVD, archival working copy), *The Supreme Victory* (YLE Teema, 6.1.2009).

[20] The above table relies on notational acronyms that are widely used in film studies:
ELS extreme long shot (human body small in the frame)
LS long shot (human body and surroundings)
FS full shot (whole human body)
LMS long medium shot (human body from the knees up)
MS medium shot (human body from the waist up)
MCU medium close-up (human body from the chest up)
CU close-up (head and shoulders)
ECU extreme close-up (a detail of human body or a tiny object)

deal more important than those working in Hollywood to portray the whole body of an actor in the frame. Here one needs to remember that many Finnish film directors of the decade were professionals of the theatre and interested in the amalgamation of the art forms. The heavy reliance on large shot scales suggests the filmmakers were still influenced by the tableau style, even if they had began to embrace new conventions.

On the basis of the data Salt provides in his database, German filmmakers preferred long shots as well: 38% of all shots in German films of the 1920s are long shots, as defined by Salt. The database contains information on only five Swedish silent films. Four of these were made in the latter half of the 1910s, which makes direct comparison problematical.[21] On the basis of this small sample as many as 44% of all shots in Swedish films of the era were long shots on Salts terms.[22] Here is the crucial observation: Whereas 22% of all shots in the German films, 21% of all shots in the Hollywood films and 31% of all shots in the Swedish films are long medium shots where actors are portrayed from the waist up, only 16% of all shots in the Finnish films belong to this category. This makes it clear that in its use of shot scales Finnish silent cinema differs fundamentally from the other three cinemas, and presumably from many other cinemas as well. This is apparent also in the use of large shot scales. As many as 14% of all shots in Finnish films under scrutiny here are extreme long shots, whereas in German films this number is only 4%, in Hollywood 5% and in Swedish cinema 2%. Extreme long shots and long shots, as defined by Salt, cover as much as 52% of all shots in the analysed Finnish fictional films of the 1920s. In more than every other shot one sees actors portrayed from head to toes with space around them or landscapes.[23] The heavy use of large shot scales needs to be seen as one major characteristic of the Finnish group style of the 1920s. Such shots are especially common in films that are set close to nature, as they contain numerous landscape shots (figure x). The figures I have presented indicate that Finnish filmmakers still positioned the spectator as if he/she were a member of the audience in a theatre. Both actors and their surroundings were visible most of the time. ‘The classical cinema, on the other hand, assumes that the narration places a spectator within or on the edge of the narrative space’, Thompson (2002: 158) argues.

[21] These films do represent the golden era of Swedish silent cinema that was admired by Finnish film reviewers and audiences alike, and at the very least these five films give some indication of what shot scales were like in Swedish films of the time.
[22] That is 6 % more than in Finnish and German films. That percentage, I believe, is best explained by the fact that the analysed Swedish films are older.
[23] In Swedish cinema the same number is 46%, in German cinema it is 42 % and in Hollywood cinema it is only 28 %.

All this indicates that the tableau tradition of filmmaking, that had been appreciated for its theatricality, and the admired Swedish cinema still influenced the ways in which Finnish filmmakers framed actors. On the basis of the figures Salt provides in his database, as many as 30% of all shots in Hollywood films of the 1920s are medium close-ups, close-ups and extreme close-ups. In German films his figure is 22% and in Finnish cinema it is as low as 18%.[24] Significantly, 11% of all shots in Swedish films of the golden era, on the basis of Salt's database, belong to these three categories. This further supports the argument that Finnish filmmakers were still greatly influenced by these films. When one focuses on Finnish films made in years 1927–1929, things look very different. The proportion of medium close-ups, close-ups and extreme close-ups in these films constitutes as much as 24% of all shots whereas the same balance of shots had been only 8% in films that were made in 1923 or earlier. This indicates that Finnish cinema became more editing based as the decade wore on and filmmakers found small shot scales ever more useful. This also means that Finnish films of the 1920s, and especially those made in the late decade, are cinematographically closer to the classical style of filmmaking than tableau style.

This move towards classical cinematography is most evident in the use of close-ups. European filmmakers of the 1910s tended to use the cut-in as a last resource (Bordwell, 2005: 67). Finnish films of the early 1920s are stylistically close to this tradition of filmmaking, as close-ups were used sparsely.[25] It was not just that the number of close-ups increased in the latter half of the 1920s, the ways in which they were used changed as well. Teuvo Puro, the director of *Sylvi*, was still reluctant to use close-ups when he directed *Olli's Years of Apprenticeship* (*Ollin oppivuodet*, 1920). But as time passed, the cinematographic style of his films underwent a significant change. In the climax of Puro's later film, *Evil Spells* (*Noidan kirot*, 1927), the protagonist, Simo Utuniemi, is chasing a ruthless criminal, who is known as Chunky Sakari, in deep winter in Lapland. Both characters move on skis in heavy snow, but whereas Simo is actually skiing, Sakari, who tries to escape Simo, uses a reindeer to pull him. Here Puro uses numerous close-ups of Simo's skis (figure x) to emphasise his speed, strength and relentlessness. Unlike in tableau films and films stylistically close to them, close-ups are not used as the last resource. Puro had found the device a good means of both creating tension and representing the nature of Simo's character.

[24] This figure indicates that closer views become common features of Finnish cinema, because the same number is only 8 % if one only looks at films that were made in 1923 or earlier.

[25] Finnish filmmakers were familiar with close-ups and knew how to use them in fictional contexts supporting the drama. Therefore the scarce use of close-ups was a choice. To see this as a weakness per se is misleading. *When Father Has a Toothache* (*Kun isällä on hammassärky*, 1923) even features 3 extreme close-ups per 500 shots (the actual number is 2). In one of these shots the audience are shown a bad tooth, which has just been pulled from the mouth of the protagonist. The extreme close-up of the tooth is a joke, it is a visual equivalent of the punch line that has been repeated in throughout the film: 'In a bad mood for a tiny bit of bone'.

In the 1920s Finnish cinematography developed in the direction of clarity and expressivity, which reflects the filmmakers' knowledge of the techniques of the classical style. The notion of 'expressivity' that I use here is borrowed from Kristin Thompson (2004: 254) who uses it to mean 'those functions of cinematic devices that go beyond presenting basic narrative information and add some quality to the scene that would not be strictly necessary to our comprehension of it'. This is precisely how the close-ups function in the chase sequence in *Evil Spells*. In the late 1920s the expressive use of the close-up was not just one stylistic option among others, but the norm.

Matters of Dissection and Continuity

Tableau filmmakers emphasised mise-en-scène over editing. *Sylvi's* (1913) fragments do not feature any close views.[26] Close-ups were used only sporadically even in foreign films that were distributed in Finland in 1911 when *Sylvi* was in production, mainly in those made in the United States. As Kristin Thompson (2002: 162) says, the 'reluctance to put several shots into a single film suggests a recognition of the potentially disruptive qualities of the cut'. Unless filmmakers mastered the basics of continuity editing, spectators had a hard time in understanding the depicted spatiotemporal relations. Teuvo Puro, Frans Engström and Teppo Raikas all had little experience of filmmaking when *Sylvi* was made. The filmmakers, two of whom were actors from the national stage, deliberately relied on devices they found theatrical and therefore fitting for their art film. Nöel Carrol (2008: 125) maintains that variable framing gives filmmakers a level of control over their audience's attention that has no parallel in theatre. On the contrary, the waist level camera height and long takes that Engström relied on create what Ben Brewster (2006: 48) has aptly called 'a view from the stalls'. Cuts to closer views are a form of pointing and they form the basis of the analytical editing that filmmakers of the classical style rely on. 'By constantly reframing the scene', Carroll (2008: 124) maintains, 'the filmmakers assure, by exploiting our natural perceptual tendencies, that we will be attending just where we need to be attending in order to follow what is going on'. Competent tableau filmmakers achieved the same by relying on tactics of cinematic staging.

The development of editing in Finnish fictional films of the 1920s can be analysed by looking at the average shot lengths (ASL). The ASL is the length of a film divided by the number of shots in it.

[26] In one outdoor scene the actors walk towards the camera and for a moment they are effectively framed in a long medium shot.

The figure indicates how often filmmakers cut and for how long the shots last, which tends to correlate with the tempo in which the story is told. Table 3 shows the ASLs of the restored Finnish silent fictional films accompanied by median shot lengths (MSL) and standard deviations in seconds (StDev).[27]

Table 3: Cutting rates in Finnish fictional films[28]

FILM	YEAR	ASL	MSL	StDev
Olli's Years of Apprenticeship	1920	7.6	6.6	4.9
Anna-Liisa	1922	9.4	7.5	6.8
Love Almighty	1922	10.3	8	7.5
The Logroller's Bride	1923	7.7	6.2	6.3
The Village Shoemakers	1923	7.0	5.6	6.1
The Bothnians	1925	6.4	5.6	4.6
Before the Face of the Sea	1926	5.5	4.6	3.9
On the Highway of Life	1927	6.8	4.9	6.4
Fugitives from Murmansk	1927	8.0	6.1	6.4
Evil Spells	1927	5.0	4.0	3.3
The Young Pilot	1928	9.3	8.0	6.2
The Log Drivers	1928	6.8	5.4	5.4
The Supreme Victory	1929	8.6	6.5	6.8
The Gypsy Charmer	1929	5.8	4.6	5.2
The Wide Road	1931	5.6	4.2	5.6

The numbers indicate that the ASLs of Finnish silent fictional films became shorter towards the late 1920s. The mean Finnish ASL of the 1920–1925 period is 8.1 seconds and that of 1926–1931 period is 6.8 seconds.[29] The ASLs varied from 6.4 to 10.3 seconds in the first period and from 5.0 to 9.3 in the latter, which correlates with the slight increase in the editing tempo. This development parallels that in other European countries. According to Salt (1992: 174), during the 1924–1929 period the mean ASL in Europe had decreased to 6.6 seconds, which was about 2.0 seconds slower on the average than in Hollywood where throughout the 1920s the most popular ASL was 5.0 seconds. American filmmakers were fast cutters, which partly explains the popularity of their films. The editing tempo was less hurried in Finland in the late 1920s, but only slightly so when compared to other European nations. In this sense Finnish films were not especially slow.

[27] Whereas the ASL stands for the mean shot length of the film, the MSL is that length for which half the shots in the film have longer lengths and the other half have shorter lengths. The median gives us the likely shot length, as it does not let deviant cases distort the data. StDev measures the extent of the spread of the data about the mean value. It can be used to tell whether the editing is even or not. The higher the number is, the more uneven the editing is and vice versa.

[28] *Olli's Year's of Apprenticeship* (YLE teema, 12.12.2009), *Anna-Liisa* (DVD, National Audiovisual Institute), *Love Almighty* (Yle Teema, 6.1.2013), *The Logroller's Bride* (35mm), *The Village Shoemakers* (35mm), *The Bothnians* (DVD, National Audiovisual Institute), *Before the Face of the Sea* (35mm), *On the Highway of Life* (Yle Teema, 3.12.2011), *Fugitives from Murmansk* (35mm), *Evil Spells* (YLE Teema, 5.12.2010), *The Young Pilot* (35mm), *The Log Drivers* (35mm), *The Supreme Victory* (YLE Teema, 6.1.2009), *The Gypsy Charmer* (DVD, National Audiovisual Institute), *The Wide Road* (DVD, National Audiovisual Institute).

[29] The slight changes in the mean MSL and StDev parallel that in the mean ASL. In the 1920–1925 period the mean MSL was 5.9 seconds and in the 1926–1931 period it was 5.3 seconds, which is about the same. The change in the mean StDev was even smaller. It increased from 5.3 seconds to 5.5 seconds.

The mean ASL of Finnish cinema would have dropped more notably if it were not for filmmakers who preferred long takes and large shots scales. This becomes obvious when one focuses on the films of Teuvo Puro and Erkki Karu. The ASL in *Olli's Years of Apprenticeship* (*Ollin oppivuodet*), a film Puro directed in 1920, is 7.6 seconds. This is a relatively long ASL as compared to Hollywood films, but fairly typical for European films of the time (Salt, 1992: 172–174). Six years later Puro directed *Before the Face of the Sea* (*Meren kasvojen edessä*) in which he began to use numerous close-ups and shot reverse shots, resulting in an ASL of 5.5 seconds. The ASL of *Evil Spells* (*Noidan kirot*), which premiered in 1927, is only 5.0 seconds. In seven years the MSL of Puro's films decreased from 6.6 seconds to 4.0 seconds while the StDev dropped from 4.9 seconds to 3.3 seconds. These figures indicate that the editing of Puro's films became faster and more editing based as the decade wore on. The ALSs of *Before the Face of the Sea* and *Evil Spells* are close to those of the Hollywood films of the 1920s, further suggesting that Puro moved away from the editing conventions of the tableau style, which he had embraced in *Sylvi*, and adapted to those of the classical style.

Two Erkki Karu films premiered in 1923, *The Logroller's Bride* (*Koskenlaskijan morsian*) and *The Village Shoemakers* (*Nummisuutarit*). The ASL of the first is 7.7 seconds and that of the latter is 7.0 seconds. The editing tempo of these films is close to that of Puro's *Olli's Years of Apprenticeship*. Surprisingly, the ASL of *The Young Pilot* (*Nuori luotsi*), which Karu directed in 1927, which is the year when Puro's *Evil Spells* premiered, is as high as 9.3 seconds. This ASL is 4.3 seconds higher than that of *Evil Spells*, which indicates how different the styles of these filmmakers had become. The MSL of Karu's films increased from 6.2 and 5.6 seconds to 8.0 seconds while the StDev remained about the same, just over 6.0 seconds. This means that Karu's shots grew noticeably longer while his editing remained somewhat uneven. Here one needs to keep in mind that the number of large shot scales, which in Karu's film style are remnants of tableau filmmaking, is exceptionally high in *The Young Pilot* and *Our Boys* (*Meidän poikamme*, 1929). Puro, on the contrary, preferred tight framings, which allowed for narratively important elements to be quickly spotted. Karu did not only hold on to longer takes, but actually slowed down the tempo of his films, which indicates that he was either unwilling or incapable of letting go of the remnants of the tableau style.

Close textual analysis of the surviving films reveals that Karu, too, relied on analytical editing, but his style of editing was different from classical editing. In relation to *The Village Shoemakers* Ari

Honka-Hallila (1995: 156) argues: 'The editing style of Karu's film could be defined as *the insert style*, because the majority of the shot combinations are based on dividing a shot into two or more segments and another shot is placed in between […] or an intertitle.' In such editing the establishing shot dominates the scene because the filmmaker keeps on cutting back and forth between the long shot and closer views. In the classical style sequences tend to open with an establishing shot from which filmmakers gradually move to closer shots, but rarely back. Another major difference to the classical editing style is that in the insert style shots are taken from the front and reverse angles are used as a last resource. To use the words of Gilberto Perez (2000, 62), such editing 'keeps the same frontal perspective in the closer view, the perspective of a spectator at the theatre who has the whole stage before his eyes and wields opera glasses for the significant detail'. D. W. Griffith, whose films were appreciated as masterpieces in Finland in the early 1920s (Seppälä 2012: 110), used this editing style to the extent that Salt (1992: 171) calls it '[t]he basic Griffith style of scene dissection'. Salt adds that this style of editing 'continued to be practiced by many film-makers into the early nineteen-twenties, both in America, and particularly in Europe'. Later in the decade the combination of the insert style and long takes became known as the old country style. It had its supporters among Finnish filmmakers even in the late 1920s.

An illustrative example of the insert style can be found in Karu's *The Logroller's Bride*. In the sequence in question, Kero-Pieti, a travelling preacher, is talking to the members of the rural community he is visiting. The laterally staged sequence opens with an extreme long shot that portrays the living room of a house full of villagers who sit waiting for Kero-Pieti's arrival (figure x). The wall in the background with a door is clearly visible. Accompanied by the master of the house, Iisakki Nuottaniemi, Kero-Pieti enters. They walk to the centre and sit down where Nuottaniemi's daughter Hanna serves Kero-Pieti coffee. As she begins to pour the coffee, Karu cuts to a medium shot of Hanna and Kero-Pieti (figure x). This shot, which is taken from roughly the same camera position as the extreme long shot that preceded it, is an insert. The framing is now tighter, but the perspective has not changed significantly and the wall is still visible in the background. The spatiotemporal relation of this shot to the previous one is easy to understand, because the background does not change and the action continues somewhat seamlessly. From this medium shot Karu cuts to a dialogue intertitle: 'My young daughter, does God live in your heart?' What then follows is the same medium shot that was already shown to the audience (figure x). It was simply spliced in two by the intertitle. Then another dialogue intertitle follows, from which Karu cuts back to the medium shot. When Kero-Pieti has had his say, Karu cuts back to the extreme long shot that opened the sequence, as if returning to the status quo.

Clearly, as Honka-Hallila (1995: 156) says, 'Karu tends to cut medium close-ups and medium shots to function as kinds of inserts within larger shots'. In the sequence in question the intertitles are inserts within the long medium shot that is an insert within the extreme long shot. In short, the sequence contains inserts within an insert. Considering that such scenes can be found in all films Karu made in the 1920s, even from those he made in the late decade, Honka-Hallila's argument can be taken further: Karu's editing style as a whole can be described as insert style.[30] In all the sequences in question 'the alterations in the camera's point of view and image size are motivated by making characters visible, by subjectivity […] and by enouncing a speaker' (Honka-Hallila, 1995: 156). Closer views and slightly different camera positions are used as a form of pointing that clarifies the action. In essence, the insert style of editing is a kind of analytical editing, but differs from the classical analytical editing.

The insert style of editing is more restrictive than the classical style of editing, because the former prevents filmmakers from controlling cinematic space with point of view shots and reverse angles, as all shots need to be taken from about the same perspective. The style also complicates the controlling of time, as it prevents filmmakers from shortening screen time with elliptical editing. In the insert style ellipses would create very noticeable jump cuts. The sequences that have been edited in this style take place in real time. The style had its advantages too. It helped inexperienced filmmakers to achieve a continuous flow of space and time that was easy for the audience to follow. When filmmakers relied on this editing style they never broke the 180-degree rule. Furthermore, it added to the cinematic theatricality of their films, which was seen as a positive thing. A further reason for the style's pre-eminence was practical. On the basis of surviving films and photographs it appears that film sets often had only one wall, which was the convention in many European countries. 'The camera cannot move to the other side' when sets exist only behind the actors 'since there would then be no set visible', Kristin Thompson (2005: 74) points out in relation to German films. So even if filmmakers wanted to use reverse angles, they could not do so. Therefore '[t]he cameraman simply moved the camera closer to the action, generally from roughly the same vantage-point' (Thompson, 2005: 74). This was a way to keep actors and sets visible without ruining the illusion of continuous space.

[30] This is not to say that all sequences in his films are edited in the same way, merely that this is the style of editing that tends to be dominant in his films.

When determined filmmakers like Puro, who lacked both the means and the experience of their contemporaries in major filmmaking nations, tried their hands on the classical style of editing, they achieved what Thompson (2005: 72) calls 'a loose version of continuity editing'.[31] According to Salt (1992: 170), 'when it came to the matter of eye-line matching in reverse-angle cutting between shots, the chances were that the average European director would get this "wrong" nearly half of the time, since he was not aware of the existence of any convention in the matter'. Although it is no match in clarity to the Hollywood standard of editing, loose continuity editing is not confusing if the sequence in question is simple.[32] *Evil Spells* features an ambitious sequence in which three logrollers approach a lone woman, Elsa, with the intention of raping her. It opens with a series of shots of Elsa rowing near the shore. As she rows into an extreme wide shot, which functions as an establishing shot, there is an empty looking boat in the far background. In the following shot a logroller wakes up in the boat and looks approximately towards the camera (figure x). This shot is then followed by a shot of Elsa looking, presumably, back at him, but the eye-lines do not match (figure x). Puro continues to use parallel editing in order to show two other logrollers first waking up and then trying with their friend to catch Elsa, who does her best to escape. As her boat gets stuck on the shore, she tries to release it. Here Puro repeatedly breaks the 180-degree rule (figures x–x). One has to agree with Salt (1992, 171) who argues that 'there is no way that any profound meaning can be read into failures of eye-line matching, as some have tried to do in recent years'.[33] The same goes for breaking the 180-degree rule. Even so, Puro manages to enhance the tension with these means and the sequence is not difficult to follow. The example indicates that in the late 1920s there were Finnish filmmakers who understood how the classical style of editing works and wanted to let go of the old country style.

Creating Believable Diegetic Worlds

'The diegetic world of the film', Charlie Keil (2001: 144) argues, 'should insist on its self-sufficiency, reinforcing believability by dispelling all marks of fictionality and pulling the viewer along in the process'. This is the fundamental principle in the classical style. In tableau films, at least when seen from a contemporary perspective, décor is often self-evidently artificial and does

[31] 'Apart from consistent screen direction, most of the techniques of continuity editing were employed', Kristin Thompson (2005: 72) states, 'but not as frequently or as smoothly as in Hollywood'.
[32] This really is not as surprising, as it might sound. The thing is that even film scholars often find it difficult to identify violations of the 180-degree rule, not to mention rough eye-line matches.
[33] Bad editing and clumsy narration of Finnish film were widely discussed by contemporary critics as well (Seppälä 2012: 258–259).

not recall a lived space that belonged to a larger world. In the fragments of *Sylvi* (1913), to use the words of Gilberto Perez (2000, 115), 'space recalls the stage not only in its integrity but in its quality of enclosure, in our sense of a demarcated area […] within which each scene is contained'. The box-style sets in which the back wall is perpendicular or only at a slight angle serve to strengthen this impression. For example, the home of Axel and Sylvi is a closed space. Their door opens to a corridor where nothing in particular can be seen and the only window in the apartment is covered with curtains that block all outside light.[34] The walls of the living room are simple coulisses that are made to look more realistic with details like curtains, a door and a painting. In front of the back wall there are two laterally placed tables and some chairs, which the actors use (figure x). As the film was shot on the rooftop of an apartment building (Salmi, 2002: 119), the sets are evenly lit by bright sunlight without a realistic motivation. As the examples pinpoint, the diegetic world is marked by fictionality.

As the sets in *Sylvi* are simple theatre coulisses, neither the door nor the window is real and as such they cannot give a proper view outside because there is no outside. And yet, these, like the telephone that the titular character uses, are the elements of the mise-en-scène that suggest the apartment is a part of a bigger world. As V. F. Perkins (2005: 22) says, 'the world is everything (in space and in time) surrounding and embedding our immediate perceptions. There is always out-of-sight just as there is always an off-screen'. An important function of the mentioned elements is to reinforce this illusion, to make the diegetic world more believable. When compared to films made in the classical style, these elements do that only marginally. It is hard to get the impression that 'we are looking at the characters, and their "life" permits us, at least potentially, to go and "occupy" any space whatever', which Jacques Aumont (2006: 350) sees as the distinctive feature of the classical style. Almost the contrary is true, because everything in *Sylvi* happens in only a few locations, as if they were sufficient to contain the whole fiction.[35]

Such marks of fictionality are much fewer in numbers in films made in the classical style where all elements of the mise-en-scène are given a stronger realistic motivation. Hollywood filmmakers embraced verisimilitude to the extent that by the late 1910s their sets had become so complex that architects were needed to design them (Staiger, 2002: 147–148). In these films doors open onto realistically motivated spaces and light streams through windows or gleams from a fireplace, unlike

[34] The framing is closed, which means that it does not acknowledge the existence of the off-screen space to convey its narrative meaning.
[35] On the basis of the surviving fragments, the story took place in only six locations. Some material is definitely missing, but it is unlikely that the film contained significantly more playing spaces (Salmi, 2002: 126–132).

in many European films made in the tableau style. As astonishing as such American sets were, Finnish critics of the early 1920s often found them superficial (Seppälä, 2012: 141). Instead of valuing grandeur and realistic motivation as such, they sought ethnographic believability; that is realistic depiction of national cultures and local customs, which in Hollywood was ultimately not that important (Vasey, 1997: 3). In other words, whether sunlight light shone in from a window was ultimately less important in Finland than whether or not the window was constructed of round unshaped timber (*Filmiaitta* 2/1922: 35). In the representation of national cultures and local customs Finnish critics found Swedish films exemplary. Especially the peasant films were valued for their ethnography to the extent that critics argued that Finnish filmmakers needed to follow the Swedish example in the creation of a truly national cinema (Seppälä, 2012: 140–141 & 154). The model for the Finnish national cinema was international.

The influence of the Swedish peasant films on the style of the Finnish films of the 1920s can be seen in mise-en-scène, especially in the meticulous care with which ethnographic details like customs, costumes and items are dealt with in many films. In films set in the past the style of sets and costumes seems to be based, as in heritage cinema, on study of the interior design and couture of the era, much like in the Swedish films. Antti Alanen (1999: 78) argues that it was Mauritz Stiller's *The Song of the Scarlet Flower* (*Sången om den eldröda blomman*, 1919), which had been a critical and commercial success in Finland, which 'taught Finns that well-known national themes could be turned into electrifying popular cinema'. According to Alanen the film 'gave Finnish cinema some basic situations for decades to come: the village dance by the river, the couple dreaming in the midsummer night, love-making in the haystack, and the climatic shooting of the rapids'. It is true that nationally charged mise-en-scène is largely missing from *Sylvi* whilst it is exploited in films of the 1920s. However, many of the elements Alanen refers to were present already in Johannes Linnankoski's novel (1905) of the same name, which Stiller adapted for the screen. Furthermore, adaptations of canonised Finnish literature were made and planned in even greater numbers already during the 1910s. I argue that *The Song of the Scarlet Flower* and other Swedish masterpieces were influential, but rather than providing the sole impetus, they strengthened the faith of Finnish production companies in the exploitation of Finnish customs, costumes and items, and probably showed how they could be narratively motivated.

One of the first Finnish films made following the Swedish model was *Anna-Liisa*, which Teuvo Puro directed in 1922. Carl Fager, who also worked on *Sylvi*, created the sets for this 19th century period piece. In the opening sequence Anna-Liisa is working in a room in her parents' house. She

stands in the foreground next to a warping reel in the midst of a box-style set. There is a brightly lit window on the left, but no sunlight comes through it, even though the weather is clearly sunny. There is a realistic motivation for this. Considering that Anna-Liisa stands in bright light that falls partly from the foreground, there must be a window in front of her in the off-screen space (figure x). Because the sun shines in from this window it cannot, of course, shine in from the window on the left as well. However, there are bright lamps on the ceiling as well, as the character does not cast a long shadow. These lights are not realistically motivated. Altogether the lighting plot creates a slight chiaroscuro effect: the background wall where a full cupboard can be seen is only dimly lit. This lighting plot is reminiscent of canonised Finnish paintings of the 19th century that depict rural homes, a good example of which is Adolf von Becker's *Sunday Morning in an Ostrobothnian House* (*Sunnuntaiaamu pohjalaistuvassa*, 1870s). In it there is a brightly lit window on the wall on the right, but, looking at shadows and lit areas, the main light source must be another window in the off-screen space somewhere on the right in the foreground. It seems that the filmmakers attempted to achieve a similar effect. The table in the background to the left of Anna-Liisa is staged in a lengthwise direction, unlike the table in the apartment in *Sylvi*, and together with the chiaroscuro it heightens the depth of the room. Soon after Johannes comes to meet Anna-Liisa, the room is shown from a different angle, which breaks the illusion of the box style set; the camera shows the corner and the wall on the right, which have not been visible in earlier shots. Fager gave *Anna-Liisa's* décor a lived-in-look and made it seem part of a larger world, even though most interior sequences take place in one and the same room. The mise-en-scène is closer to the classical style than that of *Sylvi*, even if the lighting from above is more akin to theatre than the real world.

Anna-Liisa contains a sequence of logrolling that is not present in Minna Canth's play *Anna Liisa* (1895) and has little narrative import, as it merely provides a backdrop for a flashback. Mikko is introduced standing on logs close to the shore with a pike pole in his hands. His outfit consists of dark-coloured trousers, white shirt, black vest and a brimmed hat (figure x). This is a traditional costume that Finns of the day associated with lumberjacks. Lumberjacks in *The Logrollers* (*Tukinuittajat*), which Pekka Halonen painted in 1925, wear similar clothes. Logrolling, Mikko's costume and the pike pole are examples of Finnish customs, costumes and items that the film exploits. At the time *The Song of the Scarlet Flower* was already famous for its logrolling sequences and probably inspired Puro to make these additions. However, this does not mean that the film provided the sole impetus for the cinematic exploitation of Finnish customs, costumes and items, because such elements are already present in Canth's play; good examples are Anna-Liisa's wrapping reel and her long, thick plait. These, unlike logrolling, were almost certainly seen in most

stage productions and in the first film adaptation of the play, too, that was shot in 1911 but never completed (Salmi, 2002: 113).[36] Yet, Alanen is not entirely wrong. Sequences of logrolling are not known to have precedents in earlier Finnish fictional films. The impetus to turn logrolling into electrifying popular cinema probably derived from *The Song of the Scarlet Flower*, which Stiller had adapted from on a Finnish novel. This is an intriguing example of transnational influences moving from Finland to Sweden and then back in a different form. After *Anna-Liisa* logrolling sequences were seen in *The Logroller's Bride* (*Koskenlaskijan morsian*, 1923), *Evil Spells* (*Noidan kirot*, 1927) and *The Log Drivers* (*Tukkijoella*, 1929).

The Logroller's Bride, which Erkki Karu directed in 1923, is stylistically different from *Anna-Liisa* in that most of its interiors are flat, demarcated spaces. The sequence where Hanna Nuottaniemi is working in a kitchen with grandma Anna when Hanna's father and her suitor have come to meet them is illustrative of this. Here, as in *Anna-Liisa*, the audience are able to recognise Finnish customs, costumes and items, but in contrast, Fager's staging is horizontal. The only wall that is visible is the one at the back of the room with a window in front of which the characters are laterally staged (figure x). The flatness of this décor does little to echo the style of Finnish interior paintings; actually, it is more reminiscent of the portable sets utilised by travelling theatre companies, the heavy fireplace excluded. The three carpets that lead to the window at the back create whatever sense of depth there is in the sequence. As prominent as the window is, it does not offer a view of the outside. A year earlier when *Anna-Liisa* was made, Fager had created a window behind which tree leaves can be seen. Here, the light falls from several sources from high behind the camera without creating any dark areas. As the characters stand close to the wall, their shadows can hardly be seen, which enhances the flatness of this sequence. The lighting keeps everything visible, but it is not given a realistic motivation. As such it is hard to believe that the diegetic world continues behind the camera. In both films the world is recognisably Finnish, but *The Logroller's Bride* does far less than *Anna-Liisa* to convey a sense of a lived space that belongs to a larger world. In the former décor is stylistically more reminiscent of the tableau style, where everything happens as if on a stage, than of the classical style. But as different as the films are stylistically, they both represent cinematic theatricality and in so doing give an indication of just how broad the concept is. Another lesson to be learned from this comparison is that there was a great deal of variety in the Finnish set design in the early 1920s, even in the productions of Suomi-Filmi where Fager was responsible for the sets.

[36] Puro, who was an actor in the Finnish National Theatre and certainly familiar with the theatre productions, directed this version as well.

Towards the late 1920s Finnish film sets became deeper and more elaborate. This tendency peaked in Carl von Haartman's *The Supreme Victory* (*Korkein voitto*, 1929), the detailed décor of which is heavily influenced by Erich von Stroheim's naturalism (Seppälä, 2012: 350–351). For the film Fager created a replica of Hotel Kämp's luxurious restaurant in Suomi-Filmi's studio (figure x). In the sequence where the moving camera, which is reminiscent of the dolly shots along the hotel corridors in F. W. Murnau's *The Last Laugh* (*Der Letzte Mann*, 1924), finds the protagonist Baron Henrik von Hagen enjoying a drink is illustrative of von Haartman's approach.[37] The moving camera intensifies the size and depth of the mise-en-scène and in so doing reminds the audience that the diegetic world is larger than anyone can see. Von Haarman's approach to cinematic staging is the opposite of the tableau style where everything happens as if on a stage. In this sequence the mise-en-scène differs from the ones analysed above also in that it does not contain customs, costumes and items that are instantly recognisable as Finnish. On the contrary, the appearance of the restaurant and its customers are better described as European. Before the moving camera finds the Baron, it turns to 'greet' a gentleman who is enjoying a coffee with a cigar while reading *La Vie Parisienne*, which was a French erotic magazine of the time. This and other cosmopolitan elements in *The Supreme Victory* are contrasted with recognisably Finnish nature and nationally significant locations like Suomenlinna – the maritime fortress located off the coast of Helsinki. By combining such disparate elements in the mise-en-scène of his film von Haartman promotes the argument that Finland is part of Europe and Helsinki is as cosmopolitan as London or Berlin. As elaborate as the tracking shot and the vast mise-en-scène it explores are, they differ from the ideals of the classical style in that they are not subordinate to the story; the shot has no narrative function other than introducing the Baron.

Conclusions

In the last decade of the silent era Finnish cinema evolved stylistically from the tableau style towards the classical style. This development constantly lagged behind the major filmmaking nations, which suggests that conventions of the classical style were gradually adapted from imported films rather than discovered through experimentation. The parameters of this style, with its emphasis on the centrality of individual characters and on narrative clarity, had been developed

[37] The use of mobile framing explains the long ASL of this film.

in The United States, but they are not American as such. Rather, they served as a model for employing cinematic means for telling a story in an interesting and involving way. The transformation of Finnish film style was not a straightforward process of Americanisation, even though it was greatly advanced by Hollywood films. Finnish films made in the late 1920s are not fully-fledged representatives of the classical style, as they contain stylistic elements that are not used according to the principles of the classical storytelling. These films are characterised by heavy reliance on intertitles, large shot scales, the insert style of editing and nationally charged mise-en-scène. The ways these conventions evolved in Finland was to a significant degree influenced also by European cinema. Furthermore, the way they were actually employed derived at least partly from Finnish literature, theatre and painting thus giving these transnational features a distinct national quality.

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