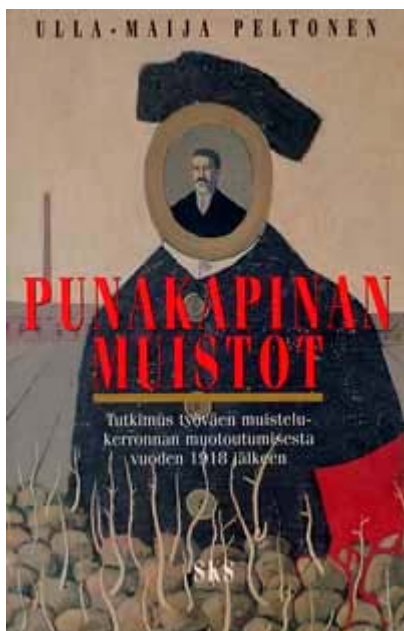


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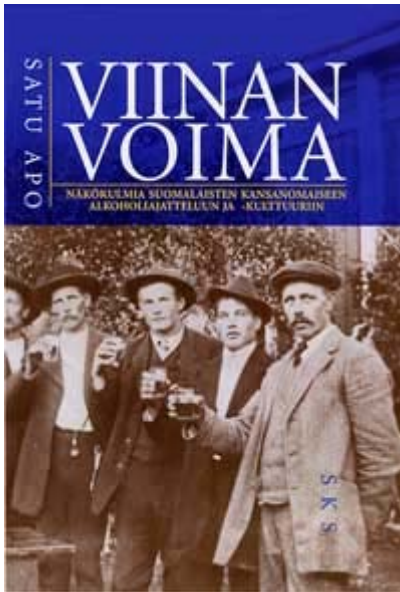
Kirsti Salmi-Niklander & Ulla-Maija Peltonen

At the university of Helsinki (<http://www.helsinki.fi/folkloristiikka/>) the theoretical and methodological questions of oral history have been most profoundly discussed by Dr. Phil. Ulla-Maija Peltonen (Finnish Literature Society, <http://www.finlit.fi/index.htm>). She has published two monographs in this field. In her doctoral thesis *Punakapinan muistot: Memories of the Civil War 1918 in Finland* (Finnish Literature Society 1996) she has concentrated on the 1918 civil war in Finland and its violent aftermath. She was most interested in the question how this most difficult trauma of independent Finland was processed in the minds of the ordinary Finns, that is, what was told about the civil war and how, who told about it and how did the narratives vary at different times. She was not as such interested about the violent events of the war but more on the ways that people reacted, processed, interpreted and in the end survived the arbitrary violence in a society.



Her recent book *Muistin paikat: Sites of Memory. On Remembering and Forgetting the Civil War* (Finnish Literature Society 2003) is part of the study project of the Finnish Academy “Oral History and the Interpretation of History” (1999–2001). It deals with the remembering and forgetting of the civil war. The central question is how the Finnish people moved on after the war. What solutions did individuals, communities and the society create to cope with and to cleanse the atrocities of the civil war. She utilizes many different sources. The aim of her study is to tie the attention to the various levels of actions manifested in the individual narratives, to the reassessments of the war and to political solutions.

The methodological questions of oral history are also a central theme in the profound monography *Viinan voima* (The Power of the Spirit) by professor Satu Apo (Finnish Literature Society 2001). She utilizes many different sources, above all thematic questionnaires in her study about alcohol in the Finnish popular culture during the 19th and the 20th centuries.



The recent doctoral thesis of Kirsti Salmi-Niklander, *Itsekasvatusta ja kapinaa* (Self-Education and Rebellion; Finnish Literature Society 2004) is based on a new kind of research material, handwritten newspapers written in a small industrial community by working-class young people. Dr. Phil. Salmi-Niklander analyses the boundary between the oral and written communication, especially in “local event narratives”. These contemporary narratives are related to retrospective memoirs about the same period.



At the moment several doctoral theses based on oral history are in the process of writing. Some of these research utilizes thematic questionnaires as the basic source material. Pauliina Latvala studies family history, and Marjatta Yli-Olli the experiences related to immigration in western Finland (Pohjanmaa). Many theses are based on interviews. Eva Olkkonen-Korvenmaa studies the experiences of interned people of German origin after the Second World War. Kari Huuskonen’s material are interviews of those people, who have attended the boarding school of visually impaired

children. Niina Lappalainen studies the identity and the sense of community among the former workers of the Tikkakoski factory (1893–1991).

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