

Ruut DeMeo

February 4, 2019

Applestein-Sweren Book Collecting Prize Entry

The Kalevala:

Retellings and Interpretations of the Ancient Myth

STATEMENT ON THE COLLECTION

My collection is of various translations, books about and related to, and retellings of the Finnish National epic poem, *The Kalevala*. In a way, my collection reflects the myth's presence in the world as compared to other, more well-known myths. When one Googles *The Kalevala*, especially in hopes of purchasing books or related ephemera, one will come across a very diverse gathering of literature, films and music, almost all of which are obscure. The various translations and scholarly works are the foundation of these treasures, as well as the handful of famous adaptations and derivative works of the tale, such as *Lord of the Rings*, (for which J.R.R.Tolkien drew heavy inspiration from the epic poem as well as from the Finnish language and some of its cultural traditions). In such a search some *Kalevala*-inspired fantasy and science fiction books pop up, too, and my collection is a reflection of that diverse literary landscape.

But most importantly my collection serves to remind me of my own journey from first learning about *The Kalevala* in Finnish elementary school, to loving it more deeply in my young adulthood, and finally now, to attempting my own retelling of the tale, as I can no longer deny my attachment to its magical power.

I left my life in Finland as a pre-teen and learned to speak English fluently by the time I was fifteen. A seed was planted then, and it was my love of English that ultimately led me to study creative writing at Goucher College. But even though I have loved getting to know the rich literary traditions in my new language, recently I've realized that my Finnish heritage followed me across the Atlantic and has grown even as I've developed as a writer. I guess it's true that wherever you go, there you are, because it's my native folklore that's become the ultimate object of my literary obsessions.

Over the past decade, I've purchased books along the way whenever one has sparked my interest and added to the passion that was growing inside me. Each purchase and every hour spent poring over its pages, solidified my hunger and commitment to finding out everything I could about this magical tale. I didn't know it then, but I know now, that this base of knowledge has helped me discover a personal writing journey, which has become clearer to me since I started my creative writing studies at Goucher College. Thus, the most recent additions to my collection, which are largely derivative works, I've gathered as part of my own preparation to write another modern retelling of our folktales.

I can imagine *The Kalevala* being told as an exciting adventure, like *Norse Mythology* by Neil Gaiman, *A Tale Dark and Grimm* by Adam Gidwitz, or *Percy Jackson and the Olympians* by Rick Riordan. Not only is there a market for such revisions, but modernized folktales also serve to influence younger generations with mythological storytelling that speaks to their esthetic and specific cultural context. On more than one occasion, as I've read reader reviews of such retellings online, have I seen someone say "it's because of this book that I went back and read the original myth." The original tales will never go out of fashion, but even Tolkien knew that his readers wanted exciting retellings of them. In fact, this recreation of worlds and characters was

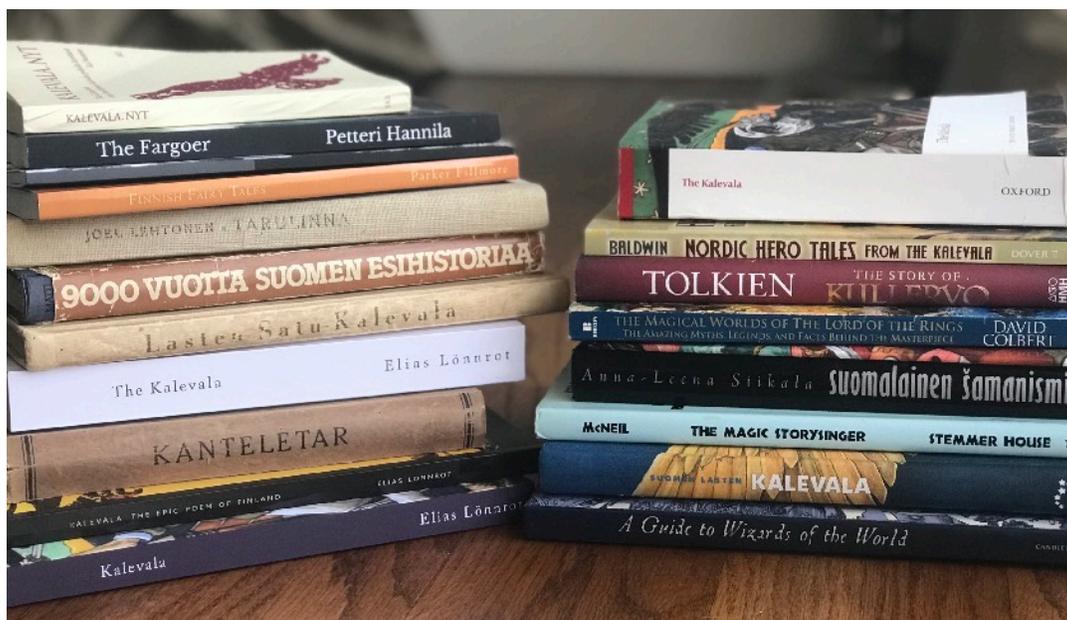
Tolkien's lifelong pursuit. Commentary and analysis on Tolkien's works derivative of *The Kalevala*, therefore, is also part of this collection. I chose not to include *The Lord of the Rings*, but instead books that explore the writer's relationship to the Finnish myth. When I've come across books that pay attention to that process, I've added them without hesitation, and gleaned a great deal from them as a writer.

I have always been enamored by *The Kalevala*. Its quintessentially Finnish, natural setting and its thematic focus on artisanship, shamanism and music (as opposed to mainly bloodshed and war) have always resonated with me. It's reminiscent of Native American mythology, resembling such nature-centered storytelling more closely, than say, *Beowulf* or even Greek Mythology. Several volumes in my collection elaborate on its uniqueness, and that commentary has been vital in my own understanding of what makes *The Kalevala* stand out as a myth on the global stage of famous stories. It differs, too, in how it's laid out: Elias Lönnrot collected audio of people singing the poem in the 1800's, and since then, the authentic and unsystematic layout, which lacks a linear plot-line, has been preserved in most translations.

It was from my Father's and my Finnish Grandmother's bookshelves that this collection got its start. I'm grateful for their gifts to me, for they sparked a lifelong love in me for *The Kalevala*, and as a result, I've supplemented the collection with purchases from bookstores in Finland and America, as I've come across titles that seem interesting or pertinent to my quest. I consider myself fortunate to have found independently published out-of-print titles, (although this sometimes presents the problem of not knowing exactly who is behind such publications. In fact, including such books serves as a reminder of the need for more accessible, mainstream publications about *The Kalevala*.)

The twenty examples I've chosen to showcase here are all connected with a common thread: these are the works that most inspire me to tell my own story. Not only does my collection of books include an imperative Finnish version of the poem itself, but other inspiring translations and interpretations, and commentary that have been executed with great insight and imagination. I am proud to share each title in my collection, first for its own uniqueness, and second for its part in the cohesive picture it paints together with the other works. Not only has building this collection introduced me to several incredible books in my mother tongue, but it has unveiled for me, through the words of various international storytellers, scholars and interpreters, a tradition of which I am part, one that goes far beyond my generation and reaches much further back than my Father's or Grandmother's bookshelves.

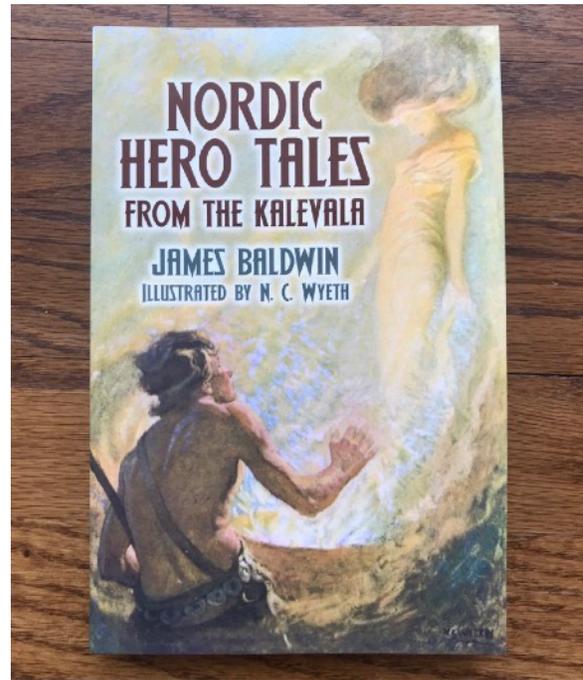
Just like Väinämöinen, the central hero of *The Kalevala*, who sings things into existence, I hope to tell his story anew to a global audience, drawing inspiration and guidance from this hand-selected collection of pertinent Finnish and English language works. Just like life is an amalgam of perspectives, my book collection, which will continue to grow, has allowed me to see *The Kalevala* in new ways, and envision my own perspective to one day join this manifold chorus of different voices.



ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Baldwin, James. *Nordic Hero Tales from the Kalevala*. Dover Publications, 2006.

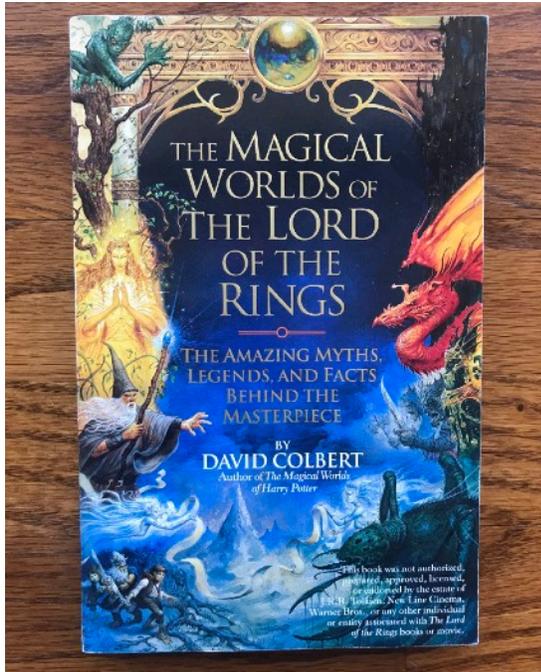
These adapted narratives were collected and rewritten by educator, James Baldwin, whose impeccable research of *The Kalevala* and past experience of reworking ancient tales into fluid narrative, makes this volume a particularly enjoyable read. He hand-selected thirty-eight stories from the epic poem and organized them into an orderly succession, which reads more like a novel with chapters. As the prologue states, the author



“combined various parts, as pleased his fancy, into one complete harmonious fabric, and, while he [retained] much of the original warp and woof, he [added] various and many colorings and connecting threads of his own invention” (Baldwin).

It is this “inventive” spirit of authors that draws me to a work, as I’m collecting books about *The Kalevala*. This book is also one of the few in my collection that include illustrations. They were painted by the great American illustrator, N. C. Wyeth, who is known for his cover of *Treasure Island*. Both Baldwin and Wyeth represent, in my collection, artists who were inspired by *The Kalevala*, and took some artistic liberties in reinterpreting it.

2. Colbert, David. *The Magical Worlds of The Lord of the Rings*. New York: Berkley Books, 2002.

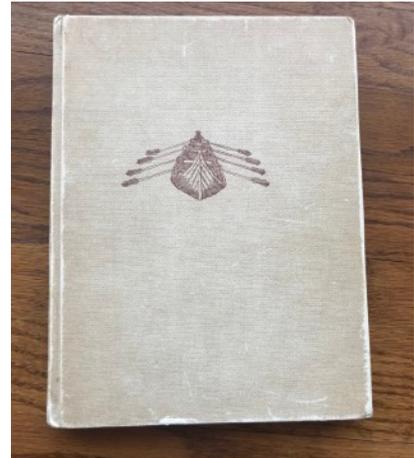


This book is a wonderful example of the aforementioned “creative process” that occurs between an author and his or her source of inspiration. In a clear and illustrated layout meant for young readers, this book poses questions, such as “how did Tolkien invent his languages?” and answers them by pointing the reader to various myths and folklore traditions around the world, that Tolkien used as guidance and stimulus when he came up with his worlds, and when he wrote his

stories. The reason I include *The Magical Worlds of The Lord of the Rings* in my collection of books on *The Kalevala*, is that it reveals how the epic myth guided Tolkien to create certain characters, settings, and languages. I picked this volume up at the young adult section of a used bookshop in Baltimore, and proudly keep it on my shelf next to *Wizardology* (book number 17), both of which add the YA intrigue that I’m constantly seeking to add to my collection.

3. Elmgren-Heinonen, Tuomi and Kirsti Gallen-Kallela. *Lasten Satu-Kalevala*. Helsinki: Werner Söderström, 1946.

In this juvenile retelling of *The Kalevala*, dialogue has been separated into quotations, and the narrative flows like a description-heavy chapter book. It is also lightly illustrated by Kirsti Gallen-Kallela, (a descendant of the famous Finnish artist, Akseli Gallen-Kallela, who is known for his paintings and contribution to military uniforms and National insignias, for instance.) There is a magical aspect to this book because of



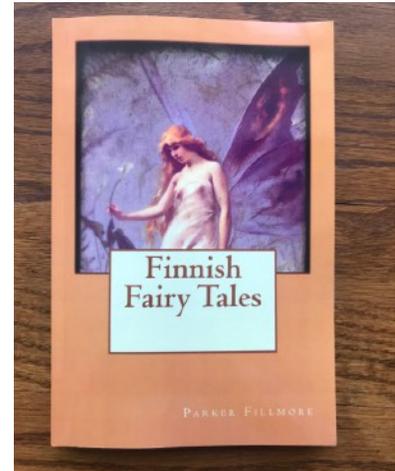
Kirsti Gallen-Kallela, who is such a prominent figure in Finnish history. It's due to her efforts that we have certain museums and collections of Finnish art. She traveled widely, absorbing other cultures and expanding her vision, and that layered existence is evident in her artwork. I pore over her illustrations in this book, which are raw and utterly unrefined, trying to imagine the inspiration she felt in retelling this incredible folktale. My Grandmother gave me this book.



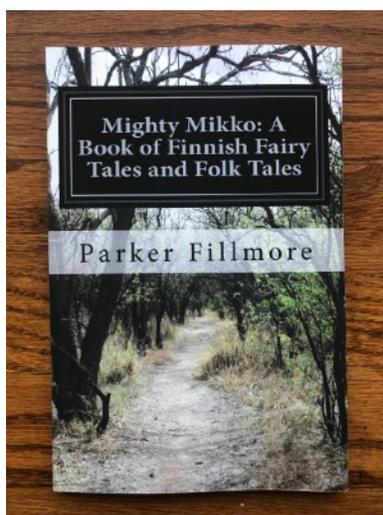
I can imagine her reading this book to her children in the turn of the century when it was published. One of the first in my collection, it actually carries some evidence of (possibly my Mother's?) family history; some of the black and white illustrations have been colored in with crayons, which gives the book, and my whole collection even more meaning, as this generations-old myth keeps being retold.

4. Fillmore, Parker. *Finnish Fairytales*. CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2015.

Parker Fillmore retold dozens of folktales at the beginning of the 20th century. Those original books, which were published by his publisher in New York, Hippocrene Books, are out of print and can only be found as collector's items online through various used booksellers. Luckily, some of them (including *Finnish Fairytales*) are also available online as independently published reprints. This book demonstrates the influence of *The Kalevala* on traditional Finnish folktales.



5. Fillmore, Parker. *Mighty Mikko: A Book of Finnish Fairy Tales and Folk Tales*. CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2014.

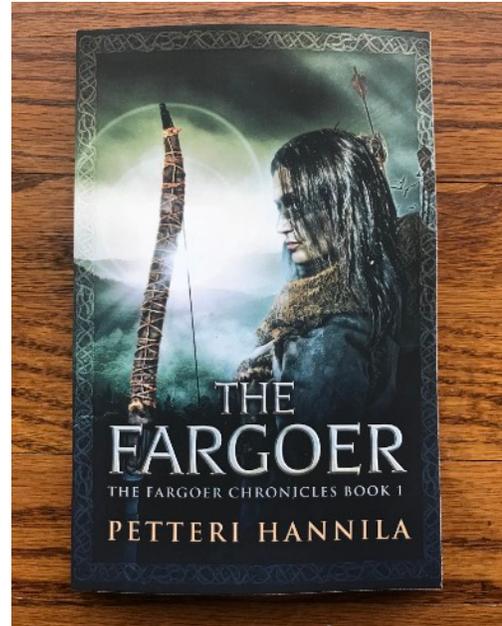


I hope to be able to afford some of Parker Fillmore's original illustrated editions one day. Luckily, these books showcase well-edited prose that captures the essence of Finnish folktales, which makes me think they are Fillmore's original text. Between the fairytale books that in Finnish (numbers 3 and 7), and these two by Fillmore, my collection now includes some of the most prominent Finnish fairytales in both languages.

6. Hannila, Petteri. *The Fargoer (The Fargoer Chronicles)*. CreateSpace, 2018.

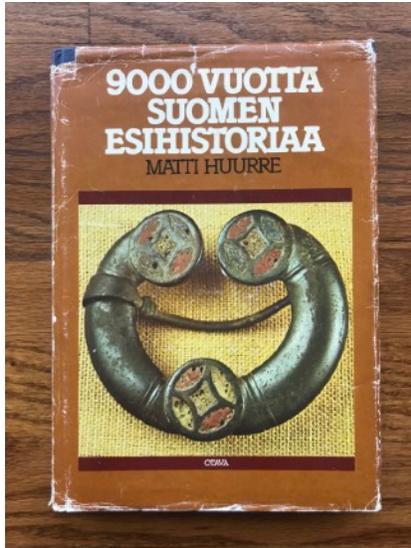
The Fargoer is the only young adult fantasy book that is a direct evolution of *The Kalevala*, in my collection. Others like it exist in the world, but I bought this one because it's brand new, and I was curious to see what modern writers are coming up with nowadays.

While the story is completely different from *The Kalevala*, it derives its atmosphere and setting from the epic poem. Also, as a nod to the myth, the story features some original *Kalevala*-spirited “runes” along the way (“rune” is the old Finnish word for poem). An introduction I copied online says “Fargoer's foundation has been laid on the wonders of the ancient world, and the fast-paced storytelling is colored by poetry, the age-old tradition of self-expression.”



I would like to own this book in its original Finnish. It was first published in Finland in 2013 under the name “Kaukamoinen” by Tajunta Media. It received mixed reviews in Finland, but American (and English speaking) readers have responded mostly positively to it, and I can see why. The translation, at least, is superb. It's definitely been written with the modern, young reader in mind. This book is a central piece in my collection because it showcases what can be done with our myth if an author's imagination is allowed to run completely wild and free.

7. Huurre, Matti. *9000 Vuotta Suomen Esihistoriaa*. Helsinki: Otava, 1983.



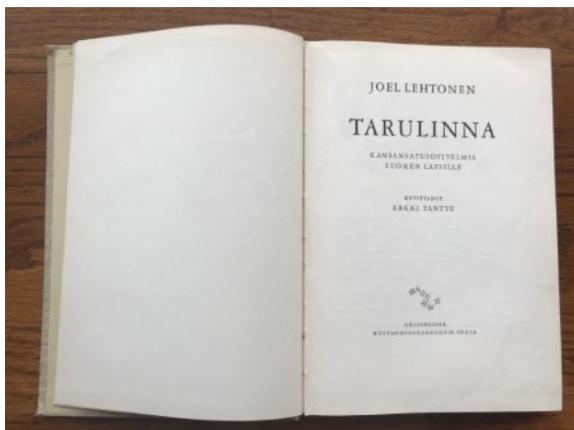
Translated, the title of this book means *9000 Years of Pre-Historic Finland*. One thing I can say about this book is that it's the greatest gift my Father ever gave me, because when he handed it to me, I knew he understood his daughter. He knew that I have always loved Finnish history, which dates back to the Ice Age, and the fact that we, as a people, have such an incredibly unique culture, that even our language differs from those who surround us. My Father also understood, (and it is something I also believe), that in order for me to build a believable mythological world, I must have a deep understanding of the real one in which that mythology was birthed. This volume is a reference to which I frequently turn to for inspiration, answers and ideas.

8. Lehtonen, Joel and Arkki Tanttu. *Tarulinna: Kansansatusovitelmia Suomen Lapsille*.
Helsinki: Otava, 1953.

Another treasure my Grandmother was willing to part with, this collection of Finnish fairytales is an example of how folklore and storytelling is derivative of *The Kalevala*. Its “style” and themes permeate our folklore throughout, for what must be understood is that *The Kalevala* shaped our independent Finnish identity as a nation. That is the power of storytelling. When a nation feels its stories can be retold and celebrated, it begins to shape its history and, consequently, its purpose.



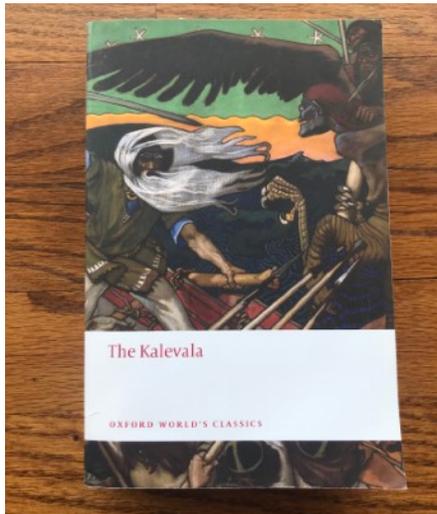
Finnish folktales are unique, even when Finland was under the control of the dominating powers of Sweden and Russia. Those cultural influences can be seen in some of these fairytales; things like monarchs and other themes not “native” to pagan (and culturally separate) Finland are the subject of some, which encapsulate our involvement in the developing lines of Northern European nations. That history is woven into our history like anything else would be.



You could say these are our *Aesop's Fables*, Grimms Brothers' and Hans Christian Andersen's tales, our *Johnny Appleseed*, or our equivalent of *The People Could Fly*. *The Kalevala* informed much of Finland's folklore, and this is a good example of that transaction.

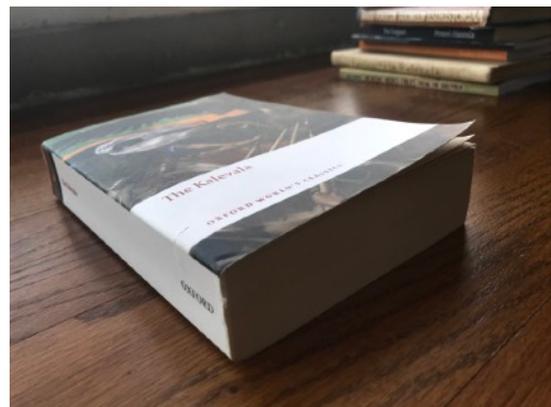
9. Lönnrot, Elias, and Keith Bosley. *The Kalevala: an Epic Poem after Oral Tradition*.

Oxford University Press, 2008.

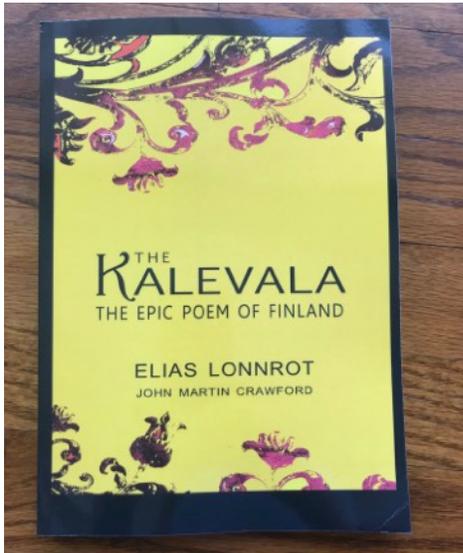


When my research into *The Kalevala* got more serious, I purchased this copy of the English version from a bookshop in Helsinki; it's the preferred (and most recent) English translation by Keith Bosley that is used by Finnish and global academics. Having only familiarized myself with the epic poem in Finnish only until that point, I knew it would be important for me to see how translated versions handled the names and events of the original work in English.

Translations are an art in themselves; the way a story is brought to life in another tongue can make or break the transaction that happens when a reader sits down to read. There is so much more to a translation than language and words only. Sentiments and context don't always translate directly, and oftentimes direct meaning must be sacrificed in order for the story to contain a fluidity in the new language. I enjoy this translation and refer to it as my ultimate guide. I am grateful to the people who spent years bringing it to fruition; I can only imagine what an undertaking it was.



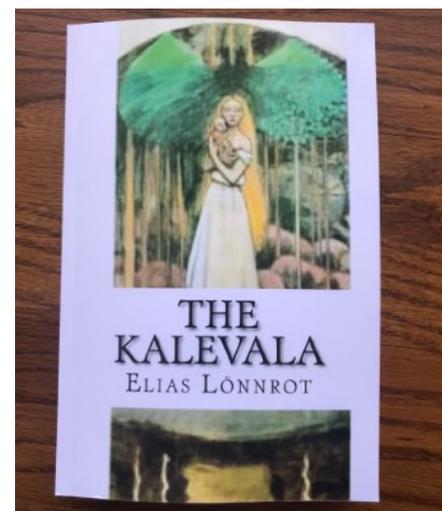
10. Lönnrot, Elias and John Martin Crawford. *The Kalevala: The Epic Poem Of Finland*.
Seattle: Pacific Publishing Studio, 2011.



This paperback reprint of John Crawford's original translation of *The Kalevala* (by University of Illinois Press in 1888) is clearly organized and provides a list of the runes in the epic poem. I like this translation because of its larger letter font, and I often compare it to my Oxford University version. It's important for me to own many translations of *the Kalevala* in English, as a phrase may be expressed differently in each one.

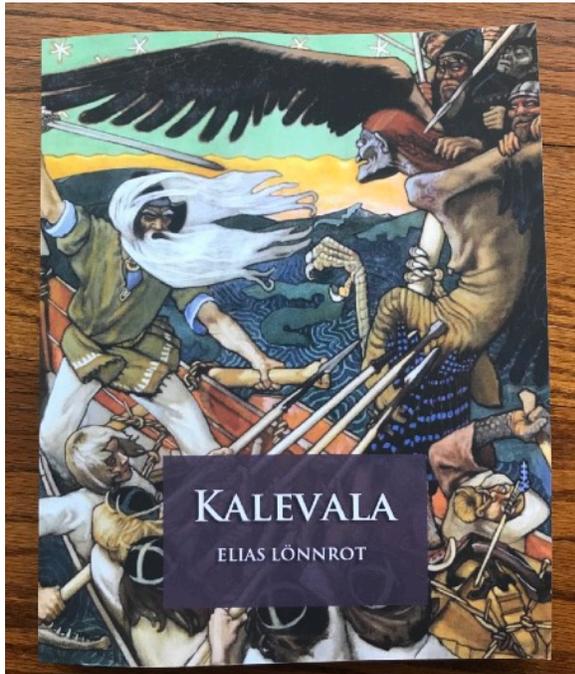
11. Lönnrot, Elias and John Martin Crawford. *The Kalevala*. CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2017.

When I found out there was another pressing of John Crawford's old translation that included his introduction, I immediately ordered it for my collection. I was curious to know what the scholar had to say about his process, and if he premised the work in differently than Keith Bosley, (whose new translation was first published in 1989). Sure enough, Crawford's insights are keen and unique, which is why I'm glad I have this edition as well.



12. Lönnrot, Elias. *The Kalevala (Finnish Edition)*. CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2014.

Owning a Finnish version of *The Kalevala* has been essential to completing my collection, after I received those first books from my Father and Grandmother, which initially spawned my initial passion for the myth. This particular volume is a large paperback reprint of one of the clearest Finnish versions. It's used in classrooms, as it retains the old language in which the original poems were sung to Lönnrot.



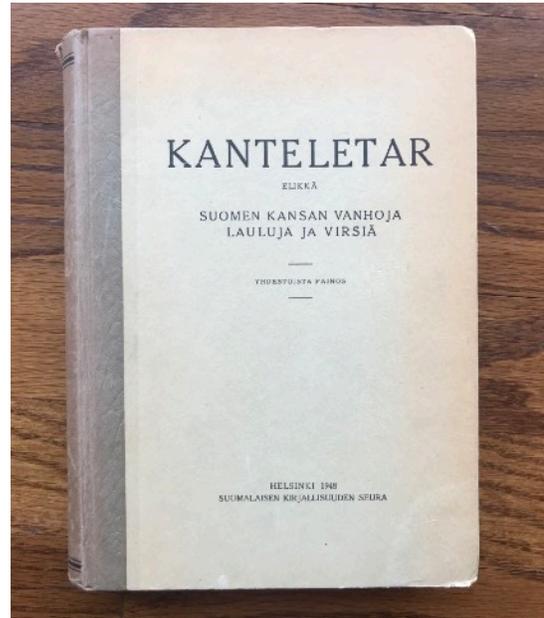
The layout is typical to epic poems; each page has two columns of straight verse with no line-breaks, stanzas or other poetic organizational elements. To read this, one must be alert and pay close attention, taking copious notes as one goes along, so as not to forget what was just said. It's far from being fictional prose, and it's no wonder why many never bother to read it. I happen to love the language and atmosphere of it, but even for such a lover of the original myth as myself,

my eyes easily tire if I try to read it for a long while.

I use this volume as a reference a lot; luckily it's divided by numbers, and some other reference books (such as number 9 in my collection) list the subject matter and events that occur within each numbered section.

13. Lönnrot, Elias. *Kanteletar, elikkä, Suomen kansan vanhoja lauluja ja virsiä* (in Finnish) (11th ed.). Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura, 1948.

This fragile edition from the mid 1900's is one I got from my Grandmother's bookshelf. She has been more willing to part with her own collection since I've expressed (and proven) my commitment to this endeavor, and this past summer, she placed this copy of *Kanteletar* in my hands with a grin; she and I both knew its value. *Kanteletar* is the companion book to *The Kalevala*, the other collection of folk poetry that was compiled by Elias



Lönnrot in the early 1800's. It's considered a sacred text by some. This collection of poems has helped establish the "Kalevala metre" of poetry, which is also known as trochaic tetrameter.

In getting the full picture of Finland's epic poetry, it's important to be introduced to the Kantele, a traditional dulcimer-type instrument that aids *The Kalevala's* protagonist, Väinämöinen, in his music creation, and is still widely used today. The title of this book includes the word Kantele and a feminine morpheme *-tar*, which alters the meaning into a character, a sort of female songstress, or "maiden of the kantele." I think that the *Kanteletar* is thought of as a Finnish "muse," and it wouldn't be far-fetched to imagine she played a role in coining Finland's nickname (which is based on her geographical shape on the map): "Suomineito" or Finnish Maiden. This elusive maiden is interchangeable with the female characters in *The Kalevala*, who tempt and seduce the men with their long, blonde locks of hair and layers of necklaces.

14. Mäkinen, Kirsti and Pirkko-Liisa Surojegin. *Suomen Lasten Kalevala*. Helsinki: Otava, 2016.

I bought this volume, titled *The Finnish Children's Kalevala*, on my most recent visit to Finland. It lay smack dab in the middle of a display in a small bookshop, calling my name. With a bold drawing of a Nordic-looking eagle with curled talons and a fiercely screaming beak on its cover, I didn't think twice about buying it. It's exactly what I've been looking for: a way to get visually stimulated kids engaged with an ancient story.

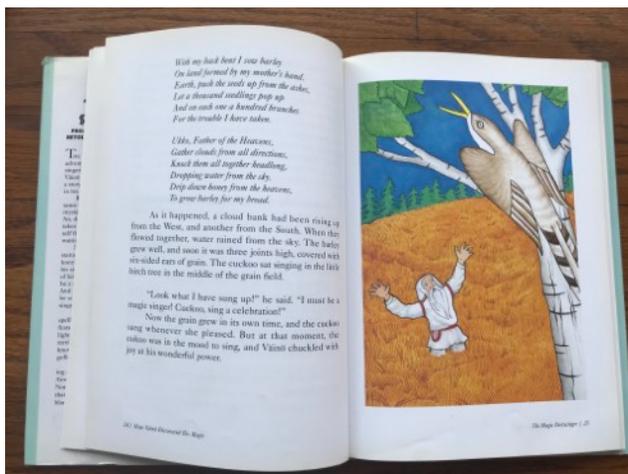
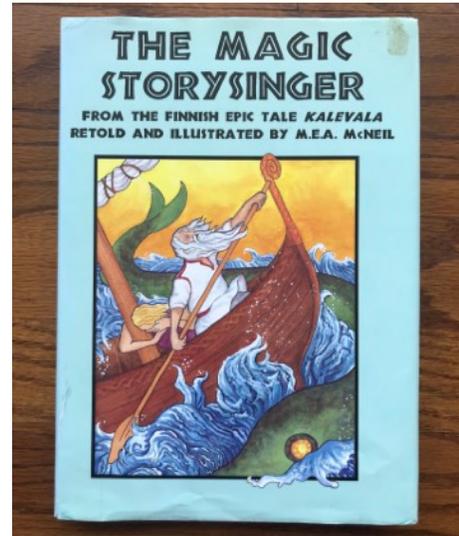


The layout is immaculate, the illustrations evocative, and you can just envision how the brilliant team of young graphic designers who created it were passionate about breathing new life into these old stories. They achieved their goal. I only wish there was an English translation that I could share with all the English-speaking children in my life, though I'm sure someone is working on it. This is just the sort of book that inspires young people to read more folktales. If they're always this exciting, why not read them all?

15. McNeil, M.E.A. *The Magic Storysinger: From the Finnish Epic Tale Kalevala*. Owings Mills: Stemmer House, 1993.

Here is an example of a retelling or a “re-imagining” of *The Kalevala* for an international juvenile audience. Though it’s been out for a few decades, I stumbled on it at a Finnish book-trading event some years back. It’s beautifully illustrated, highlighting the main events of the epic poem. The artist took some liberties to change the ending and alter some of the names. I welcome these attempts to retell because I think it can sometimes be

the language-barrier that keeps others from embracing a story. A story equals its governing principles, morals, and the feelings with which it leaves us. This is an innate quality of art itself; once it leaves our desks and enters the minds and hearts of our audiences, it becomes part of their psyches, and part of their stories. This book was published by a small operation; it didn’t reach a



national literary platform, and the artist has remained obscure. Having studied children’s literature and publishing, I see its downfall in that the story wasn’t condensed enough for its intended picture book. But this retelling made a courageous attempt and a deep enough impact on me to cause me to make it a permanent part of my collection.

16. Nieminen, Kai. *Kalevala. Nyt*. Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura, 2013.

This pocket-sized retelling of *The Kalevala* for the modern reader was first published in 1999 by the renowned Finnish poet, Kai Nieminen. I don't believe this has ever been translated into English, although some of his poetry books have been. I would love this version in English. It reads wonderfully like a novel without deviating too far from the original. My Grandmother had picked it up at a sidewalk sale, and having found it pertinent to my research, mailed it to me recently. Nieminen understood that because languages change, the delivery of an old story should also change. Thankfully he was also an excellent writer.

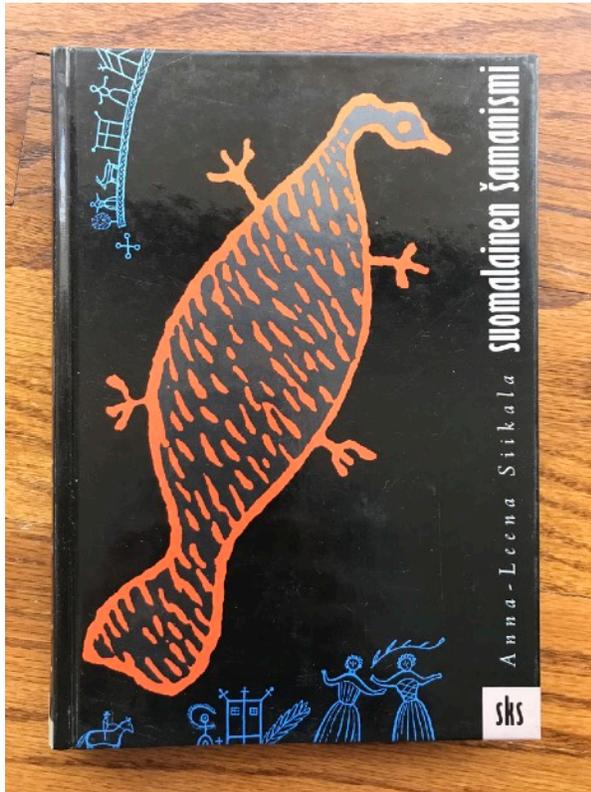


17. Shepherd, Aaron. *The Songs of Power: A Northern Tale of Magic, Retold from the Kalevala (World Classics)*. Bellingham: Skyhook Press, 2017.



Previously published as a picture books for children age 10 and older titled *The Maiden of Northland*, seasoned storyteller Aaron Shepherd's poems inspired by *The Kalevala* read like a dream for young audiences. This book is a must-have in my collection, as it again showcases the wonderful result of a well-crafted revision by a master storyteller.

18. Siikala, Anna-Leena. *Suomalainen Samanismi: Mielikuvien Historiaa*. Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura, 1992.



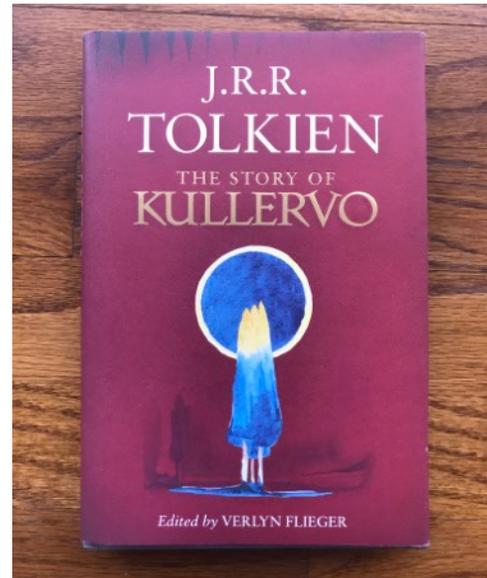
Suomalainen Samanismi (Finnish Shamanism) is one of a handful of major published works on the topic (in Finnish), even though Shamanism plays a large role in *The Kalevala* and the development of Finnish culture. After the acceptance of monotheistic religion in Northern Europe, Shamanism was seen as pagan, much in the way the witchcraft was seen by the American Colonists. But in order to fully comprehend folklore, one must be willing to put on the lenses of the “bard,” or of someone whose religion was not Christianity,

but something much more ancient and mystic and related to the Earth.

This book is an invaluable resource in comprehending the importance of Shamans’ roles in Finnish history and folklore. It’s one my Father gave me as a writer’s tool. As a writer himself, he knows that when it comes to creating convincing characters, a Shaman is a writer’s dream come true because of their revered place in society and powerful impact on other characters’ actions, and therefore on the trajectory of a story overall.

20. Tolkien, J.R.R. and Verlyn Flieger. *The Story of Kullervo*. Boston, New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2016.

Tolkien is another name in the long list of people whose work was influenced by *The Kalevala*, and he even published essays on how this epic poem helped him create Middle Earth. As soon as this edition of *The Story of Kullervo* came out in 2016, I bought a copy of it. The fact that Verlyn Flieger, who is a known Tolkien Scholar from the University of Maryland, edited it, is how I knew it would be good. And it doesn't disappoint; this book contains a largely unknown story sketch of one of



Tolkien's *Kalevala*-derived characters, Kullervo. He never completed the story, but it played a part in helping him complete his other fantastical worlds, and that methodology is also included and explained in this book. It's a gem for writers.

This book is an important part of my collection because it's a portal to the mind of a literary great, and it allows us to bear witness to the process by which such derivative works are created. I consider it to be a notebook or scrapbook of sorts, (even though the first part of it reads like a story), and love seeing where he scratched over names and made edits. It's such a personal touch. It makes me feel like the process of writing, which is often long, lonely and painful, is similar for all writers.

WISHLIST ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

1.

Ervast, Pekka. *The Key to the Kalevala*. Grass Valley, CA: Blue Dolphin Publishing, 2015.

This book was first published in 1916, and has played a vital role in the preservation of Finnish folklore traditions, as it has been used by folklore students for decades. In 2015, it was finally translated into English and is still deemed one of the best books on Finnish traditional culture. It uses a translation of *The Kalevala* by Eino Friberg (1988). From what I read about this book, it's supposed to be a unique insight into the epic poem, as well as a discerning look at Finnish traditions. Adding this book to my library would fill some gaps in understanding the "meanings" behind various symbols and events in the story of *The Kalevala*.

2.

Kirby, W. F. *Kalevala, the Land of Heroes, Volume I*. Forgotten Books, 2015.

This volume is a bridge between *The Kalevala* and (i.e.) J.R.R. Tolkien's works; it clearly shows on a more universal scale, how characters in *The Kalevala* played a role in the development of other fantastical tales. It doesn't necessarily draw comparisons as much as it shows derivative nature of mythology and other fictional storytelling. I think this would be a vital component in any fiction author's library, especially in someone's who wants a deeper understanding of the universal concepts that drive all fantastical storytelling. To my knowledge, this volume includes some inspiring original reprints of *The Kalevala*, and goes into depth about the background and archival pieces of the epic poem, which are all elements that I would love to own in print.

3.

Kirby, W. F. *Kalevala, the Land of Heroes, Volume II*. Forgotten Books, 2015.

This is a follow up to Volume I of *The Land of Heroes*. I've also read that these texts are often used in scholarly settings, which reinforces my desire to include them in my own library. I understand that these two volumes are laid out and read much like textbooks do (which I love), and can thus serve as reference guides that I could utilize thematically, etc.

4.

Lönnrot, Elias, and Keith Bosley. *The Kanteletar: Lyrics and Ballads after Oral Tradition*. Oxford University Press, 1992.

This textbook includes the translation that Tolkien used when he studied *The Kalevala*. That exact translation is no longer available on its own, which makes this book invaluable. In addition, this volume includes supportive commentary and elucidation to the translation.

5.

Olcott, Frances Jenkins. *Wonder Tales from Baltic Wizards*. Midland Park, NJ: Pinnacle Press. 2017.

A reprint of an original volume, this work is deemed by scholars to be culturally valuable in itself, as it includes a lot of the context within which it was originally created. From what I've read about this book, I understand that it includes beautifully translated tales in their original format. This would be a prized volume in my library, as it would provide me with inspiration, much like reading Tolkien, and other mythologies and fairytales has. I can't wait to have this book.

6.

Pentikäinen, Juha and Ritva Boom. *Kalevala Studies: Folklore Studies in Translation*. Indiana University Press, 1999.

These two important Finnish scholars put together an extensive study surrounding *The Kalevala*, and this volume has become an invaluable asset to teaching the folklore epic worldwide. In the book, the authors clearly establish how integral a part *The Kalevala* has played in the establishing of Finland's identity as a nation. This is why this book is unique from the other scholarly works on my wish-list: it's written from the perspective of Finnish scholars for other Finnish scholars, and for her students. And reading such an interpretive work would play a vital part in being able to convey the full picture of what *The Kalevala* is in the arena of global folktales.

7.

Petaja, Emil. *Saga of Lost Earths (The Cosmic Kalevala Book One)*. New York: DAW, 1979.

Petaja's three-part series based on *The Kalevala* is an innovative science fiction retelling, and one of the only such series in existence. I absolutely must have these books, because they express this creative need to retell mythical stories and legends in new and fresh ways. Also, because *The Kalevala* lacks a straightforward plot, what these works of fiction can do is present the ideas of the epic in a progression of chronological events, with clear protagonists and plot-lines. I am very curious to see how Petaja utilized all these elements of storytelling, and what risks he chose to use, in order to make his story come to life. This process fascinates me more than anything, and since there are only a handful of such retellings of *The Kalevala*, I feel it's absolutely imperative that I get my hands on every publication that I possibly can.

8.

Petaja, Emil. *The Star Mill (The Cosmic Kalevala Book Two)*. New York: DAW, 1979.

To add to my description of Book One in this series (above), from what I understand about these books is that they combine science fiction with fantasy, and derive their plot-line from the prophecies that were given in *The Kalevala*. They are almost like fan-fiction in a way; *The Kalevala* established the characters and foretold events, and these books (with much elaboration and innovation) take the story forward.

9.

Petaja, Emil. *The Stolen Sun (The Cosmic Kalevala Book Three)*. New York: DAW, 1979.

Another word on the series from Petaja: he wrote this series in the 1960's and drew heavily from the age of technology, comparing it to the innovation of the original *Kalevala* cast. A huge component of the epic poem is the creation of the "Sampo," which is a sort of magical mill that produces any desired wealth and necessity for prospering, basically giving you whatever riches you ask of it. This concept is developed by Petaja in these novels, but from the perspective of someone who has seen (at least a limited view of) what machines are capable of doing.

There is a movie remake of *The Kalevala*, which came out in 2013 (by renowned, Finnish film director, Jari Halonen) that explores this idea of a modern Sampo, making wishes come true for anyone who has access to it. In the film, the Sampo is made in the form of virtual reality, which was the first thought I had when I was introduced to Petaja's science fiction book series. There truly are unlimited possibilities in retelling folktales.

10.

Synge, Ursula. *Land of Heroes: a Retelling of the Kalevala*. New York: Atheneum, 1978.

Written in clear and exciting prose, Ursula Synge published this retelling in 1978, and to my understanding, it is one of the best modern narratives of the ancient tale. She apparently captured the true essence of the Finnish folktale tradition, not sacrificing its wildness and strangeness, and paying faithful homage to the physical landscapes, while making rich and believable people out of every original character in the tale. This would complete my collection of *Kalevala* themed books, adding one more unique voice in the brave souls who have attempted, and often succeeded, reimagining the ancient myth.