

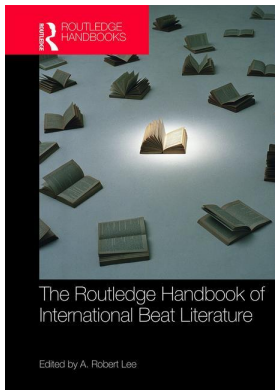
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BEAT POETRY IN FINLAND IN THE 1960S

Harri Veivo

Commenting on Pekka Kejonen's poem "Other Howl" ("Toinen huuto," 1965), Jorma Korpela, acclaimed modernist author and the then 22-year-old Kejonen's mentor in literature, said he had never imagined someone so young could suffer so much (Kejonen 1994: 51). Reading Kejonen's debut work *Jam Session (Jamit, 1963)*, a collection of joyful and witty stories of young jazz musicians and teenagers in a provincial town in Finland during the late 1950s and early 1960s, one may indeed wonder whether life was as hard as depicted in the poem. It is true however, that the author was in permanent conflict with the authorities of his time, consuming alcohol and Pervitin—a methamphetamine used by the Finnish army during the war—in big quantities and living a restless bohemian life in the grey zone between literary salons and the gutter. He spent long periods in hospitals and asylums in forced rehabilitation before quitting drinking and drugs definitively in the 1970s. It is no wonder that Ginsberg's "Howl," characterized by Christopher Gair as "probably the best-known countercultural assault on the stultifying destruction of the individual by authoritarian surveillance and control" (Gair 2008: 71) and by Marjorie Perloff as having a sense of "displaced violence" (Perloff 2006: 41) at its core, intrigued Kejonen to the point that he appropriated it in his own work.

Like many younger people on both sides of the Atlantic, Kejonen lived in a society that was at the same time strongly conservative, struggling with the painful memories of World War II, and experiencing a process of rapid modernization. Yet rewriting Ginsberg's "Howl" in Finland was not only an effort to give expression to shared feelings and experience. The poem had been introduced to Finland in a partial translation in 1959. This was a period of rapid evolution in Finnish literature where translations of "new" contemporary poetry and of the tradition of twentieth century modernism and avant-garde played an important role. Beat was one of the many models appropriated by writers of the young generation in an effort to renew the literature of their country. "Howl" was also, and maybe above all, an example of a new poetic form, albeit perhaps less the representation of a world to which may Finns could relate.

I will return to Kejonen and his "Other Howl" in a more detailed reading later. This brief initial discussion seems sufficient to point out three guiding principles which have to be taken into account when analyzing Beat poetry in Finland during the 1960s. Firstly, the appropriation of Beat literature in Finland has to be related to the internal evolution of the literary field of the country and especially to discussions of poetic discourse and the role of the poet. The 1950s saw a fundamental change in Finnish poetry, where the traditional and still largely dominant forms based on fixed rhyme and meter were replaced by an Eliot- and Pound-inspired "high modernism." The new poetic discourse, adopted by young poets such as Eeva-Liisa Manner, Paavo Haavikko and Tuomas Anhava, soon acquired prestige, representing at the end of the decade virtually the new norm in poetry. When

Kejonen started his career, the emancipatory power of the 1950s poetic revolution had more or less passed, and “high modernism” looked to be ossified. New models had to be searched for from contemporary European literature, from the tradition of the avant-garde (largely unknown in Finland at the time) and from American Beat.

Secondly, a rapidly changing international world society set new demands for the poet and his work. While the fundamental trope of literary production in the 1950s had been that of “no man’s land” (Viikari 1992), the expression of a careful autonomous positioning of the writer between the polarities that structured society at the time (such as the past and the present and the competing ideologies of the Cold War), the new decade required contact, communication and activism. The world that was emerging at the national and global levels was pregnant with new experiences, emotions, messages, and tensions that had to be reflected in literature. Kejonen’s writing of the time expresses not only the individual’s conflict with institutional forms of power, but also the strife between an older generation traumatized by the war and a newer one seeking liberty and fulfilment through all the possibilities offered by emerging modern society. The affinity felt by Finnish writers with American Beat authors stems from these positions within the Finnish literary field and within Finnish society itself.

The third guiding principle derives from the changes outlined above and from Beat literature. Compared with earlier twentieth century modernist and avant-garde movements, the Beats produced few programmatic texts laying out its poetic principles. What have been codified as the writing techniques of Beat in Kerouac’s “Essentials of Spontaneous Prose” (1959), or Ginsberg’s *Composed on the Tongue* (1980), for example, do not amount to a definitive listing applicable only to Beat writing. Likewise, the characteristics of Beat that can be found in the research literature—I counted over twenty in Christopher Gair’s (2008) and David Sterritt’s (2012) recent introductions—are not exclusive of Ginsberg, Kerouac, and their colleagues. This is of course a banal observation: literary movements rarely invent anything wholly unique. It is important, however, since it means that the categorization of Finnish authors and texts as representing “Beat” cannot be based on formal and thematic criteria only; there must be a more explicit connection to the American Beat through a citation, an allusion, or a proper name in literary texts, or through an identification of the author as a Beat writer in the Finnish literary field. “Beat” identity is in this sense a dialogic literary and social construction.

In Finland the situation is further complicated in the sense that the already dialogic identity of the Beat movement is reframed and reinterpreted through its insertion into new contexts at the European, Nordic and national levels. Kejonen may have been informed to some extent of the court case against Ginsberg and his publisher Ferlinghetti through reports in international and Finnish press. But Anselm Hollo’s essay on Beat in the Finnish literary review *Parnasso* in 1959 which followed the translation of “Howl” is likely to have had a bigger role in forming his conception of the Beat. Hollo argued that Beat showed how limited notions of “school,” “movement,” and “generation” were in discussing contemporary literature. The early Beat canon Hollo proposed was not constructed around the three usual standard-bearers of the movement (Ginsberg, Kerouac, and Burroughs), but gave a lot of room for authors who have often received less attention, such as Denise Levertov and Jack Gilbert. In the notes to the translation, Hollo also showed how deeply the poem was anchored in the countercultures and alternative ways of life in USA, thus pointing a way out of the high modernism that had so dominated literary discussions in Finland in the 1950s. One should also remember that Jarkko Laine, a prominent member of the underground scene of the late 1960s, had his first experiences of Beat life in Stockholm, not in the USA. He and the other underground authors read about Beat in various sources ranging from the Bay area’s journal *Ramparts* to the Swedish satirical magazine *Puss*. Beat, thereby, made its way into Finland through several channels and filters. It was never easy to know what the word meant exactly.

This chapter offers analysis of texts by four authors who can be considered to represent Finnish Beat, keeping in mind the issues of cultural context outlined above. I begin with Anselm Hollo and his poem “Superman as child” (“Teräsmies pieneä,” 1964) then move forward to Kejonen’s “Other Howl” (1964) and Kalevi Lappalainen’s “They I-II” (“Ne I-II,” 1966), the latter two clearly

reminiscent of Ginsberg's breakthrough poem. The last text analyzed is Markku Into's "Divine Comedy I" ("Jumalainen näytelmä I," 1971). All of these authors were related to Beat, either directly through personal interest or indirectly by critics. The texts chosen for analysis also have thematic and formal similarities with works by American Beat authors. They are however also each different, showing how Beat was appropriated at different moments in the 1960s and how it accompanied an evolution which moved from the "high modernism" of Hollo's 1964 collection towards the underground aesthetics that characterizes Into's work. I will discuss Beat prose and autobiographies briefly in the concluding section of the essay.

"What Have We Become?" Anselm Hollo's "Superman as Child"

Among the Finnish poets, Anselm Hollo had the closest ties with American Beat authors. He was born in Helsinki in 1934 to the professor and translator J. A. Hollo and the Riga-born music teacher Iris Walden. From the late 1950s onwards he lived abroad, first in Germany and Austria and then in London. During his years in Europe, Hollo became acquainted with literary circles in different countries, such as the British "Angry Young Men" and Pierre Garnier's "International Movement" of spatial poetry, and to be sure, also Beat. He presented these and other movements to the Finnish public through translations, radio programs, and articles in literary reviews and student magazines. His work as cultural intermediary was not oriented towards Finland only, however. He translated Beat poetry into German and also Swedish poetry into English. In 1967 he moved to the USA and taught creative writing in several universities, ending his career at the Naropa institute in Colorado. He received several prizes and awards in Finland and in the USA both for his translations and original work, which was written in English from the 1960s onwards. He passed away in 2013.

Hollo's two poetry collections published in Finnish at the beginning of his career follow quite closely the evolution of the poetic discourse of the time. The first, *Between the Rains* (*Sateiden välillä*, 1956), uses densely fashioned images or short narratives. The main aesthetic values are construction, precision, and clarity; meter, rhymes, and rhetorical exposition typical of the traditional poetic discourse are absent, but so are features of the 1960s such as colloquial language, references to popular culture, multiple voices, proper names, and typographical play. The second, *trobar: to find* (*trobar: löytää*, 1964), exploits the expressive means introduced at the time by leading authors of the younger generation like Pentti Saarikoski and Väinö Kirstinä. The poems in this collection are set out on the page in typographic patterns which give an undulating visual aspect to the text and can be read as if to follow the rhythm of ideas, emotions, and scenes depicted in the poems. Colloquial language is used alongside with poetic images and condensed expressions typical of 1950s "high modernism." Politics is present through allusions and citations, often situated in the context of everyday life. Proper names, citations, and intertexts from various origins pop up here and there, weaving a complex set of references that reflect Hollo's position in the international literary field of the time on the one hand and offer keys for understanding his poetics on the other hand. Beat plays an important role here: "Allen" and "Allen Ginsberg" are explicitly mentioned and the first section ends with poems named "Sandwiches to Allen Ginsberg" and "Illumination." Less explicit allusions to Beat authors and milieu also recur. Beat is however not the exclusive beacon in Hollo's poetic universe; the writing abounds also in allusions to the wider reaches of twentieth-century modernism and the avant-garde.

This creative appropriation and interpretation of Beat is particularly striking in the poem "Superman as Child." The text presents conventional features of the modern Finnish poetry of the 1950s, such as syntactic ambiguity created by enjambments and the absence of punctuation, the co-existence of literal and allegorical meaning, and free rhythm. Yet it also uses colloquial language, contains numerous proper names, has an undulating visual aspect, and mixes references to "high" and "low" culture in ways which situate it clearly in line with the emerging new poetry of the 1960s.

One way to read the poem is by looking at how Hollo uses proper names and their cultural meanings and values in order to create a dynamic network that weaves together modernism, popular culture, and the classical tradition, proposing at the same a reflection on the tension between a linear and a cyclic conception of time.

The first stanza sets firmly the lyrical I at the dawn of a new era:

Superman as child
I saw him
in the space capsule
the steel caterpillar
year 1946
Hollo 1964: 17

The enjambment between the first two lines produces a syntactical ambiguity: the words “as child” can be read as qualifying either Superman or the speaker. It is thus a question here of a beginning, of the superhero of comics or of the poet, or of both, and this beginning is also the outset of the new era of space conquest. Yuri Gagarin’s journey around the Earth in outer space took place in 1961, followed by John Glenn’s three orbits a year later. These global media events are hinted at through the image of the space capsule. Yet the year 1946 anchors this image in a childhood experience of reading comics rather than in the news flow of the 1960s. And the images of the capsule and the steel caterpillar point also to the idea of cyclical natural evolution through transformation. The poem creates thus an oscillation between the present, the modern push forward, and an earlier time, the childhood of the speaker and of the comic’s hero, and this oscillation is figured in terms of repetition (in nature) and rupture (in modernity). Superman in this respect is to be compared with the Prince Valiant, Heracles, and Ulysses mentioned later in the poem. They form a group of mythical figures situated in a mirror relation with modernity and the present—visible, observable, yet out of reach—while the speaker is an observer of modernity and its protagonist.

Time in Hollo’s poem is entangled with space, and space is represented through proper names and allusions that map a cartography of modernity where Beat stands in continuity with European avant-garde, contemporary cinema, and jazz. The second and fourth stanzas mention Peter “born in 1934 in New York,” probably a reference to Peter Orlovsky except that he was born in 1933. Other allusions are made to Marcel Carné’s 1958 movie *Les Tricheurs* as a portrait of the youth existentialism of Paris’s Left Bank, Ezra Pound’s “the little Athens in Idaho,” the Chilean poet Pablo Neruda, the suburb of Pitäjänmäki in Helsinki, “Wiesbaden,” “hipsters,” and “der Miles Davis” (Hollo 1964: 17). These multiple connections stand in equal value, the poem mapping in this way a desired space of free access, communication, and mobility not hampered by frontiers, time-lags or hierarchies of center and periphery.

Beat comes to the fore in the fifth and longest stanza of the poem:

two thousand miles away
“Zone” tolls
in the attic on the 8th street
a frightening voice
howls inside Allen’s head
Guillaume Guillaume
what have you become
the same old film of
all of us
of Prince Valiant
since many years
no more panels

Hollo 1964: 18

The spatial reference here is to Greenwich Village where Eli Wilentz's famous Eighth Street Bookshop served as a meeting place for writers and artists in the 1950s and 1960s, parties frequently taking place in the premises on the second floor. Apollinaire's "Zone" recalls also Paris, the French poet's poem of 1913 having been constructed as a one-day journey through the city and its outskirts and through the author's memories. A similarity of style, of the manner of addressing the speaker and the reader, and of the nostalgic tone, helps connect Hollo's poem to that of Apollinaire.

At the same time, the stanza is a complex citation and rewriting of Ginsberg's "At Apollinaire's Grave" (1958), translated by Hollo for the 1963 Finnish edition of *Death to Van Gogh's Ear*. Ginsberg cites in French Apollinaire's lines from the poem "A la Santé"—"et quelle voix sinistre ulule / Guillaume qu'est tu devenu ("A dire voice moaned in my ear / Guillaume what have you done" in Roger Shattuck's translation, while "what have you become" fits better Hollo's purpose) and writes how "your [= Apollinaire's] Zone with its long crazy line of bullshit about death / come out of the grave and talk through the door of my mind." The motif of the frightened, haunting voice thus binds Apollinaire's text together with those of both Ginsberg and Hollo. While the question "what have you become" concerns only the poet himself in Apollinaire's text, Ginsberg embeds it in a poem that addresses the French poet and, through him, the wider reach of avant-garde and modernism in the early decades of the twentieth century. What Hollo adds to the discussion between the American and French poet is an extension of the rhetorical questioning and of the frame where the dialogue between the past and the present takes place. The line "all of us" is syntactically ambiguous in its original form in Finnish and can be read in two ways. On the one hand, it complements the line "what have you become," taking the meaning of "what have we (become)." It would thus inscribe the speaker in the same continuity of modernism with Ginsberg and Apollinaire and question the very value of this continuity, of acts and their consequences in twentieth century poetry. The same line can however be read as relating to the preceding line on "the same old film of" also, taking the meaning of "same of film of / all of us / of Prince Valiant." This interpretation would underline endless repetition instead of modernism's ethos of progress and connect the speaker (and Ginsberg and Apollinaire) with popular culture through the allusion to the King Arthur knight made over into a comic-strip hero by Hal Foster in 1937. But Hollo's associative writing technique gives immediately a twist to this reading in the following line. "No more panels" can be read literally as expressing the end of publication of the comics series, and thus as a rupture in the endless repetition just expressed with the motif of the "same old film," but also figuratively as marking a rupture with the mythic hero. The community of modern poets and popular culture super-heroes is affirmed and then denied immediately.

We find here the same kind of relationship of presence and absence, of contact and disconnection as with Superman at the beginning of the poem. This is further reinforced in the sixth stanza, which mentions Heracles's feats which "remain untold" and Ulysses who "decided / to stay in the open sea / until the end of the century" (Hollo 1964: 18). The mythical heroes from popular culture or the classical tradition are present as names and images, but the true contact with them is lost. The speaker, however, emerges at the end of the poem as the agent who is capable of bridging the gap. As noted earlier, the first lines of the poem create an ambiguous relation of identification and observation between him/her and Superman. The last lines take up the motif of the space capsule and of the cyclical return, describing how "the capsule in the dark / circles the Earth" and "returns the same / film / time after time" (Hollo 1964: 18). The poem ends with the affirmation "in Alexandria / I am alive" (Hollo 1964: 19). This creates a strong anchoring of the speaker in the Antiquity—in the past of Heracles and Odysseus, which is also the domain of the myth, and thus of the superheroes of popular culture. "I am alive" are also the famous last words of Aleksis Kivi, the most important nineteenth-century Finnish writer. This not only adds yet another intertextual reference to the text, but affirms at the same time the speaker's will to resist death and to remain alive in literature, in the textual universe of a library, such as the one in Alexandria. As Apollinaire is present through his voice in Ginsberg's poem, so are Aleksis Kivi, Ginsberg, Apollinaire, the myth, and the modern present in Hollo's text.

The speaker lives imaginatively within this geography of nodes and networks and texts, and in a time of eternal cyclical return that is also the time of the modern forward impetus.

Rewriting “Howl”: Pekka Kejonen’s “Other Howl” and Kalevi Lappalainen’s “They I-II”

Kejonen’s “Other Howl” was first published as “Howl II” in *Ylioppilaslehti*, the journal of the Helsinki University Student Union, a lively publication whose influence extended far beyond the student milieu of the 1960s. The poem was renamed “Other Howl” in Kejonen’s 1965 collection *Utility Graphics (Käyttögrafikkaa)*. The dedication changed as well, the “To Allen Ginsberg and Kari Miettinen” of the first publication becoming “Very freely adapting Allen Ginsberg / To Him and Kari Miettinen.” This was not the first time Kejonen’s work was related to Ginsberg. The poet and critic Pentti Saaritsa had already qualified Kejonen’s *Jam Session* “a kind of a ‘Howl’ of our local provincial jazz generation” (Saaritsa 1963). His bohemian lifestyle and interest in jazz made the comparison easy. He has nevertheless relativized his role as the “local” Beat, claiming he followed the American authors’ work and career not to imitate or follow their example, but to know how far one could go in the struggle with the limits (Kejonen 1994: 48). Unlike Hollo, he did not seek to make contact with Ginsberg or other young foreign writers; instead, he appreciated the distance that separated his circles in Finland from the US, arguing that it was easier to sympathize with writers who were far enough away as not to interfere in his daily life (Kejonen 1994: 48).

Kejonen’s relation to Beat was thus constructed both by the author himself and by critics, but in a manner which avoided any strong claims on affiliation. Rather, it sought to create a space for a mode of life that was judged to be deviant and dangerous by the conservative society in which he lived. Writers of the younger generation saw in Kejonen an example of “anarchy and independency” that could be opposed both to “straight” mentality and to demands on engagement stemming from the politics of the Left (Lindstén 1967: 237).

While Kejonen was a regular figure in the media of 1960s, as he has remained in literary circles through to the present day, Kalevi Lappalainen seems to be practically forgotten. This amnesia may be due to the fact that he moved to the US in the early 1960s and lived there until his death in Emporia, Kansas in 1988. His poetry collections were early to find a strong reception. For the poet and critic Kalevi Seilonen, Lappalainen’s work symbolized the co-existence of many forms of modernism in Finnish poetry. He noted similarities between American Beat poetry and Lappalainen’s uses of image along with the humanistic anarchism that carried resemblances to many of Ginsberg’s texts (Seilonen 1967). These comparisons were supported by Lappalainen’s explicit references to American Beat. He writes, for instance, of “you who live on Manhattan near Cedar Tavern” and “the soldier who is hardened in Ginsberg’s howl” (Lappalainen 1966: 19, 45). His translation of Ferlinghetti’s “I am waiting” in 1964 and of other Beat poems further emphasize the link to the USA. He also wrote articles detailing his visits to Ginsberg and Orlovsky for *Ylioppilaslehti* in 1964 and the literary review *Young Force (Nuori Voima)* in 1965. The poem “They I-II,” from his 1966 debut collection *A Cannibal’s Facial Expressions (Ihmissyöjän ilmeet)*, offers an interesting case of appropriation of the poetic discourse Ginsberg uses in “Howl,” but with a sharper political edge directed against the bourgeoisie and its hypocrisy which he expresses through typically Finnish motifs and symbols.

As Kejonen signals at the start of his poem “Other Howl” indeed is a “free adaptation” of the first part of Ginsberg’s text. The verses in the Finnish poem have the same oratorical quality as “Howl” and the same measure which respects the natural rhythm of breathing. The images are striking, crude, sublime, and surreal in turn or at the same time. They reproduce many of the motifs relating to desperation, alienation and ostracism typical of the “displaced violence” Marjorie Perloff sees at the core of Ginsberg’s text, as well as those relating to sexuality, drugs, and the drifting, rootless, searching way of life typical of the restless young generation depicted in the poem. Kejonen relocates these elements into Finnish cultural and social reality.

The shared sense of restlessness driven by desire and/or despair and so characteristic of Beat as mapped by Ginsberg, here is adapted to Kejonen's own life and world. "Tenement roofs" in line 5 of Ginsberg's poem is thus replaced with "arava roofs," the expression referring to the state-subsidized housing program which started in 1949 and became the backbone of Finnish housing construction in the 1960s. It came to serve as a cultural symbol for modern urban planning. The copulation "with a bottle of beer" likewise becomes an act with "a bottle of jallu," a cheap Finnish brandy. The "Buddha" in the "Rocky Mount" becomes "Väinämöinen in the forests," the shaman hero of the Finnish national epic *Kalevala*, and "Harvard" the "sick cities on the Coast," an allusion to the major universities in Turku and Helsinki. The geography of drugs, sexuality, and jazz in "Howl" is reproduced in "Other Howl" with places that name the major hubs in Kejonen's wandering bohemian life: "Paris" thus equals "Mexico," "Kuopio" stands for "Denver," "Sweden" for "Tangier," "Helsinki" for "Manhattan," and "Stockholm jazz caves" for "Birmingham jazz incarnation."

Kejonen's poem preserves the "air of documentary literalism," as Perloff calls it, that characterizes "Howl" (Perloff 2006: 31). Nevertheless, it is also a different text, and it is equally important to see to what extent Kejonen departs from the original and crafts a space for his own voice and experience. Two differences are particularly meaningful: the position of the speaker and the sense of time expressed at the end of the poem. Ginsberg's "Howl" begins with the words "I saw," anchoring thus the visions that follow to a position of enunciation that participates in the world described and in the communication between the text and the reader, relaying information from the former to the public and giving thus the lyrical I the role of a witness. This construction is absent from Kejonen's poem where the opening scene is offered directly, without a mediating narrator or "seer." The "I," however, appears later in a passage that rewrites Ginsberg's celebrated invocation of Neal Cassady—"N.C., secret hero of these poems, cocksman and Adonis of Denver" (Ginsberg 2009: 4). In Kejonen's version, the same passage reads "I Myself, the secret hero of these words, the greatest... of Kuopio and the Adonis-mighty the memory of his thousand girls in every place" (Kejonen 1965: 57).

This bold foregrounding of the "I" is typical of Kejonen. His writing in the 1960s is radically egocentric, creating poetic narratives around an authorial self-figure overwhelmingly the focal point of interest. This amounts to a strategy that insists upon existential freedom and authenticity of being, but it also carried by literary implications since the spaces of that freedom are to be filled reflexively in the act of writing. So dynamic and mutually reflective a relationship between life and literature is typically in play when the text slides in the passage cited from the "I Myself" into the third person. Literal and invented autobiography meet in the effort to give testimony of an individual's struggle against oppressive norms and laws and to express the ambition of transcending that struggle at the same time.

For Kejonen, the emancipatory potential that might have been there in literature did not provide him with a lasting solution. Life and literature, as he saw them, are inexorably bound to the present. This becomes evident at the end of "Other Howl." Whereas Ginsberg ends the first part of "Howl" with a verse expressing both his visionary text's relation to particular bodily lives ("the poem of life butchered out of their own bodies") and its capability to overcome ephemeral existence and strive for eternity ("good to eat a thousand years"), Kejonen's poem maintains the first idea but replaces the second with "good to eat for a day." This underlines his view of the transitory and fugitive nature of literature and of the redemption it can offer. Defending one's right to exist in literature and through literature is a never-ending, always-ongoing struggle.

The back cover of Kalevi Lappalainen's *A Cannibal's Facial Expressions* (1966) presents the poems in the book as related in "an original and independent way to the newest American movement" with its "constant vibration, endless motion and transformation expressed in the imagery." This slightly veiled branding of the author as a Beat is followed by the claim that the work is a "poetry collection that participates." "Participation" was the major word at the time: while 1950s modernism had sought

to give poetry and literature in general a neutral position in relation to ideology, politics, and social issues, the 1960s required more involvement in the big questions of the time, asking poetry and prose to react to the tensions that were gaining in importance in Finnish society as in the more global world of the Cold War era. “Participation” for the 1960s meant less that the writer should align him- or herself with a specific ideology or a program embodied in a political party than a call to consciousness, a wider awakening.

“They I-II” is constructed as a two-page diptych with part I on the left-hand page and part II on the right-hand page. These parts share the same formal structure where the pronoun “they” starts the verse and is followed by verbs and complements that attribute actions and qualities to the protagonists represented by the pronoun. As in Ginsberg’s “Howl,” each verse extends over three to four lines and acts as though a natural breath-sequence. The imagery Lappalainen deploys does not coalesce into a singly threaded narrative or a scene; rather, as the critic Kaleivi Seilonen writes, it offers a “film-like series of events” that eschew seeking to “be expressive or convey information (Seilonen 1967). “They I-II” also addresses violence as does Ginsberg’s poem, but with the difference that Lappalainen contrasts two generations depicting the kind of violence typical for each.

Part I invokes the older generation and the discursive, structural and symbolical violence it exercises through capital, law, arrogance, condescension and hypocrisy. It describes the inner contradictions and the anguish their desperate defense of privileged positions engenders. Part II puts into the scene the younger generation which “burns dad’s summer house, drinks Algerian red wine on the back seat in a stolen car, rapes good girls of the same age, and rushes into a new city holding their free organs in their hands,” “is expelled” from academies, “hates the bourgeois and the workers” and “buys stimulants and sedatives from a pharmacy, [and] falls into a hallucination that is not far from a chronic mental disorder” (Lappalainen 1966: 27). The paratactic syntax, the flow of image and motif one from another, is clearly reminiscent of Ginsberg’s poem. Yet as in Kejonen’s case, these similarities also bring out clear differences that emphasize Lappalainen’s personal voice even as he appropriates Beat for a new phase in the evolution of Finnish poetry.

While Ginsberg’s poem creates a potential connection—or even a communion—between the poet, the protagonists in the narratives of the poem (“the best minds of my generation”), and the reader, Lappalainen’s position is clearly more detached, one of writer–reader distance. The structure of his poem is strongly rhetorical in that it opposes two generations which are different yet equally reprehensible and subject to criticism. But it does not seek to persuade the reader to choose a side. Lappalainen remains the critical observer. What we see emerging here is the polarization of the Finnish literary field that would gain in importance at the end of the decade and especially into the 1970s. The increasing demand to involve literature in discussions on political and social questions led finally to a situation where authors had to choose sides between the left and the right; the further the process went, the less space there was for any neutral middle-ground critical observation. It was as if the Cold War had been mapped on to Finland’s culture and literature. This meant also that the renewal of poetic language acquired from European and American modernism in the 1950s and 1960s began to give way for a return towards less experimental writing. Hollo and Kejonen were not affected by this evolution, while many of the leading poets of the 1960s were so, to include Seilonen, Pentti Saarikoski, and Kari Aronpuro. Lappalainen’s poem reflects the polarization that was emerging and points to future evolution. But, more than not, it remains anchored in the ideal of neutral critical observation.

Markku Into’s “Divine Comedy I”

As the neutral middle ground of the literary field shrank one possibility was to go underground. At the end of the 1960s, underground movements emerged simultaneously in Helsinki and in Turku. The Helsinki movement published the revue *Ultra*, organized happenings that combined rock music with theater and short movies, experimented with collective forms of living, and

promoted drugs publicly and privately. The Turku group published the revue *Aamurusko* (*Sunrise* or *Light of Dawn*) and organized rock concerts that verged towards happenings and a range of performance art. The two scenes were connected and members from both cities often participated in shared projects. Both groups positioned themselves in continuity with the tradition of the avant-garde. The Turku authors also appreciated American Beat that they appropriated directly through books and magazines and indirectly through visits to the regional Beat and underground hub in Stockholm (Veivo 2015).

Two major authors emerge from the Turku group: Jarkko Laine and Markku Into. Laine, right from the start of his career, was hailed as the most talented poet of his generation. He soon became a well-established figure in Finnish literature, even becoming a candidate in the parliamentary elections of 1999. For his part Into earned his living as a librarian and pursued a less rocket-like literary career. Even so he has been able to publish over ten poetry collections since 1971 and was awarded the prestigious Eino Leino prize in 2001. He has also made an important contribution as a translator of contemporary poetry and especially of Ginsberg, Ferlinghetti, and Gregory Corso.

Into's "Divine Comedy I," from his first poetry collection *Tuonela Rock* published in 1971, shows how the ironical, satirical, and critical elements of underground literature are used with reference to Finnish and world literature in order to break free of the suffocations of society. The title of the collection immediately presents a strong image of the world the reader is to enter. In old Finnish mythology, "Tuonela" is the realm of the dead, comparable with the Greek Hades. In Into's poetic imagination, it can be understood as the world and society controlled by police, law, capitalism, narrow-minded authorities—as the very "system" against which the underground saw itself in revolt. Rock, with its vitality and energy, is the appropriate music to accompany assaults on the system. The play of opposites is thereby between establishment and underground, old and young, straight and the queer. But the title signals also a move beyond even these conflicts toward the rock 'n' roll of Tuonela, an interplay of the mythic and the contemporary.

In "Divine Comedy I," Into attacks hypocrisy and sense of captivity that characterize the "system." These he represents in images such as "the faceless family," "the dirty old man's embrace," "the climate of sweat" and "anal cultures" (Into 2005: 23, 24) from which the poet must escape. They are also depicted with reference to politicians and other public figures such as "De Gaulle," "The King of Denmark" and "Kekkonen" (the president of Finland at the time; Into 2005: 24), and objects and spaces typical of the rapidly developing modern world such as "the frozen fish in the supermarket" and "the paranoid dictation machine" (Into 2005: 23, 29). This world is also characterized as "the divine comedy that is everywhere" (Into 2005: 27). The historical and mythical depth the references to Dante (and to the "Tuonela") open the text—despite the many historically specific references to the contemporary world—to the more eternal struggle between authority and freedom.

The references to Dante concern, clearly, the first part of *Divine Comedy*. Yet the poem is not only a description of hell but also an affirmation of a collective the push for liberation and revolt. This tradition Into underlines in his allusions to past literary authorship and figures taken from popular culture. He questions whether "Alice is [his] girl in the underworld" (Into 2005: 23), names Dostoyevsky, whose novel *The Idiot* signaled the beginning of the "underground activities" (Into 2005: 26), and declares that he is "the mayakovskien we, the communal ego" (Into 2005: 25). Later, he shouts "Viva Spartacus! / Viva Zapata! / Viva Tauno Palo! / Viva Ivanhoe!" (Into 2005: 30), joining the Finnish movie star Palo with symbols of rebellion whose presence in the Finnish culture of the time was based mainly on Hollywood films. The "I" of the poem continues this revolt as both individual and collective, at once both first person singular and plural alike. He is "full of the water of life" and "a work of art" (Into 2005: 28). He has "understood the satori" (Into 2005: 25) and the land he walks on is "liberated territory" (Into 2005: 25). He belongs to a "we" of "armed love" (Into 2005: 25), who "can only lose [their] chains" (Into 2005: 27), and for whom "nothing is sacred, everything is hilarious" (Into 2005: 26). He belongs with those who "represent the reborn divinity / that is in all

of us, in every / unique and vision-appealing / sex maniac, son of man” (Into 2005: 29). The future in prospect is of a society where joy, desire, love and solidarity reign, without contradiction and conflict and which permits the individual to live in shared harmony with others.

Into’s messianic tones were not totally unprecedented in Finnish poetry. The modernists of the first half of the twentieth century such as Katri Vala and Edith Södergran occasionally adopted the role of prophetic seer in their visions of utopia and dystopia. However, this was nearly banned in the aesthetics of the 1950s and 1960s that favored neutral observation and rational discussion. Into’s poem rejects this position and connects with the more emotional modernism of the first decades of the twentieth century and with the epic, mythical and religious dimensions of Dostoyevski, Mayakovsky, and Dante, giving explicit acknowledgment to Herman Melville’s *Moby-Dick* and the Bible also. It expresses the refusal of the “system” in words and phrases that fuse the colloquial and crude registers of language with the refined and sublime, acquiring thus a dimension of “verbal revolution” (Söderholm 1999: 248). Into’s poetry participates in the widening of literature beyond the conventions of high modernism that was being carried out by Finnish writers and critics in the 1960s. He does it with a sensibility and an awareness and with linguistic means that stem from the Beat and the underground and are new in the Finnish context, opening a way out not only from of the “system,” but also from a literary field that was becoming strongly polarized and left little space for individual voices.

Beat and Finnish Literature from the Global 60s to the Present

The 1960s was a global decade. Many countries in both the West and the East underwent similar kinds of deep transformation processes. People left rural areas and settled in cities. New housing arose, not a little of it given to modernist design. Standards of living improved. Private cars and television became accessible to most households. Larger portions of population gained access to higher education and a new social class—the young—emerged. This shared evolution created the basis for a new kind of connected consciousness that transformed local conflicts such as the wars in Vietnam and Biafra and the occupation of Czechoslovakia into global media events. Commitment became a political imperative. Within this context Beat literature attracted widespread interest, never least in the globetrotting poetic ambassadorship of Ginsberg. The “Howl” court case played its part as did the rise of “the beatnik.” Beat signified dissent, a break from so-called liberal capitalism and a search for authenticity. All these factors held appeal for younger Finnish poets. They appropriated Beat in a period when literature was urged to enter more and more into connection with social and political issues. In this regard and along with the poetry so far mentioned that of, say, Kalevi Seilonen and Jarkko Laine can come into the reckoning. In the great majority of cases, however, it is difficult to distinguish Beat appropriations from poetic elements that originate in Finnish experimentation or from other foreign sources.

It is likewise appropriate to look at Beat effects and traces in modern Finnish prose. Kejonen’s autobiographical work of the 1960s—*Jam Session, Napoleon’s Despair* (*Napoleonin epätoivo*, 1964), *The Unbelievable Ones* (*Uskomattomat*, 1966) and “The Lethal Story” (“Se tappava tarina,” 1967)—resembles that of Kerouac in spontaneity of style and construction. The two writers also share recognition of the importance of jazz. At it needs to be said that Kejonen was also highly eclectic, borrowing not only from Beat authors but from the likes of William Faulkner, Henry Miller, and Lawrence Durrell. He would later stress the difference between his true self and his public image as “the Kerouac of Kuopio” created by critics (Kejonen 1980: 11).

Leo Lindstén, who had compared Kejonen with the Beats, in 1965 published a ten-page excerpt of his novel *The Escape and the Hiding* (*Pako ja piiloutuminen*) in the collective anthology of young writing *Group 65* (*Ryhmä 65*). It, too, reminds of Kerouac in its extended prose paragraphs, especially the opening sequence of a dance hall and a night spent in a hostel. Burrough’s cut-up technique seems to be applied at the end where texts from different sources are combined in a collage-like

fashion. The novel has remained unpublished, however, and Lindstén was known as a painter, art critic, and highly original poet. His memoir *Sitting the Long Night Away. A Drinker's Progress (Istuja pitkän illan. Erään juomarin kehitystarina, 1985)* bears testimony to a brief life of creative work, criticism, and heavy drinking, and to his continuing efforts to remain politically neutral.

Markku Into's autobiographical *U* (1982) offers the author's underground adventures in a style that combines satire, provocation, nonsense and revolt, thus remaining faithful to the original aesthetics of Beat. For the author, underground is a large tradition indeed, connecting Beat with Apollinaire, Baudelaire, Hölderlin, The Rolling Stones, Jimi Hendrix, The Dead Kennedys, Jesus, Chaplin, Buster Keaton and other protagonists of subversion and alternative action (Into 1982: 101). Tapani Kinnunen, Into's fellow Turku-base poet, has likewise drawn equally from the Beats as from Charles Bukowski, Dylan Thomas, punk, and a large selection of modern and classic authors.

The widening of the original Beat network is typified in the reception of Beat in Finland. Beat poetics was never strongly codified in programmatic texts that would make it possible to clearly distinguish "true" Beat from "false" imitation. The word "Beat" derived its meaning from its capacity to establish a connection between a modern literary discourse, an alternative positioning in the political field of the Cold War era, and aspirations for change, subversion and revolt experienced by a global and connected youth. This made it fuzzy from the beginning, but gave it also considerable appeal that has lasted until the present day.

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Further Reading

There are very few publications on Beat in Finland in major world languages. A. Hollo has described the origin of his poetics and philosophy of life in “[Context? The Reading-Writing in and of This Life Identity? My ‘Identity’ Is Mine!],” *boundary 2* 26 (1999), 139–142. H. Veivo, “In Kainuu as in Colorado – Receptions and Appropriations of Beat Literature in Finland in the 1960s” (in Veivo, James and Walczak-Delanois (eds.), *Beat Literature in a Divided Europe*, forthcoming) will focus on the reception of Beat in Finland, providing a complementary view to the one presented here. G. Schoolfield’s *History of Finland’s Literature* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998) offers a solid general introduction to Finnish literature of the 1960s. H. Veivo, “Broken Clouds – Also by Instalments” (In Bru et al., *Regarding the Popular: High and Low Culture in the Avant-Garde and Modernism*, Berlin: de Gruyter, 2012, 240–252) and H. Veivo, “Poésie, jazz, bohèmes” (in Carayol and Peltola (eds.), *Singularités, pluralités – Identités linguistiques et littéraires en Finlande*, Caen: Presses Universitaires de Caen, 2015, 95–110) discuss the literary and cultural context of the 60s in Finland, focusing especially on poetry.