

Thomas A. DuBois. **Finnish Folk Poetry and the Kalevala**. New York and London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1995. Pp. xiii + 328, notes, bibliography, index, photos. \$52.00 cloth.

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Finnish Folk Poetry and the Kalevala is a study of both Finnish folk poetry and of its relationship to Elias Lönnrot's nineteenth-century literary epic. The work draws heavily upon Dell Hymes's ethnoepoetic method, providing sound, albeit cumbersome, descriptions of performance and folk poetry.

The most interesting chapter starts with "Learned from the *Kalevala*," a well-written examination of versions of epic poems collected from the oral tradition that were influenced by the 1849 edition of the *Kalevala*. Although this sort of influence has often been thought to "contaminate" oral tradition, DuBois demonstrates the tradition's creativity even when influenced by the literary epic. It is also an instructive reminder that literary culture influences oral culture even when the oral singers are illiterate, as were most of the Finnish singers.

DuBois is at his best when he writes about the lyric poetry in the Finnish tradition and in the *Kalevala*. In fact, in his discussion of folk lyrics in the *Kalevala*, he presents Lönnrot's creative process in a more coherent manner than in his discussion of Lönnrot's transformations of the folk epic poetry. Since Lönnrot drew from the lyric tradition in his creation of the *Kalevala*, his handling of this material is obviously an important consideration in understanding his use of folk poetry.

The most significant flaw in DuBois's book is that his discussion of the relationship of Finnish folk poetry to Lönnrot's literary epic is largely confined to the 1849 edition. While this is considered the definitive edition, it is difficult to demonstrate Lönnrot's methods of creation without referring to his earlier versions. The folk poetry was repeatedly rewritten in earlier incarnations, but without consideration of the earlier texts any conclusions about Lönnrot's methods are at best impressionistic.

However, Thomas DuBois's *Finnish Folk Poetry and the Kalevala* is an important contribution to the recent scholarship. It is one of the best general descriptions of the composition and aesthetics of Finnish folk poetry available in English, and the chapters about the influence of the *Kalevala* on the Finnish folk tradition suggest new directions for research.