A Jungian Reading of the *Kalevala* 500–1300?: Finnish Shamanism—The Patriarchal Senex Figure. [Part 4: Conclusion]

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Abstract
Jungian interpretation of the *Kalevala*, focusing on the character of Väinämöinen and his role as Shaman. Part 1 gives an introduction to the *Kalevala* and to shamanism, then analyzes the creation myth in the *Kalevala*. Part 2 analyzes Väinämöinen's transformation of the land, the felling of the oak, the confrontation with Joukahainen, and the death of Aino. The third part discusses Väinämöinen's "second encounter with the anima figure in the being of Louki’s daughter." The conclusion is a Jungian analysis of Väinämöinen's "night-sea journey" to the Abode of the Dead; his journey within the body of the giant Antero Vipunen; and his fashioning of an "instrument of eternal joy," the *kantele*.

Additional Keywords
Jungian analysis of The Kalevala; The Kalevala—Characters—Antero Vipunen; The Kalevala—Characters—Väinämöinen; The Kalevala—Jungian analysis; Music in The Kalevala; Night sea journey; Patrick Wynne
The Night-Sea Journey

Like Osiris and Christ, as well as countless other mythical and historical figures who experienced their night-sea journeys, so Vainamoinen must still undergo his supreme test to further his initiation—the ego's encounter with the Self. Such an ordeal requires the hierophant to overcome the terrible vicissitudes which take place with a regression to the Abode of the Dead, to that unknown and frightening realm, where monstrous apparitions stalk. It is within the deepest strata of the elemental sublimal spheres that Vainamoinen must descend. Only there will he find the nutritive elements capable of replenishing and revitalizing the creative force, for overexposure to the light of reason frequently leads to spiritual and creative impoverishment.

Vainamoinen will now begin his night-sea journey. Unlike Charon's ship which ferried the shades from one side of the River Styx to the other, or Amida Buddha who considered himself himself a passerby in the waters of life, Vainamoinen of his own free will decides to immerse himself in the insalubrious domain of the dead. The chthonic powers he encounters are archetypal in dimension; forces with which he has not yet had to contend: Death's Daughters, who are described as "stumpy," "ugly," "mean" and "vicious." Negative female figures, which is the case with many guardians of secrets and treasures in myths and fairy tales, they are described as voracious dragons; their claws and jaws ever ready to pounce and crush any victim approaching them. That Vainamoinen encounters these spirits and is unafraid of them indicates his growing inner strength, his ability to face the most insidious of beings.

These horrific maidens are archetypal images: destructive and poisonous in every sense of the word, they are carriers of spiritual and physical disease. To expose oneself to them is to experience the very origin of a thousand different scourges. Described as having putridating skin, each reigns over a particular illness: Pseudomya, Colla, Gout, Ritsis, Ulcers, Scabies, Cancer, Plague, and a "fatal spirit, a creature eaten up with envy" that is not given a name. Since in medieval times disease was believed to be caused by the soul's departure from the body, a cure consisted in the recapturing of this force through exorcism. Plague, interestingly enough has been embodied throughout history as female. Like the Erinyes, those Greek goddesses of revenge, who also worked for the Terrible Mother, so Death's Daughters perform their terrors in vulnerable areas where darkness, fear, and oppression reign supreme.

Despite the horrors that assault Vainamoinen, he remains fearless. Rather than shrink from their sight, he makes demands upon Death's Daughters. He wants to be taken to the opposite bank of the river—to the land of the really dead. They comply. He is received by Tuonetar, the Queen of Tuonela, the Abode of the Dead, who offers him beer to drink.

Steadfast old Vainamoinen looked long at his stoup; drops were spilling inside, reptiles crawling on the sides (p. 100).

Vainamoinen refuses it. To get drunk, to lose his lucidity would be his undoing. Another reason is also instrumental in his refusal: to partake of beer (or water) in the Abode of the Dead in myths of many lands, meant to remain bound, imprisoned in this darkened domain—to forever forgo ego-consciousness. To withdraw into such a state of oblivion is to be a prey to circular energetic powers, to be shut up in the collective unconscious—to have insanity prevail. A shaman, a master of magic, is on the contrary always lucid, even paradoxically when experiencing a cataleptic trance. The shaman observes his activities at all times and is not swallowed up by their subliminal worlds; he believes he sees his soul leaving his body and is aware of the function of...
Vainamoinen's refusal to drink the beer, angers the Queen of the Dead, and she informs him that he will never leave her realm, never return to the upper world—to consciousness. He has entered a sphere from which there is no return. Suddenly Vainamoinen falls into a deep sleep, and a net of iron mesh a thousand fathoms long with sharp interlocking teeth, is thrown over him. Never will he succeed in extricating himself from such a barrier, the Queen of the Dead explains. Vainamoinen, however, calls his knowledge of magic and his wisdom, which he has increased during his previous ordeals, and turns himself into a snake—he "crept in the form of an iron reptile" (p. 101) and slithers through the sharp metal teeth, unhurt. He has learned that difficulties may be broached from several vantage points, and if one course does not solve a problem, another may. That he chooses the form of a snake—a symbol of wisdom in the East as well as of immortality (the annual moulting of its skin), indicates that he realizes he needs to be in touch with the elements it represents: the earth's eternal natural rhythm of death and renewal. Snakes are also considered in Kunda-lini yoga, as energy centers. Every individual has his own snake which is coiled up in his lower extremities; its energetic powers are exercised and strengthened through special rituals during which time these lower forces are made to travel upward within the body until they reach the head—then focus upon a centrally located spot on the forehead which is believed to be endowed with "divine intelligence." The fusion of energy and mind augments spiritual and physical insight. Snakes in their ambivalence and mysterious ways also cure as well as kill. If properly approached and handled with care, a serpent may yield its knowledge as it did to Aesculapius who had immortalized it on his caduceus. By transforming himself into a snake—frequently identified with the feminine in patriarchal cultures—and now used by the Queen of the Dead to destroy Vainamoinen, he is in effect availing himself of her power to save himself. His encounters with the feminine force, reminiscent of Ajax's struggle with Circe, indicates a major step forward in his psychological growth.

Vainamoinen slithered through the vast iron net; its murderous teeth arranged in soldier-like formation, proved to be harmless because he knew how to extricate himself from the tentacles of impending doom—to use this force to his advantage. His eight-sea journey has further increased his understanding of the power of love and hate of the underworld—his own archetypal images which he has also experienced and succeeded in understanding and accepting as part of his world—both inner and outer. "Many have got there, few have come from there, to the home of the Dead, from the eternal cottages of the Abode of the Dead" (p. 102). Vainamoinen, realized how perils his journey had been; he also knew that to become a great shaman/poet, a period of indwelling was a necessity during this period one unearths certain secrets which although excoriating at times, may disrupt the ordered sequence. What is important, is the individual's ability to take the unpredictable into account and not allow it to destroy one's course, but to adapt to the event in question, build upon it. It is this attitude now that increases Vainamoinen's energies: it forces him to draw upon himself to seek out his own remedy. The fact that the giant swallows the shaman/poet is also of great significance psychologically. The mouth, the orifice from which breath and the spoken word emerges, and through which food is ingested, represents an ontological condition. Logos, spiritus, consciousness make their secrets known through the mouth. The mouth is the vessel through which man reveals his predatory principle; it is the force that feeds the mouth is armed with teeth and tongue, connecting the uncreated realms of darkness with the created world of light. It is a vehicle through which fantasy is transformed into fact, energy into activity. That the giant swallows the shaman/poet indicates Vainamoinen's access to the treasuries of the inner man; those archetypal forces within him. Unlike the volatile female principles Vainamoinen encountered in the Abode of the Dead in the form of archetypal imagery, the giant's components are inactive. Slumbering most of the time, immersed inrawn rather than in brain, the giant offers Vainamoinen direct contact with vital organs: knowledge buried deep within the flesh of existence. Unimpeded, Vainamoinen travels deep into the giant's stomach. Identified with the transfiguratory process, since this organ takes in food in one state and alters its consistency and quality via its gastric juices, so knowledge, too, is to be gained by Vainamoinen within the gut area, calling upon the heart, liver, intestines, and bladder in the process. The giant's entire inner system works on behalf of Vainamoinen. Each organ imparts its special knowledge to the shaman/poet. Still Vainamoinen seeks to discover more. He has recourse to art/artifice. He will practice metalurgy: from his shirt he makes a forge: his sleeves and fur-lined coat serve as bellows: his knee becomes the anvil: his elbow, the hammer. He strikes away, blow after blow at the giant's belly. The pain Vipu nen knows is excruciating; hot coals are coming into my mouth, fire burns into my heart, I am living on fire" (p. 105). Despite the jabs, thrusts, and searing sensations, the giant refuses to reveal his inmost secrets. Vainamoinen threatens him.

I will set my anvil deeper in the flesh of your heart, press my sledge hammer more firmly on the...
more painful spots, too, so that you will never get free, never, never at all unless I get to hear charms, take along propitious spells, hear enough charms, thousands of magic formulas (p. 111).

Finally, Vipunen begins reciting charms of all types: against injuries, disease, misadventures, exorcisms, intimidation. Still Vainamoinen has not heard what he wants to know. Only in the heart—the center of being, the focal point of life—can the answer be found.

The heart and lungs are the seat of the soul, according to mystics ranging from the ancient Egyptian sages to present-day Hindu practitioners of occult art. For this reason, the warriors in certain cultures eat the heart and lungs of those they vanquish: to better absorb their vital force. The heart is the focal point of feeling and affectivity. The knowledge emanating from this organ is not cerebral, but emotional; its responses, therefore, are frequently more important and more profound than those resulting from the cerebral cortex. That blood emanates from the heart and circulates through the entire body, indicates that this organ is responsive to the needs of the whole person rather than a specific area. The Taoist masters understood that the heart was the focal point of cardiac rhythms, and for this reason learned to master it according to their will. They thereby combined thinking and feeling; in so doing, life's polarities work together rather than being at odds. What had been assigned as an inferior or superior function within the psyche becomes better balanced. This is the lesson Vainamoinen has to learn.

When Vainamoinen, therefore, strikes at the heart—the heart of the matter—the giant yields and "opened his chest of words" (p. 111). His "chest" contained the secrets hard to attain—the Treasures of Tradition, the Tables of the Law—verbal sperm. Unlike Pandora's box that was opened out of curiosity, Vainamoinen's quest is more consciously purposeful. The fruit of his work allows consciousness to grow and in so doing, he projects himself as shaman/poet—aiding humanity in overcoming their own trials.

Once Vainamoinen experienced the rhythmic chants emerging from the vital organ itself, the words and sounds communicated to his heart greater meaning and impact. Vipunen intoned his knowledge in the stillness of mind/body—in the timeless universal world soul. The shaman/poet learned how to cure souls of depression and sorrow, of worldly cares. Not from the head exclusively, as Plato had dictated in his Timaeus, but also from the bodily sphere, thereby bringing feeling and emotion into what would otherwise have become a dry, stale, cerebral domain.

Vipunen's pain grew intense. Still Vainamoinen hammered, cut, and fired his metals within the giant's belly. Then Vipunen opened his mouth wide and allowed his captive to escape—to reveal his message to mankind.

Old Vainamoinen set out from the mouth of the man of great learning, from the belly of the man of great knowledge, from the bosom of the man of great magic knowledge (p. 112).

Eventually Vainamoinen builds his boat and sails onto other adventures. Solitary, as is the trajectory of the chosen one—the being who has been assigned to lead his people—he understands and accepts his lot. He knows now that he will never be able to live on the human level. He cannot, therefore, seek out love in mortal terms nor enjoy any personal relationship in an earthly context. He is a universal figure, eternal in his imaginings and fantasies, universal in his concepts, answering society's needs in the spiritual as well as in the creative domain.

Archetypal Music: the Kantele

One of Vainamoinen's most moving adventures takes him on another journey by water. While sailing through some rapids, a large pike emerges from the deep. Since it is obstructing the boat's course, it has to be killed. From its jawbone, Vainamoinen fashions an "instrument of eternal joy", the kantele.

From what was the harp's frame? From the great pike's jawbone.

From what was the harp's pegs? They are from the pike's teeth.

From what are the harp's strings? From the hairs of the Demons' goulding/

Now the instrument was produced, the harp got ready, the great pinebone instrument, the fishbone harp (p. 274).

Bones of fish or animals are considered living entities, positive forces, frameworks for the soul and body. They were, therefore, rarely destroyed. The Fifis and lapps believed that the gods used the bones of the dead in the reconstruction of new beings and animals. Since the kantele was fashioned from the pike's jawbone, it may be looked upon as a hierophany in The Kalevala. It was similarly so considered in the Edda, where heroes were buried with their harps at their sides on the funeral pyres, making sure the instruments would follow them into the next world. Vainamoinen's kantele is that vehicle that allows him to tame his adversaries, to lull natural forces to sleep, and to experience harmony with the universe at large.

Generous as always, Vainamoinen allows all those who wish to, to play his kantele. Only he alone, however, is able to modulate its tonal pitch so that the deeper sounds that emerge from it can take on the sound of life's universal world soul. From the head exclusively, as Plato had dictated in his Timaeus, but also from the bodily sphere, thereby bringing feeling and emotion into what would otherwise have become a dry, stale, cerebral domain.

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That Vainamoinen had reached such heights as musician and shaman, meant that a plateau and then a descent are in order. In keeping with this pattern, we are told of a storm that arises at sea. Giant waves cover the ship in which Vainamoinen and his friends are sailing. People and objects, including the kantele, are washed overboard. The very instrument that has made Vainamoinen Master of the People, Master of Song and Word has vanished forever. "There has gone my creation," he exclaims, "gone my lovely instrument, vanished my eternal source of joy." (p. 286). Although the creative factor has been swept away, and with it the pleasures of life, no regrets existed on Vainamoinen's part: "In a boat there must be no lamenting, in a vessel no whispering." Life must pursue its course. Distress, pain, loss, are all part of the workaday world. The new, the fresh, the future, must forever be considered. "Weeping does not rid one of distress nor howling of evil days!" (p. 297). To face the realities of existence is Vainamoinen's way.

The Sampo also vanishes during the course of the storm. Shattered, some of its fragments are lost in the sea; others are washed ashore. In keeping with the great mystical traditions of Orphism and Kabbalah, Vainamoinen starts to gather those they vanquish: to better absorb their vital force. The heart and lungs are the seat of the soul, according to mystics ranging from the ancient Egyptian sages to present-day Hindu practitioners of occult art. For this reason, the warriors in certain cultures eat the heart and lungs of those they vanquish: to better absorb their vital force. The heart is the focal point of feeling and affectivity. The knowledge emanating from this organ is not cerebral, but emotional; its responses, therefore, are frequently more important and more profound than those resulting from the cerebral cortex. That blood emanates from the heart and circulates through the entire body, indicates that this organ is responsive to the needs of the whole person rather than a specific area. The Taoist masters understood that the heart was the focal point of cardiac rhythms, and for this reason learned to master it according to their will. They thereby combined thinking and feeling; in so doing, life's polarities work together rather than being at odds. What had been assigned as an inferior or superior function within the psyche becomes better balanced. This is the lesson Vainamoinen has to learn.

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He was still speaking as he was going, remarking as he went along:
"Let time pass, one day go, another come; they will need me again, be looking, waiting for me to fetch a new Sampo, to prepare a new instrument fetch a new moon, free a new sun when there is no moon, no sun nor any worldly joy " (p. 336).

Earth-oriented, The Kalevala expresses the spiritual and creative yearnings of the Finnish people through its words and music, and the spectacular images and colorations. Its message, which reflects the culture of its creators, as do myths in general, is one of hope, but it is neither blind nor utopian. Rather it is that sort of realistic hope that exists at the very heart of conflict and the struggle for daily existence. In keeping with the importance given to nature, The Kalevala focuses on trees and forests, sowing and planting, seas and rivers and inland waterways.

Vainamoinen, the senex figure, shaman/poet, is archetypal in dimension. He represents an ideal for a people deeply rooted in the earth. He is a thinking principle, a light bringer to a land immersed for so many months in darkness and cold. In their vision, however, the Finns understand that too great a reliance upon a rational attitude also has its dangers: it brings aridity to a culture and to the psyche. Only with a balanced hieros-gamos, can a working relationship between the polarities implicit in the life experience be effected. Such is the lesson that Vainamoinen learned. Once achieved, he offered himself to the service of humankind.

The Kalevala has been an inspiration to many creative artists. Laccadio Hearn (1882) believed that it contained "all the elements of a magnificent operatic episode...an universe for startlingly and totally new musical themes.21 Sculptors, such as Erik Cainberg (1771-1816), who was the first to treat The Kalevala motif in that medium, inscribed his vision of Vainamoinen for eternity. Aksel Gallen-Kalella (1865-1931) created a pictorial version of Vainamoinen's Departure (1896) and a fresco entitled The Forging of the Sampo (1893). His student Alpo Sailo (1877-1955) sculpted many kantele players identified with Vainamoinen. A film, The Day the Earth Froze (1959), shot in Finland, but produced in America, was an adaptation of the Sampo episode.22 Perhaps the greatest spokesman of all was Jan Sibelius (1865-1957) who composed his orchestral works in the profoundly musical spirit of The Kalevala. With magic and artistry, he brought Vainamoinen to life; as the shaman/poet and kantele player predicted at the conclusion of his saga: "Let time pass, one day, go, another come; they will need me again, be looking, waiting for me..." (p. 336).

Notes
22. Facts about Finland, pp. 64-77.

Mythopoeic Core Reading List

Mythlore frequently publishes articles that presuppose the reader is already familiar with the works they discuss. This is natural, given the special nature of Mythlore. In order to assist some readers, the following is what might be considered a "core" mythopoeic reading list, containing the most well known and discussed works. Due to the many editions printed, only the title and original date of publication are given. Good reading!

J.R.R. TOLKIEN
The Hobbit (1937); "Leaf by Niggle" (1945); "On Fairy-Stories" (1946); The Lord of the Rings: Vol. 1, The Fellowship of the Ring (1954); Vol. II, The Two Towers (1954); Vol. III, The Return of the King (1955); The Silmarillion (1977); Unfinished Tales (1980).

C.S. LEWIS
Out of the Silent Planet (1938); Perelandra (1943); That Hideous Strength (1945); The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe (1950); Prince Caspian (1951); The Voyage of the Dawn Treader (1952); The Silver Chair (1953); The Horse and His Boy (1954); The Magician's Nephew (1955); The Last Battle (1956); Till We Have Faces (1956).

CHARLES WILLIAMS
War in Heaven (1930); Many Dimensions (1931); The Place of the Lion (1931); The Greater Trumps (1932); Shadows of Ecstasy (1933); Descent into Hell (1937); All Hallows' Eve (1944); Taliesin through Logres (1958) and The Region of the Summer Stars (1944) (printed together in 1954).