

## Resounding: Feeling, Mytho-ecological Framing, and the Sámi Conception of Nature in Outi Tarkiainen's *The Earth, Spring's Daughter*

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*Abstract: The song-cycle The Earth, Spring's Daughter by the Finnish composer Outi Tarkiainen (born in 1985) is based on poems in the Northern Sámi language by Nils-Aslak Valkeapää and Rauni Magga Lukkari, among others. This ecomusicological and cultural musicological article analyzes the musical-textual ways the work portrays Sámi culture's changing relationship to nature and addresses today's environmental concerns. Typical for the work are musical motifs with nature-related meaning, representations of the cyclical conception of time, and adaptations of Sámi mythology for communicating environmental(ist) messages. The distinctive way the work grounds the sense of nature in feelings is called "mytho-ecological framing."*

*Résumé : Le cycle de chants The Earth, Spring's Daughter, du compositeur finnois Outi Tarkiainen (né en 1985), s'inspire de poèmes rédigés en langue sami du nord par Nils-Aslak Valkeapää et Rauni Magga Lukkari, entre autres. Cet article en écomusicologie et musicologie culturelle analyse les différentes manières musicales et textuelles par lesquelles cette œuvre représente la transformation de la relation de la culture à la nature chez les Samis et évoque des inquiétudes environnementales contemporaines. Cette œuvre a pour caractéristique de renfermer des motifs musicaux dont le sens est lié à la nature, des représentations de la conception cyclique du temps et des adaptations de la mythologie samie destinées à communiquer des messages environnementalistes. La façon distinctive dont cette œuvre enracine la perception de la nature dans le monde des sentiments s'appelle « formulation mytho-écologique ».*

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“I see the best music almost as a force of nature, which can flood over a person and fill a person and even change entire destinies.”

Outi Tarkiainen (qtd. in Mellor 2016)

The philosopher Bryan E. Bannon has suggested that environmentalism begins with a feeling (2014: 1). This means that any action for nature's benefit would require a pre-existing sentiment of care as its basic motivation. Because music is often considered to have a close relationship to our emotive life, the idea that feeling frames eco-sensitivity could prove promising for an ecocritically oriented study of music (ecomusicology). But it is obvious that not all music relates to feelings in the same way, and seeing environmentalism as dependent on feelings risks having it dismissed as a subjective matter. Nevertheless, the environmentalist implications of Bannon's insight could be maintained in ecomusicological study if we consider feeling to be a shared phenomenon and if we understand the term "ecology" in a broad sense, reflecting both interconnections in a specific environment and a critical attitude towards human impact on the environment (Feisst 2016a: 293).

In this article, I will discuss how music represents the ways human relationships with nature can be framed with and grounded in feelings. Crucial to this are notions of "feeling" that follow the post-Husserlian phenomenological tradition, drawing on such terms as "attunement," "Stimmung," "immersion," and "atmosphere" (see Heidegger 1993 [1927]; Merleau-Ponty 1968 [1964]; Schmitz 2014; Vadén and Torvinen 2014; Böhme 2017). In particular, I draw on Tim Ingold's (2007) idea of "ensoundment": feeling is an indication of the existential-ontological precondition according to which we are always immersed in the world — in this case in sound — before isolation of body and mind, subject and object, or hearing and the object of hearing can take place. Therefore, my main focus is not on how music arouses personal immersive experiences. Instead, my perception of music's ability to represent the ecological function of feeling comes close to what the artist and writer Salomé Voegelin has called "critical immersion" (2014: 60, 62-63, 82). Critical immersion is a matter of "living in the actuality of the work as a real possible world and, from this complicity, to work out meanings and consequences for an actual reality" (60).

I will illustrate these ideas by analyzing *The Earth, Spring's Daughter* (originally in Northern Sámi: *Eanan, gida nieida*; in Finnish: *Maa, kevään tytär*) by the Finnish composer Outi Tarkiainen. I propose that, by addressing traditional and contemporary understandings of nature in Sámi culture, this composition embodies how and under what conditions the human-nature relationship can begin with feeling. The most prominent form of this in Tarkiainen's work is "mytho-ecological framing" by which I mean the application of mythological conceptions of nature for communicating environmental(ist) messages in musical and other artistic practices for contemporary audiences (see more below).

Regarding the term “ecology,” I contribute to the ever-widening use of the term as an ideology and metaphor, and like many others, I see ecology and environmentalism as closely related (see Boyle and Waterman 2016: 25; Feisst 2016a: 293; Titon 2016: 72). A broad definition of “ecology” is important especially when dealing with imagined, mythological, or virtual places that represent realities outside common natural scientific and socio-political categories. Methodologically, I draw on ecomusicological and other ecocritical studies of music and place (Ramnarine 2009; Allen 2011; von Glahn 2013; Feisst 2016b), topic theory (Välimäki 2005; Monelle 2006; Mirka 2014), and ecophenomenological philosophy (Brown and Toadvine 2003; Dillon 2007; Toadvine 2009; Bannon 2014).

## Feeling, Nature, and the Music of Outi Tarkiainen

Outi Tarkiainen (born 1985) is a Finnish composer living in Finnish Lapland. After studying at the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki, the Guildhall School of Music in London, and the University of Miami in Florida, she worked in the metropolises of Paris and Berlin, but also amidst Arctic fjords and Lapland villages. She is educated in both classical and jazz composition (see Tarkiainen 2017b). Although not of Sámi descent herself, Tarkiainen is familiar with the indigenous Finno-Ugric Sámi culture and its changing relationship to nature; in fact, nature is one of the most important topics in and sources of inspiration for her artistic work. She has even described music as a “force of nature which can flood over a person and fill a person and even change entire destinies” (qtd. in Mellor 2016; see also Torvinen 2017).

According to the philosopher Alan Badiou there are two main orientations to the notion of nature that form dominant traditions of thought in the West (2006: 123-129). One is based on the Idea in a Platonic sense, submitting all presence to “*matheme*” (i.e. scientific procedures) and occurs today, for example, as theoretical constructions and natural scientific ideals. The other is based on what is believed to be the origin of the term “nature,” namely, the ancient Greek conception of *physis*. *Physis* was not the name given to the universe’s ultimate constituents and their laws of interaction. Rather it designated the *way* in which the most important or meaningful things and moments in the world present themselves to us (see Dreyfus and Kelly 2011: 237-239). In Badiou’s words, nature as *physis* is “the appearing, the bursting forth of being itself, the coming-to of its presence” (2006: 123).

If, in Tarkiainen’s words, “nature” is considered something that can “flood over,” “fill” and even “change” a person, then we are dealing with nature in the

sense of physis. Indeed, Tarkiainen's description of the relationship between music and nature comes strikingly close to Hubert Dreyfus and Sean Dorrance Kelly's discussion of physis manifesting in today's world and culture through extraordinary, overwhelming moments, when something seems to "well up and take us over, hold us for a while, and then, finally, let us go" (2011: 236-238). Their prime example is exceptional sports performances, but it is easy to see powerful musical experiences in this context as well. Badiou sees physis as a form of "originary thought" that occurs especially in poetics. The "letting-be of appearing" is proven by the "immemorial character of the poem and poetry" and its "established and constant suture to the theme of nature" (Badiou 2006: 125). We can extend Badiou's point to music by recalling the frequency with which nature is referenced in musical practices of all eras.

The philosopher Gernot Böhme has pointed out that understanding nature as the way reality reveals itself means that nature is necessarily characterized by its perception. For Böhme, perception does not only belong to the one who perceives, but also applies to an object's likelihood of being perceived. The feeling of presence (of a subject) and the felt presence (of an object) amalgamate (Böhme 2017: 89, 92). Feeling, in this sense, is neither subject nor object but something in-between. Such an understanding of feeling resonates with, first, the new phenomenological idea of "atmosphere" as something that emanates from things and human beings and fills space with emotional nuances (Griffero 2014; Schmitz 2014; Böhme 2017; on atmospheres in music, see Vadén and Torvinen 2014; Riedel 2015; McGraw 2016; Abels 2018). Second, this understanding resonates with the imperatives of postmodern thought, in which processes, borders, and other labile phenomena have become equally important objects of research as fixed objects and presumed entities have been historically (see Abels 2016: 137). Therefore, feeling, connected to the way reality presents itself, can indicate the quality and the manner of coming-to-presence of the ecological whole in question. Not only environmentalism, but also different ecologies can be understood to begin with feeling. If nature is understood in the sense of physis, feeling becomes a form of ecology.

Along with environmental awareness, Tarkiainen's work is guided by themes of strong societal, feminist, and cultural awareness, all of which come together with her interest in Sámi traditions:

The Sámi minority has been in Lapland for thousands of years, before Finnish and Swedish people came and started to take taxes from them so they lost their land and almost lost their culture. ... That touches me. It gives me this fuel, this longing. The Sámi are a minority voice and in a way I am too because I'm a woman in

a world made for men. It's more complicated than that feminist statement of course, but I do feel united with the Sámi. (Outi Tarkiainen, qtd. in Mellor 2016; see also Torvinen 2017)

Understanding northern cultural and natural environments as a source and model for novel or alternative ways of thinking, acting, and experiencing has been an issue addressed by many musical artists, such as Glenn Gould, John Luther Adams, and Anna Thorvaldsdottir (Mantere 2005; Cowgill and Scott 2018; Torvinen and Välimäki, forthcoming; see also Grace 2001; Davidson 2005). The Sámi worldview, cultural heritage, and living environment can provide a fruitful vantage point for understanding and commenting on cultural and ecological issues of wide significance. This is especially because they are the only indigenous people in the European Union with a long history of being under Finnish, Swedish, Norwegian, and Russian colonization and because they inhabit Arctic areas that are extremely vulnerable to climate change and its impacts.<sup>1</sup> The history of the Sámi being colonized is complex and cannot be discussed here in detail. However, as Tina K. Ramnarine has pointed out, Sámi music has played a notable role in reflecting territorial politics, changing discourses on social justice, and developing new histories. Sámi popular musicians have entered global markets, while popular music and new communication technologies have become the means of transforming traditional dichotomies between centres and peripheries as well as identities defined by modern nation-state borders (Ramnarine 2017: 278-279). Similarly, aspirations for decolonization and for better global futures motivated by local cultural and environmental concerns are among the key matters articulated in *The Earth, Spring's Daughter*.

Transforming a single cultural impulse or a concrete natural phenomenon into a communal, shared experience is indeed a central feature of Tarkiainen's music. One could even call her compositional ethos "glocal": she is equally at home in urban environments as in the wild, and she draws on more or less global cultural factors (Western music, environmental and societal problems, established venues of performing and publishing, and so on) that are, however, created, disseminated, and interpreted more or less locally (see Latour 2006 [1991]: 186-190). Just like the American women "nature composers" in Denise von Glahn's analysis (2013: 3-4), Tarkiainen's concerns and understanding of nature are fundamentally global and universal. The special natural formation in her saxophone concerto *Saivo* (2016), for example, affords a vista of mythological history and fuses contemporary musical elements from modernist devices to live electronics and jazz ("Saivo" is a Finnish translation of a Sámi word, "sáiva," meaning a sacred fresh water lake believed to have two bottoms

[Kulonen, Seurujärvi-Kari, and Pulkkinen 2005: 374]). The monodrama *Metsän hiljaisuuteen* (*Into the Woodland Silence*, based on poems by Sirkka Turkka and Eeva-Liisa Manner, 2010/2012), having both chamber and big band versions, mirrors individual growth against the backdrop of nature. Other works in Tarkiainen's oeuvre addressing nature include *Siimes* (*A shade in the forest*, 2017) for wind quintet, and *Beaivi* (a Northern Sámi word for "the sun," 2016) for flute, cello, guitar, and piano.

### Eanan, giđa nieida — The Earth, Spring's Daughter

*The Earth, Spring's Daughter* (2014-15) is a song cycle for mezzo-soprano and chamber orchestra that includes a prologue, seven songs, and an epilogue. The 45-minute work was commissioned by the Lapland Chamber Orchestra (Finland), the Norrbotten Chamber Orchestra (Sweden), and the Arctic Philharmonic (Norway). It premiered in Rovaniemi, Finland, in September 2016, performed by the Lapland Chamber Orchestra, conducted by John Storgårds, and featured the mezzo-soprano Virpi Räisänen. The Northern Sámi text was compiled by the composer and consists of poems by Rose-Marie Huuva, Rauni Magga Lukkari, Timo Malmi, Aila Meriluoto, Leena Morottaja, and Nils-Aslak Valkeapää.

According to Tarkiainen, the work's central themes include the Sámi worldviews of a cyclical conception of time, matriarchal socio-cultural systems, a mythical relationship to nature, the Sámi people under colonization, and the devastating effects of climate change on northern regions of the globe (Torvinen 2017; Tarkiainen 2017a). Mainstream Westerners are typically used to different perspectives: a linear conception of time, patriarchal systems, seeing nature as a resource to be extracted or used, and being the ones who colonize. The Sámi culture's mythical relationship with nature acts as a model for novel ways of thinking about the environment, and it is especially through this theme that the work's message can gain cross-cultural significance.

One important element in the work is the application of musical motifs with a specific meaning. This element — essential to Tarkiainen's composer profile and in line with a long history of musical rhetoric as well as more recent research on musical topics (see Välimäki 2005; Monelle 2006; Mirka 2014) — is exemplified in musical renditions of the poetic text in the *Baudelaire Songs* (2009-2013) and in expressive gestures in the string quartet *Trois poèmes* (2013). *The Earth, Spring's Daughter* has three prominent musical motifs publicly identified by the composer: the motifs of Earth, Eternity, and Longing (Torvinen 2017; Tarkiainen 2017a). In my analysis, I complement

these motifs with my own identification of another three musical devices: the motif of Time, the motif of Mystery, and the extensive use of pedal points in the composition. These devices charge specific topics with feeling and often precede the introduction of the topic in the sung text or the narration of the work. In this regard, the use of pedal points is especially important. At least since the 18th century, pedal points and other static textures have been a commonplace musical means for depicting nature, eternity, and other realms greater than the human. They signify something that is stable and, thus, opposed to the changing and ephemeral lives of humans (Dahlhaus 1989 [1980]: 307; Torvinen and Välimäki, forthcoming). In Tarkiainen's work, pedal points are usually written in intervals of fourths or fifths. This relates to her knowledge of modal jazz, but such open intervals also thicken the orchestral tone with strong, "natural" overtones.

Another important element in *The Earth, Spring's Daughter* is the cyclical conception of time represented in the overall symmetrical structure: the work begins and ends with similar music, the turning point being in the middle of the fourth song, which itself is composed in an ABA form. Musically, the prologue and epilogue, the first and seventh songs, the second and sixth songs, and the third and fifth songs form pairs with shared musical characteristics (for another element in the symmetry of the work, see below). The cyclical structure of the work relates to the Sámi way of life, which historically has not been dependent on measurable time, but rather on the weather and nature conditions with which the Sámi divide the year into eight seasons (Kulonen, Seurujärvi-Kari, and Pulkkinen 2005: 415-416).

## The Feeling of Mytho-ecological Framing

The work's prologue begins with a pedal point on a perfect fifth in the strings, above which we hear the soloist's recitation. Spoken text emphasizes the cultural, societal, and environmental message of the work and reminds listeners of the difference between linguistic and other forms of knowing. The latter aspect becomes evident in the ways the composition introduces many of its subjects in the orchestral parts *before* they are mentioned in the text. This is also how the main subject of the composition, the birth of the Earth, is introduced.

The spoken text of the prologue reads as follows:

Soai vácciiga buohtalaga  
 eadni ja nieida  
 vuostebiggii mii sojahalai siedggaid

loktii muohttaga ja sudno helmmiid  
 Guoldu sázai ratti  
 Ii lean šat velojaš jurddašit geasi ja cizážiid  
 Fáhkkestaga goappašagat nolliheigga  
 ja riegadahtiiga rabasnjálmmat nieidamánáid

They walked side by side,  
 mother and daughter,  
 against a wind that made junipers bend  
 and the snow and their hemlines rise,  
 wind lashing their chests  
 One could no longer think of summer and birds.  
 Suddenly they both squatted  
 and gave birth to gaping baby girls.

(Rauni Magga Lukkari, Trans. Kaija Anttonen)

In bar 17, after the words *fáhkkestaga goappašagat nolliheigga* (“suddenly they both squatted”), we hear the Earth motif for the first time (see Fig. 1). This motif is immediately followed by the text referring to the birth of the baby girls. The music clarifies that the newborns are the Earth.

In Tarkiainen’s melodies, chromatic undulations often avoid particular notes, for example by including only 11 tones of the 12-tone chromatic scale. In other words, these melodies revolve around hubs that are themselves unheard, as if focusing on something that exists, but is essentially inexpressible. The yearning for the unattainable is also reflected in the frequent motifs that make use of acceleration, deceleration, or a shrinking interval, all of which are gestural ideas capable of, in principle, continuing *ad infinitum*. The musical expressions of the unattainable may call to mind Kaija Saariaho (on Saariaho see, e.g., Hautsalo 2008; Howell, Hargreaves, and Rofe 2011; Välimäki 2015). In *The Earth, Spring’s Daughter*, the topic of unattainability is represented on many levels, most concretely in the musical motif fittingly called “Longing.” This upward-stretching motif appears for the first time at the end of the prologue (bar 27; see Fig. 2). The corresponding text, however, does not refer to the topic of longing. Musical motifs that are not given specific meanings by textual elements often gain their meaning either through the structural ways they are used in the course of the work or through historical associations, that is, by being interpreted as musical topics. For example, ascending musical motifs, like those of Longing and Mystery (see below), are commonly used to represent heaven, transfiguration, higher forms of reality, and everything desirable.



Fl. 15 **4** *dolce* *mp*

Eng. Hn. *espe* *mp* *a*

Cl. *To Bass Cl.* *p*

Bsn.

Hn.

B. D. *pp*

Cel.

M.S. *awakening*  
 Fähh-ke-sta-ga *a* *ä - ä - ä* *gosp-pa-lä-gat nol-li-beaig-ga*  
*mo - lew - mat kyy-vä - yä - vät*

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla. *unis.* *sempre p*

Vc. *arco, ord. espe* *mp* *poco sul pont.* *p*

Cb. *arco, ord. espe* *mp* *poco sul pont.* *p* *mp*

Fig 1. Outi Tarkiainen, *The Earth, Spring's Daughter*, Prologue, bars 15-20. An excerpt from the score. The Earth motif starts in bar 17 in the English horn part. Copyright: Edition Wilhelm Hansen. Used with kind permission.

As discussed above, music is what signals the birth of the Earth. Similar anticipatory and specifying functions characterize the musical motif of Longing: in the end of the prologue it is accompanied by a short phrase from the Earth motif, suggesting that what is longed for is the Earth itself (see Fig. 2). This interpretation is further supported by the prologue's instrumental symbolism. One example of this is found in bars 21 through 24, including the words *ja riegádahtiiga rabasnjálmmat nieidamánaid* ("and gave birth to gaping baby girls"). The first half of this spoken phrase is followed by a solo violin melody. Solo violin is commonly used in classical music to signify a human individual. Because the words *rabasnjálmmat nieidamánaid* ("gaping baby girls") are recited after the violin phrase starts, it is the music that first delivers the message: the newborn is a true individual. Beats on the tam-tam and crotales (in bar 23) emphasize the message. The tam-tam signals eternity, as its sound includes all possible pitches and the potential of eternal vibration, while the crotales, antique cymbals, are a symbolic echo of a distant past. When the music and words are combined, they articulate the overall significance of *The Earth, Spring's Daughter*: the newborn female, given birth in the prologue of the work, is an individual, but not an ordinary one. She is the Earth that will always be and that has always been, and whose eternity a human being can long for, but never obtain.

If music — especially wordless music — has a close relationship to feelings, the prologue of *The Earth, Spring's Daughter* exemplifies on many levels and in many ways how feeling *precedes* intellectual and linguistic understanding. The work begins with a pedal point background representing the all-embracing presence of nature. As mentioned, many central themes in the prologue — earth, longing, individuality, and eternity — are presented first in musical motifs using symbolic instrumentation. This is reminiscent of Böhme's views on the two-step process of experiencing atmospheric feelings discussed earlier: first we affectively and unconsciously sense the presence of atmosphere, and only thereafter do we comprehend it as something specific involving psychological emotions and intellectual interpretations.

The epilogue serves as the prologue's counterpart in the cyclical form of the work. The text is the same, but in the epilogue it is sung, not spoken. Again, we hear a story about a mother and her daughter giving birth to baby girls, the Earth. But here the text continues, relating how the women now cover the babies with snow to shelter them. The women are also joined by a deceased grandmother, who appears mysteriously and lies down beside them in the snow.

The music is again characterized by constant pedal points. Instead of the Earth and Longing motifs, the music in the epilogue is built around *Suivirsi*, a Finnish hymn praising spring and summer. *Suivirsi*'s melody is recognizable in

The musical score for bars 27-33 of the Prologue of *The Earth, Spring's Daughter* by Outi Tarkiainen. The score is arranged in a standard orchestral format with the following parts from top to bottom:

- Flute (Fl.)
- English Horn (Eng. Hn.)
- Bass Clarinet (Bass Cl.)
- Bassoon (Bn.)
- Horn (Hn.)
- Bass Drum (B. D.)
- Crotchet (Crot.)
- Musical Staff (M.S.)
- Violin I (Vln. I)
- Violin II (Vln. II) - split into 'Violin (solo)' and 'altri'
- Viola (Vla.)
- Violoncello (Vc.)
- Contrabass (Cb.)

Key musical features include:

- Violin I:** Features a 'Longing motif' with triplets in bars 27-29 and 31-33. Dynamics are marked *mp*.
- Violin II (solo):** Features a phrase from the 'Earth motif' in bars 31-32. Dynamics include *mp* and *p*. Markings for *solo* and *tutti* are present.
- Violoncello:** Features a 'div.' (divisi) section in bars 31-32. Dynamics include *mp* and *arco, div.*.
- Violin II (altri):** Features a phrase from the 'Earth motif' in bars 31-32. Dynamics include *p* and *arco*.
- English Horn:** Features an 'espr' (espressivo) marking in bar 31 and a dynamic of *mp*.
- Horn:** Features a dynamic of *pp* in bar 33.

Fig 2. Outi Tarkiainen, *The Earth, Spring's Daughter*, Prologue, bars 27-33. An excerpt from the score. The Longing motif in the first violins (bars 27-29 and 31-33) and a phrase from the Earth motif (bars 31-32). Copyright: Edition Wilhelm Hansen. Used with kind permission.

the musical texture but is not necessarily obvious. First, the melody is heard in the solo cello's accompaniment to the vocal line (bars 60-84) which comprises approximately the first half of the epilogue. In the prologue, there are no musical allusions to the hymn. However, a short cello gesture in bar 17 of the prologue can be understood to anticipate it. Furthermore, as this gesture leads straight to the Earth motif in the prologue (bar 18), the cello rendering of *Suvivirsi* and the Earth theme become connected. In the epilogue, the hymn assumes the meaning of the Earth motif.

In bar 89 of the epilogue, *Suvivirsi* moves to the solo violin. Here, too, the solo violin represents individuality, but together with the tam-tam in bar 95, it shifts the focus from individuality to eternity. In bar 115, where the text announces the appearance of the grandmother and her joining in the singing of *Suvivirsi*, the solo violin is doubled by another violin. Although the joint singing of *Suvivirsi* is mentioned in the text, the hymn's melody is played only by the violins. This further emphasizes the everlasting nature of the Earth: communication between the living and the dead takes place outside time and linguistic knowledge. The work ends on the lowest note of the double bass accompanied by very high flageolets in the other strings, while the celesta repeats the opening phrase of *Suvivirsi* so distinctly that this time it is easily recognized. While the cello rendering of *Suvivirsi* in the epilogue echoes the prologue's Earth motif, the violin version leading to the shimmering celesta resembles the upward-stretching motif of *Longing*, which now reaches its goal, as it were, in eternal bliss. The orchestration at the end of the work creates a sense of vast space associated with many of the text's themes, including a mystical connection to nature, which is here, in the end of the work, associated with a connection to previous generations.

An obvious reason for quoting *Suvivirsi* in the work is that the hymn is mentioned in the poem on which the epilogue is based, a poem by the Sámi poet Rauni Magga Lukkari. The hymn represents Christianity's colonization of the Sámi people. Thus, are we to interpret the covering up of the baby girls — the Earth — with snow as a gesture of giving up, a symbol of the destruction of a people and their land in the face of colonization and environmental concerns? This interpretation is supported by the fact that the Earth motif is given to the English horn, a traditional symbol of death. Or is the newborn Earth something that has to be protected? Covering a baby with snow could ultimately be about warming it up: snow insulates well, and northern animals often cover themselves with snow when the weather gets cold. The incorporation of *Suvivirsi* in the work is relatively concealed and even a bit distorted. Is the message, then, that the Western-Christian conviction is ultimately unable to overcome the Sámi worldview? The

poem also represents a matriarchal social order, another element that resists Christian ideals. All in all, the epilogue has a strong ecofeminist undertone (see also Ramnarine 2017: 288).

As mentioned earlier, the work starts with the soloist reciting, not singing. A similar function in the epilogue is given to a video meant to be shown during this part of the work. The video *Kasvojen vaihdos* (Change of Faces) by the filmmaker and visual artist Elina Oikari bolsters the themes of colonization and climate change addressed in the music (Oikari 2016). The black-and-white video is a combination of new material and archival films, and it mirrors the history of the Sámi people with staged scenes and pictures of the mining industry, for example (see Tarkiainen 2016a, from 4:56 onwards). The video offers an explanation of the more feeling-based and metaphorical renderings of the work's themes as expressed in the music.

Together, the prologue and epilogue make up only about one-fifth of the work's duration. Still, they form its most essential sections in many ways. First, they create mytho-ecological frames: the interpretive context in which the work is meant to be understood and listened to. Second, they affirm the composition's cyclical form: after reaching its end, the work could, theoretically, start again from the beginning, musically. Third, their music suggests a vision of reality in which everything connects with everything else in a profound way possible only in myths. Fourth, the prologue and epilogue introduce musical mechanisms and strategies that represent how ways of feeling a thing, entity, or event precede intellectual understanding. This happens on the level of individual musical motifs and is also evident on the level of the whole work: musical and textual strategies in the prologue and epilogue create an overall feeling through which the work and its messages are to be experienced and interpreted further.

As an in-between phenomenon, feeling in *The Earth, Spring's Daughter* can be considered an outcome of complex connections between the composition, composer, listeners, Sámi culture, nature, and so on. Textual and performative practices of Western classical music form yet another element in this relationality. Feeling in this sense comes close to what the ethnomusicologist Birgit Abels has called the "meaningfulness" (Ger. *Bedeutsamkeit*) of music. In contrast to fixed meanings (Ger. *Bedeutung*), meaningfulness refers to the totality of the possible historically and culturally conditioned interpretations (meanings) of or within a single musical piece or practice. Meaningfulness appears as a feeling-like atmosphere that provokes and calls for affective, bodily, and intellectual interpretations (Abels 2018: 223-224). Thus, meaningfulness is another way to characterize what I have called the feeling of mytho-ecological framing.

## Mystical Assimilation with Nature

Between the prologue and the epilogue, the composition portrays other forms of nature relationships relevant to Sámi culture. The further the work is from its prologue and epilogue frames, the more concrete, mundane, and individual the messages of the songs become. The nature experience represented in the first song, *Eanan, gida nieida* (“The Earth, Spring’s Daughter”), and the seventh song, *Mun sárγγun dáid govaid* (“I inscribe these images”), highlights the individual’s mystical assimilation and immersion in nature. While the epilogue and prologue present a mythological and universalizing narrative about the Sámi’s nature relationship, the first and seventh songs shift the focus to a human subject.

Like most sections of the work, the first song builds on the firm ground of a pedal point. The composition’s title song introduces the third musical motif identified by the composer: that of Eternity. Its first appearance is in bar 47, scored for celesta and vibraphone. The motif consists of a sequence of triads whose root notes are an interval of a second apart. It appears three times in the song, each time in a slightly different shape, and each time retaining its identifiable character. After its appearances, it is followed either by the Longing motif, the Earth motif, or both. Tying these motifs together in the first song affects their signification in the whole work: Eternity is the object of Longing, and Eternity is ultimately the Earth.

The song’s text is about time and how a human conception of measurable time does not exist in the eternity of Earth. The song introduces yet another distinguishable motif, which appears in this song only: Time. It is heard first as a vocal melisma on the words *oavddolaš eallima máihli* (“the wonderful sap of life”; beginning in bar 43) and is imitated immediately by the flute and later by the solo violin. The text that follows, *áiggiid gihppu, loážža giesastuvvon oktii* (“the bundle of times, loosely wound together”), puts the motif in a context, asserting that time is always and forever. The interval structure of the Time motif is reminiscent of the Earth motif in an inverted form. Formalist observations aside, these motifs are related through their meaning: Longing for the Earth understood as Eternity is always about dismissing (inverting) traditional conceptions of time.

The seventh song parallels the first in the cyclical structure of the work. The text here is by Nils-Aslak Valkeapää. While the temporal climax of the work is in the middle of the fourth song, the seventh song forms the dynamic and dramaturgical pinnacle. Once again, the piece begins with a pedal point on the low strings supported by a timpani tremolo. Whereas the first song is about the non-existence of chronological time, the seventh song is about the non-existence of measurable space as well. The protagonist of the poem inscribes

images, leaves her mark in time and place in concrete and metaphorical ways, and finally becomes one with nature, resonating with the vibrations of the whole of existence. The text of the seventh song is as follows:

mun sárɡɡun dáid govaid  
geađgái gárrái  
áigái  
iežan govat  
mu eará hámit  
ja soapmásin jáhkán  
ahte mun dat lean  
dáid govaid  
ja mus nu olu hámit  
ja dál, dál de iežan sárɡɡun  
ollisin, easka  
čavddisin  
ja mun čuojan go dat čuojaha mu  
ja jávkkan bosastaga mielde  
áiggi ábii'e  
ja dan govas  
in boađe ruoktot  
šahten  
I inscribe these images  
on the stone, on the drum  
in time  
my images  
my other shapes  
and sometimes I believe  
that this is me  
these images  
and so many shapes of me  
and now, now I draw myself  
whole, finally  
complete

and I resound when it plays within me  
 and I disappear with the gusts of wind  
 into the sea of time

and from this image  
 I will not return  
 again

(Nils-Aslak Valkeapää, Trans. Ralph Salisbury and Harald Gaski)

When the text reaches the words *ja dál* (“and now”), a rising timpani glissando launches a continuous, canon-like contrapuntal upward movement in an echo of the Longing motif. Scored for the entire ensemble and combined with the text *ja mun čuojan go dat čuojaha mu, ja jávkkan bosastaga mielde, áiggi ábii’e* (“and I resound when it plays within me, and I disappear with the gusts of wind, into the sea of time”), this section creates the most powerful effects in the whole work. The music is like the collapse of reality into a wormhole (Tarkiainen 2017a). The text indicates the relativity of the categories of time and space. Music becomes a mass of sound and noise without identifiable musical agents. This introduces another element in the cyclical nature of the work. A similar musical “wormhole” occurs in the exact middle of the work, in the fourth song (bars 62–69), forming a counterpart for something that is quite literally outside spatiality and temporality: the imaginative void between the ending and the (new) beginning of the work. As noted earlier, after reaching its end, the work could, music-wise, start again from the beginning quite seamlessly. Finally, the seventh song recedes towards silence, and the last words are whispered repetitions of the words *in boađe* (“I will not [come]”) and *šabten* (“again”). The human subject has quite literally lost her voice.

The seventh song of *The Earth, Spring’s Daughter* represents humans’ immersive relationship with nature. As such, it is a representation of what Ingold calls “ensoundment” (2007: 12). It tells of the existential precondition of our being immersed in the world before we can develop any perceptions or interpretations of it. Seen and heard immediately after the seventh song, the video *Kasvojen vaihdos*, discussed above, becomes an interesting concretization of the ravishing experience of immersion in nature through inscribed images. It suggests that the images of Sámi culture and its destiny, which audiences see on the screen, are actually images of themselves, their own shapes. Again, the work focuses on the feeling of being one with nature first (the seventh song), and thereafter presents the same idea in more conceptually accessible ways (the video).



## Disturbances in the Local Ecology: Colonialism, Environmental Disasters, and Mourning of Losses

The remaining five songs focus on colonization and environmental problems. The second song, *Dáid galbma guovlluid mii johtit* (“In these cold lands we migrate”) is about the Sámi way of life (*ja áiggi mieldde mii šaddat oassin dán eatnamii, gos min máddagat leabbájit* — “and over time we become a part of this land, where our roots spread”) in a land that has been colonized by others (*muhto go sii bohtet ... ja sii vázzet min čada, oainnikeahttá, oainnat* — “but when they come ... they will walk through us without seeing”). The music is characterized by rising figures. However, in comparison to the Longing motif, the rising musical figures in this song are slower, less distinctive, a bit hesitant — as if the anticipation of a secure future had become impossible. The third song, *Áhččamet opmodat lea odne juhkkojuvvon* (“Our father’s estate has been divided up today”) mourns the irreversible losses and the historic faith of the Sámi people under colonization.

In the middle of the fourth song, *Dát guhkes idjadiimmu* (“The nightly hour of the wolf”), the text indicates a profound change. The first half discusses the Sámi understanding of the way of life and nature: *Mon šadden bajás áhkuid rávvagiin, olgun luonddumánáid beaiveruovttun* (“I grew up heeding old grannies’ advice, out of doors in the nursery for nature’s young”), and the cross-generational elements of this tradition become evident in the culminating phrase, *Mon dovddan mon lean eallán duhát jagi* (“I feel as if I’ve lived for a thousand years”). After this, the focus turns to nature under stress. In the context of the previous songs, environmental and climate changes now become symbols of colonization. The fifth and sixth songs are about mourning the degraded Earth. The end of the sixth song repeats the Longing for the Earth by briefly combining these two respective motifs. This song also introduces yet another musical motif, which can be called the motif of Mystery. This rising arpeggio, introduced in the celesta part in bar 2, characterizes the sixth song in various ways; the song is about finding secret mystical and mythical knowledge anew after colonization has ruined nature. What follows is the seventh song and its depictions of the mystical process of becoming one with nature.

## Conclusion: Feeling and Mytho-ecological Experience in Music

The philosopher Ted Toadvine has maintained that the “calculative rationality” of the natural sciences cannot deal with problems in nature, because something becomes a problem only when it is framed within the human lifeworld of

value and signification (2009: 3-4). Musical works and other artistic products are obvious cultural sites for such framing. I have endeavoured to show how Outi Tarkiainen's *The Earth, Spring's Daughter* serves this framing function by representing three forms of ecology relevant to the Sámi: 1) a mytho-ecological relationship with nature, conveyed in the prologue and epilogue of the work and based on a cross-generational, non-individualistic, and cyclic-temporal understanding of reality; 2) an immersive, mystical experience of becoming one with nature, which is the subject matter of the first and seventh songs; and 3) environmental problems as phenomena caused by colonization and disturbances in the traditional Sámi worldview. In a way, the composition is not a song-cycle but a monodrama, where the protagonist is nature itself, undergoing change.

In my analysis, I especially wanted to show how music is able to frame nature with shared feelings and thus functions both as a site for environmental(ist) negotiations and as the means to inspire such negotiations. This principle is at work in Tarkiainen's composition from single musical motifs to the overall structural and temporal unfolding of the work. While the composition demonstrates the Sámi conception of cyclical time, as a listening experience it, of course, follows chronological time. Therefore, the setting at the end of the epilogue suggests that only cross-generational, mytho-ecological knowledge can initiate a new spring and, consequently, a new Earth. It is as if the music itself creates an experience of "critical immersion" with which environmentalism can begin anew among audiences even after the music has ended.

The theme of one specific nation's changing relationship to nature highlights the activist potential of the work. As Mark Pedelty has pointed out (with reference to singer-songwriter Adrian Chalifour), an environmentalist piece of music placed in a recognizable locale resonates better with listeners far away, not because listeners can relate to the described locale but because they too live in places with definite identities, meanings, and emotional connections (2016: 4-5; see also Ramnarine 2017: 289). Accordingly, composing, performing, listening to, and discussing *The Earth, Spring's Daughter* is not only about raising awareness of the Sámi and their nature relationship but also about an environmentalist negotiation of the human-nature relationship in any and every place or culture. A single musical composition might not be able to solve environmental challenges on its own, but it may be able to charge environmentalist messages with feelings that make our awareness of nature more meaningful, regardless of where we are.

The Sámi are "internal Others" in countries in their region (see Locke 2009: 7). Therefore, any Finnish composition with a Sámi-related theme

necessarily represents musical exoticism and is, thus, open to criticism of being a colonizing practice itself. However, *The Earth, Spring's Daughter* respects the Sámi tradition in many ways: texts by the Sámi poets are sung in their own language and dialects, traditional Sámi wisdom is portrayed as exemplary environmentalism, and all performances of the work (at the time of writing this article) have taken place in the Sámi region or nearby. Furthermore, another sign of cultural respect is that the composition does *not* include any allusions to joik, the traditional Sámi form of music. Namely, applying such an “exotic style” (see Locke 2009: 10) in “universal” Western musical practices could appear as underrating joik’s value as an independent musical form.

It is not my intention to claim that the Sámi relationship to nature is without its problems. At least two examples of “non-ecological” practices characterize the traditional Sámi way of life: overstocking reindeer, made possible with the aid of all-terrain vehicles and snowmobiles, which accelerates erosion; and hatred and killing of predators thought to threaten the reindeer (Heikkilä and Järvinen 2011: 69-74). The biologist Tuomas Heikkilä and the ecologist Antero Järvinen have even pointed out that the belief in more “ecological” and mythically nature-friendly ways of life among indigenous peoples can be a myth in itself; as soon as indigenous peoples have enough money and technology, they begin to oppress nature like any other group of people (2011: 72). As Shepard Krech III attempts to show in his widely-discussed book, *The Ecological Indian* (1999), peoples can behave in “non-ecological” ways even without modern technology. In the final analysis, it may be that the Sámi culture’s nature relationship forms a model for a globally eco-friendly way of life primarily in its mytho-ecological form. And this is exactly why environmentalism could benefit from starting with feeling, music, and resounding. ❁

## Notes

1. About 60,000 Sámi live in Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Russia. Most of the Sámi people are in Norway, and many of them live outside the traditional Sámi regions. The biggest Sámi community in Finland, for example, is in Helsinki. Depending on the terms of division, there are ten or more Sámi languages, which can be very different from one another. For example, speakers of Northern Sámi — the language in which *The Earth, Spring's Daughter* is sung — cannot understand speakers of Inari Sámi. There are still strongly disputed issues concerning the status of the Sámi people, one of the most heated topics being the ratification of the ILO 169 Convention in Finland.

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