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An Exploration of Ethnically Oriented Origin Narratives and Related Rhetorical Responses in
the Transitioning Multicultural Reality of a Long Term Care Home

In the beginning: A few Finnish men were taking a sauna together and discussing the need to provide continuous care for some aging Finnish community members in the Sudbury area. Many Finns in the area – men especially, and most of them aging miners and loggers – felt they had nowhere to turn in their senior years. Also lacking was a place for Finnish people in the area to congregate, as they were scattered across the vast Sudbury region. Literally sweating over the conundrum, the men discussed it at length. One of them said he had property in the northeast outskirts of Sudbury, which he would donate toward building a Finnish rest home, known today as Finlandia Village Long-Term Rest Home (...and the rest is history).

Or is it? This version of the Finlandia Village origin story, among other existing versions, and associated rhetorical responses of the organization, hover as discursive enactments of the ethnic foundation of a particular long term health care organization in Sudbury, one that has been conceived “in the Finnish tradition.” Undertaking a narrative approach to a rhetorical analysis of the conceptual and symbolic dimensions of the origin story for Finlandia Village Long-Term Rest Home will yield a contextualized articulation of their enactments, or “thick description,” as

Clifford Geertz would contend, illuminating just how and why ethnicity matters *matter*, but also to what degree they may not (Geertz 3).

This analysis will examine three different versions of the Finlandia origin story through the lens of narrative criticism. A thick description of the rhetorical reverberations and enactments of Finlandia's origin narrative involves thinking about how the story operates organizationally as a useful metaphor and narrative paradigm, yet not necessarily within a closed system of signification. In one incarnation, the story is set in a sauna, and threaded with Finnish cultural elements, values, and symbolism. In other versions, the sauna setting is absent from the narrative. Following the examination of origin narratives, I will assess closely linked artefacts of the organization's identity expressed through public rhetorical responses, such as the mission statement and logo, and practices such as the "Finnish Ethnicity Action Plan." The analysis will address how the issue of ethnicity is rhetorically constructed and negotiated in the particular long term care home that is Finlandia Village. The current rhetorical situation at Finlandia Village relates to specific recent policy amendments, so through the lens of interpretative policy analysis, some underplayed, yet salient, aspects of Canadian long-term healthcare policy will be considered.

Aging Nation, Aging Situation

As Canada's aging population increases, long term care homes have been the predominant solution to providing seniors quality care in a residential setting. Today, it may seem as though such facilities have always existed, yet this institutional trend in health care aimed at an aging population, some experiencing a diminishment of capacity, emerged mainly in the 1960s, reflecting societal demographic aging trends combined with a widespread shift away from family-based, in-home care provision. Long term care homes may be properly understood as

Canadian society's public-health response to a natural, and previously domestically contained, health phenomenon – the process of aging. The shift in demographics is significant: “By 2015, there will be more people aged 65 years and older in Canada than people under 15 years of age” (Chambers 20). Meeting the growing demand for bed space in long term care homes is becoming critical in the Sudbury region, and indeed, in Canada.

Depending on their size and structure, some long term care home facilities offer a continuum of care that ranges from apartment-style senior residential housing, which offer a modicum of independent, community living; to nursing home facilities offering full-time personal care, with some facilities also including palliative care. In 2010, “Statistics Canada reported that there were 4,761 residential care homes – defined as homes with four beds or more that are funded, licensed, or approved by provincial/territorial departments of health or social services – in Canada serving approximately 243,000 residents” (20).

Indefinite care, definite need

Long term care homes differ from other health care facilities, such as hospitals, in that they generally provide indefinite (transitioning toward end-of-life) care in a residential-style environment. The number of people waiting for long term care home placement is growing and bed space is at a premium. As a result, there are practices in place in many long term care homes aimed at identifying certain residents requiring possibly only short-term care. In such cases, strategies work to alleviate health and capacity issues, and to move residents back into the community. However, the principal function of long term care homes remains the housing and care of residents on an indefinite basis.

In many long term care home settings, as with Finlandia Village, a range of services is provided to meet health, personal, social, and, in some cases, spiritual care needs (Finlandia brochure), most often providing care for residents who are chronically disabled or have lost some degree of capacity for self-care. In some long term care homes, another facet of resident care/response exists, albeit one that is not overtly acknowledged in the public health sphere: Specific consideration had been made to prioritize the ethnicity of residents for admission into homes of similar ethnic affiliation. When placing residents in long term care homes, the Long-Term Care Homes Act, 2007, ensures ethnicity is one – among many – evaluative criteria for admission.

One such ethnically inspired and affiliated facility is Finlandia Village, chartered as the Sudbury Finnish Rest Home Society Incorporated, a non-profit charitable organization that was created in 1982. Located in Sudbury, Ontario, and providing a continuum-of-care lifestyle for seniors, Finlandia Village is located on more than 40 acres of land overlooking the north shore of Lake Ramsey. Geographically speaking, the magnificent landscape of the Canadian Shield – stands of coniferous trees and craggy rock set against the backdrop of shimmering Lake Ramsey – evokes images of Finland. The terrain of the area and the architectural design of the numerous buildings in the complex strengthen these vivid associations. Arguably, images of Finland hanging on the walls of the lobby at Finlandia Village could just as well be Sudbury.

Finlandia Village offers a continuum of care with varied housing consisting of several lifestyle choices for senior residents, depending on their needs: “Finlandiakoti seniors apartments with 90 one and two bedroom units; Palvelukoti Supportive Housing with 46 one bedroom units; Rivitalo Townhouses with 31 two and three bedroom units; Hoivakoti Nursing Home with 110 beds; and Majatalo Shared Seniors Housing with 8 units” (Finlandia brochure). Ideally, this kind

of model would allow a resident to transfer from one type of housing (starting with the apartments) to more care-oriented housing (such as the nursing home) as their needs changed over the years.

A crisis situation

The idea seemed to make sense: Building continuum-of-care facilities responsive to the changing health care needs of seniors, allowing them to transition seamlessly on-site, from one level of care to another, as their requirements changed. However, residents may no longer be guaranteed a continuum of care in one facility, as organizations of this kind must surely have intended. At Finlandia Village, for instance, a resident living in an apartment may no longer expect to transfer directly into the nursing home at the same facility. Admission to the nursing home now depends on the status of the waiting list for the entire region. A person assessed as higher need may be placed there, and in turn, the person at Finlandia Village may be transferred out to a nursing home section of a different facility. Waiting times are affected. Couples may be separated. These are but a few ramifications of what results when Crisis 1 designation is in effect.

Crisis 1 designation has been in effect in the Sudbury region for more than six years. This means that the lack of long-term care home spaces initiates a crisis designation that essentially overrides other admission policy criteria, such as some distinct categories outlined in the Long-Term Care Homes Act, 2007. “Sudbury has been in a crisis designation by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care for six years. Families must accept the first long-term care bed that becomes available, regardless of whether it is their first choice or not. The six-year crisis has essentially left families feeling powerless because they have no control over when – or where – their loved ones will be placed” (Mulligan). Further, these policy changes may be understood as

limiting the previous “privileging” – to some degree – of ethnic origins as outlined in the Long-Term Care Homes Act, 2007.

Crisis 1 designation is largely instigated by the regional hospitals, which apply to the Community Care Access Centre for its enactment. Through its wide-ranging deployment, non-specific creation, and particular effect in smaller long term care homes, Crisis 1 designation has some (presumably unintended) ramifications in an organization such as Finlandia Village, and indeed, in other ethnically oriented care homes in Ontario. As is happening in similar ethnically oriented care homes, in some cases at Finlandia Village, seniors of Finnish ethnic heritage now find themselves vying with seniors of differing ethnic heritage for admission. The Long Term Care Homes Act, 2007, awards points for admission based on “religious, ethnic or linguistic origin” in its formula for its “Placement into Categories on Waiting List.” However, due to government funding requirements, roughly one-third of the beds in the nursing home at Finlandia Village no longer meet the “religious, ethnic, or linguistic origin” criteria used in evaluating admission. Crisis 1 designation overrides this policy.

In *Telling Tales: Living the Effects of Public Policy*, an analysis of selected Canadian policy that uses real-world examples to show how policy shapes people’s daily lives, the authors assert: “Capturing and articulating the effects of changing social policies on people’s lives is important [because] social policies daily affect people as individuals ... [an analysis] insists on approaching social policy by considering its differential effects” (Bezanson 9). Finlandia Village experiences the effects of healthcare policy in its own inimitable way; and with Crisis 1 designation addressing the exigencies of a hospital setting rather than a rest home setting, the policy may not necessarily map neatly onto this small organization. It is necessary to consider the larger implications of the frameworks for policy, and how systematic, “rational,”

comprehensive policy may counter more incrementally conceived policy frameworks (Bezanson 9).

Ethnicity matters, matters of ethnicity

Ethnicity had been an initiating force in the creation of many long term care homes, which, through funding and grants in the 1970s to the 1990s, were permitted to create homes specific to their ethnic constituencies. While no specific policy existed to fund ethnically oriented long term care homes per se, the general funding was available to them, which conveyed a measure of government endorsement. Finlandia Village was funded largely through government grants, as were many other long term care homes.

Today, the mix of residents is shifting and becoming more inclusive of other ethnicities, albeit for pragmatic reasons, in many cases. While the ethnic landscape is indeed shifting in some of these homes, and policy changes are constraining the privileging of ethnicity in terms of admission formulas and criteria, consideration of ethnicity persists through administrative structures, on-site group behaviours, and their commingled rhetorical enactments, which serve to highlight benefits of cultural respect and awareness.

The Finns: A history of idealism, hard work, and harsh circumstances

While seemingly incongruous for the region, a long term care home in Sudbury serving the Finnish population is anything but. Finnish immigrants began arriving in Sudbury from 1883 and onward, making a large contribution to the region throughout the first half of the century. Their political and social tendencies carried over to the new land, and the predisposition was to stand up for workers' and women's rights; they were also influential in the unions. "Traditional"

Finnish values transplanted to North America were those of idealism, hard work, struggle, autonomy, and defiance. In the Sudbury region, Finns were skilled agricultural settlers, miners, loggers, and builders” (Saarinen 1).

The Sudbury Finns came to work: “Assimilation brought with it many dangers, especially where employment and politics were concerned. In forestry and mining, Finns were given jobs that required great endurance and a tolerance for hazardous conditions. In agriculture, they were relegated to the rural fringes the others had rejected” (Saarinen 2). In the early years, the sense that Finns had of existing on the fringes of Sudbury society aligned with the value they placed on autonomy within their community, including their unique culture and traditions. From the outset, the hardworking Finns shared a belief in autonomy, self-reliance, and self-preservation, and it is no wonder that in later years they would create a space to care for their elderly in much the same manner.

Origin stories under a narrative lens

The Sudbury Finns created a space to care for their elderly. How that space came to exist is understood and related by its staff, board members, and founders. As rhetorical artefacts, the different versions of the organization’s origin story are in quiet conversation with one another. Finlandia’s origin narrative, like any good story, changes subtly in the telling. There is a “factual” version, an official version, and a more “symbolic” version, as well as a range of subtle variations.

It is important to note that in daily operations, Finlandia’s origin stories are not necessarily perceived as contested accounts, if even shared explicitly in everyday life – instead, the stories hover in the background. The organization’s tacitly known, ‘common knowledge’

origins reverberate behind the scenes, as foundational reinforcements for the enactment of “Finnishness” as general episteme within the organization.

To begin, the Finlandia origin stories may be apprehended through the lens of narrative criticism. “Narratives can be distinguished from other rhetorical forms by four characteristics” (Foss 307). To paraphrase Foss, these four characteristics are: 1) narrative discourse is comprised of at least two events (either active or stative); 2) the events in the narrative are organized by time order; 3) a narrative must include some kind of causal or contributing relationship among events in a story (depicting change); and 4) a narrative must be about a unified subject and cannot be absolutely disconnected (308).

Three core versions of the origin story emerge from the small multitude, all of them sharing the four defining characteristics used to identify narratives. The first version is set in a sauna; the second version is captured in a film documentary (produced to pay tribute to Finlandia Village on its 25th anniversary), and emphasizes the founders who were instrumental in creating Finlandia; the third version is the most historically ‘factual’ chronological narrative account, and maintains that the sauna setting was confused and conflated with another Finnish origin narrative.

The sauna version

The first version calls for the most meticulous analysis, as it sets the backdrop against which the others may be critically compared. I was quickly drawn in upon hearing this story on “orientation day,” my first day of placement at Finlandia Village. The story aligned with my own (admittedly simplistic) perceptions of the Finnish culture and seemed rhetorically appropriate as an origin narrative – perhaps almost too appropriate. The story was shared with me as an aside during an

enlightening and comprehensive orientation. Given all the crucial information that is conveyed during orientation to the uninitiated through the meticulous use of forms, checklists, and booklets, I found it interesting that the story of how Finlandia came to exist was not to be found in the texts – yet neither was it completely absent. Conscientious and careful to point out that the story she conveyed to me was based on her understanding of the story, a staff member who oversees Finlandia Village’s “inductees” explained to me how Finlandia came to exist. To paraphrase:

A few Finnish men were taking a sauna together and discussing the need to provide continuous care for some aging Finnish community members in the Sudbury area. Many Finns in the area – men especially, and most of them aging miners and loggers – felt they had nowhere to turn in their senior years. Also lacking was a place for Finnish people in the area to congregate, as they were scattered across the vast Sudbury region. Literally sweating over the conundrum, the men discussed it at length. One of them said he had property in the northeast outskirts of Sudbury, which he would donate toward building a Finnish rest home, known today as Finlandia Village Long-Term Rest Home.

This account meets the four criteria for narrative: The two events – the discussion among men in a sauna and the donation of land that would set in motion the creation of Finlandia Village – are sequentially organized in time order, depicting change, a causal relationship, and thematically unified. “Finnishness” infuses the account, from the individuals, the communal decision-making process, to the sauna as the key setting.

The enclosed sauna setting resonates with Finnish cultural associations, serving as a metaphor of Finnish culture: “When Finns immigrated to North America, it was the sauna that became the sure sign of the Finn. For Finns in North America, no matter how poor they were or

how humble the building, it was the sauna that gave them stability and a link with the past that was almost as necessary as food or shelter” (Saarinen 248). Here, the sauna is pivotal to the narrative, serving as a link to the past, as well as a springboard for the creation of a facility to care for future generations of Finns in Sudbury.

This particular origin story functions as both overriding metaphor and narrative glue – the story takes place in a sauna, with Finnish-themed elements including: fellowship, camaraderie, communal decision-making, cultural autonomy, sharing of land, sharing of ideas, self-sufficiency, building, and upholding cultural traditions (Saarinen 45). As an insular, sealed off setting, the sauna’s inside/outside dialectic functionally negates contemporary notions of multiculturalism, open borders, and assimilation. The sauna, like Finlandia Village, encloses those who belong inside, shelters them from the world at large, stands in for distinct Finnish heritage, and, literally and symbolically, provides health, nurturing, and protective benefits. If the two may be conflated – the sauna and the organization – another point arises, that of the protective qualities they share. Yet, as rhetorician and critical theorist Kenneth Burke reminds us, “Implicit in the idea of protection, there is something to be *protected against*” (Burke, *Philosophy* 61).

While the sauna narrative is loosely based on factual details, it becomes mythic because this apt setting, quite simply and according to the more ‘factual’ account, is somewhat of an invention. Its invention speaks to the human narrative impulse for story to confer essence. Indeed, this narrative has inflated into myth. Specifying distinctions between fiction and myth, literary theorist Frank Kermode explains: “We have to distinguish between myths and fictions, Fictions can degenerate into myths whenever they are not consciously held to be fictive ... Fictions are for finding things out, and they change as the needs of sense-making changes. Myths

are the agents of stability, fictions the agents of change” (Kermode 39). (The term Kermode uses here, “degenerate,” negatively casts the idea of fiction becoming mythic; in the context of the sauna story, the better term to apply here may be: “change.”) Most crucial in this passage, Kermode illuminates the stabilizing function of mythologizing. By mythologizing, the sauna story fixes and stabilizes “incommensurable realities” (Yanow 9) – the lived disruption between the origin of Finlandia and the process of transformation at work today within the organization, such as the changing ethnic composition, which, both literally and symbolically, opens the sauna to non-Finns. In her interpretative approach to myth analysis, Dvora Yanow states:

From an anthropological rather than a literary approach, myths may be seen as explanations constructed in the face of puzzling parts of their organizational or policy contexts. We create myths as an act of mediating contradictions, such as those that arise when we are faced with accommodating in daily life the mandates of two (or more) irreconcilable values. Myths direct our attention away from such incommensurables, from the puzzling aspects of policy and agency realities, suspending them in a temporary resolution (at least temporarily) masking the tensions between or among incommensurable values. (80)”

If, as Yanow contends, myth has the power to “mask tensions between or among incommensurable values” (9) it also points to the power of values, even if seemingly incommensurable. The seeming incommensurability of Finlandia Village’s values – between its simultaneous enshrining of Finnish ethnicity and its welcoming of other ethnicities – may not be evidence that these values are, as Yanow suggests, “suspended in a temporary resolution.” Rather, these values coexist in delicate tension, continuously negotiated within Finlandia Village as new members, as the myth would have it, enter the sauna.

Kenneth Burke explores the notion that beginnings equal essence, a concept that can be reconstituted as: “beginnings equal essentializing,” serving to indicate the way in which impulses/desires are discursively enacted through the telling and retelling of an origin myth (Burke, *Rhetoric* 19). As discursive performance, it casts “the beginning” as something essential and indelible to that thing/organization that is being characterized as having a beginning. The rhetorical performance captures, essentializes, and closes gaps in coherency by means of an origin narrative.

The official version

The video documentary version is the organization’s official version of the story as told by Finlandia Village, or as it refers to itself in the video, the “society.” It is important to note that the official version is simply a snapshot of the organization’s identity as presented in a particular moment in time, and as told by selected members. As such, in presenting itself as a single articulation, albeit one containing numerous voices, the official version is, as are other versions of the Finlandia story, predisposed to moments of projection and conflation, especially when differing accounts are synthesized to present a unified account, or when one particular account is presented as representing the whole.

Celebrating the milestone of its 25th anniversary (1982- 2007), a video was produced to tell the tale of the organization, with footage encapsulating the society from the beginning and projecting into the future. From the very beginning of the video, the sombre, yet light, flute and harp music sets a certain tone, conveying a stoic sensibility that is an element of Finnish culture. Next, we are drawn into a convivial gathering of a few residents and board members who are sitting together in one of Finlandia Village’s comfortable meeting rooms, and like most rooms at

Finlandia Village, the space is high and airy, the walls covered with pine wood. The mood is light. The group is laughing and reminiscing. The camera zooms in on Kerttu Haapamaki, a founding member of Finlandia Village. In her hand she holds sheets of paper, the written account of the story, and is poised to deliver the account on camera. The warm voice of executive director David Munch invites Kerttu to “just speak all you want.” Kerttu’s account is delivered in Finnish, with English subtitles provided. The significance of choosing to tell the story in the Finnish language enacts a profound sense of the linguistic ties to cultural origin, while at the same time unapologetically presenting the Finnish language to be the most appropriate conveyance for the account. We learn that in 1982:

Aino Krats reported on the Historical Society meeting ... the subject of a rest home. Leo Raaska had earlier discussed with Oliver Korpela the need for a rest home in Sudbury. Oliver Korpela had stated; ‘If you Finns want to build a home for the seniors I’ll donate the land!’ A meeting was held May 2nd at Sampo Hall. It had been advertised to all Finns in the area. Seventy-nine people indicated their desire to bring the project forward and each paid \$10 for a membership in the new organization. These individuals are known as the ‘Founding Members’.” (Finlandia Village documentary)

The account goes on to list the names of the first elected board members (chairman, secretary, treasurer, membership secretary, ladies committee chair), and appears meticulous in its effort to name – and thereby pay tribute to – these individuals. It is the people, the individuals, who are privileged in the account, and not the setting. Also privileged in this account is the notion of social responsibility and the sharing of land as a driving force, which serves to highlight the communal, collective impetus behind the creation of Finlandia Village. In watching the official documentary version, the sauna setting is completely absent. Later, I hear that when it

came time to document the origin story on film, slight variations of the story emerged and it came to light that there were minor differences in the narratives, even among some early or founding members.

The conflated version

The third version of the origin story, as shared by Reijo Viitala, a longstanding and very involved board member (who also provided a timeline for historical accuracy), discounts some of the first version. The sauna setting in the first version is absent in the third, albeit not entirely. A significant deviation emerges: It seems that two similar events may have been conflated in the initial storytelling. Conflation occurs when the identities of two or more concepts, which share characteristics, become confused until there seems to be only a single articulation – obscuring the differences. It seems that the sauna may have served as the setting for the creation of the Finnish Grand Festival, not Finlandia Village.

So, two events were conflated – the creation of Finlandia Village and the origin story of the Finnish Grand Festival, yet the festival and the Finnish rest home remain quite linked. This story takes us even farther back in terms of motivation. Through the creation of the festival, and at the festival in the early 1970s, young Finns came together and started discussing the dire situation of the aging Finns, many of whom were reluctant to turn to national healthcare or social assistance. A more alarming yet almost unmentionable concern may have motivated the creation of Finlandia Village. As the value of self-reliance was thought so deeply rooted in aging Finnish men, it was feared that many had taken – or would take – their own lives rather than become a burden to others. A Finnish long-term care home could offer respite for such men.

At the Grand Festival, this local knowledge may have been held close during discussions that prompted the creation of a Finnish Rest Home Association. A short time later, and through this association, Finnish rest homes materialized (first, one in Sault Ste. Marie in 1976, then the one in Sudbury in 1982). It is intriguing that the festival, and not the rest home, was conceived in the sauna. Although the two events are conflated, the story functions to unite these two significant occurrences and their end products – two established Finnish organizations. The sauna is still the supreme metaphor in this story, and its rhetorical presence is not necessarily diminished through the conflation of the two events. Today, the Finnish Grand Festival and Finlandia Village are still linked, and visitors to the Finlandia Village home page will, quite literally, find a link to the website for the Finnish Grand Festival.

The sauna – first a key element in the origin story – is absent from the more official versions, becoming unhinged from the narrative as a floating element of the story. Evidently, dealing with the historic facts alone, the decision to create a rest home for the Finnish population of Sudbury *did not* emerge from a conversation in the sauna. Symbolically, however, it may as well have, and the sauna setting was muddled, mixed-in, and mythologized at some point along the way.

Congregation by initiation

A compelling origin story (that meets the four criteria for narrative) personifies and reifies the organization through its telling. The rhetorical act of oral storytelling and passing along “informal” information, as in the case of the first “sauna” version, is a powerful articulatory gesture, particularly when conveyed as an “aside” to the uninitiated, as it was to me during my orientation. The origin story discursively frames the values of an organization as something deep

set, and the rhetorical act of sharing the story with the uninitiated is imbued with unifying potential: Knowing and sharing how something came to be – explaining origins – is a strong rhetorical desire, emerging from and recreating a sense of what Kenneth Burke conceptualizes as congregation by segregation: “Is it not a terrifying fact that you can never get people together except when they have a goat in common? ... That’s how they have to operate; they get congregation by segregation” (Burke quoted in Aaron 499).

Burke’s concept of congregation by segregation is useful, as it pertains to Finlandia’s origin narratives. The concept of congregation by segregation refers to the establishment of commonality through differentiation. For Burke, the very nature of rhetoric is determined simultaneously by difference – there is a speaker and an audience – and by identification – the speaker attempts to identify with an audience. In terms of this organization, as with many organizations, story guides and indoctrinates (in a ceremonial sense) the uninitiated.

In terms of reaching out to the uninitiated, Finlandia Village does not expend a great deal of its organizational energy promoting itself through the use of such public relations methods as slick marketing or promotional texts – it is just not them. By virtue of its “business” and the service it provides, Finlandia Village, like other long term care home facilities, has less of a need to attract attention (and new residents) than to communicate information about itself clearly.

Using marketing terminology, Finlandia Village could be thought of as a niche market.

Generally, Finlandia Village communicates with those already initiated in its practices – its staff, partners, current and future residents and their families, and the Sudbury Finnish community. In most cases, Finlandia Village has taken a local approach to communicating the organization’s operations, values, and organizational structure, often utilizing staff for the creation of brochures, website design, and indeed, even something as significant and symbolic as its logo. The

rhetorical tendency for the organization to express itself in an organic manner ties in with the continuous feedback it receives, often collected through informal staff meetings and on-the-ground interactions among individuals. In this way, the organizational culture appears to be small, informed, responsive, and adaptive to fluctuations in the pulse of the organization.

In *Understanding Organizational Culture*, Mats Alvesson writes about “Cultures as a Metaphor and Metaphors for Culture,” analyzing several existing metaphors which performatively foster unified understandings of organizational culture. Most appropriate to the Finlandia Village configuration is his metaphor of “culture as social glue,” which is the notion that “organizations are integrated and controlled through informal, non-structural means – shared values, beliefs, understandings, and norms” (Alvesson 32). In this sense, organizational culture operates – in a feedback-loop fashion – against fragmentation, conflict, and tensions. For instance, Finlandia Village places great value upon the expression, re-evaluation, and adherence to its ethics and values, which include its strong encouragement of Finnish traditions and practices. Regardless how genuine the underlying motive, it is interesting to consider how the idealization of values and traditions is not, in itself, the expression of something purely “Finnish,” but figures just as well as a performative enactment of a *sense of* cohesion. Put into practice, the performance negotiates and navigates divisions and fragmentations (which are necessarily part of any organization and any group dynamic).

Conjoined with ritual and tradition as performance, similarly, as Kenneth Burke writes of the “bringing together” properties of ritualistic dance, the enactment of Finnish traditions and rituals (such as the sauna) assures cohesion and may be seen as an extension, through ritualistic practice, of Burke’s description of group dance:

[A rite] considered as social science, had an accuracy lacking in much of our contemporary action, since it was highly *collective* in its attributes, a *group* dance, in which *all* shared, hence an incantatory device that kept alive a much stronger sense of the group's consubstantiality than is stimulated today by the typical acts of private enterprise (Burke, *Philosophy* 108-109).

Identification and consubstantiality are facets of Burke's theory of rhetoric. In order to identify with the interests of another (or to show that shared interests exist) an individual articulates consubstantiality with another individual (this concept also applies to groups). In *A Rhetoric of Motives*, Burke demonstrates that consubstantiality paradoxically implies division. Identifying with another individual (or group) is a consubstantial phenomenon, but, also: "to begin with 'identification' is, by the same token, though roundabout, to confront the implications of division" (Burke, *Rhetoric* 22). "Insofar as the individual is involved in conflict with other individuals or groups, the study of this same individual would fall under the head of *Rhetoric*." (23).

Rhetorical spin-offs

At Finlandia Village, ethnically oriented divisions (as perceived) are negotiated through "satellite" rhetorical responses that serve to mediate seemingly incommensurable gaps or deviations within the organization. Rhetorical responses "confront the implications of division" (Burke, RM 22) by bridging them, to some degree. In these organizational responses, the rhetorical processes at work intersect with, and perhaps interrogate, the notion of an 'origin story'. Organizational rhetorical responses include public articulations of the organization's identity, such as the mission statement and logo. For instance, the current mission statement was

recently revised to address the changing ethnic constituency and therefore, the organization's perceived situation. The current mission statement, "Founded and maintained in the Finnish tradition ... for our multicultural community," may be understood as a projection of the impulse to unify that which threatens to divide. It juxtaposes the organization's Finnish origins with a multiculturally inclusive mandate, thereby accommodating the provisional and evolving status around which individuals are felt to belong in the "village." As such, the mission statement redefines and extends notions of sanctioned village membership, opening the door to consubstantiality.

Another organizational rhetorical response like the mission statement, yet not revised as recently as the mission statement, is the logo for Finlandia Village (Figure 1). The logo may be apprehended as the visual enactment of consubstantial impulses – a visual effort to bridge the gap between ethnic realities: the Finnish-only origins and today's more diverse constituency. The logo's somewhat amateur, informal design may be appreciated as an example of the organization's "grassroots" stance on articulating identity. However, the design's superimposition of two national symbols, the Canadian maple leaf and the Finnish flag, threatens to obscure or almost 'cancel out' both symbols. In this sense, the design's superimposition points to a sense of 'cultural imposition' serving as a visual snapshot of the organization's situation, as it continues to negotiate its jostling cultural reality. (It is interesting to note that the organization is currently reviewing its logo, and embarking upon a rebranding project that may replace the entwined national symbols with one distinct visual motif of a more inclusive nature, yet without wholly losing a sense of its "Finnishness.")



(Figure 1)

Many aspects of the Finnish culture seemed embedded in the early creation of the facility through its architecture, traditions, and practices. Today, however, more deliberate rhetorical responses/performative actions at Finlandia Village are arising, perhaps to address the more obviously shifting ethnic situation. For example, the recent formation of a “Finnish Ethnicity Action Plan” in spring 2011 was a specific response to a call for enhanced understanding of the role of ethnicity at Finlandia Village. To invite staff feedback, a workshop was held, called: “What can be done to enhance/support “Finnishness” Action Plan.” A creative, eclectic assortment of ideas emerged: To revamp name tags by adding languages spoken through the inclusion of flags; to assess staff Finnish language skills in annual performance reviews; to introduce a Finnish “theme of the month”; to add cultural observances in telecasts; to translate more signs and nameplates into Finnish (already, most building signage is Finnish/English); to invite all residents to take part in Finnish “ethnic craft workshops”; and, quite significantly, to create an ethnicity committee.

The organization performatively takes ownership of the current situation through the springboard of a workshop. A slightly more cynical analysis might also regard the organization's directed response as a proactive 'last stand' to a threat to the organization's Finnish origins. Yet for pragmatic reasons, the threat *will* be negotiated – this much is clear. On one level, the workshop may be interpreted as an overt gesture aimed at respecting and broadening “Finnishness” throughout the organization in such a way that all residents, irrespective of individual ethnicity, are encouraged to understand, practice, and appreciate this distinct culture's traditions. However, while the ethnicity committee will highlight Finnish traditions, it is expected to also open the door to *other kinds* of ethnicity committees, such as Francophone and Ukrainian ethnicity committees. Although a seemingly paradoxical concept, it may be the case that through the organization's tradition of respecting Finnish culture, Finlandia opens avenues to respecting *other cultures* as well.

Adding complexity to the concept of ethnically/culturally oriented organizations, it is necessary to interrogate the assumptions at play when thinking in terms of a singular culture (ie. Finnish culture) that serves an organization as a cultural benchmark. It would be naive to presume a small group, the Finns in the Sudbury region, were necessarily a fully harmonious/homogeneous group; in fact, the very first residents at Finlandia Village carried deeply set political and philosophical discordances/distinctions. For instance, Finnish immigrants coming to Canada from the 1900s to the 1950s brought with them divisions from their homeland – political, religious, and social. Many Finns in the Sudbury region (and North America at large) differentiated themselves as either communist/socialist (the Reds) or nationalists/traditionalists (the Whites). Some of these very individuals comprise the first generation of residents within

Finlandia Village, many of whom are now in the oldest age bracket, some of whom have passed away.

While the cultural divisions among the Finns are noteworthy, this is not meant to imply that Finlandia Village ferments political divisions; in fact, quite the opposite appears to be the case. As Alvesson states, “Culture is anchored in tradition and frequently changes slowly, but there are many cultural manifestations and people in turbulent and multi-group situations move between them” (Alvesson 49). The old allegiances and divisions seem to have obscured, or possibly become irrelevant, in the context of a long term care home, where other, more pressing eventualities (such as end-of-life eventualities) are shared among members.

Yet at the same time, front-line workers at Finlandia Village are currently receiving phone calls from families frustrated that their Finnish family members are, in some cases, not being admitted into what they thought would be their facility for long term health care. Answers are not simple. While provincial healthcare policy – based on neoliberal funding requirements and articulating who may be admitted into the Finnish rest home – is potentially divisionary in its local application, the performative coping strategies and rhetorical responses addressing this present moment at Finlandia Village indicate a small-scale, care-driven, and – for those very reasons – *responsive* organization’s role in managing, negotiating, and fine-tuning the particular, day-to-day effects of larger admission policy imperatives in this healthcare environment.

The organization’s ‘smoothing over’ of earlier divisions sets the tone for the negotiation of the new ethnic reality at Finlandia Village, perhaps serving to alleviate a potentially divisionary problematic. Finlandia Village has been built around handling such divisions and challenges. Significantly, ethics of care is a central force in the organization; there seems a genuine sense of respect for those in the “village” that crosses far more boundaries than cultural

boundaries alone. It may be no small wonder that the organization's attention to ethics of care, coupled with the tradition of respecting Finnish culture, opens avenues to respecting *other cultures*. Nevertheless, the numbers in line for long term care home placement are growing and bed space is at a premium – a trend that will continue for at least another decade. For this reason, the ethnically situated negotiations are provisional in nature and continuously under revision.

Some degree of provisionality inheres in the organization's origin stories, just as provisionality inheres in its ethnically oriented rhetorical negotiations. As Yanow explains, "What is not said, the silences in discourse based often on assumed and implicit norms, is as deserving of analytic attention as what is said ... Myths divert attention and maintain silences ... As with "ritual," "myth" is analytic language, because [it is] so deeply embedded in an agency's architecture of meaning" (80). On a daily basis, Finlandia Village negotiates seemingly incommensurable realities, yet significantly, through the lens of a health care, or "ethics of care," perspective. Daily interactions at Finlandia Village involve negotiating terrain of profound ethical/moral decisions, end-of-life eventualities, and more recently, competing cultural values and revisions to its origin myths.

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