

# Foreign Camp Ground

## On Translation of Camp and Postcolonial Allusions

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**ABSTRACT:** This paper examines the translation of culture-bound allusions from one socio-cultural context into another. The paper focuses on the translation of camp and postcolonial allusions from English into Finnish. The aim is to highlight the significance of these allusions to a literary text, and to examine how the adopted translation strategy affects the meanings and functions of these allusions in a different socio-cultural context. The discussion is illustrated by examples from the novel *Not Wanted on the Voyage* (1984) by Timothy Findley (1930–2002) and its Finnish translation *Suuri tulva* (1986) by Hanno Vammelvuo (poetry by Alice Martin). In Findley's novel, camp and postcolonial allusions play a key role in creating an alternative narrative and voices that resist, parody and reject the existing order of things. This alternative narrative is only accessible to readers who can identify the allusions and understand their meanings.

**RÉSUMÉ:** Cet article traite de la traduction des allusions culturelles d'un contexte socioculturel à un autre. Il se concentre sur la traduction des allusions homosexuelles (camp) et postcoloniales de l'anglais au finnois. L'objectif est de mettre en lumière la signification de ces allusions dans un texte littéraire et d'observer comment la stratégie de traduction adoptée affecte le sens et les fonctions de ces allusions dans un contexte socioculturel différent. Cette analyse est illustrée par des exemples tirés du roman de Timothy Findley (1930–2002) *Not Wanted on the Voyage* (1984) et sa traduction finlandaise *Suuri tulva* (1986) de Hanno Vammelvuo (poésie de Alice Martin). Dans le roman de Findley, les allusions homosexuelles (camp) et postcoloniales ont un rôle clé dans la création d'une narration alternative et de voix qui résistent, parodient et rejettent l'ordre existant des choses. Cette narration alternative n'est accessible qu'aux lecteurs qui peuvent identifier les allusions et comprendre leur signification.

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**A**n allusion is an explicit or implicit, often playful reference to another cultural element, which is known to at least some members of the same culture or subculture. Leppihalme (1997) provides a categorization of allusions that divides them into proper-name (PN) allusions and key-phrase (KP) allusions. The former contain a proper name and are references to, for example, fictional and non-fictional characters, places, and titles of literary and other works. The latter ones are phrases that evoke another text or situation and the network of meanings it carries. The reference may be to a work of literature but also to another type of “social text,” such as a commercial slogan, a politician’s famous phrase, an event in history, and so on. Allusions vary considerably, but they are all aimed at producing reader recognition and response to a cultural reference. Therefore, an allusion ceases to function as one if it is not recognized as a reference to another text. Consequently, if the readers of a translated text cannot recognize an allusion, which many readers of the source text would be able to recognize, the result is a reduced meaning.

This paper examines some of the problems involved in translating culture-bound allusions from one socio-cultural context into another. The paper focuses on the translation of camp and postcolonial allusions. The aim is to demonstrate the importance of these allusions to a literary text and to examine the impact of different translation strategies on the meanings and functions of these allusions in the target context. The discussed problems are illustrated by examples drawn from the 1984 novel *Not Wanted on the Voyage* by Timothy Findley (1930–2002) and its Finnish translation *Suuri tulva* [The Great Flood] from 1986 by Hanno Vammelvuo (poetry by Alice Martin). The paper contains four sections. Section II presents the background and methodological approach of this paper. Section III provides brief definitions for key concepts. Section IV introduces Findley’s novel and presents an analysis of selected camp and postcolonial allusions as well as their translations. And finally, Section V offers some concluding remarks.

## II

The theoretical approach of this paper is mainly descriptive. Translation is here seen as communication that takes place between different socio-cultural systems, which contain semiotic, literary, cultural, and social structures. Moreover, each culture or society is seen as a heterogeneous, open, and dynamic network of systems: a polysystem (Even-Zohar 1990a). In this network of intersecting and partly overlapping systems, literature (which includes the literary institution, authors, translators, readers, as well as texts and translations produced in the culture) forms one system and translated literature its subsystem. Translated

literature can have a weaker or stronger position in the polysystem at different times, depending on various cultural and social factors, and this position partly conditions the strategies adopted by translators working within the polysystem (Even-Zohar 1990b). Rather than focusing on source texts, this systemic approach emphasizes the study of target texts and their relationship with the target language and culture.<sup>1</sup> An important role in this approach is played by the norms that affect the translation process. Norms are here understood as socio-cultural constraints that are located somewhere between rules and idiosyncrasies (Toury 1995 54).<sup>2</sup> In addition, this paper stresses the translator's role as a mediator of cultural information, an inter-cultural communicator, so to speak.

The presented examples of camp and postcolonial allusions are analyzed in two stages. First, their use and functions in the source text are analyzed by using concepts drawn from literary theory, especially queer theory and postcolonial theory. Ideas applied from both areas include resistance to and subversion of dominant values and discourses. Key ideas applied from the area of queer theory include the constructedness and performativity of gender (Butler 1990, 1993) and camp as queer discourse (Bergman 1993, Meyer). From postcolonial theory, applied concepts include hybrid mimicry or the subversive repetition of existing texts (Bhabha), canonical counter-discourse (Tiffin), and the deconstruction of imperialist discourses, cultural stereotypes, and the representation of the "other" (Said, Hall 1992, 1997).

Second, the translations of the allusions are analyzed by using the strategies categorized by Leppihalme for the translation of allusions. Leppihalme divides the strategies into two groups, according to the type of the allusion.

For proper-name (PN) allusions, she presents three alternative courses of action: *retain* the name in its source text form (or in its standardized target text form), *change* the name, or *omit* it (78–79). The first alternative can be accompanied by additional information (explanation within text or footnote, etc.). The second alternative is to replace the PN allusion with another one in the source culture or with one in the target culture. The third alternative involves two more radical choices: re-create the meaning of the allusive name or omit the allusion altogether.

For translating key-phrase (KP) allusions, Leppihalme offers the following strategies: *standard translation* (can be applied to an allusion that refers to an object shared by both the source and target culture); *minimum change* (i.e., a literal translation that ignores the implied meaning of the allusion); *extra-allusive guidance* (provide additional information as needed); *footnote, endnote, translator's preface*; *simulated familiarity* or *internal marking* (to signal the presence of an allusion); *replacement* (by a target culture item); *reduction to sense* (rephrase the meaning and omit the allusive form); *re-creation* (construct a new element with similar implications and effect); and *omission* (1997 84).

In addition to Leppihalme's work, the analysis draws on Harvey's study on the translation of camp talk. The translator's strategies are then considered in

light of the current norms governing the translation of allusions in Finland (Leppihalme, Tuominen). However, before looking at the actual allusions and their translations, some key concepts need to be defined.

### III

*Postcolonial theory* is a broad and interdisciplinary approach that combines theories from a number of fields, such as “feminism, philosophy, psychology, politics, anthropology, and literary theory” (McLeod 23). In this paper, the use of the term *postcolonialism* is limited to a particular type of counter-discourse that subverts, rejects, or deconstructs various forms of colonial or imperial discourse. In the Canadian context, and specifically in the case of Findley’s *Not Wanted on the Voyage*, the focus is on counter-discourse directed against ideology, discourse, and rhetorics rooted in British imperialism.

*Queer theory*, like postcolonial theory, is a broad and divergent field of study. It developed from the field of gay studies and especially lesbian studies, which in turn evolved from gender and feminist studies. Queer theory comprises a wide variety of different theoretical approaches, which makes the field difficult to define. Also, any attempt to define queer theory contradicts the goal of queer theory, which is to reject fixed definitions and categorizations. However, the field does have some common starting points. Queer theory sees gender and sexual identity as an ambivalent and unstable construction, which is produced through a repetition of acts (gender performance). Queer theory criticizes heteronormativity and compulsory heterosexuality. It subverts and deconstructs heterosexual (and heterosexist) discourses, categories, and labels, and instead, emphasizes the performativity and discontinuous nature of gender (Butler 1990, 1993). Queer theory distinguishes itself from gay and lesbian studies by defying the idea that gender is somehow fixed, and by offering a voice to people ignored or excluded by gay or lesbian studies, such as bisexuals, transsexuals, transvestites, and sadomasochists (see Beemyn and Eliason 163–168). Again, in this paper the term is used to refer to a type of counter-discourse that challenges or deconstructs heterosexist discourses. One of the means to produce this counter-discourse is the use of camp.

In her 1964 essay, Susan Sontag defined *camp* as representing an alternative aesthetic value system, which emphasizes taste, style, and artifice (277). According to Sontag, camp sensibility is “disengaged, depoliticized—or at least apolitical” (ibid.). Her specifically apolitical definition of camp has been heavily criticized by queer theorists, who define camp much more politically, as a “solely queer discourse,” which “embodies a specifically queer cultural critique” (Meyer 1), and as a tool for sexual identity politics (Bergman 1993 14–15). Through the use of exaggeration, irony, parody, absurdity, and theatricality (especially

representations of a “theatricalized woman”), camp mocks, rejects, and deconstructs prevailing binary categories and labels built on the idea “heterosexuality = normal, natural, healthy behaviour; homosexuality = abnormal, unnatural, sick behaviour” (Babuscio 20).

## IV

*Not Wanted on the Voyage* is a re-telling of the biblical story of the flood. In the novel, Dr. Noah Noyes is depicted as a monster who carries out experiments with kittens and murders deformed children. He has the sole power to interpret reality and to communicate with his god, Yaweh. In Findley’s text, this god is a senile, vengeful old man (the cat Mottyl seriously suspects that Yaweh is in fact a human). In the course of the novel, it becomes gradually evident that Noah’s interpretation of reality serves only his interests. His forced, binary reality marginalizes or excludes all things that defy categorization into either good or evil. The heroes in the novel include Mrs. Noyes, Noah’s gin-sipping wife, her half-blind cat Mottyl, and Lucy, the angel Lucifer dressed as a seven-foot geisha, who later in the novel marries Ham, one of Noah’s sons. These silenced, marginalized, and othered “lower orders” (*Not Wanted* 302) seek to resist and survive, even subvert, Noah’s dictatorial and oppressive system.

Literary critics have found various approaches to the book. It has been read as a distinctively postcolonial text (Ashcroft et al.) and even as a “Gnostic parable” (Woodcock). Others have found an intertext to the novel in Byron’s *Heaven and Earth* (Nicholson), Orwell’s *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (Keith), as well as several other texts.<sup>3</sup> Pennee sees the book as a “revisionist novel” that “questions received notions” about gender, power, and social hierarchies, and gives a voice to the silenced and marginalized (14–15). Martell approaches a queer theoretical viewpoint in arguing that in the novel, Findley “addresses the ways in which contemporary society tries desperately to *normalize* people, social practices, gender, religion, dogma, and exegesis” and continues by saying that “through a radical infusion of *Camp* elements, Findley not only ironizes social practices, but also criticizes the kinds of binary ideologies that function as filters for exclusivity and inclusion on various coded levels of a social text” (97). Peter Dickinson combines the themes of postcolonial and queer discourse in looking at the novel as a “narrative of both national ambivalence and sexual dissidence” (125). The analysis here will focus on postcolonial and queer counter-discourse manifested in the form of allusions.

The first postcolonial and camp allusions are present on the very first page of the novel, in a postmodern prologue, which starts with a passage from the book of Genesis, describing the boarding of the ark. But then, the first line of Findley’s text reads: “Everyone knows it wasn’t like that,” directly challenging

the authority of the canon and “drawing our attention to [Findley’s] text as postmodern metafiction” (Dickinson 129). Findley deconstructs the canonical text by taking it down to the level of a fable, arguing that all texts, including religious and historical ones, are in a sense fictional. Findley’s text continues with the following paragraphs:

To begin with, they make it sound as if there wasn’t any argument; as if there wasn’t any panic—no one being pushed aside—no one being trampled—none of the animals howling—none of the people screaming blue murder. They make it sound as if the only people who wanted to get on board were Doctor Noyes and his family. Presumably, everyone else (the rest of the human race, so to speak) stood off waving gaily, behind a distant barricade: SPECTATORS WILL NOT CROSS THE YELLOW LINE and: THANK YOU FOR YOUR CO-OPERATION. With all the baggage neatly labelled: WANTED or NOT WANTED ON THE VOYAGE.

They also make it sound as if there wasn’t any dread—Noah and his sons relaxed on the poop deck, sipping port and smoking cigars beneath a blue and white striped awning—probably wearing yachting caps, white ducks and blazers. Mrs. Noyes and her daughters-in-law fluttering up the gangplank—neat and tidy—tidy under their umbrellas—turning and calling; “*goodbye, everybody.*” And all their friends shouting; “*bon voyage!*” while the daughters-in-law hand over their tickets, smiling and laughing—everyone being piped aboard and a band playing *Rule Britannia!* and *Over the Sea to Skye*. Flags and banners and a booming cannon...like an excursion.

(*Not Wanted* 3, original emphasis)

The opening scene is full of allusions to English colonial life. It resembles the departure of an ocean liner: friends “waving gaily” on the shore, Noah and his sons “sipping port and smoking cigars” on the poop deck, “wearing yachting caps, white ducks and blazers.” The passengers are “piped aboard” while a band plays “*Rule Britannia!*” and “*Over the Sea to Skye,*” accompanied by “flags and banners and a booming cannon.” This pleasant scene is “like an excursion” of British aristocrats in the nineteenth century. The two pieces of music are explicit allusions to colonialism. The first one, “*Rule Britannia!*”, alludes to the dominance of the British Empire, especially over the seas, during the nineteenth century. The second, “*Over the Sea to Skye,*” is an allusion to Prince Charles Edward Stuart, the Young Pretender. In the summer of 1746, his army suffered a crushing defeat against the Duke of Cumberland, but a local young woman, Flora MacDonald, helped him to sail to the Isle of Skye to avoid capture. During this boat trip, the prince assumed the identity of and was dressed up as Betty Burke, Flora’s Irish maid (note the additional allusion to cross-dressing).

In the Finnish translation, the above song titles were translated literally as “*Hallitse Britannia!*” [*Rule Britannia!*] and “*Skyen pursilaulu*” [*Skye boat song*] without any additional information or guidance about their meaning. If we recall

Leppihalme's three strategies for translating PN allusions, *retain*, *change* or *omit* the source text form, the translator appears to have used the second strategy—*change*. Within this strategy, the translator chose to replace the names with target language names (and not with other source language names). The first title succeeded in indicating the target of Findley's subversive text (Great Britain), but failed to imply the more specific object of criticism (colonial/imperial practices, ideology, and so on). In the latter case, the literal translation strategy eliminated the function of the allusion altogether.

As an example of the use of camp in the source text, the character of Lucy, whom Findley later described as a "seven-foot gent in drag," is the most obvious camp figure (Findley 1990 227). Findley uses the character of Lucy to deconstruct and destabilize binary sexual categories. With her extravagant mannerisms and appearance, Lucy wears a "gown of bronze feathers" (*Not Wanted* 283) and is "steeped in camp vernacular" (Bailey and Grandy 7). In the novel, her feathers are found by various animal and human characters, which Cecilia Martell sees as an allusion to "dropping [one's] beads," or "leav[ing] broad hints about one's homosexuality" (Martell 104n4, quoting Bergman 1991 110). At one point, Mrs. Noyes asks Lucy about her height, and she answers "seven-foot-five: and every inch a queen" (*Not Wanted* 249). The answer alludes to the well-known concept of a *drag queen*, a man dressed and posing as a woman. However, in the Finnish translation, the word *queen* is translated literally as *kuningatar* [queen], which does not carry the allusion to a drag queen. Lucy's speech is full of camp exaggeration and playfulness, as the following excerpts from her discussion with Michael Archangelis indicates. Michael has just slain a dragon, which he hoped to be Lucifer in disguise.

"Wonderful scene," she said. "Very nice try, ducky. I suppose you thought that Dragon was me. But it wasn't and it ain't."...

"How very disappointing," said Lucy. "A sort of double disappointment for you, Michael, my love. Not me and not anybody. Too bad. Better luck next time"...

"What do you hope to accomplish by all this?" Michael asked.

"All what?" Lucy shook out her frail skirts and lifted her hand to her hair.

"Well—dressing as a woman to begin with. And a foreigner."

"Nothing wrong with dressing as a woman. Might as well be a woman as anything else. And what, may one ask, do you mean by 'a foreigner'?"

"Someone not of these parts," said Michael, as if he was quoting from a book of rules for border guards.

"The slanted eyes, et cetera? The black, black hair – the white, white face? You don't like it? I love."

(*Not Wanted* 106–107, original emphasis)

"Loistava esitys", Lucy sanoi. "Oikein hieno yritys, poju. Luullakseni sinä oletit että tuo Lohikäärme olin minä. Mutta se ei ollut eikä ole."...

“Mikä pettymys”, sanoi Lucy. “Eräänlainen kaksinkertainen pettymys sinulle, Michael kultaseni. Ei minua eikä *ketään*. Voi voi. Parempaa onnea ensi kerralla.”...  
 “Mitä luulet saavasi aikaan kaikella tällä?” kysyi Michael.  
 “Kaikella millä?” Lucy ravisteli hauraita helmojaan ja kohensi kädellään hiuksiaan.  
 “No, ensinnäkin pukeutumalla naiseksi. Ja muukalaiseksi.”  
 “Mitä vikaa siinä on, että pukeutuu naiseksi. Yhtä hyvin naiseksi kuin miksikään muuksi. Ja saanko tiedustella, mitä sinä tarkoitat ‘muukalaisella?’”  
 “Joku paikkakunnan ulkopuolinen” sanoi Michael ikään kuin olisi siteerannut rajavartioiden ohjekirjaa.  
 “Vinot silmät ja niin edelleen? Mustaakin mustemmat hiukset – valkoistakin valkoisemmat kasvot? Etkö pidä niistä? Minä *rakastan* niitä.”  
 (Suuri tulva 126–127, original emphasis)

[ “*Splendid scene*,” Lucy said. “Very nice try, sonny. I suppose you thought that Dragon was me. But it wasn’t and it isn’t.”...  
 “What a disappointment,” said Lucy. “A sort of double disappointment for you, Michael, my dear. Not me and not *anybody*. Dear dear. Better luck next time.” ...  
 “What do you expect to accomplish by all this?” asked Michael.  
 “All what? Lucy shook her frail skirts and adjusted her hair with her hand.  
 “Well, first of all, by dressing as a woman. *And a foreigner.*”  
 “What is wrong with dressing as a woman. Just as well a woman as anything else. And may I enquire, what do you mean by ‘a foreigner?’”  
 “Someone from outside this locality” said Michael as if he was quoting from a book of rules for border guards.  
 “The slanted eyes, et cetera? Hair blacker than black – face whiter than white? You don’t like them? I love them.”]  
 (Gloss by Michael Jääskeläinen)

The elements that draw our attention are Lucy’s mannerisms and camp-like use of adjectives and verbs typical of feminine language. The phrase *and what, may one ask* presents a case of intentional register mixing, something that “verbal camp typically delights in” (Harvey 301). Its purpose is to parody accepted norms of discourse. In addition, words are stressed (*wonderful, love* in italics) or repeated (*white, white* and *black, black*) to create additional emphasis. This is also typical of camp talk. Harvey talks about the “empathics of camp,” which are used to produce a “theatricalized woman.” The process involves the use of exclamations (such as *oh my, oh dear*), hyperbole, and typically feminine adjectives (299). This argument is also supported by Peter Dickinson, who (in discussing this particular passage) says that the “exaggerated emphasis of certain words (*Wonderful scene, ‘I love’*), the linguistic repetition (“black, black hair,” “white, white face”), and the use of epicene epithets and pronouns (“ducky,” “may one ask?”) are stylistic or syntactical elements of what we may call a particular camp rhetoric” (137).

Many of the camp elements in Lucy’s speech and mannerisms are lost in the translation. An exception to the loss of *campness* is the register mixing in the

phrase “Ja saanko tiedustella” [and may I inquire]. Lucy’s emphasized use of typically feminine words, such as *wonderful* and *love* have become *loistava* [splendid, brilliant] and *rakastan* [love], both in italics. Although the typographical emphasis is maintained and the actual words are perfect translations of the source text words, their meanings are reduced. In Finnish, the adjective *loistava* [splendid] does not carry quite the same connotations as the English word *wonderful* and the Finnish word remains gender-neutral. Also the sentence “Minä *rakastan* niitä” [I love them], for the source text “I love,” seems to have a slightly different meaning. In the source text, Lucy’s emphasized use of the word *love* has a clearly camp sense of exaggerated and theatrical feminine language. In Finnish, the use of the word *rakastan* does not have the same effect. The verb *rakastaa* [to love] is used less profusely in Finnish than in English. The camp exaggeration is also partially lost in Lucy’s repetitive use of adjectives, when “the black, black hair—the white, white face” become in the target text “*mustaakin mustemmat hiukset – valkoistakin valkoisemmat kasvot*” [hair blacker than black—face whiter than white].

Another “campy” character in the novel is Japeth, Noah’s youngest son, who is depicted as a “sexual ignoramus and a virgin to boot” (*Not Wanted* 77). To correct this situation, Japeth heads out to “find his manhood once and for all” and return home to conquer his young wife’s virginity (*Not Wanted* 23). Instead, on the road to Baal and Mammon (an allusion to Sodom and Gomorrah) Japeth goes through an allegorical “awakening and denial” of homosexuality, perhaps even sadomasochism, as he is captured, marinated, and nearly eaten by the Ruffian King and his foul crew (Dickinson 136). Japeth returns home with his body permanently coloured blue by the marinade. The colouring is an allusion to Thomas Gainsborough’s feminine painting *Blue Boy* from 1770, but also to “one of the oldest magazines of gay male pornography, which goes by the same name” (ibid). “Turning blue” is also an allusion to “coming out” or announcing one’s homosexuality.<sup>4</sup> Lorraine York (210–211) notes that this passage has an intertext in Findley’s other novel, *The Butterfly Plague*: “Once, I did turn blue and I was very ill and had to be put in an oxygen tent and treated by many, many doctors” (307). Japeth’s “turning blue” or becoming homosexual is also recognized and discussed by animals, as Mottyl the cat inquires from Bip the lemur whether he has “heard about Japeth.” Bip answers affirmatively and continues with: “Blue, is he?” (*Not Wanted* 45). Japeth is treated differently (in fact, he is metaphorically “put in an oxygen tent”) because of his new skin colour (or sexual outlook), as “his wife wouldn’t sleep with him; his father wouldn’t honour him; his friends all laughed at him and his mother made him sit all day in a tub of lye, while screaming ‘scrub! scrub! scrub!’” (*Not Wanted* 16). Japeth is ashamed of his blueness, which denies him the manliness he seeks: “It’s because I’m blue...and that isn’t fair! I didn’t ask to be blue” (*Not Wanted* 16). If we now return to the prologue of the novel, the phrase *blue murder* gains a whole new meaning. It can be read to allude to the

exclusion (and in this case extermination) of all people with non-heterosexual preferences. They, or *everyone else*, are left onshore to wave “gaily” at the departing ark, from “behind a distant barricade.”

In the target text, the allusion to homosexuality in “blue murder” has been omitted, and “waving gaily” has been translated as “heiluttivat iloisesti” [waved happily]. The omission of the first allusion removes the alluded message but also some of the “campness,” or exaggeration and absurdity from the entire scene. The second allusion is eliminated because the literal translation turns it from a campy allusion to a phrase that carries no sexual implications.

In the discussion between Mottyl and Bip concerning Japeth’s new (blue) condition, Bip’s reply is translated as “Hän on siis sininen, niinkö?” [So, he is blue, is that right?]. While the translation describes Japeth’s physical colour perfectly, it fails to reconstruct the allusion to homosexuality that “turning blue” carries. The same applies to all occasions in which Japeth’s “blueness” is discussed in the novel. For example, Japeth’s social exclusion because of his sexual preference is not alluded to in the target text. His desperate complaint about the unfair treatment he receives in the Noyes household is translated as follows:

“Tämä johtuu siitä, että olen sininen”, sanoi Jaafet. “Ja se ei ole reilua! Enhän minä halunnut tulla siniseksi.”

(*Suuri tulva* 25)

[“It’s because I’m blue,” said Japeth. “And that isn’t fair! But I didn’t want to become blue.”]

(Gloss by Michael Jääskeläinen)

In the above sample, the target text “I didn’t ask to be blue” has been translated as “Enhän minä halunnut tulla siniseksi” [But I didn’t want to become blue]. The target text statement indicates that Japeth did not want to become blue, while the source text only stated that his becoming “blue” was not a matter of choice, but something unavoidable and inborn. Thus, the allusion to homosexuality is lost in the translation. In fact, since Japeth’s homosexuality is mainly alluded to through his “turning blue” in the source text, the issue of his homosexuality becomes obscure in the target text.

In her study on the translation of allusions from English into Finnish, Ritva Leppihalme notes that while the majority of the translators interviewed in the study considered themselves as cultural mediators and had a generally positive attitude toward providing additional information to convey unfamiliar items, they in fact “found little use for guidance” in the translations examined in the study (92). Instead, the study showed that the predominant strategy for the translation of allusions was that of *minimum change*: “retention of the name as such for PNs and minimum change for KPs” (102).<sup>5</sup> The reader-response survey

conducted in connection with the study showed that this strategy frequently led to “culture bumps,” or translations that are “puzzling or impenetrable from the target-text reader’s point of view” (197). A more recent study on the translation of allusions (also from English into Finnish) showed the same prevalence in the use of minimum change strategies and that target-text readers had difficulties in understanding the meaning of the allusions (Tuominen).<sup>6</sup> The translation of camp and postcolonial allusions in *Not Wanted on the Voyage* would seem to comply with this tendency, which appears to be the norm in Finland with regard to the translation of allusions.

In his article, Harvey stresses the cultural embeddedness of camp discourse. He argues that translator should be familiar not only with the “comparable resources of camp in source and target language cultures” but also the “functions that camp performs in its diverse contexts” (295). His examination of translated camp discourse seems to suggest that creative translation strategies (as opposed to literal or minimum change strategies) may be called for to render the functions of camp in another cultural context. I would argue that this also applies to culture-bound postcolonial allusions.

## V

This paper has discussed some of the problems involved in translating camp and postcolonial allusions from one socio-cultural context into another. With a few examples I have tried to demonstrate that these allusions contribute significantly to the overall effect of Findley’s novel. The examples were limited to a few micro-level allusions that proved particularly problematic. My analyses indicated that some or all of their functions were not rendered in the Finnish translation. However, the translator’s strategies seem to comply with current translational practices in Finland (i.e. the use of minimum change strategies). But in the case of the examined allusions, the strategy of minimum change proved to be less successful in conveying the networks of meaning that these allusions carried, and in fact resulted in a reduced meaning. It would appear that in this particular case, the translation of these allusions complies with Toury’s law of growing standardization (267–274), according to which the textual relations of a source text tend to get modified or even totally ignored in favour of more habitual target language options. The results of this study seem to support the findings of the two studies referred to in this article (Leppihalme, Tuominen). This raises some important questions. Do the meanings and functions of culture-bound allusions have a general tendency of being reduced when translated from English into Finnish, and if so, why? Does the same tendency apply to translations from other languages into Finnish? What about translations from Finnish into English or other languages? Is the tendency limited to the Finnish context or are we dealing

with a more universal phenomenon? These questions, while obviously far beyond the scope of this paper, deserve more attention and study.

#### NOTES

1. For an account of descriptive, systemic approaches to translation since the 1970s, see Hermans.
2. See also Toury (1998) and the critical responses in the same book. Gideon Toury is a pioneer in the study of translational norms (he began his work on the subject in the late 1970s). Toury divides norms into preliminary, initial and operational. Preliminary norms refer to the “choice of text-types, or even of individual texts” to be translated, as well as attitudes toward translation through a mediating language (1995: 58). Initial norms refer to whether the translator adheres to the norms of the source or target culture, the choice resulting in varying degrees of adequacy and acceptability for the translated text (56-57). Operational norms govern the translator’s decisions during the actual translation process (58). Chesterman, on the other hand, talks about expectancy norms and professional norms. Expectancy norms refer to what target text readers expect a translated text to be like. Professional norms are further divided into accountability norms, communication norms, and relation norms, and refer to different factors that influence the actual translation process.
3. For a discussion of a number of such intertexts, see Pennee (17-24).
4. See, for example, *Am I Blue? : Coming Out from the Silence*, a collection of short stories about adolescence and homosexuality edited by Marion Dane Bauer.
5. For a discussion on the possible reasons for the predominance of this strategy, see Leppihalme (102-104).
6. Tuominen’s study also indicated that although Finnish readers are somewhat used to encountering foreign elements in translated literature and indeed expect to find them in such texts, failure to understand the meaning of the allusions in a text reduced its overall richness and in some cases resulted in negative attitudes toward the text (Tuominen 88-92).

#### ABBREVIATIONS

KP: key-phrase  
 PN: proper-name

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