Editorial

The current issue of *Pro Ethnologia*, *Multiethnic Communities in the Past and Present* observes ethnic processes in a historic perspective and in the present age. The studied groups live in Europe and Russia: the Nenets, Kvens, Livs, Hungarians, Russians and the Võru people. Ethnic or national group identity is one of the identity levels of the individuals who are members of these groups. Secondly, the way of life of various groups is being treated as well as the issues associated with religion and beliefs.

When taking a closer look at the nature of current ethnicity studies and their priorities, the most important ones seem to be the issues of power and liberty (and, by way of this, also the opportunities) of the ethnic groups. Primarily, the dominating topics in ethnicity studies involve colonialism and post-colonialism, also the cultural rights of ethnic groups; multiculturalism and migration being the second prevalent object of discussion. Directly or indirectly, these debates also frame the following articles. To a certain extent, the issues regarding the correlation between traditional beliefs and the religion and the connections between the language and ethnicity also illustrate the power relationships.

Presently, the dominating understanding within the treatments on ethnicity underlie that ethnicity is not a stable, static phenomenon, but instead, is characteristic of a concrete moment of time and room, a phenomenon depending on this. Ethnicity is a living construction of the terms of social life, identity and participation (Calhoun 2001: 10). Thus, in its nature, it is a modern phenomenon.

Saulvedis Cimermanis' article "The Livs of Svētciems *Pagasts* in the Late 18th and 19th Century" deals with the Livs and tries to find them from among the archive data on the basis of other features, such as their occupations, property relationships and other socio-demographic characteristics, in addition to names. Cimermanis, similarly to other authors, focuses on one region in his research, thus making the article a historical case study. He discusses the issues of social mobility and the mutual proportions of power between ethnic groups (first and foremost, that of the Livs and Latvians), by describing the situation how the Livs, during the period under observation became assimilated due to the reciprocity of several factors. This involves the resettling of people;

during the same period, the region was also struck by diseases and epidemics and as a result of all these processes and events, the ethnic composition of this area altered significantly during the observed period of time.

Ethnicity is not coterminous with traditional life or tribal identities. Instead of that it is usually developed as a specific way of constructing large-scale identities and regarding this focus, identity based on kinship or relationships within a village community became a so-called inadequate solution. In this regard, the Estonian settlement in Russia having been discussed in **Anu Korb**'s article – "*Virulased*, a Multiethnic and Multicultural Community in Ryzhkovo Village, West-Siberia" – is a very interesting case. Here the most important actual functioning area of ethnonyms as, e.g. *the Virulased*, primarily seems to be present solely within the limits of one village. In this way, it seems as if we are not dealing with ethnicity directly in the form it is understood in its wider sense – as a level of forming large-scale identities. Here, ethnicity is rather revealed as a factor of subjective or local identity, as an attribute of drawing the inner borders of the local village community. At the same time, this case vividly demonstrates how large-scale processes can primarily be manifested at a local level. Similarly, this also indicates the paradoxical nature of the concept of ethnicity. The question is, in given social relationships, to what extent does ethnicity offer an alternative to kinship relations and to the roles existent inside the village community, and how much does it actually overlap and intertwine with the latter.

Of all the authors, Korb is the only one who emphasises the keyword, multiethnicity, by concentrating on a multiethnic village that has been her focus as a researcher for a long time.

The article provides an overview of the historic development of the village and an analysis of the newer data obtained during fieldwork. The situation in the village is peculiar as the village inhabitants do not use the Russian language for their mutual communication, whereas none of the other languages have become dominant as the communicative means between the older generation of Latvian, Estonian and Finnish origin. Village people understand each other's language and this makes it possible for everybody to use the most intrinsic language or, when necessary, switch over to another one. The village inhabitants admit the existence of two monolithic groups (*Virulased* and Latvians); both groups have, to a certain extent, maintained their territory despite frequent mixed marriages. At the same time, the author does not

directly deal with the formulating of the power relations between the various groups, although in social sciences, the term 'multiculturalism' is mostly used for the analysis or for the expression of cultural rights within the various ethnic groups.

In the entire world, ethnic processes are presently being influenced by one and the same factors – globalisation and post-traditionalism. Post-traditional society (Giddens) is a concept that can not be evaded by these articles regarding contemporary present time. Likewise, Gidden's concept primarily refers that we cannot talk about fixed identities; identity is rather reflexive, related to situation, uncertain and negotiable. **Marjut Anttonen** relies on similar assumptions, whereas her study may be positioned in another characteristic paradigm that has become dominant in the research of ethnicity only during more recent times – this being the field of identity politics. Anttonen's article suggests an introduction to the various ways of treating the concept of ethnicity and is suitable for explaining and framing the rest of the contributions of this collection. Subsequently, the article mostly concentrates on the role of the Kvens in the debate about indigenous people in modern Norway.

Pihla Vuorinen's article – "Family in Transition: Transnational Family Ties and Identity Negotiations" – deals with the people who immigrated to Finland from Russia, during the 1990s. The author of the article stresses that immigration and emigration do not solely concern individuals but also family networks. The study, based on abundant empirical data, focuses on family ties and shows how in transnational and multicultural families, identity and belonging are not primarily connected to a certain place, instead, those features are created and maintained increasingly through discourses. Family is not a closed unit and it does not remain unchanged in the new cultural environment. When facing a new societal situation, then family relations also have to be negotiated anew. After moving to another country, also questions of ethnic identity become topical in a new way. Immigration raises the need to define "we" as compared to "others". Such defining takes place by way of a complicated combination of various cultural backgrounds.

Eva Toulouze's article "The Forest Nenets as a Double Language Minority", is based on the author's fieldwork in the observed region. The research object being the multiethnic community with Forest Nenets, the Khanty and Russians living side by side. When tracing the language situation, it is possible to admit that the position of the Khanty language is undoubtedly the strongest, dominating even that of the

Russian. The current speakers of the Forest Nenets language solely comprise the older and middle-aged generation, whereas the Khanty children, when going to school, as a rule, have acquired also the Khanty language.

The Nenets themselves are aware of the situation but regard it as inevitable. They do not consider their current language use as the mastering of the Nenets language as, according to their viewpoint, it cannot be compared with the rich and poetic language spoken by their predecessors. Nevertheless, the language has indeed preserved its psychological value – it becomes a particular indicator of group membership by the fact that none of the Khanty can speak the language. However, one can also say that being in the role of group identifier, on the other hand, supports the fading away of the language as there is always a Khanty in the company and therefore the common conversation language would be either Khanty or Russian. According to Eva Toulouse, the preservation of the Nenets identity in the region is not primarily dependent on the language situation but instead, on the oil drillers operating in the area as they have destroyed the traditional Forest Nenets lifestyle to a great extent.

Laur Vallikivi's article "Minority and Mission: Christianisation of the European Nenets" focuses on the Nenets in the 19th century when they were baptised. The author opposes himself to such interpretation of christianisation where the contact between the missionaries and that of the indigenous people has been described negatively, claiming that conflicts between the involved parties were indeed existent during baptising, but in reality, the contacts were much more diverse. Different groups adopted the Orthodox practices to a various extent, for instance, when encountering the Orthodox mission, the migrating groups maintained significantly more associations of their traditional belief than the more settled groups. One of the essential contra-arguments of the Nenets, to the message delivered by the missionaries, was embedded in the idea of usefulness. A lukewarm feeling towards Christianity was persistent when people did not understand how the "new religion" facilitates the coping with the world, whereas the old belief had proved itself by guaranteeing, to a necessary amount, the preservation of both social order and general equilibrium. Thus, the elements of Orthodoxy were accepted selectively in conformity with their suitability to existent understandings or their complementing character.

Tatyana Boulgakova's article "Nanai Shamans under Double Oppression. Was the Persecution by Soviet Power Stronger than the Power

of Shamanistic Spirits?" is based on a fieldwork session in a Nanai district, Khabarovsk Krai 1980–2002, where the researchers tried to find out about the attitude of the shamans themselves as well as their relatives towards the central power's attempts to completely eradicate shamanism at the end of the 1930s. Boulgakova' s excellent treatment of the topic shows that it would not be correct to say that the transformations carried out by the Soviet power on 1930s, were accepted by the population only in the negative key. The tragic opposition between the representatives of the traditional and innovative culture was mainly applied to shamanistic practice, whereas many other innovations were accepted by people.

Lyubov Sazhina deals in her article "Gathering the Female Body in Komi Everyday Life and Rituals" with the notion of a human being in traditional culture. Her focus is upon women's behaviour, which contrary to that of men's, is much more regulated. It is expressed in a number of everyday conventionalities (stereotypes) restricting their freedom, as well as ritual situations aimed at supporting women's status. The purpose of the article is to study the ideas of the Komi people about the woman and the female body, to analyse a few manipulations performed with the female body in everyday life and in the context of rituals, as well as indicate how the peculiarities of the female body bring about some behavioural stereotypes.

The article "Confessional Factor in the Ethno-Cultural Processes of the Upper-Vychegda Komi" by **Alexander Chuvyurov** and **Olga Smirnova**, offers a deep and outstanding look into the folk culture, especially the religious sphere of the Ust-Kulom region of the Republic of Komi. From the confessional point of view, the Upper-Vychegda Komi were divided into several groups: in addition to the Orthodoxy, a considerable part of the Upper-Vychegda population were Old Believers. The spread of the latter confession among the Upper-Vychegda Komi is connected with the resettling of the Russian Old Believers from other regions in the middle of the 18th century. The religious life of the contemporary Komi population in Upper-Vychegda is characterised in the article by a number of special features, which can be explained by the historical-cultural peculiarities in the formation of the population in this region.

The arsenal of cultural researchers has also comprised quantitative measures when dealing with human groups and for the localisation of certain research topics. Relatively often, the microanalysis is not its predecessor but instead, the following study phase; deeper analysis is

hereby enabled by triangulation and the combining of various databases. The next authors also refer to such possibilities themselves.

Ilze Boldāne, in her article "Latvians' Ethnic Stereotypes Regarding the Ethnic and Cultural Minorities of Latvia" deals with the ethnic stereotypes of Latvians with regard to other nations. As the study was carried out in Riga and in its vicinity, it primarily reflects the ethnic situation of this particular city. Historically, Riga has been a multinational city. The Belorussians, Ukranians, Estonians, Russians, Lithuanians, Poles, Jews, etc. are mentioned in the study. Boldane who is in the early stages of her research work, discusses the opportunities of further studying of the given issue and considers folklore, journalism, fiction and all other sources where the stereotypes regarding other ethnic nationalities could be clearly distinguished as a good and potential research reservoir.

Marju Kõivupuu's article "On the Identity of the Members of the Võru Society in Tallinn" touches upon ethnic processes in Estonia. Her article is a case study on the Võru movement in Estonia. It is possible to talk about the manifestations of regional identity, the emergence of the South-Estonia-related Võru movement from the year 1988. This unites people who originate from Võrumaa, South-Estonia and speak the Võru language and also individuals interested in Võrumaa, aiming to increase awareness with regard to a region in Estonia – Võrumaa – both in Estonia and world wide. The object of Marju Kõivupuu's study is the group of Võru people who come together in Tallinn, their attitude towards Võru literary language and towards the media in the Võru tongue.

References

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Pille Runnel

The Livs* of Svētciems *Pagasts*** in the Late 18th and 19th Century

Saulvedis Cimermanis

In 5–22 June 1846, Andreas Johan Sjögren, Academician of St. Petersburgs Academy of Sciences, visited Svētciems estate and, helped by Karl von Fegesack, owner of the estate, met 22 people, who to a certain extent still knew the Liv language. In his report on the trip published in 1849, the researcher published the names and surnames of the people, mentioned their places of residence, described his observations, and drew conclusions (Sjögren 1849: 467–483). The above Livs of Vidzeme, to put it more precisely – of village Svētciems, were the first and only ones, who were mentioned by their names and who had awoken the interest of scientists, as were the only ones who had remained known till nowadays. The people had 17 surnames, which belonged to 18 families.

The surnames found around 1826 have purely Latvian or German origin. The majority of them – 11 – are Latvian: Āboltiņš (perhaps Ābols?) in Ķulmaki farmstead, Ādmīdiņš in Lielķuiķuļi farmstead, Bērziņš in Dišleri farmstead, Bisnieks in Pūrnavi farmstead, Kalējs in Minniki homestead, Kariņš in Karas homestead, Lēniņš in Klāvi and Sprundes farmsteads, Lielnors in Lielnori farmstead, Pļaviņš in Ķirpaki farmstead, Priediņš in Puriņi farmstead, and Ūdriņš in Ķulles farmstead; but fewer – 6 – are German: Feldmanis in Ķirpaki farmstead, Gīze in Lielķuiķuļi farmstead, Jākobsons in Mustanci farmstead, Jirgensons (perhaps Girgensons?) in Alkšnoti farmstead, Mihelsons in Dzeņi farmstead, and Zīlemanis in Ķeguļi farmstead. The above surnames do not carry any Liv ethnic information and are not found among surnames of the Kurzeme Livs, which they for the first time got around 1834. Rather widespread names of the Liv families of Kurzeme, such as Bērtulis, Bille, Brancis, Didriķis, Gēde, Inne, Klāvs, Nēze, Niks, Janis, and other names (Latvian State Historical Archive (LSHA, fund 235,

* Widely-used form is "Livonians".
** A small rural district.

registration books of people from Irbe-Ģipka parish), are rarely found in the Liv families of village Svētciems.

Academician Sjögren had unfortunately distorted the names of farmsteads, personal names and surnames, and had transformed them in German manner that usually did not correspond to the true names of farmsteads and to the true names of people. Instead of farmstead Lielķuiķuļi, he, for instance, had farmstead Lielkuikul, farmstead Dzeņi was turned into farmstead Dzenne, farmstead Puriņi into farmstead Purring, etc. Jānis Ādmīdiņš was transcribed as Jān Ādemiding, Gusts Bisnieks as Gust Bīstniek, Krists Lēniņš as Krist Lēning, etc. Anna Mihelsone and Anna Zīlemane, who were the mistresses of farmstead Dzeņi and farmstead Ķeguļi, were not named at all. The lists of the *pagasts'* farmsteads do not give Alkšnoti farmstead, as well as surnames Ābolting and Jürgenson, recorded by Sjögren. Registration lists give records of rather branched families of the Ābols and the Girgensons with their members living in several farmsteads.

Of 22 Livs who knew the Liv language, six were characterised by Sjögren according to their social position and called "farmstead mistress", "farmstead head", and "mistress's mother", while four – according to their position in the family with words "mother", "mistress's mother", and "wife". Thirteen of them were not given any person's characterisation.

The recorded by Sjögren 22 speakers of the Liv language, are unlikely a true number as 1) on 6 June 1846 at Svētciems estate Academician met only "five Liv men of the estate's vicinity, of whom three turned out to be aged men" (Sjögren 1849: 468). They could possibly be Krists Kariņš of Karas farmstead, Andres Lēniņš of Klāvi farmstead, Krists Gīze and Jānis Ādmīdiņš of Lielķuiķuļi farmstead, and Gusts Bisnieks of Pūrnavi farmstead. Sjögren met the other 17 speakers of the Liv language only some days later. 2) Six women were only mentioned among 22 speakers of the Liv language. The material of the Kurzeme Livs shows that their women, being the most immobile and the least social part of the rural inhabitants of the day, preserved their native tongue for the longest period. 3) The 1861 census of Vidzeme that was 15 years newer than Sjögren's data, had recorded 24 Livs in the Province of Vidzeme (Sjögren in 1846 – 22 speakers of the Liv language), but 2313 Livs – in the Province of Kurzeme (Grass 1863: 9). To our regret, the origin and places of residence of the 24 people are presently unknown.

I have until now available no document of Western Vidzeme of the

18th century and of the first half of the 19th century, which would have recorded the nationality (ethnic belonging) or language skill of a named person using words "Liv" and "the Liv language". The ethnic belonging was not considered significant then, but rather their capacity for work and social position (landowner, citizen, peasant, etc.). In the late 19th century, when the first general census of Russian Empire of 1897 marked the native tongue, the Livs of Vidzeme had already went over to Latvians. However, for the sake of precisiom it should be mentioned that in documents the words "a Liv" and "of the Livs" are used in generalised expressions, which do not characterise definite people, but rather group phenomena and clusters of phenomena. The same principle of expression is also characteristic for Northern Kurzeme, which had compact and large Liv population (2180 people in 1850 (Archives of the Russian Academy of Sciences (ARAS), fund 94, descr. 1, file 137, pp. 1–2)). Because of the above conditions, the initial data on the concrete Livs of Svētciems village are the names and surnames of the people, recorded by Sjögren in 1846. Following them it is possible to search information on the above year, more distant past, and on recent period in different sources.

It is presently possible to single out four basic groups of such primary sources.

1. Descriptions of parishes of Western Vidzeme, including the neighbouring ones of Aloja, Liepupe, and Salaca (Svētciems *pagasts* belonged to the parish of Salaca), which were compiled by parsons in 1802 and around 1816 as answers to the inquiry forms compiled by Otto von Huhn, physician and historian (LSHA, fund 6810). According to their understanding and assessment of the Livs and of the Liv territories of Western Vidzeme of the day, German parsons have recorded in them different scale information – on their business activity, wellbeing, way of life, traditions, language, ethnic psychology, negative traits, etc.

2. Registration lists of the 1795–1850 inspection made of the souls or people of Svētciems estate and *pagasts* (LSHA, fund 1232, descr. 1, file 32). They have recorded inhabitants of named peasants' farmsteads, estates and of other inhabited places, indicating their names (since 1826, also surnames), age, position in the family, rather often social belonging and sometimes even the ethnic one, and the previous place of residence. The lists sometimes mention newcomers from other areas, as well as serfs exchanged or bought in other places. On people above 13 years of age the registration lists of 1795 also provide data for 1782.

This for the time being is the most distant year, which allows us to follow the destinies of the Liv families mentioned by Sjögren.

3. The registration lists of Svētciems *pagasts* made for the 1897 first general census of Russian Empire (LSHA, fund 2706, descr. 1, file 228), which provide each recorded person's name, patronymic, surname, sex, social status (estate), position in the family and farmstead, age, place of birth, place of registration, place of permanent residence, temporal leave or arrival, denomination, native tongue, ability or disability of reading, indicate the kind of education or institution of education, basic and additional occupation, and obligation to military service. In spite of a large number of misrecordings, the registration lists still allow to make different calculations and characterise processes, as, for instance, migration of people, educational level of different generations, proportions among different fields of occupation, new phenomena of social character, which in the latter half of the 19th century came into the life of people, as well as other things.

4. Documents of the interconnected Svētciems and Vecsalaca estates that characterise their business activities, as well as court protocols of both *pagasts* (LSHA, funds 1779 and 1184), which provide complex information on inhabitants of Svētciems and Vecsalaca *pagasts* of the 1840s–'90s.

Within a brief introductory article it is impossible to give a full survey of the enormous quantity of facts provided by six inspections of people. I will therefore motivate generalisations against the background of the Liv speaking families met by Academician Sjögren in 1846. It is only possible to doubt, decline, supplement and say something new by using such examples and groups of examples.

Krists Gīze, farmstead head, and Jānis Ādmīdiņš, with no social characterisation both were mentioned by Sjögren as speakers of the Liv language in Lielķuiķuļi farmstead of village Svētciems. According to documents the Gīzes turn out to be an old and branched Liv family of farm masters.

In 1795, the head of Lielķuiķuļi farmstead was Pēteris, 42 years old. With him there were: wife Dārta, 41; six daughters from 6 to 20 years old, and four sons from half a year to 8 years old. Krists, the eldest of them, 8 years, later became the farmstead head. One of the brothers died in 1798.

In 1811, the farmstead was still run by Pēteris, who died in 1812 at the age of 59. Together with him resided four sons, of whom one was born in 1799, i.e., after the inspection of 1795. All six daughters had

presumably been married off, while there was no mention of the wife.

In 1816, Krists was the new farmstead head, who had superceded the deceased father. His mother Dārta, 69, who died in 1825, wife Grieta, son Jānis and daughter Dārta, as well as brothers Jānis and Ādams resided with him. Brother Juris had died, whereas brother Pēteris, 25, had become the new head of Utkas farmstead and resided there with his wife and daughter.

In 1826, Krists continued running Lielķuiķuļi farmstead, had acquired surname Gīze, and was considerd to be 39 years old. His family included wife Grieta, 33; three underaged sons and a daughter named Katrīna. In addition to the above people, there were his brother Ādams, 27, with his wife Grieta, 20, and daughter Dārta, 2 years old. Brother Jānis together with his wife Anna resided as farmhands at farmstead Blanki headed by Andress Brasmanis. In 1826, Pēteris, the head of Utkas farmstead, was not registered in village Svētciems any more.

In 1834, too, Krists continued running his father's farmstead. He was together with the above-mentioned wife, three sons and daughter Katrīna. In addition, daughter Grēta was born. The family also included foster-son Jēkabs Hildebrands, who in 1839 left for Ķirbiži farmstead. In the 1840s, daughter Katrīna married off to Pāle. Brother Jānis with his family, previously a farmhand of Blanki farmstead, was then a farmhand of Sprundes farmstead, and had become the father of two sons. He died in 1846. Brother Ādams had become the head of Dambji farmstead and died in 1846 at the age of 47. In 1834, he had a wife, two sons and three daughters.

In 1850, four years after Sjögren's expedition, Krists Gīze, 63, together with his wife Grieta, 57, and the second son Jēkabs, 29 years old and actually the farmstead head then, was still residing at Lielķuiķuļi farmstead. Jēkabs had wife Anna, 27, and a daughter named Katrīna. The family also included the third son, 24 years old Fricis, his wife Trīne, 29, and their little son Ernsts. Daughter Grieta, 18, who likewise her eldest sister Katrīna, married off to Pāle 1852, also resided together with Krists. Krists' first son Jānis, 37, together with his wife and three daughters resided in Blanki farmstead of village Svētciems with the farmstead head Andress Brasmanis, where his father's brother Jānis lived in 1826.

Krists Gīze died in 1855 at the age of 68, his wife Grieta – in 1854 at the age of 61. Their descendants were three vigorous sons in Svētciems village and two daughters in Pāle. Descendants of the Gīzes family are still residing in the vicinity of Lielķuiķuļi farmstead.

Jānis Ādmīdiņš, lodger of Lielķuiķuļi farmstead, who was mentioned by Sjögren in 1846, died in 1847 as a 76 years old farm labourer. Because of coincidence in people's names and patronymics and incomplete recordings, the roots of his family can be only traced to 1811, when Krists, his 20 years old son, resided in Postreiteri farmstead (later renamed Posti) of village Svētciems as a farm labourer.

In 1816, 45 years old Jānis Ādmīdiņš, mentioned as Krists' son Jānis, a surnameless person, together with his wife Anna, 55, were farmhands at Skrēdeļi farmstead headed by Andres. They had two sons – the above Krists, born around 1791, and Jānis with no other references. In 1826, Jānis, Anna, and Krists, having acquired family name Ādmīdiņš, were farmhands in Priecumi farmstead headed by master Ange Priekulis.

After 1826, the family witnessed changes. Wife Anna had died. Jānis had married Dārta, ten years senior, and in 1834, together with her daughters Trīne and Anna, was still residing in Priecumi farmstead. In the period between 1834 and 1847 the family had turned to Orthodoxy and had left Priecumi farmstead for Lielķuiķuļi. As it is generally accustomed, the transition to Orthodoxy was associated with the change of the name. Dārta had become Darya, Trīne – Yekaterina, etc. In 1850, Lielķuiķuļi farmstead was inhabited by 89 years old Darya, Jānis Ādmīdiņš' widow; daughter Yekaterina, 19 years old, Nataliya, 8 and a half, and son Aleksandrs. Darya died in 1857, but Yekaterina went to Ķirbiži in 1856. In 1834, Jānis Ādmīdiņš' son Krists, 43, together with his wife Ieva, 37, and Juris, their newly born son, were farmhands in Mazķuiķuļi farmstead. In 1850, Krists Ādmīdiņš together with his wife lived in Sārtiki farmstead as farmhands, whereas son Jānis – in Ķulmaki farmstead. The above Liv speaking landless peasant thus also had descendants.

Krists Lielnors, Lielnori farmstead head, was also mentioned by Sjögren among the speakers of the Liv language in 1846. In 1795, Krists, 14 years old, resided in Klāvi farmstead as the fourth son of farmstead head Krists, 51. He had 40 years old mother Maija, and three brothers – Fricis, Gusts, and Jāks. Fricis later became the head of Klāvi farmstead, Gusts – firstly the head of Ķulmaki and later of Lielnori farmstead, while Jāks was recruited. Father died in 1803.

Several years on from 1811, Krists, 30, was the young head of Salat Jennas farmstead and lived there together with his son Gusts, 2 and a half. Wife is not mentioned. In 1816, Krists, 35, and his wife Ilze, 34, were farmhands in Klāvi farmstead that after the death of brother Fricis was run by Gusts, the other brother. Together with Krists and Ilze there

were the following people: Gusts, their eldest son, 7 and a half; daughter Ieva, 11, who later ran away from Svētciems village; and daughter Dārte, 3. Krists' wife Ilze died around 1821, and Krists got married for the second time.

In 1826, Krists, 45, had already acquired surname Lielnors and resided in Lielnori farmstead as a farmhand. His second wife Babe, 45; son Krists, 3; Andres, 2; Dārte, 13, daughter of the first wife; and foster-daughter Anna, 7. Gusts, 17,5, son of the first wife, had become a labourer of the estate.

In 1834, Krists Lielnors, 53, had already become the head of Lielnori farmstead. He lived together with his wife Babe, 53; eldest son Gusts, 25,5, who had come to Lielnori farmstead from the estate; Gusts' wife Ieva, 21, who in 1834 gave birth to son Kristians. Krists' other son Krists, 11; Andres, the youngest son, 10; as well as Krists' sister Anna, 15; also lived with the family.

In 1850, 69 years old Krists Lielnors with his wife Babe, of the same age, lived with the family of his eldest son Gusts, 41, head of Lielnori farmstead. It also included Gusts' wife Ieva, 37; son Kristians, 16; son Augustīns, 3,5; and daughter Anna, 14. Krists senior's other son Krists, 27; his wife Trīne, 28,5; and Miķelis and Mīne, their little children, were registered as the people of Svētciems estate. Anders, 26, Krists senior's youngest son; and his wife Trīne, 24,5; resided in Ķulles farmstead headed by Miķelis Mežgailis.

It is noteworthy that Juris, 15, recruited in 1854, son of Liv speaking Jānis Ādmīdiņš, also lived in Lielnori farmstead. Ķulles farmstead in its turn was the residence of the family of Liv speaking Anders Ūdriņš, 54, mentioned by Sjögren in 1846. He was a descendant of an ancient family of landless peasants of village Svētciems. Anders Ūdriņš' family consisted of five people: wife Anna, 40; son Miķelis, 10,5; daughter Dārte, 13; and foster-daughter Anna, 25,5. Likewise the Ādmīdiņs, the Lielnors had turned to Orthodoxy. Gusts, farmstead head, was re-christened as Augustīns, whereas his eldest son Kristians – as Kirils. Krists Lielnors senior died at the age of 72 in 1853, but his wife Babe – at the age of 76 in 1857. After their death, the families of their three sons, and of at least three grandsons and two granddaughters, including of the mistress of Jespars farmstead, stayed in village Svētciems. Descendants of the Lielnors family are also today residing in the vicinity of the former farmstead.

In a similar way it is possible to follow the lives of all 22 families, speakers of the Liv language mentioned by Sjögren.

Until now available information allows me to make the following nine generalisations.

1. Likewise all Estonians, Latvians, and the Livs of Kurzeme, in 1795–1850 the Livs of village Svētciems lived under conditions of rapidly disintegrating feudal order, and in the first decades after the abolition of serfdom, when peasants had not complete personal freedom to chose a field of occupation and a place of residence. Such a choice still required landowners' consent. They only acquired the freedom of occupation and of the place of residence, with some liens though, after the reforms of 1860. All members of the Liv families of village Svētciems, known until now, had the juridical status of peasants. Their actual position and occupation (crafts, seafaring, serving for the estate, fishing, etc.), as well as their place of residence were not considered. They lived in their own farmsteads and in the Latvian ones together with the Latvians or in their neighbourhood and rapidly became Latvianised. At the same time they tried to preserve their ethnic consciousness, traditional culture, and language. Around 1816 Franz Hackel, the unfriendly to the Livs parson of Salaca parish, in this connection wrote: "One can still meet the Livs here. They speak their peculiar language and most often marry among themselves" (LSHA, fund 6810, descr. 1, file 14, pp. 168–169). The description of Salaca parish, drawn up around 1822, among the other gives the following information: "Some feel proud of speaking a special language, not understandable to other people" (LSHA, fund 6810, descr. 1, file 15, p. 205). In 1849 Academician Sjögren admitted that "15 years ago the Livs must have rather widely used their mother tongue even during the corvee labour of the estate, whereas now the Liv language can be only heard, when one endeavours to find its speakers, some scattered people, and persuades them to demonstrate their hidden knowledge" (Sjögren 1849: 470).

2. In the late 18th century and in the first decades of the 19th century, village Svētciems was of mixed ethnic composition. The content of sources unfortunately does not allow us to define precise proportion of each ethnic group. Village Svētciems had the following residents: a) Latvian families having resided there for many generations; b) people having arrived there from other areas, including Latvian families and perhaps even the Liv ones (in sources usually marked as "a Courlander" (in Latvian *kurzemnieks*)), early 17th century incomers from Kurzeme; c) Liv families having resided there for many generations and their Latvianised descendants; d) the Estonians having arrived during differ-

ent decades mainly from Eastern Estonia and less from Estonian islands, Central and Northern Estonia; e) the Russians; and f) the Germans.

Until 1850, the Livs mainly changed their places of residence (farmsteads) within Svētciems estate and *pagasts*. In search of jobs, getting married, and in some other connection members of the Liv families, however, rather often moved to neighbouring *pagasts* and even to some more distant ones, such as Ainaži, Ķirbiži, Pāle, Rozēni, Unguri or Ungurpils (later Aloja), Vecmuiža, Vecsalaca, and Viļķene.

In the latter half of the 19th century the number of inhabitants in Svētciems *pagasts* rapidly increased, new places of residence (farmsteads) were established and the ethnic composition of people saw considerable changes: descendants of the last Liv families became Latvianised, dozens of Latvian families and many individuals (singles) arrived from neighbouring *pagasts*, as well as from rather remote ones, and from very distant *pagasts* of Latvia, including from the above mentioned *pagasts* Ainaži, Ķirbiži, Pāle, Rozēni, Unguri, Vecmuiža, Vecsalaca, and Viļķene, as well as from *pagasts* Bauņi, Burtnieki, Dikļi, Katvari, Kocēni, Lāde, Limbaži, Līvi, Mežotne, Pociems, Puikule, Trikāta, Unguri or Ungurpils, Vecate, Veļķi, Vilzēni, and others. The influx of the Estonians and Russians intensified, and the Jews also settled in the *pagasts*. Mixed families were formed in village Svētciems, including of the descendants of the Liv families, and families of the Estonians, Russians, and the Latvians having arrived from other areas.

In 1897 no resident of Svētciems *pagasts* acknowledged the Liv language as his native tongue. Except for some individuals, the Livs had melted within the majority of neighbouring Latvians. Basing on the relationship of the languages, some speakers of the Liv language could have possibly be registered as Estonian speaking people during the census of 1897.

3. Likewise the Estonians and the Latvians, the Livs of village Svētciems had many-branched occupations. They were engaged in agriculture, cattle-breeding, fishing, crafts, gardening, seafaring, trade, and wood cutting, and they also rafted timber, loaded firewood and timber in special big transport boats with flat bottoms and in sailboats, and also worked in other fields. Farmsteads inhabited by the Livs were situated in the eastern part of the *pagasts*, the most fertile and the richest in wood area (Blanki, Dambji, Dišleri, Ķulles, Lielnori, Mustanci, Priecumi, Puriņi, Skrēdeļi, and Utkas), on the coast of the Riga Bay (Dzeņi and Ķeguļi), of the River Salaca (Karas, Posti, and Salat

Jennas), River Svētupe (Dzeņi, Klāvi, Ķirpaki, Ķulmaki, Lielķuiķuļi, Mazķuiķuļi, and Sprundes), and of the River Jaunupe (Pūrnavi).

On the coastline of the Riga Bay near Lāņi, Svētciems estate had arranged a large timber-yard and had built an inn, Vadloms, where there was also a terminal, *sedums*, for fishing sea boats and transport boats, and a warehouse for transportable goods. In the first decade of the 20th century the inn was transformed into a residence for estate labourers and woodsmen. Near the mouth of the River Salaca on its left-hand bank, there was another large timber-yard, but the third one, the so-called "Upmute", – at the mouth of the River Svētupe. At all three timber-yards firewood and timber was loaded in sailships and in big transport boats, which took firewood and agricultural products to Pärnu (Pērnava), Riga, and to other ports. Under the favourable conditions, commodity-money economy came to the Liv farmsteads earlier than to the farms, which were situated far away from the seacoast and rivers.

Around 1816, the above mentioned parson Hackel of Salaca parish apparently with good reason wrote about the Livs of village Svētciems the following words: "They deserve praising and are the best and well-off peasants" (LSHA, fund 6810, descr. 1, file 14, pp. 168–169). It is to be added that, judging from the purchase contracts of the 1870s, the Livs ran rather large old farms (LSHA, fund 218).

In 1815, of 9 official peasants-fishermen's farmsteads no less than five were managed by the Livs. In the summer of 2002, when visiting the remnants of farms inhabited by the Livs, it turned out that they had strived to locate their farmsteads in the most picturesque places – on hills, near river bays, and on steep river coasts. Their houses had large yards and were surrounded by orchards, while gardens, yards and driveways were enclosed by birches, maples, lime-trees, ashes, oaks and other trees, including lilac.

In the decades of the study, the Livs of Kurzeme were also engaged in the above-mentioned fields. However, because of natural conditions, mainly because of sandy coastline soil, swampy meadows, and large tracts of forest, as well as because of the lack of natural pastures, gardening, cattle-breeding, and agriculture were much weaker there than on the Liv farms of village Svētciems. Whereas the Livs of Kurzeme were better in seafaring, trade, and in fishing than the Livs of village Svētciems. Having rather great density of constructions and small yards, farmsteads of the Kurzeme Livs were comparatively scarcely planted with greenery and were less picturesque than those of

the Livs of village Svētciems. Likewise inhabitants of Vidzeme planted lilac, the Courlanders usually saved birches, lime-trees, oaks, pines and other trees, which had naturally grown near their buildings and yards and had acquired expressive forms.

4. Speakers of the Liv language, mentioned by Academician Sjögren in 1846, mainly belonged to the middle-aged and elderly generation of village Svētciems. The majority of them died in the latter half of the 1840s and the '50s. The speakers of the Liv language overwhelmingly came from ancient, large, and branched families of village Svētciems, the roots of whom could be traced as far as the inspection of people of 1782. Aside from the people mentioned by Sjögren, different farmsteads of the *pagasts* were also inhabited by their children, brothers, sisters, sisters-in-law, brothers-in-law, and sometimes also by their aged parents. Unfortunately we may only express guesses about their ethnic consciousness and language skills. Sjögren did not meet them and could not therefore leave any information, but the records of registration lists and other available documents say nothing about the features of those people. In the future, some useful knowledge might be provided by the documents of Salaca parish. Nowadays it has been established that in 1846 the Livs of Svētciems inhabited at least 25 farmsteads instead of 16 as mentioned by academician Sjögren (Sjögren 1849: 469). Such a conclusion follows from the people registers of 1834 and 1850 (LSHA, fund 1232, descr. 1, file 32, pp. 118–218). Isolation of the Livs was not so pronounced as was supposed by academician Sjögren and other authors who wrote about the Livs of Svētciems. The farmsteads Dišleri, Ķirpaki, Mustanci, Priecumi, Skrēdeļi, which were located in the eastern part of the *pagasts* formed one cluster of comparatively close neighbours, and another cluster was formed by the farmsteads Blanki, Dambji, Ķulles, Lielnori, Puriņi, Utkas. On the opposite sides of the Svētupe mouth at the Riga Bay the closest neighbouring farmsteads were Dzeņi and Ķeguļi, and slightly upper the river – Ķulmaki and Sprundes. Very close farmsteads were also Klāvi on the bank of the Svētupe River and Pūrnavi on the bank of the Jaunupe River. Close neighbours were Karas, Posti and Salat Jennas on the bank of the Salaca River. The relatives of the Liv language speakers, mentioned by Sjögren, inhabited also other farmsteads, which were not named by the above scholar, and either in this article.

5. In the second half of the nineteenth century a part of the above-mentioned and other Liv families reduced in number by death. Others experienced a shortage of male heirs and thus the number of the family

name carriers decreased. It seems that members of several families moved to other places in countryside or towns. Some families, for instance Kariņš, very likely split up into branches. This process needs to be studied more. Presently it can be said with certainty that after the known 22 Liv language speakers of the Svētciems *pagasts* passed away, their sons and daughters, who were in the prime of their life, their grandsons and granddaughters survived them. The survivors maybe didn't know the language, but surely retained memories about the Liv families.

During the above-mentioned census taken in 1897, all seventeen surnames of the Livs, which were known since 1846, were entered in the registration lists of the Svētciems *pagasts*. However, only the surname Feldmanis was registered in the same farmstead Ķirpaki, where it was registered in 1846. The carriers of the remaining sixteen surnames lived in estates, half-estates and peasant farmsteads different from those recorded in 1846. In 1897, however six families – carriers of the Liv surnames, namely Ābols, Ādmīdiņs, Bērziņs, Bisnieks, Jirgensons, Kariņš, lived in farmsteads Dzeņi, Karas, Klāvi, Ķeguļi, Ķirpaki, where in 1846 other Liv families had lived. In the second half of the nineteenth century, some former farmsteads of the Livs – Karas, Klāvi, Ķeguļi – were transformed into the dwelling houses for the estate's farmhands, and others, at least in winter time, were used for lodging woodsmen, who came from other districts and towns. In 1897, in Mustanci, for instance, thirteen woodsmen – sleeper cutters were accommodated. The latter came from remote and even rather far-off places as Burtnieki, Kauguri, Kārķi, Kocēni, Rauna, Rīga, Smiltene, Valmiera (LSHA, fund 2706, descr. 1, file 228, pp. 229–232). Presently, we have at our disposal documentary evidence, that in 1897 at least a part of the carriers of the former Liv surnames where direct offsprings of the Liv language speakers known in 1846. Nowadays, there are many people in the Northern Vidzeme who are, to some extent, aware of their belonging to the old Liv families, and still carry their surnames (Bisnieks, Gīze, Kariņš, Lielnors, and others). The carriers of other (non-Liv) surnames also recall their Liv origin.

6. The data acquired from the whole scope of sources, particularly references of relationship ties, which can be found in six people registers (1795, 1811, 1816, 1826, 1834, 1850) and the record lists of the census of 1897, parish inventories, the record books and other documents of the Svētciems parish court, and the notes taken during expeditions, all these provide strong testimony that the number of Liv

language speakers was much larger than 22 persons, a number given by Sjögren. There is no doubt, however, that ethnic consciousness of the Livs grew narrower and the language was rapidly disappearing because of the lack of daily application. In the second half of the nineteenth century the Liv language lost its function as a means of public communication, and ethnic consciousness narrowed to a such extent that only individuals realized themselves to be the Livs. Several persons are known to have told that some of their relatives even in the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century still knew, to some extent, the Liv language. Today, there is a certain part of people, who still realize that they are descendants of the Livs. The described easing of ethnic consciousness and rejection of the Liv language was characteristic also to the Kurzeme Livs in the twentieth century. The above process cannot be thoroughly described there owing to the scope of the present work.

7. The disappearance of ethnic consciousness and language of the Livs occurred owing to many circumstances taking place in the eighteenth century and the first decades of the nineteenth century. These were: 1) Sharp decrease of the number of people because of the epidemics of smallpox, diphtheria, measles, plaque and scarlatina. According to the estimations of associate professor J. Bērziņš, during the plaque epidemic of 1710–1711 more than 79,8% of the population of the Salaca parish died (Bērziņš 1936: 26719–26720). However, the knowledge acquired during the studies of the Kurzeme Livs shows that any number referred to in one source or by an individual author for interpreting the disaster caused by the epidemic of plaque need to be checked (Cimermanis 2001). 2) A very high infant and juvenile mortality, which particularly increased during the exacerbation of infectious diseases, when several children or even all children of one family died within a short period of time. 3) Living under depressing conditions of ethnic minority. 4) Increase of the absolute number and the percentage of mixed marriages. 5) Indifferent, and sometimes even hostile attitude of local pastors, landlords and local authorities towards the Livs. 6) Virtual disuse of the Liv language: it was not taught at schools, was not used in public institutions and was not spoken during public events and elsewhere. 7) Use of the Liv language as a colloquial speech only in a family or during contacts with the near-by or distant families living in farmsteads, where often people of both ethnic groups – Latvians and the Livs – lived. 8) Unwillingness of parents to speak with their children in the Liv language.

In the twentieth century, the above-mentioned and several other reasons brought to an ethnic catastrophe the Kurzeme Livs, too.

8. In 1823–1826, or perhaps later a wide movement of the inhabitants (maybe displacement?) of the Svētciems *pagasts* from one farmstead to another took place. Such process affected the Liv families, too. Movement of people can be followed up in the record books of people registers (LSHA, fund 1232, descr. 1, file 32, pp. 59–171), which unfortunately don't bring out the reasons of the process. Up to now no document has been found to tell about the reasons of such behaviour. The displacement of 260 Livs (for the time being the verity of this number is not corroborated by documents) and their dispersion among Latvian farmsteads was very likely aimed at assimilation. The latter was heard and described in writing by Heinrich Georg von Jannau, a pastor, historian and scholar of Estonian language. He was of the opinion that the Svētciems estate had carried out such action before 1828 (Jannau 1828: 154). With reference to Jannau, academician Sjögren wrote about it in 1849 (Sjögren 1849: 471).

However, the number of the Svētciems inhabitants urges to question the possibility of such assimilation. In 1816, there were 528 inhabitants who lived in the estate and 34 farmsteads (LSHA, fund 1232, descr. 1, file 32, pp. 1–21). The likely number of the Livs – 260 people then would constitute 49,24 percent of all inhabitants. In 1826, the Svētciems estate and 38 farmsteads were inhabited by 646 people (LSHA, fund 1232, descr. 1, file 32, pp. 64–95), and at that time the above-mentioned number of the Livs – 260, constituted 40,24 percent. Such proportions of ethnic groups – 49,24 percent to 50,76 percent in 1816, and 40,24 percent to 59,76 percent in 1826, cannot serve as evidence of purposeful and rapid trial of assimilation and, consequently, of noteworthy outcome. Moreover, in reality the numerical proportion of Latvians and the Livs differed from the above-mentioned in favour of the latter, because of the parish was inhabited also by several dozens of Estonians, Russians and Germans. For clearing up the matter more documentary evidences are needed.

9. The Liv families of that time, in the same way as the Estonian and Latvian peasants, were groups of people that were stratified by material and social position. The members of the Liv families, even members of one family, belonged to every social group of peasants existing in the Svētciems *pagasts*. There were permanent and traditional farmhand and farm labourer families, which lived in farmsteads, and farmstead head families, which, in fact were farm tenants. In these families one

son could inherit his father's farmstead, and others could become farmhands or farm labourers in their father's or other farmsteads, as well as they could become estate servants. In 1870s, the Svētciems estate launched selling of farmsteads for heirloom. In the found contracts on selling the Liv and other farmsteads, i.e. in farmstead sales contracts of 1875 only two names and surnames of the Liv families can be found – Mārtiņš Gīze in the farmstead Liepiņas and Jermolajs (?) Bērziņš in the farmstead Priecumi. The rest of the known former farmsteads of the Livs were purchased by the carriers of non-Liv surnames (LSHA, fund 218, descr. 2, file 10678–10702), including newcomers from other *pagasts*.

The members of the known Liv families can be also described according to the branches of their economic activity, for instance, craftsmen, sailors, husbandmen, fishermen, and those combining different or several trades – craftsmen and husbandmen, sailors and fishermen, husbandmen and fishermen and others.

Within these groups a dynamic social process was taking place, which was often directed by the Svētciems estate. Depending on the landlords will the farmstead head's family, which was in fact a farm tenant, was transformed into 1) a farmhand or farm labourer family still living in the same farmstead, which was now run by another person and family; 2) a farmhand, farm labourer or farmstead head family in some other place; 3) a family of an estate servant, farmhand and farm labourer or worker at an industrial enterprise (brewery, distillery, tarworks, brick-kiln, glassworks). The families of farmhands and farm labourers retained their usual position, were transformed into families of estate domestics, who were further categorised, or farmstead heads (tenants).

These changes became apparent in a variety of forms. Of great importance was the landlord's regulatory action, personal qualities of people, failures and successes, their abilities to utilize their skills, their mutual understanding and other qualities in a situation, when up to the seventies of the nineteenth century all power and land in the *pagasts* actually belonged to the landlord of the Svētciems estate.

The Kurzeme Livs, who inhabited the lands of the Dundaga and Pope estates, experiences similar situation. For the present the following differences are known; 1) the Kurzeme Livs inhabited a narrow coastal zone of the Baltic Sea and the Riga Bay, which was separated from the districts inhabited by Latvians, by a wide tract of swampy forests and meadows. It hampered daily contacts between the two

ethnic groups. Only the Ģipka and Žocene inhabitants were less isolated from Latvians because of a narrower belt of forests and meadows. 2) the Kurzeme Livs were numerically much greater ethnic unit than the Svētciems Livs, they lived in villages and were in much closer contacts that then helped them to preserve their language and traditional culture. 3) In comparison to the Svētciems Livs, the Kurzeme Livs were more occupied in sea transport, trade and fishing. They were less involved in corvee and servant works at the Dundaga and Pope estates if compared to the Livs at the Svētciems estate. For this reason the inhabitants of Kurzeme didn't have intense daily contacts with people from other ethnic groups, the process of losing language and traditional culture was much slower and it was rather affected by coming in of other ethnic groups or leaving the villages by the Livs themselves.

The study of documents about the Svētciems Livs and their descendants is being continued. We do hope that in the future we'll be able to tell you in more detail about other spheres of their work, life style and social relations, for instance, about their endeavours to acquire knowledge, to improve their living conditions, economic activity and others. The next publication will be a book *The Livs and their culture in Latvia*, which is expected to be finished in 2003.

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Virulased, a Multiethnic and Multicultural Community in Ryzhkovo Village, West-Siberia

Anu Korb

Introduction

Leaving one's motherland has been conditioned by economic, religious, political or other reasons and there is nothing extraordinary in living out-with one's ethnic habitat. Most frequently, Estonia has been departed from for the expanse of Russia. Thus the Estonian community in Russia has the longest tradition and is also the most abundant – according to the data of the 1989 census, the total number of Estonians living in Russia was 46, 390. The Estonian community was mainly formed, during the second half of the 19th century and the first decades of the 20th century, from the Estonian emigrants migrating towards the eastern direction. The status of the Siberian Estonians is somewhat exceptional in the background of the whole of Russia. For homeland Estonians, the word phrase *Siberian Estonians* primarily associates with criminals and prison camps or deportations during the years 1941 and 1949. Although the older settlements in Siberia were indeed generated by the expelled persons, the emigrants, however, form the basic part of the Siberian Estonians.

The study of diaspora is topical in today's world and has consistently been in the focus of the interest of population scientists, ethnologists, linguists, cultural anthropologists and others. In Estonia, the study of foreign Estonians, including that of the Estonians living in Russia, has gained momentum particularly during the last decade, albeit, the researches did not have to start from an empty place. Writings on the Estonian settlements in Russia can be found in the press since the middle of the 19th century. The first surveys were published at the turn of the 19th–20th centuries, and were used as a basis by all of the later researchers (about what has been done earlier, see, e.g. Viikberg 1997: 28–29, Korb 2002: 152–153).

This current article has developed from my expeditions organised to the habitats of Siberian Estonians during ten years (1991–2000). Within the framework of the project "Ethnic culture in Estonian settlements",

we worked with the Estonian Folklore Archives' expedition group in Krasnoyarsk and Altai provinces (krais) and in Omsk, Novosibirsk, Tomsk and Kemerovo oblasts; the fieldwork was financed by the cultural and scientific funds of Estonia. By now, the former Estonian settlements have either totally disappeared, become multiethnic villages where Estonians are in a minority, or have solely remained the villages of old people. As a rule, the children and young people do not have a command of their Estonian language (Korb 2001: 171–172, 193). In the majority of cases, we worked in rural areas and interviewed the fellow nationals who mastered their mother tongue – ergo, mainly the Estonians of the older generation. Although mother tongue and ethnic nationality are not coincidental concepts, language undoubtedly is one of the main identifiers of ethnicity. Personally, I regard the informant's way of expression to be of extreme importance and am of the opinion that a dialogue, by way of a mediating language, cannot be sufficiently profound. In order to obtain comparative material, we also interviewed some non-Estonians, with the mediation of the Russian language.

I reached Ryzhkovo, the oldest settlement of Lutherans, for the first time during the collection trip in 1999 and continued work in this location also in the year 2000. The local language and cultural situation significantly differed from other Siberian settlements: if elsewhere, Estonians primarily communicated in the Estonian and/or Russian language, then in Ryzhkovo, four languages (Estonian, Finnish, Latvian and Russian) were confusedly being used and none of these languages seemed to have a prevailing status. All interviewees, the number of women among them being remarkably more sizeable due to the demographic circumstances in the village, were born in Ryzhkovo and had spent there the main part of their lives. Connections between the peculiar ethno-linguistic situation of the village and the oral tradition were perceivable to such an extent that I decided to focus on these issues in this current article.

1. Founding of Ryzhkovo, the first settlers

Ryzhkovo (in the Krutinka (Krutinsky) district in West-Siberia, approx. 220 km north-west of Omsk, founded ca 1803) was the first colony of Lutherans in Siberia. Here, the consolidated name Lutherans is used for the designation of the people with Estonian, Finnish (also Ingrian-Finnish), Swedish, Latvian and German origin, with common religious-cultural background. Researchers are of different opinion with regard to the founders and the exact year of establishing the village. For instance,

Ryzhkovo has been mentioned as the oldest Latvian colony: at the end of the 18th or the beginning of the 19th century, Latvians, due to resistance, were expelled from manors to Siberia; the settlement was named Rishkovo, after Riga city (Viikberg, Vaba 1984: 147). However, most of all, the Baron Ungern-Sternberg's peasants from Ingermanland, Yamburg county, have been regarded the first settlers of Ryzhkovo, as they had started a rebellion due to inhumane treatment and a fierce tax burden. Following the suppressing of the mutiny, 25 families, i.e. 150 souls were sent to Siberia (Juntunen 1982:352, Viikberg 1988: 284). According to J. G. Granö (1905: 7), some of the peasants from Ingermanland also settled in Siberia with the permission of Tsar Alexander I, after having obtained a positive answer to a relevant petition. The descendants of the Ingrian settlers live in several villages in Omsk oblast and are known by the name of Korlaks (see Korb 1998: 10, 36–37). Researchers V. Zlobina from Petrozavodsk (Petroskoi) and a Finn R. E. Nirvi ascertained that language-wise, these are the descendants of the Izhorians from West-Ingermanland Lower-Luga dialect. The name *Korlaks* has been explained by the scientists as having been derived from the Russian word *горло* and means a throat-cutter – thus a criminal sent to Siberia. Nevertheless, V. Zlobina has later refuted this explanation. Pursuant to her estimation, this name rather comes from the word *кореляк* < *Корела* ('Karelia'). These are said to be the Baltic Finns whose language differs from that of the local Finnish population, including several Karelian elements and in its essentials, is similar to the Izhorian language (Nirvi 1972: 92–95; Zlobina 1972: 89, 92). Izhorians are Orthodox, whereas the Korlaks believe in Lutheranism. According to V. Zlobina, these people might have converted to Lutheranism due to the impact of Finnish clergymen and other Lutherans (Zlobina 1972: 88). The first pastors in Ryzhkovo, e.g. the Baltic German R. J. Walter, actually had no command of the Finnish language (Juntunen 1982: 353), thus it is only possible to speak about the influence of Finnish pastors from the year 1863, when the Finnish Lutheran Church began to take care of the religious life of the prisoners expelled from Finland.

Siberia belonged within the Moscow consistorial region. The Lutheran Church itself was primarily interested in the consolidation of the Lutherans and from the 1820s, Lutheran deportees were consistently being settled in Ryzhkovo: Estonians, Latvians, Germans, and since 1826, the Finns and Swedes expelled from Finland (Juntunen 1983: 11). The Tsar's regulation (1845) appointed Ryzhkovo as the

location of West-Siberian Lutherans, which became the destination point for small-scale criminals, whereas more serious criminals were sent to Upper-Suetuk in East-Siberia (Granö 1905: 9, Juntunen 1983: 95–96).

Due to various circumstances (lack of space, scarcity of arable land), the mother colony Ryzhkovo spun off several new settlements (Bugene, Boyarka – following the 1846 fire, Om settlement in 1861), but Ryzhkovo was permanently being supplemented on the account of newcomers. From the last decade of the 19th century, the population was also enlarged with the help of the emigrants.

Older settlements, being multinational and multilinguistic from the very beginning, remarkably differed from the ethnic villages that were formed during the later period. Even the development of the two older Lutheran settlements, Upper-Suetuk and Ryzhkovo, was not alike. If in the long run, the inhabitants of Upper-Suetuk went over to the Estonian language, then the multilanguage and multicultural character of Ryzhkovo has preserved until today.

2. Inhabitants of Ryzhkovo – their number and ethnicity

The number of inhabitants in Ryzhkovo and its ethnic composition has been constantly altering during the course of time. In 1846, the size of population reached 900; in 1848, following the departure of some inhabitants (mainly Ingrian Finns), approximately 700 persons remained living in the village. After this, the population of the village increased more than twofold in a short period – in 1859, the number of settlers counted was 1653 (Juntunen 1982: 357). The share of Estonians had increased, 52 Estonian, 39 Latvian and 36 Finnish children were studying in the school (Busch 1862: 263; Viikberg 1988: 285). The foundation of the Om settlement significantly alleviated the shortage of space in Ryzhkovo and the amount of the inhabitants in the mother colony did not later reach the 1859 level. In 1880, the number of parishioners in the settlement comprised 1, 420 persons and in 1902 – 1, 185 inhabitants – 235 Finns, the total number of Estonians, Latvians and Russians combined was 950 (Granö 1905: 21). August Nigol the researcher of settlements, gives an approximate number of Estonians in Ryzhkovo to be 500 in 1918 (Nigol 1918: 43); however, he does not present any data regarding other Lutherans. The author lacks any data considering the changes that reflect the interim period of circa 80 years long, with regard to the statistics of Ryzhkovo inhabitants.

The statistics of the 1997 village council gives the estimated size of

the population in Ryzhkovo to be 750, whereas 11 different nationalities have been listed. Now, Russians are the majority ethnic nationality (ca. 400), in smaller amounts, they had been living in Ryzhkovo from at least the turn of the 19th–20th centuries but the Russians do not form a single community, as they came from various locations at different times. The next ethnic nationalities are the Latvians (ca. 145), Estonians, (ca. 115), Kazakhs (ca. 55), Germans (ca. 20), Ukrainians (ca. 10). In addition, only a few persons represent the Georgians, Armenians, Tartars, Belorussians and Bashkirians. There is no such ethnic nationality as *Finns* registered in the statistics of the village council. When I asked the Ryzhkovo inhabitants about the ethnic composition of their village, the informants provided relatively different answers, but the Finns were mentioned repeatedly. The inhabitants of Finnish ancestry affirm themselves: *Me oleme suomlased, a meid ei kirjutata suomlane*. EFA I 57, 16 (1) < female, b. 1927. [We are Finns but we are not written down as Finns.] According to the data of the Finns in the Om settlement, it was dangerous for the Russian Finns or Ingrian Finns, following World War II or the Winter War, to identify themselves as a Finn and a Finnish name was changed to more Russian-like and the ethnic nationality was noted to be an Estonian (SKSÄ 155, 1991). Although in Siberia, the Finns have added to the local Estonian community, not all Finns were registered as Estonians. For instance, in the demographic statistics of the Orlovka village council, Omsk oblast, 19 persons were recorded as Finns and some Finnish family names had preserved in their indigenous form (Alhonen, Unkuri and others). Similarly to the Finns in Russia, the fate of the Russian Germans has also been problematic, but due to the greater abundance of the Germans and their strong ethnic feelings, the nationality *German* has not disappeared from local statistics. Transitional exchanges of identity or double identity, as a result of political or economic pressure by the country of residence, is relatively frequent in world practice, see, e.g. the Norwegian Kvens (Sulkala 2002: 217).

3. The knowledge of Ryzhkovo inhabitants about their ancestors and the first settlers of the village

The people of the Ryzhkovo village, in comparison with the inhabitants of Upper-Suetuk, where long, elaborated and folklorised stories about the occurrence of their ancestors in Siberia have been preserved in village and family tradition (see Korb 2000: 52–53, 56–57), know relatively little about their predecessors. It was possible to obtain

corresponding reports solely from some elderly persons:

> *Minu isaisa Iestimaalt saadeti.* [My father's father was sent from Estonia.] (This reveals the shortening of time, relatively common in stories.)
> *Jalad olivad raudades. Kaheksa last olivad, kogu perega tulivad.* [Feet were in chains. There were eight children. There were eight children, they came with the entire family.] CD-0450 (13) < female, b. 1922.

> *Tuodi, vai sie isaisa vai tema isa raudades, raudades saadeti siia Siberi. Aga ma ei tia siss, ma küsisin, mis kurja ta tegi. Ta ütles, et ta seda ei tia. No kas ta ei tia vai ei tahtnud ütelda.* /—/ [He was brought, either the grandfather or his father, in chains, in chains he was sent here to Siberia. But I didn't know, I asked him, what evil did he do. He said he didn't know. Well, either he didn't know or didn't want to say.] CD-0454 (6) < female, b. 1916.

> /—/ *Minu vanaisa isa on Germaaniast saadetud oma isaga, 12-aasta vanane poisikene tuli siia. No siss siin elas ja vottis naise ja ja siss oli vot minu vanaisa.* [My grandfather's father was sent from Germany together with his father, he came here as a 12-year-old boy. Then he lived here and got married and then he was my grandfather.]
> – Did he also tell you why he was sent here?
> – *No seal ta misle kurja oli teind, siss saadeti siia. Siin saadeti keik, et Siberisse.* /—/ [Well, he must have done something bad there, then he was sent here. Everybody was sent here, to Siberia.] CD-0457 (18) < female, b. 1913.

The vague knowledge about their ancestors being sent to Siberia, had indeed preserved in the depths of the memory of Ryzhkovo inhabitants, but the vast majority of the descendants of the deportees are not capable of talking more precisely about this topic. It is possible that the oral memory of the inhabitants does simply not reach to the times of 200 years ago. The offences of the predecessors were generally not comparable with the criminal deeds of the ones sent to East Siberia and therefore, the clan and family stories of Ryzhkovo inhabitants did not leave a deep emotional trace in the memory of their descendants.

The foundation story of the village was also discussed in summer

1997, at the celebration of the 195th anniversary of the settlement, and some informants related what they had remembered from this event:

> /—/ *Siis algas see Rõžkovo küla. No meil on räägitud, kuda ta algas. Nii kuda siia tulivad elama, saadeti, nuheldi inimesi, tsaar nuhtles inimesi. Enam ta ei jõudand neid ära tappa, meile räägiti nii, ja siis ta rešil niiviisi, et paneb kandalatesse, ja minge kuhu oskate. Ja tulivad, näe, siia Siberisse, siia näe, Rõžkovo tulivad, seda räägivad. Siin oli igavene mets…*/—/ [Then the Ryzhkovo village started. We have been told how it started. How they came to live here, were sent here, people were chastened, the Tsar chastened the people. He didn't manage to kill them any more, this is what we were told, and he had decided to chain them and let them go wherever they could. And see, they came here, to Siberia, they came here, to Ryzhkovo, that's what they say. There was everlasting forest here…] CD-0307 (10) < female, b. 1922.

The descendants of the emigrants often regard it necessary to justify their ancestors' coming to Siberia. Their stories describe difficult circumstances in Estonia and glorify the riches of Siberia. Similar self-justification is also present in the stories of the deportees – their predecessors had become convinced in the better quality of Siberian life and had remained living here after the expiration of their term of punishment:

> *A ku tulivad siia, nad tagasi enam keski eivat läind, sellepärast et siin maa oli ia. Vot Lätist, Iestist nad on keik saadetud siia. /—/ Sial na kivega vaja jahtida selle maaga, a siin künna ja tie ja keik kasvab ja keik nii ea ja. Nad olid davolnad, sellepärast see küla nii ruttu, vot nüid kaks tuhat kolmendamal aastal lieleb kakssada aastat. /—/* [And once they came here, no one went back any more, because the land was good here. People from Latvia and Estonia, they've all been sent here. /—/ There they had to fight with stones and the land, but here, you just plough and work and everything grows and everything is so good. They were so satisfied, that's why the village grew so rapidly, well now, at the year two thousand and three, it will be two hundred years.] CD-0457 (18) < female, b. 1913.

The founders of the village are also being frequently mentioned in the

stories on the origin of people. The knowledge of who has come here earlier or later, shapes the hierarchic relationships in the relevant region (see, e.g. Jaago 2000: 175). The first comer as if seems to have more rights. The main share of the current inhabitants in Ryzhkovo consider the Estonians and Latvians to be the founders of the village:

> *Eestlane ja lätlane olivad, no kumb nendest enne oli, seda ma ei tia.* /—/ [Estonians and Latvians were there, well, who was the first one of them, I don't know.] CD-0308 (6) < female, b. 1916.

> *Siin olliva lätlased ja iestlased. Iesti omad olivad siin puoles, lätlased sial puoles.* [There were Latvians and Estonians here. The Estonians were in this side, the Latvians in the other.]
> – But how did the boundary go here? Did it go straight along the streets?
> – *Uulitsaid pidi ja-jah. Siin uulits, see oli vahe, ku ütelda see vaheuulits, /—/ kus mina praegu elan. A siinpool oli eestlaste see uulitsa. Ei olnd ju nihuksed, ku nüt on uulitsad, uulitsad olivad talusid täis ja keik vanaaegsed talud.* /—/ [Yes, along the streets, that's right. This street here, this was the line, the so-called intermittent street /—/ where I live now. And this side of the street was of the Estonians. The streets then were not like now, the streets were full of farms and they were all archaic farms.] CD-0450 (7) < female, b. 1922.

> /—/ *Esteks iestlaseid oli siin rohkemb. Siis oli lätlased.* /—/ *Ühed iestlased siin otsas elasivad, lätlased sial otsas elasivad. Ja no iesti naise vottis see vanaisa isa.* /—/ [First, there were more Estonians here. Then, there were Latvians. /—/ Some of the Estonians lived in this side and the Latvians lived in the other end. And my grandfather's father married an Estonian woman.] CD-0457 (18) < female, b. 1913.

Still, not all inhabitants of Ryzhkovo are of the same opinion with regard to the first settlers of the village; sometimes, the Russians have also been included within the first settlers:

> *Kui meie siin algas meie küla ja kohe meie esimesed inimesed olivad lätlased ja venelased ja suomlased läbi segatud* /—/ [When we here, our village started, and right away, the first people were

the Latvians and Russians and the Finns, all mixed up.] CD-307 (10) < female, b. 1922

4. Ambiguity of ethnic and religious identity, the term *virulane*

Besides ethnic-linguistic affiliation, one of the factors shaping the identity in Siberia has undoubtedly been Lutheranism, also called *our belief* (see also Jürgenson 2002: 226–227). Religious life has been relatively persistent, despite the fact that pastors were forced to leave the country in the 1920s and in the 1930s, churches were altered into clubs, granaries or were simply destroyed. Since then, mainly elderly women began to conduct ecclesiastic services and baptisms-funerals were carried out in a homely circle, half-secretly. The pressure of official ideology inevitably had to have an impact at least on the younger generation and the ambiguity of identity today is also evidenced by the blending of two different identities – religious and ethnic:

Me emme ole korlakad, me oleme luterjaanad. [We are not Korlaks, we are Lutherans.] DV 96 < female, b. 1921.

In older Lutheran settlements of Siberia (e.g. Upper-Suetuk, Ryzhkovo), mixed marriages have been conducted since the early days of these villages. An informant, whose predecessors comprise people of Estonian, Latvian, Finnish and German origin, could not at once define her ethnic nationality.

In Siberia, the blur of ethnic identity is more frequent among the middle-aged and younger generations (a Russian or an Estonian) in blended settlements of Lutherans (e.g. Estonian-Finnish, Estonian-Latvian, Finnish-Latvian):

Isa oli soomlane, ema lätlane, a ise olen eestlane. [My father was a Finn, mother a Latvian, and myself, I'm an Estonian.] EFA I 38, 124 (1) < female, b. 1922.

From the standpoint of ethnic identity, it is indeed possible that a person, living in the contact area of cultures, who, at the same time, is often born from a mixed marriage, may identify himself/herself with two or more ethnic groups. Depending on the necessity, they define themselves as the representative of one or the other ethnic nationality. A person born from a mixed marriage can more firmly associate

himself/herself with one ethnic group adhering to one of the parents, for instance:

> *Isa oli eestlane, mamma soomlane. Passis mul on eestlane. Sa oled isa-juurikast välla tulnud, sa piad olema nigu tema oli.* [My father was an Estonian, my mom a Finn. In the passport, I'm an Estonian. Once you've come out of your father-roots, you have to be the way he was.] EFA I 57, 5 (1) < female, b. 1922.

In some occasions, the basis for self-determination is rather the close communication circle:

> *Pasportis ma olen estonets. Minu ema oli russkaja, isa oli latõs. A ma siin külas elasin, ma ütlen, et olen estonets.)* [In the passport, I'm an Estonian. My mother was Russian, father a Latvian. But as I've been living in this village, I say I'm an Estonian.] EFA I 57, 12 (1) < female, b. 1921.

> Estonians and Finns are often not being distinguished in Siberia: *A suomlane ja iestlane – need olivad nagu üks*. [Oh, a Finn and an Estonian – they were like one and the same] and when speaking about the latter, a common name *virulane* is being used in Ryzhkovo. CD-0449 (6) < female, b. 1928.

In general, the Estonians acquired the common name *Estonians* only during the 19th century national movement; by that time, the older settlements in Siberia had already been established a long time ago. Estonians have also named themselves after their counties, such as the *sakalased* (people in Sakala county), *virulased* (people in Viru county), *harjulased* (people in Harju county), etc. but the deportees in Ryzhkovo originated from various parts of Estonia.

Relying on my earlier experience in Siberia, I know that North-Estonians in Siberia, living in the neighbourhood of Ingrians and Finns, have sometimes called themselves *virulased* (comp. in Finnish *virolainen* 'Estonian'). In the Upper-Suetuk village, the Estonian school of that time was generally called the *Viru school*, and the Upper-Bulanka Estonian village was *Viru-Pulan* (see also Viikberg, Vaba 1984: 220). The first purely Estonian village that outgrew from the Ryzhkovo settlement and was founded in 1861, on the shores of the Om River, was called *Viruküla* by the Estonians (with an official name Revel), and

later, *Vana-Viru* (Staryi Revel). People who left Viruküla in 1914, formed the *Uus-Viru* village (Novyi Revel). These Viruküla villages, now being multinational and multilinguistic, are existent even today.

In Ryzhkovo, the term *virulane* often designates both an Estonian and a Finn, however, elsewhere in Siberia, in the neighbourhood of Ingrians and Finns, *virulane* is the self-name for Estonians. The following names – *virulane, Estonian, Finn* – can be used in Ryzhkovo almost as synonyms.

The reasons for common definitions with regard to Estonians and Finns may be the similarity of languages, the fact that the Latvians and *virulased* [plural of '*virulane*'] had distinct territories in the village, elaborated throughout the course of time (Latvian and Viru sides), the weaker position of the Finns in the village. The situation where the Finns have, to a certain extent, remained in the shade, may be explained with the following circumstances: 1) As early as at the beginning of the 20th century, J. G. Granö (1905) mentions that the Finns and Ingrian Finns in Ryzhkovo do not regard much of their language and mostly speak in Ingrian dialects, with Russian and Estonian words and sentence structure. 2) They marry other Lutherans. 3) After the end of deportations from Finland, the position of the Finns in the village became weaker as there were only a few newcomers. 4) It was politically less dangerous for the Finns to identify themselves with some other ethnic group.

5. Multilingualism of the Ryzhkovo Lutherans

When asking about the language for mutual communication in the village, I relatively often received a response that people can speak four languages:

> /—/ *Oskan lätiks haastada, rääkida. Ma oskan lätiks rääkida, i iestiks oskan rääkida, ja veneks oskan rääkida, ja finljandskos ka oskan rääkida. Vot.* CD-0455 (16) < female, b. 1921. [I can speak Latvian. I can speak Latvian and I can speak Estonian and Russian I can speak, and I can speak in Finnish. That's it.]

> *No meil on mestnoi sie kiel. Ma ette oskan nella kielt: lätiks, viruks, suomeks ja veneks. Hot huda, no vseh panimaju i znaju.* /—/ [Well, the language, it is local here. I can speak four languages: Latvian, Viru, Finnish and Russian. Even if not too well, but I understand and know them all.] CD-0458 (27) < female, b. 1913.

Bilingualism and multilingualism are always present when people who speak different languages, are in close contact. Linguistic switching is common to a person who has been living in a multilanguage environment since early childhood and similar multicultural societies can also be found elsewhere, for instance, some of the reindeer-herding Sámi people in Norway and Sweden (Lindgren 2000: 23); a part of the last Votic people have been trilingual (Ariste 1981: 64), etc. Such people, living a contact area, have also been considered semi-lingual, as supposedly, they have no proper command of any of the languages – the Russian press of the 1920s–1930s repeatedly expressed relevant opinions with regard to the Ryzhkovo inhabitants. When observing bilingualism and multilingualism, proceeding solely from the communicational situation (see e.g. Oksaar 1999: 13–15), the Lutherans in Ryzhkovo may definitely be considered tri- or quad-lingual.

In the eyes of an informant, the common Latin alphabet may also be the basis for the linguistic unity:

> *Nied kieled kõik on ühe laada pial: lätlalane, iestlane, suomlane – nendel on kõik ühed tähed*. [These languages are all in the same market: Latvian, Estonian, Finnish – they all have the same letters.] EFA I 57, 3 (11) < female, b. 1922.

Linguists have noted that in the case of language contacts among Siberian Estonians, the Russian (impact of the prevailing great language) and Finnish languages are of greater relevance. The number of people who could speak Russian in the settlements of deportees, was undoubtedly larger than among the earlier emigrants – during penal servitude, it was inevitable to be in contact with this language, and when Russian was made the language of instruction in school education, (1937), the knowledge of the official language became common. Some of the inhabitants also admit: *Russian language is now the first language.* According to linguists, the active presence of a prevalent great language suppresses the small languages in a backward position, thus lessening the social need and interest to reciprocally acquire these languages (Vaba 1999: 539). In several Siberian regions, the situation has indeed developed so that today, Latvians and Estonians communicate by way of the Russian language. With regard to Finnish-Estonian language contacts, the larger extent and intensity of the contacts and the amalgamation of the Finns with Estonians are also estimated to be part of the reasons, in addition to the similarity of languages (Viikberg,

Vaba 1984: 220). As early as at the beginning of the 20th century, Johannes Granö (1905: 18) noted the recognisable impact of the Russian and Estonian languages in the speech of the Ingrian Finns and that of the Finns themselves. During the course of time, the Finns became a minority in the settlements and changed over to the Estonian language, for instance, in Upper-Suetuk, which was initially known as a mainly Finnish village.

A special situation was retained in some regions of Siberia, for example, among the Lutherans of the Om settlement villages – even today, the Latvians, Finns and Volga Germans can often speak Estonian, whereas the Estonians have no command of their neighbours' languages to a similar extent. According to J. Viikberg (1997: 38) the compactness of the Estonians and their own-language village society, respected by other minority groups, is of decisive importance in this regard.

However, the language situation among the Ryzhkovo Lutherans remarkably differs from that of the other settlements in Siberia. As a rule, in Ryzhkovo, the older generation inhabitants of Latvian, Estonian and Finnish origin do not use the Russian language in mutual communication and none of the languages spoken in the village has become dominant either. The Lutherans in Ryzhkovo village understand each other's languages thus making it possible for everybody to use the closer native language or to switch over to another language, if necessary. Usually, in communicating with a concrete person, a certain language is being used. For instance:

> *Mees on lätlane, a ta minuga rääkis veneks. A meheema rääkis lätiks ja lapsed minuga räägivad lätiks. Ema oli finska jazõka pial, isat ma ei tiagi, viidi 41. aastal sinna na vainu ja sial tema tapeti ära.* [My husband is Latvian, but he spoke Russian with me. And my mother-in-law spoke Latvian and the children speak Latvian with me. My mother was using the Finnish language, I don't know about my father, he was taken to the war in '41 and killed there.] EFA I 57, 22 (1) < female, b. 1933.

The exchange of codes in the language of a Ryzhkovo inhabitant is relatively customary. From the point of view of communication, it does not matter whether the message is being delivered by using one or several languages. Siberian Estonians and probably also the other Lutherans switch more easily to the Russian language when dealing with newer concepts and nowadays problems (see also Viikberg 1989:

203).

The language of Estonians and Finns in Ryzhkovo naturally differs in the cases of various persons, but here these two kindred languages have interwoven more densely than anywhere else in Siberia. It is actually possible to conditionally talk about the so-called language of the *virulased*:

> *Ja praegu meie kiel ei voi ütelda, et ta on suome kiel, ei voi ütelda, et ta on viru kiel, misle niukene smešannõi on, no ikka kirjutame virulased, et nigu virulased.* /—/ [And now, our language, you can't say it is the Finnish language, you can't say it's the Viru language, it's such a mixture, well, let's write virulased, that it's like virulased.] CD-0458 (27) < female, b. 1913.

> *Meie keel on: ta läheb eesti sonad, soome sonad, ei ole puhas see keel, segatud ära. Siss ütlevagi korlaka. /—/ See on korjatud kiel. Siin on vene ja suome ja iesti vai viru ja keik keiki on pantud kokku. See on nüid tehtud isi, isi omatehtud kiel.* /—/ [Our language is like this: Estonian words, Finnish words, it's not clean this language, it's mixed up. That's why they would say Korlak /—/ It's a collected language. There is Russian and Finnish and Estonian or Viru and all this has been put together. This is all self made, it's a self-made language.] CD-452 (10) < female, b. 1916 and male, b. 1933.

In reality, the Estonian language's position in Ryzhkovo is indeed stronger than that of the Finnish one and we can speak about the Estonian language with a touch of Finnish. The language of the *virulased* has a lot of Finnish words (e.g. *koidan, reheline, lieneb, vaikka, mansikka* /berries/, *uuni* etc.) and sentence structure. While the impact of Latvian on the language of the *virulased* could be anticipated due to close mutual contacts, such an influence seems to be relatively modest.

6. Specific features in the tradition of the *virulased* in Ryzhkovo

Folklore is a fairly international phenomenon: types and genres of folklore, plots of stories, short narratives etc. easily overcome state and language borders. Nevertheless, we can still talk about the tradition of a concrete ethnic group. Folklore is one of the basic means through which a human being and a group discovers or creates their identity

(Dundes 2002: 69). Besides the folklore text, the researchers of tradition are becoming more and more interested in the presentation: how is the information being transmitted? In this case, the use of language by the tradition group is not at all unimportant.

In the Ryzhkovo tradition, it is possible to note several specific features, conditioned by the ethno-linguistic situation of the village. As I interviewed the Latvians in Ryzhkovo to a significantly lesser extent and more superficially than the local *virulased* (mainly those whose spouses were from among the *virulased* or who lived in their territory), I can hereby display some of the specific features in the tradition of the *virulased* in Ryzhkovo village.

In Ryzhkovo, healing with words, similar to the general situation in older Siberian settlements, has been preserved and is still viable today, probably also due to the insufficient availability of professional medical assistance. The healers of other ethnic nationalities have been quite frequently attributed stronger healing capacity and greater skills; this fact has been referred to by several researchers of folk belief (see e.g. Loorits 1928: 16jj). *Virulased* in Ryzhkovo consider the healers of Latvian ancestry to be of greater knowledge, whereas the Latvians often look for help from the nearby Russian village or from the *virulased* living in the vicinity. In Ryzhkovo, healing words are passed on to a younger person and, as a rule, in the same language they were once learned. *Virulased* know spells in Estonian, Finnish and Latvian languages as well as in Russian. During the expedition, we managed to record *pistuksesõnad* [charms against short sharp sudden pain] and rose spells in Estonian; *lendvasõnad* [spells against a mythological illness believed to be sent by a witch's arrow] and the spells against the illness brought by the wind, both in Finnish; rose spells in Latvian; Russian-language spells against fright, etc. In general, local people are of the opinion that healing charms can also be put into another language without lessening their power or impact. The translation of words was generally not a difficult problem as the inhabitants knew the language of their neighbours.

The Siberians' command of languages, in speech and writing, differs both by villages and persons. The knowledge of the Latin alphabet among the *virulased* in Ryzhkovo was relatively poor and the healing words, apotropaic writings, songs, etc., in Estonian or Finnish-Estonian blended language, have often been written down in Cyrillic.

Finnish names *piru, para* are being used, by the *virulased* in Ryzhkovo, as the names for mythological creatures. *Piru* is also used in

shorter folklore pieces, in riddles and sayings. Denoting the joint handicraft evening of girls, both the Russian *vechorka* and the blended Finnish-Estonian *illan istmine* are known. The names of more relevant holidays are used simultaneously in four languages, for instance, the Midsummer Day (St. John's Day) – Latvian *liigo* (liiga), Finnish *juhannus*, Russian *Ivan Kupala* whereas in Ryzhkovo, the Latvian name is most widely spread as the Midsummer Day had been a more significant feast for the Latvians than for the *virulased*. Singing belonged in the tradition of celebrating the Midsummer Day, both among the *virulased* and the Latvians. Often, this grew into a singing competition, however, the *liigo* songs are sung solely by the Latvians. Regarding *liigo* songs, see (*Latviešu tautas…* 1973: 65–66.)

Singers among the Estonians (*virulased*) have willingly included the most pleasant Russian, Finnish and Latvian songs in their repertoire, in addition to Estonian ones – the language has not been an obstacle and some of these songs have already been acquired in childhood. *Kellel miuke viis on: on vene ilusaid ja on iesti ilusaid, ei oska ma nüid siit selitada.* [Depends on the tune they have: there are beautiful Russian ones and Estonian ones, I can't sort them out.] CD-0305 (5) < female, b. 1916. Evidently, the knowledge of Russian songs spread here earlier and was more general than in the purely Estonian villages in Siberia. The international and borrowed quality of rhymed folk songs enabled joint singing also in a multilanguage company – every person in his/her own language.

The knowing of Finnish songs is remarkably more profound in Ryzhkovo than in other Siberian settlements. If in Upper-Suetuk, initially considered a Finnish village, people only remember a couple of song fragments in the Finnish language, then in the repertoire of the Ryzhkovo *virulased*, Finnish songs have a firm place, including a lullaby in alliterative verse, "*Tuudi luudi lasta…*" existent in many variants in an academic publication *Suomen kansan vanhat runot*.

The share of bilingual rhymed songs is larger in Ryzkovo than elsewhere in Siberia and they do not originate from the later tradition of Estonia, as in the majority of Estonian settlements. The Estonian rhymed songs include songs with switching to the more widespread language in homeland Estonia (Russian, German, Latvian, Finnish and Swedish). Conditioned by the linguistic situation in Ryzhkovo, local people also know songs in Finnish-Russian mixed language, e.g.:

Lavvantekki posle banju

pojat menit naimaa.
A vaskresenje utrom rana poigi uni painaa.
[On Saturday, after sauna,
The boys went to get married.
But early Sunday morning
The boys were obsessed by sleep.]
CD-0305 (13) < female, b. 1916.

which has a purely Finnish language equivalent in the files of rhymed songs in the SKS folklore archives.

In Ryzhkovo, I also recorded a song in Estonian-Russian mixed language:

Läksin metsa, poidu les,
seal oli karu ja medved.
Läks ta minu üle pia,
tšeres moju golovu.
[Went to the forest, went to the forest
There was a bear and a bear
Did he go over my head,
Over my head.]
CD-0305 (14) < females, b. 1913 and 1916.

It is possible that this song reached Ryzhkovo by way of the Ingrian Finns as the only earlier transcriptions have been done by the academician Paul Ariste, from one and the same songster, presented in Votic-Russian and Izhorian-Russian languages (Ariste 1987: 9).

Virulased in Ryzhkovo know the dances, which are more widespread among their neighbours, the relevant dance name was also taken over together with the dance. For example, the description given by Emilia Naarits:

Meil tantsud enne mis olivad [The dances we used to have]*: valss, polka, katele poole polka, krakujakk, korobuška, padispaan, tustepp, kikas, kurtu tetsi, svetit mesjats, hoira, läksin pedre, jehal na jarmarku, võidu na retšenku, ma läksin õhtul hilja.* Ryzhkovo inhabitants consider their ability to dance to be of higher level than that of their neighbours and criticise the latter: *Eivat oskanud polkat tantsida, hüppasivad aga paiga pial!* [They couldn't dance polka, they're just jumping on one spot!] CD-0305 (19).

The tradition of Ryzhkovo *virulased* involves, on one hand, the joint tradition of the Lutherans in the village and, on the other hand, however, defines the *virulased* as a separate tradition group.

Summary

The oldest Lutheran village in Siberia (being approximately 200 years old) has evolved into a multiethnic and multicultural settlement. Village inhabitants, as before, admit the existence of two monolithic ethnic groupings (the *virulased* and Latvians), despite the history of abundant mixed marriages between them. To a certain extent, both groups have also maintained their own territory, and naturally, both parties have been supplemented by newcomers of various ethnic origin. On one hand, we can speak about the joint tradition of the Lutherans in Ryzhkovo, on the other hand, also about the tradition of two ethnic groupings (the *virulased* and Latvians). The relatively weaker position of the Finns in the village has caused the amalgamation of the Finns and Ingrian Finns with the Estonians, nevertheless, Finnish language and culture have significantly replenished that of the Estonians and the joint name *virulased* seems to be fully justified. Constant competing between these two ethnic groups contributed to the longer persistence of the tradition.

Archive materials

SKSÄ – Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seuran kansanrunousarkiston äänitearkisto

CD – Compact disc of the Estonian Folklore Archives

EFA – Eesti Rahvaluule Arhiivi käsikirjaline kogu [The collection of manuscripts of the Estonian Folklore Archives]

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Translated by Mall Leman

The Politization of the Concepts of Culture and Ethnicity: an Example from Northern Norway

Marjut Anttonen

'Culture' and 'ethnicity' are central but also difficult and controversial concepts in ethnology and anthropology. They are closely connected and intertwined; by discussing ethnicity we also discuss cultural distinctiveness and questions of origin as well as linguistic and/or religious characteristics. Besides being academic concepts, they have become popular words in the public sphere. On one hand, they have a wide and also inaccurate use in popular expression and in the mass media; on the other hand they have become highly politicized words that can also be given as explanations for a variety of conflicts.

In this paper I will first present some aspects of 'culture' and 'ethnicity' as scholarly concepts, and secondly an example from Northern Norway, where identities of Finnish origin were politicized in the 1990s.

Conceptualizing culture – from a static entity to a dynamic process

Earlier anthropological theories of culture stressed order, integration and stability by defining culture as coherent, integrated and self-reproducing. Culture was often presented as a homogenic small-scale entity, which could be described by naming its typical features, for example, with the help of lists of traits. This meant that each culture was supposed to have certain basic features that each member of that particular group should agree on. Thus, culture should be 'shared' by all its members – and at the same time it was made common by simplifying and homogenizing it. At the same time, earlier theories could also hide conflicts and contradictions. Culture should have a certain, eternal core of homogenity, genuinity, originality and truth, in other words eternal 'cultural essence'. Searching for this kind of cultural essence is called *essentialism*. Another parallel concept is *reification*; supposing that cultural or ethnic groups have certain enduring, everlasting features.

The present view, however, is the opposite: culture is not something

concrete, like 'a thing', having a beginning or a homogenic core, but it is a way of conceptualizing practices and beliefs as well as continuation and change. It must be understood as communication. Culture is not "something that we have", but "something that we do". Geographical borders have less meaning, as culture is creative practice and a combination of different elements that have been adopted from various directions. Borders between 'cultures' should be understood as incidental. The cultural variation within a certain group can be so extensive that defining the 'common culture' of that group becomes difficult. And the changes are so rapid, that it is impossible to talk of a continuing homogenic culture. Eventually, questions of 'sharing' or 'possessing' culture become highly politicized matters (Hannerz 1993: 95–98; Borofsky 1994a: 243–245; Borofsky 1994b: 313–318; Friedman 1994: 72–77; Keesing 1994: 306; Wolf 1994: 5–7; Wright 1998: 8–10).

The continual and dynamic process of change is described as follows:

"Culture is now everywhere, under continuous creation – fluid, interconnected, diffusing, interpenetrating, homogenizing, diverging, hegemonizing, resisting, reformulating, creolizing, open rather than closed, partial rather than total, crossing its own boundaries, persisting where we don't expect it to, and changing where we do" (Sanjek 1991: 622).

In other words, we are dealing with very complicated cultural dynamics. We should pay attention to continuation and change, and to increasing individual diversity and emerging new variations. We should also notice what is shared, and what is not, within different cultural groupings. These questions are connected with the concepts of overlapping, differentation, creolization and hybridization (Borofsky 1994b: 313–318).

The role of anthropologists and ethnologists in defining culture is also often discussed. We have chosen what we want to study as culture, and by doing this we define what is culture. This will, in return, influence peoples' understanding of what their 'own culture' is. In other words, the phenomenon we are studying is created by us at the same time as it is described by us (Ehn 1992: 3–7; Ålund & Schierup 1992: 9–10; Wright 1998:13–14).

Essentialized and reified concepts of culture are still deep-rooted in general discussion; 'culture' is turned into an object, regarding it from the outside as something existing independently. Even though most anthropologists and ethnologists emphasize the change of paradigm,

and have abandoned the older terms, some scholars, however, are still stubbornly referring to culture as if it were an actor doing different things (Ehn 1992: 4–5; Hannerz 1993: 95; Borofsky 1994a: 243–245; Keesing 1994: 301–310; Wright 1998: 8–10).

Conceptualizing ethnicity

'Ethnicity' became part of the English vocabulary in the 1950s, whereafter it gradually became an independent concept of social sciences during the late 1960s and the 1970s. During the past thirty or forty years new ethnic movements, revitalization processes and worldwide anticolonial fights have made the term well-known and it has superseded the concepts of acculturation and assimilation that were earlier fashionable terms in social sciences. Ethnicity is used as an analytical tool of research as well as for different ideological and political purposes. It sometimes seems that we can talk about ethnicity with apparent ease in most different situations without defining, or maybe not even being aware of what we really mean by it (Chapman et al. 1989: 11–19; Eriksen 1992: 2–3; Eriksen 1993a: 3–4; Roosens 1989: 11; Williams 1989: 401–402).

According to the previous definitions, ethnicity was based on culture and often also connected to tribes. Until the middle of the 1960s, it was usual to try to classify ethnic groups by making lists of different identifiable cultural traits that would distinguish cultural groups. This is demonstrated by different folksy taxonomies and popular suppositions from different parts of the world. In other words, an ethnic group was supposed to be the same as the 'culture' represented by it, and ethnicity was described and categorized in the same way as culture. Again we meet conceptual reification and essentialism (Barth 1969: 10–11; Roosens 1989: 12; Eriksen 1992: 3, 15–17, 28–30; Verdery 1994: 40–41; Banks 1996: 11–13).

The paradigm changed when Fredrik Barth published his famous book *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries* (1969). Even though some parts of it have been criticized since, the central ideas are valid. According to the Barthian view, ethnicity is neither a static phenomenon nor the same as culture. It cannot be defined by studying the so-called objective lists of traits. Such cataloguing would rather be like arranging empiric 'collections of butterflies'! Instead ethnicity deals with social relations between groups, and ethnic identifications are based on definition and self-definition. They are created by human experience and therefore attention should be paid to the creation and maintenance of borders,

and not to the 'cultural stuff' inside the borders. The invisible border itself is a social product of varying importance. It is also worth remembering that ethnic boundaries are not necessarily identical to territorial boundaries. Some scholars have pointed out the possibility of ethnic groups becoming culturally more similar, for example as a result of creolization, while group boundaries are simultaneously getting stronger (Barth 1969: 10–11; Eriksen 1992: 3; Eriksen 1993a: 36–39; Verdery 1994: 40–41; Vermeulen & Govers 1994: 2–3; Banks 1996: 12–14).

The conceptual confusion deals with the terms of ethnic identity, ethnic group and culture, as they are often confused in everyday use. This is not surprising as the term of ethnic identity can refer to the origins, 'the heritage of blood', the cultural distinctiveness, etc. All these facts can be presented in all possible combinations and emotional degrees and forms of social organization. At the same time, the usefulness of the concept of ethnicity has been criticized. Ambiguity makes it a difficult term. Even though it covers a large field, it is conceptually difficult and analytically weak. In fact, its negative aspects might remain unnoticed if one looks too eagerly for ethnic homogenity and at the same time neglects the cultural diversity on the field (e.g. Banks 1996: viii).

Eugeen E. Roosens has concluded that ethnic identity is a psychological reality, because people are also identifying themselves ethnically in addition to all their other identifications. He also reminds us that the concept of ethnic identity is flexible as it covers the cultural and social as well as the psychological dimensions. Combining them all dynamically makes many nuances possible (Roosens 1989: 15–19).

Ethnic and social identities are relational and situational, i.e. they are manifested situationally, as the Barthian school emphasizes. People define their own identities in relation to somebody else and this happens differently in different situations. In some situations, it can be practical to consider certain ethnic groups to be same groups while they can be regarded clearly different groups in some other situations. The relational and optional nature of ethnic identity is especially visible in persons that have multi-ethnic background, e.g. migrants or children belonging to families with more than one nationality or ethnicity. They have the choice of being loyal and identifying with either one or both of the groups. Strong over- and under-communication is also part of identity negotiations. Identities can also be manipulated, which has to be recognized in the analysis. In addition to all that, there are also many

situations in multi-ethnic societies where ethnicity plays no role. As the importance of ethnicity can change remarkably, it is worth noting the situations where the cultural differences become important, how ethnic identity becomes fundamentally important to some individuals but not to others, and how loyalty is created and maintained (Barth 1994: 13–30; Eriksen 1993a: 152–154; Verdery 1994: 34–35). People also understand the ethnic group differently: "The ethnic group is an aggregate of selves, each of whom produces ethnicity for itself" Anthony P. Cohen (1994) has remarked.

Originally, the ideology of many nation states was based on compulsory categories of identity and on the so-called imperative identities, which meant that each person could have only one certain ethnic and national identity. These kinds of identity categories are essentially important for the state in helping to keep the census. One can't keep the census if people have "one identity today, and another one tomorrow". In the same way, the rise of the states and the registration of the population led to the use of surnames. The idea of one single identity has been prevalent in modern states, but it seems that the concept of multiple identities is now becoming so in postmodern states (Anderson 1991: 164–170; Verdery 1994: 37–39).

Politization of ethnic and cultural identities

As we now understand the culture concept, it is not a homogenous zone of shared meanings but a zone of disagreement and contest. This means that by studying ethnicity we are not studying shared culture but how certain concepts of culture as well as concepts of tradition and history are used as political tools. Ever since the end of the 1980s, there has been a flow of anthropological studies dealing with the study of culture as politics. In these studies, ethnicity is tied to social ideologies, especially to ideologies of nationalism, which certain social groups construct around notions of 'culture' and 'origin'. One starts arguing about 'culture' while one also fights over 'possessing' it (Friedman 1994: 72–77; Verdery 1994: 42–43; Wolf 1994: 5–7; Wright 1998: 8).

The rapidly changing social and cultural processes have shown us how ethnic identity has become more clearly articulated than before. Ethnicity has not disappeared, as many researchers predicted some decades ago; on the contrary, the meaning of identity is emphasized in such situations where social mobility, change and competition for resources have started threatening ethnic boundaries. For example, some people react on the modernization process as though it were

threatening, whereas ethnic identity can give people a comforting idea of belonging and being connected to the past. Ethnic symbolism refers to traditional language, religion, way of life and a family system, which has a particular reason for maintaining the ethnic identity. Knowing that you 'possess a culture' is a sign of being faithful to your forbears and the past. Maybe, it makes life easier in the turbulent changes of the modern world, if one 'knows' that one is "a link in the chain of a thousand years" and descends from some ancient folk (Eriksen 1996: 49–51).

Besides answering 'perennial problems of life' – questions on origins, destiny and even the meaning of life – ethnic ideology must also have a practical function, otherwise it would not thrive. Ethnicity can be an instrument for competition for scarce resources, i.e. it can be used to obtain certain privileges. Roosens (1989: 13) has remarked that many people would even change their ethnic identity if they could gain by doing so. The instrumentalistic view, in its strictest sense, has been criticized for not paying any attention to the symbolic aspects of ethnicity, and the emotional meanings of ethnic identity (Eriksen 1993a: 45–47, 73–74).

In ethnopolitics, ethnicity becomes a relevant political factor. It is important to define culture and its owner, as ethnicity is understood as common and shared culture. Cultural differences are also used as ideological weapons in ethnic conflicts between different groups. They start arguing about 'culture' and quarreling and fighting over its 'possession'. 'Possessing culture' becomes the 'politics of culture'. Becoming extremely politicized, it also becomes a question of a violent conflict. This is why it is important to study how the concept of culture is used for political, ethnic and nationalistic purposes (Ehn 1992: 3–4; Borofsky 1994b: 318).

One of the interesting fields of study is to scrutinize how historical and cultural symbols are manipulated in identity management. When studying *ethnogenesis* – i.e. the creation of ethnic relations and identities – historians often try to find out what really happened, and some of them even distinguish between 'invented' and 'real' traditions. Anthropologists, in their return, would rather show the ways certain historical accounts are used as tools in the contemporary creation of identities and in politics. History is not a product of the past, but a response to the requirements of the present. The ambiguity of symbols makes it possible to manipulate them politically; e.g. different versions of the same myths can be created for political purposes. Ethnic groups might

need either a tragic or a heroic history. In other words, we are not dealing with the past but with the constructions of the past that are created in the present (Eriksen 1993a: 71–73).

The fragmentation or 'pluralization' of identities can become visible in certain situations; e.g. when there is the possibility of 'playing the identities games'. Personal identity politics are typical for our modern societies. The contradictions of identities are, on one hand, in society and on the other hand, in the minds of individuals. No single identity, e.g. belonging to a certain social class, can adopt other identities so that the result is some kind of an overarching 'master identity', that could be a safe ground for politics. On the contrary, modern political landscapes produce dislocated identifications that are competing with each other; multiple identities are connected to negotiable history and cultural content. This means that identifications become politicized and they can be competed over. This change has sometimes been described as a shift from a politics of class identity to a politics of difference (Hall 1992: 279–280).

As a result of the social development and the many processes of change, the 'homogenizing projects' are nearly over. Diversity becomes visible and even more attention is paid to difference. At the same time, one can see signs of so-called 'new-essentialism', understanding all kinds of difference as inherent and imperative. Essentializing and politicizing culture and ethnic identities can have strong social political influence, and therefore it is important to focus research on these questions, e.g. on how a certain state or a nationalistic or ethnic movement attempts to achieve homogenity (Verdery 1994: 46–47, 51–55).

Three levels of analysis of ethnicity

Fredrik Barth (1994) suggests that any analysis of ethnicity should take place on three different levels; the micro, median and macro level in order to fully understand the diverse processes whereby ethnicity is transformed into politics. In fact, these levels are not objectively separated from each other but they are interwoven in a complex fashion. For analytical purposes, however, one has to distinguish them in order to be able to illuminate their interconnections.

A micro level, or the so-called grassroot level, is the field where identities are formed. It focuses on persons and their interpersonal interaction in various events and arenas of human lives; on the management of selves, the complex context of relationships; the

experiences of self-value, and how different symbols are chosen or rejected. The processes on this level are formative of a person's consciousness of ethnic identity and they also lay foundations for a possible identity crisis, which again can feed back to the other levels.

A median level is needed to depict the processes that create collectivities and mobilize groups for diverse purposes by diverse means. This is the field of ethnic leadership, groups and organizations, rhetoric and stereotypes. The dynamic of groups and collectivities arises from requirements of group leaders and ideology. Ethnicity is defined by certain conditions, dichotomies and boundaries. Processes on this level limit the various expressions of identity as people are compelled to take either/or choices and construct 'package deals'. Instead of conveying the multiple ways of understanding ethnicity, the simplified and homogenized concept of the leaders is made public by media – often very aggressively. They present the politics of the leaders as the will of people. Therefore it is important that researchers also listen to those who have different opinions than the ethnopolitical elite.

On the macro level attention is paid to state politics and the way the state deals with groups and categories of persons. All ethnic processes must be understood with reference to state structures as modern states provide a vast field of public goods, which can be distributed by arbitrary regulation or control by bureaucrats. As a result, different new groups start organizing and claiming access and rights to the benefits and privileges given by the state. Different governments have different political agendas for different ethnic groups. On this level, bureaucrats grant privileges and restrictions on the basis of formal criteria. In this way, modern states generate categorical distinctions within the field of cultural variation, and they also create the basis for the development of ethnic groups. In different parts of the world there are new situations where different ethnic movements, liberation movements, international organizations etc. are rising against their governments. By scrutinizing their relations to each other one can analyze the premises they create for each other. The individual understanding of identity, formations of ethnic groups, the interests of governments and global processes are fused together forming a complicated field of political and cultural processes, where – to rephrase Barth – we are facing a competition with most global processes and most intimate experiences of identity (Barth 1994: 19–21, 26–30).

An example of the ethnopolitical debate on the Kvens

Since the 1970s a considerable interest has been paid to the language, culture, history, roots and origins of the population with Finnish-speaking ancestry, also know as Kvens, in Northern Norway. This kind of interest is typical for ethnic revitalisation movements around the world. Over time, it has become important for some members of the present-day generation of the Kvens to politicize their Finnish-speaking background and the cultural identification of 'being a Kven'. The debate accelerated in the 1990s and was full of controversial and conflicting arguments on the questions of ethnicity, culture and language. The debate has revolved around controversial arguments about the ethnonym 'Kven' and the present-day situation of the Kven culture. It has also focused on different ways of defining the status of those with Finnish-speaking ancestry, whether they are defined as descendants of early immigrants or whether they could be regarded as an aboriginal population on a par with the Sámi people. The debate has also dealt with different interpretations involving the Finnish language and the local dialects in Northern Norway, one of the main questions being whether these dialects are variants of the Finnish language or whether they can be considered as belonging to an independent language, which still needs to have its own written grammar.

In the following chapters, I will present some examples on how the concept of culture has been used and how the idea of historical background has been reconstructed in the ethnopolitical debate (see also Anttonen 1998, 1999, 2000 and 2001).

Death of the Kven culture?

While I collected material for my thesis, I often encountered arguments about the dying Kven culture. Sometimes there were serious comments about cultural death at various seminars and symposia, at another times, jokes about the resurrection of the Kvens. Often death was mentioned in readers' letters or in the fiery headlines of some newspaper articles like "I don't want to die as a Kven" or "I am going to die as a multicultural Kven". Powerful metaphors dealt with, for example, the idea of Kvens being sentenced to death or being buried alive. Language death was also often mentioned in many debates in Northern Norway (see also Anttonen 1995).

At first I didn't understand why the Kven representatives used terms of dying when they talked about their own language, culture and group in Norwegian society. They didn't seem like a 'forgotten' group as they

had become ethnically organized in the past 15 years, and Kven matters were openly discussed in public. The atmosphere had become freer during the past twenty years and it allowed various minority members to articulate their ethnic distinctiveness loudly, which made the debate multivocal and contradictory.

Gradually, I understood that the death metaphors were part of conscious ethnopolitical rhetoric, which the Kvens used when addressing their message to the state or to the members of the government and the parliament. Culture was described as a kind of 'threatened species', which needed money in order to be preserved and revived. Describing the dangers of culture would show how general modernization was regarded as a threat to the so-called traditional ways of life and how culture was understood as an essentialized, static, bounded and self-supplied entity.

Kven culture has also been defined as a dying culture by some researchers. Nearly all experts used similar metaphors and drew similar conclusions about the fate of Kven culture in the early 1980s, as, for example, in a seminar held in Rovaniemi. It was described as a museum-like culture of the past, having no future (see Aikio 1982: 204; Bjørklund 1982: 215–217; Bratrein 1982: 153; Eriksen 1982: 143–145; Eriksen & Niemi 1982: 108). At that point in time, the existence of people of Finnish origin was publicly recognized and made into a research object, and the researchers had the paradigm of that point in time in their mind. They conceptualized culture as it was then understood, a homogenic and static entity without future. Those academic comments about the death of the Kven culture can be compared with the polemic, ethnopolitical metaphors of today. What lies behind them is the holistic and essentialized concept of culture. In reality, we are dealing with a process of cultural change, i.e. the process of modernization, which sweeps across all fields of society and results in replacing earlier habits and practices with new ones.

The same kinds of judgements have also been offered about the Sámi culture. There are several examples and early literal notes on the 'disappearance' of the Sámi, and the idea has been presented on quite a few occasions in recent years even though Sáminess has proved to be most dynamic in many respects.

What is 'genuine' Kven culture?

One has looked for 'genuine' and 'real' Kven culture in the past years. But what might that be for us today? We know that the Kvens of the 19th

century were hard working tar distillers, fishermen and peasants with diligent wives and large families. It seems difficult to abandon this image of a 'real Kven' and to accept that a present-day Kven actually is a Norwegian-speaking citizen of Norway, one for whom 'being Kven' means being familiar with the historical background of the family. As we want to research the culture of these Kvens, we are repeatedly facing the question of defining the research object. Should we focus on the old Kvens, burning wood in charcoal pits to make tar, or barley cultivation, or sauna traditions, or on the post-war modernization, or what?

The questions of so-called ethnic monopoly of research are also relevant in this connection. The University of Tromsø has been accused by the Kven organization for not doing enough Kven research, or having too many Norwegian or Finnish scholars working in that field. The ethnopolitical elite would rather restrict the right to do Kven research to 'genuine' Kvens (Figenschau 1996; Seppola 2000). This kind of claim for ethnic monopoly is typical of our time – it deals with the questions of insider's and outsider's points of view – at the same time, the debate shows what kind of problems can arise if the principles of academic freedom and the right to research are limited, for example, to particular ethnic groups only. The ethnopolitical elite would also like to direct research to focus on subjects that it considers important; for example the Kven newspaper published a list of cultural phenomena that should be studied (Kveenitutkimusta tarvitaan 1996). Maybe not surprisingly, the suggested list coincided with the indexes of old ethnological works; the main features of material culture grouped according to a certain pattern. Over a hundred years ago, it was typical that ethnologists set out to collect material from the fields that were considered to be in danger of imminent death. Now too, the suggested fields of present-day research are most essentialistic, understanding culture as a static and bounded phenomenon.

The homogenizing culture concept is connected to demands of authenticity; i.e. researchers sometimes present their views on what ethnic groups should be like in order to fulfil researchers' own criteria. While searching for the 'genuine' and 'real' cultural features of 'genuine' and 'real' groups, they make the mistake of wanting to prohibit these groups from developing and modernizing because of our own essentialistic demands. Researchers have also warned us about victimizing the various ethnic groups and indigenous peoples by contact with the Western world, as such a simplification objectifies their cultures as static and inflexible systems that are on the verge of being destroyed or

disappearing. This kind of attitude overlooks human flexibility and different ways of becoming adjusted, or it does not appreciate the versatile dynamics of cultural processes either (Eriksen 1993b: 294, 347; Thuen 1995: 13).

Reconstructing ethnic origin

The history of the Finnish-speaking minority in Norway has been understood and presented as a history of migration; it was one of the results of the colonization of the wilderness by Swedish and Finnish peasants in the 18th and 19th centuries. Gradually, they reached Arctic coastal areas where some of them settled permanently. Unrest due to years of war as well as famine and the need for a better livelihood also provided some of the main reasons for migration. Present-day Kvens are descendants of these early migrants and settlers.

In the beginning of the 1990s some new interpretations of Kven history became public. Some Kven activists claimed that it was only a 'political myth' that Kvens had been Finnish-speaking migrants in the latter half of the 19th century. Instead of defining their forefathers as Kven migrants a few hundred years ago, they wanted to focus on their ancestry from the 10th and 12th centuries and focused on the mythical original home of the Kvens between 900 and 1100.

Nowadays, one hears another explanation of their origins, which start with the story of Ottar in the 800s, which is one of the oldest written sources in which the words 'Kven' and 'Kvenland' are mentioned. Kvenland was the lowland area around the bottom of the Gulf of Bothnia, and the name Kven was used to describe the inhabitants of that area by other Scandinavians in the late Middle Ages. This idea of the mythical original home of the Kven people is used as a historical explanation when one has wanted to obtain indigenous rights for a population of Finnish-speaking origin: "Our country has to be responsive to the UN resolution on minority rights and the ILO Convention. *State borders should be unimportant because Kvens are an indigenous people of the North Calotte*" (Første landsmøte i NKF (Norske Kveners Forbund/Norwegian Kven Organization) 1991, my italics).

The ethnic leaders like to point out that there was a permanent Kven settlement in Norway before 1751, when the present borders of the state of Norway were first drawn. In connection to demands for indigenous rights, the Kvens have been compared with the Sámi. Some ethnopoliticians have concluded that the cultures can be fully compared with each other as their starting points are similar: the historical

tradition is longer than a nation state, and both groups have been Norwegianized, and "the demolition of their cultures has been systematic and organized" (the essentializing idea of a 'demolished culture' as an entity is visible also here). According to these claims, both the Sámi and the Kvens have the same forefathers historically, which means that the Kvens are just as much an indigenous population and should obtain the same aboriginal rights (see eg. Johansen 1992).

New historical interpretations are a clear sign of the need to search for the oldest possible historical background in order to legitimize the demands for an indigenous status. On the other hand, these demands have not been accepted by all Kvens. There is a wide disagreement between different members of the group.

The competition between ethnic groups has become tenser in the past years. One sign is the founding of a new Kvenland organization (Kveenimaa-yhdistys in Finnish) at the end of August 1999, which wants to prove that it is the Kvens and not the Sámi who are the real indigenous population of the North Calotte (Koivulehto 1999).

Analysis of the Kven debate

The Kven debate can be scrutinized with the help of Barth's model; analysing ethnicity on three levels. *On the micro level,* there is a diversity of identifications. The population with Finnish-speaking ancestry is heterogenous, with a variety of ethnic and cultural identifications. Many of them also have multiple identifications, with Norwegian and Sámi elements as part of their Kven or Finnish identities. In reality, there are diverse interpretations of how to be a 'real' Kven, or a real Finn, Norwegian or Sámi. As far as 'genuine' Kvens are concerned, there are very many ways of representing and expressing their cultural distinctiveness. For some – in fact quite a large number – it is enough to be aware of one's family history and Finnish ancestry. Some others are also interested in various cultural activities, whether this means merely celebrating some annual festival or taking a more active part in various Finnish and Kven events. In addition, there is a small but distinctive group of Kvens for whom their cultural background is a basis for ethnopolitical activities.

This variety of meanings reveals the fact that identities are not homogeneous, one-dimensional or static, but rather are constantly in flux. Instead of interpreting identities as discrete entities with clear boundaries, we see that in reality they often function analogically. One can be both Norwegian and Kven or Norwegian and Finnish with

shifting differences. This also leads people into their never-ending negotiations on cultural identification and various forms of self-ascription.

On the median level, ethnic and cultural identifications are politicized; ethnopolitical leaders are trying to construct an idea of a single, homogenous minority population, which could eventually be called a Kven nation, and which could thus obtain a certain legal status based on its historical background and cultural distinctiveness. Comparisons are made to the Sámi population, which was granted a status as an indigenous population due to the ILO Convention number 169 in 1991.

The idea of a homogenous Kven nation is created with the help of some rhetoric tools such as the concepts of language, identity and culture, and with the help of the metaphors of culture and language death. Reconstructions and new interpretations of the historical background are also needed; like the above-mentioned idea about the one thousand year old mythical homeland. The need to obtain the largest possible number of members for the ethnic group, leads the ethnopolitical enterprise to a 'fight for souls' since a solid bulk of people sharing the same identification and self-ascription is a prerequisite for the idea of an ethnic community (even a nation) with clear boundaries. There are imperative demands for a certain identity for those persons who have Finnish-speaking ancestry so that they can be classified as 'real' Kvens. The organizations, however, cannot make imperative demands on people's identities, so the result is to continue with identity negotiations. The idea of a homogenous Kven nation is created by defining a common ethnonym, 'Kven', for all members of the group, creating a common Kven language of their own, and postulating a shared historical background and origin. There are also identity symbols; a national Kven museum has been established and a national costume was designed a couple of years ago. A Kven flag and some other identity symbols have also been discussed.

On the macro level, the relationships between ethnic groups and the state are analysed. Different groupings organize themselves and start claiming the public benefits and services that the modern state can provide. They also want to establish their status and want to legitimize their demands by referring to the concepts of culture, tradition and authenticity. This also happens in Norway, where society tolerates a fair amount of ethnic and cultural diversity – unlike the past when the young nation-state wanted to create and maintain an imagined idea about the homogeneous Norwegian nation.

Nowadays, a general 'aboriginalization' is also taking place; earlier the Sámi were defined as a national or ethnic minority, whereas now they are considered an indigenous population. In the 1970s, nobody would have defined Kvens as indigenous people, but in the 1990s this has become a popular subject of debate. At the same time, questions of special cultural and linguistic rights on ethnic grounds become a dilemma for modern welfare states. For example, in Norway the Kven organization demands the same benefits and rights as the Sámi already have, and they also demand compensation for the injustice that their earlier generations have suffered. Fundamentally, the politicized debate on culture and identity is negotiation for economic resources and power in the modern society.

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Family in Transition: Transnational Family Ties and Identity Negotiation

Pihla Vuorinen

Background

Over one third of all immigrants in Finland have come from Russia, Estonia or other areas of the former Soviet Union.[1] The number of immigrants increased especially during the 1990's when former Soviet Union citizens with Finnish background were given the opportunity to apply for the status of a returning migrant and permission to move to Finland with their families. Emigration and immigration do not only concern individuals but larger family networks are also affected. In transnational and multicultural families,[2] identity and belonging are not primarily connected to a certain place; instead, those features are created and maintained increasingly through discourses. When facing a new societal situation, family relations also have to be negotiated anew.

I am studying family talk as a generator of the (transnational) family, as well as the role thereof in constructing an (ethnic) identity and shaping family ties. I use ethnographic and narrative research methods and collect my research material mainly by interviewing immigrant families from the former Soviet Union living in Finland and their relatives in Russia and in Estonia. Some of these people are so called return migrants (mostly with Ingrian roots[3]) and their family members,

[1] At the end of the year 2001, 38.8 % of foreign nationals permanently living in Finland were from Russia, Estonia or the former Soviet Union (*Siirtolaisuusinstituutti* 2002). Also, in the end of the year 2000, 38.7% of foreigners living in Finland were Russian- or Estonian-speaking (*Ulkomaalaiset ja siirtolaisuus* 2000).

[2] With the word family I refer both to a smaller family unit living together and to a larger circle of relatives.

[3] Ingrian Finns, people of Ingrian Finnish origin, are descendants of people, who migrated from the territory of present-day Finland to the easternmost part of the Swedish Empire starting in the 17th century. Today, this area lies in North-West Russia, in the vicinity of St. Petersburg. Other groups with Finnish origin in the area of the former Soviet Union are descendants of Finns that have moved to the Soviet Union between the years 1918–1939 ("Red" emigrants, illegal immigrants during the great depression, and Finns that moved from United States and Canada in the 1930s) and after World War II (*Maahanmuutto- ja pakolaispoliittinen toimikunta* 1996).

others have moved to Finland for different reasons (because of studies, work, marriage[4] etc.).

Until now I have interviewed 27 people (representing 14 families) in the province of Northern Karelia in Eastern Finland.[5] In this article, I will present some preliminary findings from my research, concentrating on the changes in family relations, gender roles, and transnational family connections. I also discuss processes of producing and negotiating ethnic identity from the viewpoints of different generations and the cultural differences people have experienced when moving to Finland.

I have striven for a dialogic relationship with the persons I have interviewed, although since I am the one writing the article and choosing the citations, it is naturally my interpretation that will dominate in the text. By using a lot of citations, I wish to bring forward not only the statements but also the actual voices of the informants,[6] their way of seeing the things under consideration and clothing their thoughts in words. The spoken word does not always look very nice when transcribed. Neither is it necessarily easy to read, but still I consider the usage of the close to original citations worthwhile. The interviews have been done in Finnish and/or in Russian, and in the process of translation the quotations are inevitably slightly edited to make them better understandable, still wishing to preserve the everyday language style. However, for example, the dialect used in the interviews disappears, and also the practices of using two or more languages alternately are hidden.

Negotiating ethnic identity

After moving to another country, questions of ethnic identity become topical in a new way. In the former homeland, ethnic identity might have been something self-evident – something written down in one's

[4] Finnish men marry Russian women significantly (about 15 times) more frequently than Finnish women marry Russian men. Also if we take a look at the general percentages of former Soviet Union immigrants living in Finland, we can see that circa 60 % of them are women (*Suomen tilastollinen vuosikirja* 1999; *Siirtolaisuusinstituutti* 2002).

[5] Most of the interviews (22 of 27) are individual, one-to-one interviews, besides which I have made five group interviews.

[6] I am aware of the discussion related to the unsuitability and epistemological implications of the word informant (cf. Vasenkari 1999). However, it has long-established use and in the absence of a better word I settle for using it.

passport but not discussed or pondered very actively.[7] To some extent, family history and ethnicity have not been talked about because of the traces of fear that earlier persecutions have left behind. The Soviet or Russian community did not encourage discussions about questions connected with ethnicity either.

Identity building through family talk acquires a greater meaning after the immigration process.[8] Immigration raises the need to define who "we" are compared to "others", the majority of the society, by seeking both similarities and differences.[9] In these identity discourses different stereotypes are used and various strategies can be chosen to cope with the new environment and situation. When it comes to ethnic identity, the group of former Soviet Union immigrants is very heterogeneous (Kyntäjä 2001: 156). Some want to distinguish themselves from the majority, to be proud of their own cultural background, while others are pleased when people regard them as being part of the majority, the "ordinary" Finns.[10] However, positioning oneself cannot be achieved through clear binary oppositions but by combining them, thus creating multiform, hybrid identities (see Hall 1999: 231–234).

According to the social anthropologist Petri Hautaniemi, ethnicity can be understood, above all, as a person's feeling of belonging to a certain group and culture refers to a kind of collective awareness

[7] As Stuart Hall (1999: 3) states, to build up a picture of the "self", it has to be contrasted with the "other". Hall also cites Kobena Mercer: "identity becomes a problem only when it is in a crisis, only when something that has been assumed to be constant and stable moves from its place as a result of experiences of doubt and uncertainty" (Hall 1999: 20–21).

[8] I understand identity to be a "production", something that is never ready, but always in a process, as Hall has put it (1999: 223). Or as Anu Koivunen has stated: Identity is not a truth or essence that can be found, received, given or adopted, but it can be described as lifelong processes of building and disassembling (Koivunen 1996: 98).

[9] As Outi Laari has pointed out, remigrants used to compare their Finnishness to Russianness in the Soviet times, but in Finland they came to notice the differences compared to Finns in Finland (1997: 306). Also comparisons to other minorities are made. Additionally, former Soviet Union immigrants make distinctions among themselves on the basis of different statuses and reasons for immigrating to Finland. For example, some return migrants distinguish themselves clearly from women who have moved to Finland after marrying Finnish men.

[10] According to the classical acculturation model by Berry et al. (1992) there can be found four acculturation attitudes or strategies. These are integration, assimilation, marginalisation and separation or segregation, from which integration is seen to be the most positive option from the point of view of an individual. Nevertheless, it has to be noted that this model simplifies the situation significantly. For example, same people may combine different discourses, use different strategies in different stages of their life, or in different situations.

(Hautaniemi 2001: 13). When we look at ethnicity from a subjective point of view, it is easy to see that different generations have different viewpoints of their ethnic identity.[11] Adults who have immigrated to Finland do not easily regard themselves as Finns, but state that their children will probably pass for a Finn.

> I think I'm a Russian who lives in Finland, I'm not a Finn. But my son, my son might become a Finn. But I represent the first generation living in Finland that's why I am a Russian living in Finland /—/ (Female, 45 years, from Russia).

> What do you think about your identity, are you Russian or Ingrian or Finnish? – In my passport it is written that I am a Finn, but I have always thought I'm Russian. The same way when I moved here. Although the family is Finnish, I'm nevertheless Soviet [laughs]. All the nationalities have been so mixed anyway.
>
> Pihla: What do you think of your children, do they think they are Russians? – I think they are Finns, because they have learnt all the customs and language and all that. Usually, nobody they get to know believes their parents are Russians. They have grown up at a different time in a different country (Female, *circa* 45 years, from Russia).

As this example shows, some of the people claim that they are just Soviets, while others stress that they also maintained Finnish culture and customs in their family circle during the Soviet time. The "Soviet citizen" has been a kind of general category covering over 130 nationalities with different ethnic backgrounds (Davydova 2002: 156). People seem to be used to multi-ethnicity on the basis of their experience of Soviet times. Their parents may have different ethnic backgrounds and their families may have been multilingual etc.[12] It seems that it is the immigration to Finland that has brought up the need to discuss and

[11] Ingrian remigrants have usually been divided into three generations according to their language skills, descent and social background (see Kyntäjä 2001: 157–158).

[2] Also the Finnish or Ingrian people had to learn the Russian language at school or at work, and gradually it has become the first language for many people, also the language spoken at home. Those Ingrians, who have moved to Estonia, usually also learned the Estonian language, if they did not live in the Russian-speaking areas/environment. Some people can thus be nearly trilingual (see Kyntäjä 2001: 158).

redefine one's ethnic identity. People who have moved to Finland as remigrants face special pressure to be "genuine" Finns, but other migrants also have to answer the question as to who they are both to themselves as to others as well.

Feelings of otherness and/or mastery of two cultures

As we have discussed questions related to ethnic identity during the interviews, it has been difficult for most of the people to unambiguously state who they are. The majority of the people I have interviewed have mentioned that they feel they are "both" at the same time: a bit Finnish, a bit Russian, sometimes partly Estonian or something else.[13] This can be seen both as an advantage and a factor causing anxiety. According to some studies, people who have come to Finland as remigrants usually consider themselves as Finns in spite of possible language problems, but in the eyes of Finns these, usually Russian speaking, people are Russians (see Jasinskaja-Lahti & Liebkind 2000: 126). It could be argued that people face a kind of doubled otherness. They are defined as something foreign or strange everywhere.

> In the [Soviet] passport my nationality was a Finn. And there were lots of problems. There were lots of problems because according to the passport I was a Finn. /—/ It was not good to be a Finn in Russia, it was hard. When it was the Soviet Union. After that it became easier, of course /—/ In Russia, when I was in Russia I was called "чухонка"[14] /—/ I have that kind of red hair [laughs], and I'm fair, like a Finn. Well, appearance was not important to me, whether I look like that or not but my family name was also Finnish /—/ I was teased, oh how much I cried and they teased and teased. /—/ And there, anyway, I don't want to

[13] Some of the people have a more mixed ethnic background having, for example, also Polish, Lithuanian or Jewish roots. Remigrants with an Ingrian background very rarely use the attribute Ingrian to describe themselves. Even the term itself might cause confusion in people who are used to thinking they are Finns (as their nationality was usually marked in their passports during the Soviet time) and do not meet the conception Ingrian Finn until they move to Finland (see Laari 1997: 306). Especially for the young people who are called remigrants the Ingrianness has remained remote. They have usually grown up to think they are Estonians or Russians (Kyntäjä 2001: 158–159).

[14] This is a derogatory term that has been used for Finns as well as other Finno-Ugric people. Many of my informants say that they have been called *tsuhna* while speaking Finnish in public places, for example.

talk about it. Well. When I came here [laughs] – here I am Russian. /—/ Here I don't have any good Finnish acquaintances, until now I don't have any good Finnish friends. No one, nobody, wants to get to know me. Or even say hello to me, not only that they don't want to be a friend. Although basically, what am I, a kind of leper, I don't think I'm inferior to Finns when it comes to education or anything else. But they simply don't want to (Female, 49 years, from Russia).

/—/ And, I had also lived in Estonia and I went to a Russian school. And I spoke fluent Estonian so that no one knew if I was Estonian or Russian, or which I really am. But Estonians sometimes called me "*Venevanka*". *Venevanka сорок лет водку хочет денег нет*[15] [laughs]. /—/ So, I remember when, in Estonia people thought I was Russian, then when I moved to St. Petersburg I was called Estonian, then when I came to Finland now here I'm some kind of a foreigner, now I don't know who I really am, so /—/ (Female 40 years, from Estonia/Russia).

This problem of forced otherness[16] – contradiction between the ways a person him/herself defines his/her ethnic identity, and how others perceive it – seems to be greatest for those middle-aged people, who have not yet "found their place" in Finnish society. They seem to live, for example, through the good memories they have of the past active life and make future plans mainly for their children.[17]

Also younger people, who in many cases speak excellent Finnish and do not seem to have any problems with everyday life in Finnish society, have a feeling of being in no-man's land. It is hard for them to define who they are and where they belong. However, this does not make them pessimistic about their future. Some informants also do not regard cultural differences between the countries in question to be very significant.

[15] Translation of this would be: Old Russian, forty years old, wants vodka but has no money.

[16] According to the example Hall (1999: 228) has given, the most serious thing in constructing a group of people as "others" is that probably these people also start to see and experience themselves as others.

[17] Also Olga Davydova (2002: 164) has mentioned, that many of her (middle-aged) interviewees stated, that their own success does not matter much – the main thing is that their children would find their place in Finnish life.

How do you feel if thinking about that kind of ethnic identity, who do you feel you are? [we laugh] – Well, moving on no-man's land [laughs shortly]. Well, nowadays it's maybe more that I'm Finnish but, but it hasn't been this way for a long time and before that it was often so that, over here I was kind of an Estonian and then in Estonia I was kind of a Finn. I don't know really, but probably it is drifting towards the Finnish side little by little. Because, now I know more about this [laughs shortly] system than the one over there. And in a way one feels oneself more at home [here] anyway (Male, 22 years, from Estonia).

So. What are the greatest differences between Finnish and Russian cultures and values? I don't know. Difficult to say. Very difficult because, in a way, I can't call myself a Finn and can't call myself Russian, and probably no longer can't be Lithuanian. I'm kind of a person like, you know, without, [laughs] without nationality [laughs]. Do you understand what I mean? Because I was myself born in an international family and here I'm a wife of an Ingrian man, he's not exactly a Russian or a Finn. And we have adjusted and we are happy and, cultural differences, I don't know I think it depends on person what kind of person is. /—/ I think among Europeans there are very few of these cultural differences /—/ (Female, *circa* 25 years, from Lithuania).

Different cultural contexts, for example Finnish and Russian, can also be combined in a positive and fertile way. We can talk about cultural double (or sometimes even triple) competence especially as far as young immigrants are concerned. Some young informants mentioned that they would like to take advantage of the knowledge they have of both Finnish and Russian cultures, working, for example, in bilateral business between Finland and Russia.

Many parents set great hopes for their children and exert pressure on them. They expect their children to cope in the spheres of two cultures and to do even better at school than their Finnish peers, or sometimes to be even more Finnish than the Finns themselves. Parents want and hope that their children would master the two cultures and languages. This is also the future that young people have planned for their own children.

> I would like [my children] to become kind of cosmopolitans. So I think it's not very reasonable when someone is a kind of fundamental Russian or fundamental Finn, there is always the danger that he/she /—/ will not understand other people and is kind of withdrawn into his/her own world and. But at the same time there are other things happening in the world like. You know such provincial thinking is natural for many people that outside their own village nothing is happening. /—/ I don't want [my child] to be that kind of pure Russian or pure Finn, but an educated, civilised person, and if he/she is a civilised person, who would know Finnish culture well and had not forgotten Russian – that would be great. And I believe he/she would speak Russian and Finnish, as his/her mother tongue, and thus be bilingual, which is in itself a source of wealth, that one would be bilingual and feel at home in the two cultures (Male, 24 years, from Russia).

Multiculturalism usually means changing the identity according to the situation. Thus one identity would not endanger or exclude the other(s). Different aspects of identity can be emphasised in different situations and contexts. As Laura Huttunen (2002) has stated, people can have a home-like relationship in many places at the same time. However, reconciliation or symbiosis of two cultures does not always work as expected nor is it painless since it is not only a question of speaking two languages. The cultures are also different and instead of "taking" them both, one has to make compromises between them.

Language and mentality as markers of "difference"

As Eve Kyntäjä has stated, people can identify with different ethnic groups on different grounds. A basis for the ethnic identity of an immigrant can be found, for example in their descent, language, religion, country of residence, nationality or even citizenship (Kyntäjä 2001: 156). According to Sara Ahmed, the experience of leaving home and 'becoming a stranger' can lead to the creation of a new 'community of strangers'. Thus it would be the sharing of the loss, rather than the past as sharing, which binds the migrants together (Ahmed 1999: 330–336). Former Soviet Union immigrants cannot be considered as one homogenous group. Their backgrounds vary significantly and coming from the same region is often not enough to create a feeling of togetherness. However, when certain cultural traits or customs are

compared or juxtaposed, they regard themselves, first of all, as Russians. In some cases also the language is linking them firmly to Russianness. I will here take a look at the language practices of former Soviet Union immigrants in Finland and the differences between Finnish and Russian mentalities as they have them experienced.

Most of people who have immigrated to Finland from former Soviet Union area are Russian-speaking. Also, the majority of remigrants speak Russian as their mother tongue (Kyntäjä 2001: 153), and for most of my informants the language spoken at home is Russian. Many interviewees mentioned that sometimes they prefer not to speak Russian in public places, so that people would not immediately categorise them as Russians. This is connected with the negative attitude among the Finns towards Russians.[18] On the basis of my material it seems that learning the Finnish language is an important goal for people who have recently immigrated to Finland and sometimes all the family members study language together. Mastering a language also denotes power and as the following examples show, complicated situations may follow when one family member knows the language well and the other does not.

> Had you studied the Finnish language before you came or? – The problem was that my husband didn't want that I know the language because he wanted that he could dominate in the family because language is /—/ power. He wanted to control and we always spoke English because I know English, he knows. /—/ Of course it would have been better if I studied Finnish earlier, but I asked him a hundred times if he could speak Finnish to me. I need Finnish inevitably. But he didn't want to. We spoke English /—/ (Female, 45 years, from Russia).

> /—/ Do you ever speak Finnish at home? – Well before this Mother always forced me to do that [laughs], once even for money but I didn't comply. Now she has surely already given up hope, and she's using [her Finnish male friend] for this. [Laughs.] Yes it was a bit annoying, or a bit too much, I sometimes wanted to relax and speak my mother tongue at home. It's easier to

[18] Russians were the last but two groups in the ethnic hierarchy of 24 different ethnic groups, towards which the attitudes of Finns were ranked in 1998 (Jaakkola 1999: 82–87).

express oneself and everything. /—/ I'm at school and all the time use Finnish with friends and teachers and in classes, but Mother doesn't have so many possibilities for that /—/ (Female, 17 years, from Russia).

Many of the interviewees who have already stayed in Finland for some years claim that they want to speak Russian or Estonian at home, so that children would not forget it. Especially, Russian is considered to be a difficult language, which is needed among the other things to communicate with relatives. People argue that, since families are surrounded by Finnish society, they will learn the Finnish language anyway.

Do you have, or what language do you speak to children at home or? – Always Russian (Pihla: sure). A couple of times he wanted to speak only Finnish but I tell him no, I'm Russian. I think it's useful for the child if he knows two languages. It's, it's a good thing. In many families Mother speaks to the child, for example, in Russian and he/she answers in Finnish. Or she speaks the Finnish she knows and also the child replies in Finnish. But I think if I speak Russian, it's easier for me to express my feelings and my thoughts. If I speak Russian then the child understands me better and because I always speak Russian to the older son, so we all speak a common language and it's a good thing. Like a real family. Sometimes when people on the street are listening to what language we use, I use a little Finnish but very rarely (Female, 45 years, from Russia).

A common language at home can help to achieve a feeling of togetherness, a sense of (being) a family. On the other hand, in many families the languages are used interchangeably and this does not seem to bother people. The most important thing is that the parties involved understand each other. Using many languages concurrently has also itsown historical background.

To talk about the childhood living in Estonia that is, what language did you speak at home? – At home we spoke Russian, because Mother and Father were divorced /—/ and Mother married a Russian man. My Father was Ingrian so back then they did speak Finnish at home with each other. When Mother married a Russian man we started speaking only Russian at

home. But my Mother can speak Russian and Finnish well. Well, it's not quite that real Finnish, it's kind of the Ingrian language and her Estonian is maybe better than her Russian because it is a small place where my Mother lives and there are no Russians at all. /—/ Yes, I spoke Estonian to my friends, Russian to my Mother at home and then when grandmother or aunts visited us then all of them spoke Finnish among themselves. It was kind of fascinating. We speak many languages at home at the same time. Maybe that is why I speak the same way to my own daughters, I talk to them in Russian they answer me in Finnish. /—/

Do you speak Russian with your husband? – Russian (Female, 40 years, from Estonia/Russia).

What has been the language spoken at home in your family? – Well we speak Estonian at home. Well nowadays it's a bit of such mixed language perhaps if, well what happens to come most quickly, [so] that words are mixed but however both understand so it's communication anyway. So that if a word doesn't come to mind in one or the other languages so [laughs shortly] (Male, 22 years, from Estonia).

The Finnish language also gains ground in the home environment, especially when it comes to the younger generation, people who have moved to Finland at a relatively young age. Russian or Estonian is used as the everyday language, but many do not think they master it at the level of literary language. In some families children and young relatives use Finnish among themselves.

Have you sort of, with Mother, with family, which language you usually speak? – Finnish usually. But now I do try to speak more Russian nowadays, at least for Mother. But if I go to [my siblings] or at least to [one of them] if I try to talk Russian for her she's like that sure that could you speak Finnish to me [laughs shortly], that what an earth are you stammering for? It doesn't feel quite natural to speak Russian with them. Then, of course, with Father and with that stepfather I don't speak Finnish with him because I know that he better understands Russian anyway (Female, 18 years, from Russia).

Have you thought like that, that if you have children of your

> own sometimes that what you kind of, will you teach them both [languages]. – Yes I have thought. Well now yes I'd terribly like that they would speak Russian but, somehow I feel that, it's quite sweaty [laughs] that it goes, because, I mean yes I hope at least that I could teach them somehow but I don't know. I have to take them to my dad's like to teach them [laughs] /—/ (Female, 16 years, from Russia).

Multilingualism can be a natural possibility; people mix different languages. But at some stage one of the languages can take the position of a main language, and it could be asked, how much is ethnicity connected to language. If people forget the language, will the cultural heritage also disappear little by little? When discussing this question in her article, Maisa Martin has referred to Finns living in America, who regard themselves as Finns, although they have never lived in Finland and cannot speak Finnish. The meaning of a language as an element of a person's identity thus varies from person to person. However, I would agree, that knowing or not knowing the language has somehow to affect the identity of a person (Martin 2002: 42–44).

Understanding another culture is not only connected to commanding the language. The most profound experiences of dissimilarity in the answers of informants are connected to different mentalities and people's attitudes. This is partly seen as an inevitable result of growing up in different countries, environments and cultures.

> Do you think that sort of your relationship would have been different if you would have stayed in Russia or. Or how much it affects that you are from different cultures and different. – It affected us a lot of course. It's an extra stress in life. I've made a lot of mistakes because I don't know culture and mentality I don't understand what it really means, it's, we express our feelings and thoughts in different ways, Russians and Finns. And, I've made mistakes. With other people. [Laughs shortly.] There have been lots of funny incidents when, Russians kiss so much and Finnish women watch warily that what could it mean /—/ (Female, 45 years, from Russia).

> /—/ What have you missed most [from Russian culture] or have you missed anything? – Well our cultures do differ so much that we can't even understand each other, or even if we can, well

> I'm not very much interested in Finnish people and Finns are not interested in me. I mean because we have grown up in different worlds, listened to different fairy tales and watched different films, different cartoons and so on, so there's a difference everywhere. And yes there are people that would be interesting for me, I mean Finns, but they are few and they are hard to find /—/ (Male, 24 years, from Russia).

Russians are also depicted as more open, hospitable and their attitude towards money is seen to be completely different as compared to Finns.[19] According to one informant, the meaning of life for Finns is working in order to get money and material benefits. Many people have also mentioned that borrowing money in Finland is not so common and relatively difficult: one has to figure out how to manage on one's own. People are especially surprised about money matters inside families in Finland. As one young girl said to me: in her ideal family everything is common, husband and wife do not have separate money but a common budget. Also, siblings support each other financially, and give money to their parents if needed, or if they just want to pamper their mother, for example, by letting her buy new clothes or a trip abroad.

> /—/ I think Finnish girls or women are usually really independent, in my opinion a little bit too much /—/ they make a bit too much effort /—/ so that, for instance, everyone has their own account and their own money and then the fridge is kind of shared, who eats what [I laugh] that kind of things. And sort of, and finally that, the plan that everything is shared so that you have your own and I have mine and then everything is paid together. Wait a minute. [Let's take a] step back, what is the idea of a family then. I mean it doesn't depend on money at all, I mean I think it should all go together, it's just like that, but Finnish women have a totally different opinion, and why not, I don't mind, I've never thought about marrying a Finnish girl [we laugh], it's a completely different thing, yes /—/ (Male, 22 years, from Russia).

[19] Raija Warkentin, who has studied Russian women who have married Finnish men, has made the same kind of remarks. These women view Russians as more approachable and friendlier than Finns. It was also pointed out the value of friends in Russia: "You don't need a hundred roubles, you need a hundred friends" (Warkentin 2000: 7).

> Are there some differences in the social life of young people or? – In social life. Well maybe there are because, here in Finland people are like that, everyone has their own world and so on, and if he/she is socialising with someone he/she still doesn't let others in to his/her own world, that he/she has some kind of own world, oftentimes own apartment and so on. In Russia it's like that, everyone is somewhat more open, they easily let people into their own worlds and, kind of tell about everything and kind of the fact that there were no, there are no secrets, no property, and nothing to lose. Everybody knows everything about everyone, I mean a kind of more intimate society, in Finland the model is more closed. /—/ For example, if I ran out of sugar in Russia, I could ask for it from my neighbour, in Finland it's not a common practice. Or ask money from the neighbour. Do people borrow money from their neighbours in Finland: no. /—/ I mean if we think about my family [in Russia], if someone is ringing the doorbell, every other person [behind the door] is asking for some stuff or money /—/ (Male, 24 years, from Russia).

In Soviet/Russian and Finnish societies the prevailing attitudes towards individualism and collectivism are quite different. The networks of families and relatives have formed very important social spaces of the everyday life in Soviet Union and they continue to do so.[20] In this context, Finns might seem to be uncommunicative and self-centred in the eyes of former Soviet Union immigrants.

Gender roles and changing family relations

According to many interviewees the meaning of the family and family support is especially important when moving to another country. If other relatives are already living in Finland, the newcomers may want to live near them and the place of residence in Finland is chosen accordingly. Also women who have married Finnish men have emp-

[20] As the role of the state has been getting narrower in Russia, welfare is to a greater extent generated and taken responsibility of in the spheres of family and civic organisations. Also, during the Soviet time family and other social networks have substituted for the non-existent or inoperative public services (Salmenniemi 2002a: 33–37). Anna Temkina and Anna Rotkirch have, in their article, discussed in more detail the so called shadow contract (semi-public sphere) of the Soviet society, including the networks of 'dostavanie' (how-to-get-something), and the relations of 'blat' (how-to-arrange-something-through-somebody) (Temkina & Rotkirch 1997: 10–12).

hasised the importance of the husband's support especially during the beginning of their stay in Finland.

In many cases, the relationships between family members have, in a way, become closer because of immigration to another country. Migration has also changed the relations between family members in other ways. For example, unemployment of the parents may have an effect on family relations by changing the power structure inside the family.

> What kind of meaning has family had for you, and has it somehow changed with the years? – Yes the meaning has certainly been quite big. When my sister moved here almost alone when she was sixteen, there was no family to support her and in that kind of critical period of life, so she could not take it. The meaning of the family in that phase has been important, to be able to go through this situation and to adjust to it, as I knew that I am not alone and somebody is there to support me, it was a really big thing. And then even now when there has been all these problems, this puberty and all such periods. Well yes for sure, sometimes one grows away from the family and sometimes gets closer. There have been such times, that Mother basically forced me to study and at some point I realised myself its importance and then I was thankful about it for my Mother. One wouldn't have strength enough otherwise, if someone wouldn't support this growth in general. And certainly the older you get, the better you understand the meaning and the value of the family (Female, 17 years, from Russia).

> Has [the immigration] somehow influenced the relationship between parents and children? – Er. Well maybe if you are thinking about the changing of hierarchy positions, or mixing, so maybe there was that too. I mean yes we had to translate to some degree to our parents things and.
>
> Pihla: Okay. Or like many times it's suggested that children are adjusting sort of faster. – Yeah, that was noticeable yes. But I don't know what kind of meaning it has, maybe it has been made into a somewhat more loose hierarchical construction in that sense that [laughs] that there are no clear positions anymore so strongly or. That now there's in a way such a herd family that before there was such, more hierarchical. /—/ Maybe, nevertheless, all the members are quite equal in our family to a great

degree. That maybe the authority of parents suffered about it, yes [laughs] (Male, 22 years, from Estonia).

Furthermore, a number of informants are emphasising the close relationships among their family (and kin) as compared to Finnish families. They say that they also keep in touch with cousins, second cousins, aunts and so on and claim that this is not done only because of the sense of duty. Emphasising the close relationships can partly be construed as a policy of differences – people are looking for the solidarity and the strengths of the own group as compared to the "other". In these discourses, differences might be highlighted and the meaning of the family is stressed.

What about if thinking about families, or that what meaning does family have for people, so are there [differences between Finland and Russia]? – Relation(ship)s are much better so that there, like, children respect their parents a lot more. I mean that that, like people don't bang doors even if they have puberty and yell at parents all the possible, possible things. Their kind of relationships then generally like with grandmothers, like cousins and with all relatives are much better. For example, in our family, we are very close with our relatives like, then all Finns don't always understand that, when I speak, I sometimes call my cousin like a second sister I mean that way, then everyone doesn't always understand it, what why so (Female, 16 years, from Russia).

What kind of meaning does family have to you? – Well quite big. Schools or other things, they don't matter so much. Absolutely it's family that is, siblings especially and cousins and second cousins and all.

Pihla: Do you keep in contact a lot? – Sure, at least with my own and otherwise, but here since the other families are Finnish like cousins for example, children of my husband's brother and others, so they are not able that way. They think it's weird. They can't take it that way, so in that sense this [tradition] breaks now, my children don't have such a close relationship to cousins, not to mention second cousins. I think it's a bad thing (Female, 34 years, from Russia).

Some interviewees have stated that in their opinion it is not so much a question of differences in family relations but rather of practices dictated by possibilities. Close family relations are partly connected to the importance of family and other social networks in everyday life (cf. above), and due to cramped living conditions and difficulties in getting apartments. This has to a certain extent prevented or delayed divorces or children moving out of home at an early stage. Moving to Finland has inevitably had an effect on these practices, as well as on relationships between parents and children.[21] The effect of the surrounding culture cannot be prevented, even if people tried to stand out from the Finnish customs.

> /—/ Yes it has remained [unchanged] a lot but otherwise maybe life has changed [in Russia] but those family relations and family things not. Then in Russia, for example, quite many families still live like this, that grandma lives with them and, maybe because there are no possibilities to move and live separately. /—/ That maybe because of that the relationships are closer there compared to Finland. I don't know how it goes with our own daughters /—/ I think that a few, a couple of, years and we'll be left alone two of us, me and [my husband]. What is certainly not possible in Russia. That, that children move away so early. There, even when they get married, they still live with their parents. And when a child is born to them those [grand]parents take care of the child just because they all are there in the same, under the same roof (Female, 40 years, from Estonia/Russia).

One of the greatest differences people have experienced in Finland is connected to gender roles. Interviewees state almost without exception that the man is the head of the family in Russia; men earn money and take care of the women (cf. Salmenniemi 2002b).[22] According to a

[21] This is also seen in the immigrant autobiographies studied by Huttunen. Family is not a closed unit, a protected, private space, where people could go on and live their lives according to the customs of their own culture (Huttunen 2002, see for example page 85).

[22] According to Anna Rotkirch (2000: 249), it is monetarisation that has strengthened the ideal of the male breadwinner further in the post socialist Russia. Lynn Attwood has found that statements like "he should earn the money, she should spend it" are commonly heard nowadays among young people, and this creates pressures, especially on young men (Lynn Attwood 1996, cited by Temkina & Rotkirch 1997: 20–21). Cf. also with the citation below.

number of informants, women in Finland make too much effort trying to be equal with men, and thus men also forget to treat women as 'women'. Interviewees have the experience that, in Finland, men show less attention to women through little compliments, like bringing flowers, opening doors for women, helping them to take their coats off and so on.

> With some people we have talked about these sorts of roles of women and men. That have you experienced that, it would differ somehow how men are behaving? – Well [sighs].
>
> Pihla: Or what do they expect or? – Mm, well my Father has dated with this Anna for a very long time [in Russia] and a good friend of mine Svetlana, she has dated quite a long time with her boyfriend so how, so these men are perhaps, somehow more attentive, or I mean so that, that our Father thinks at least so that a woman has to be at home and kind of raise children and that a man works and brings money home. And then already when he was dating this Anna, he bought her absolutely everything and fed her and dressed and everything. And that my friend also, her boyfriend always buys her everything, they always ponder together about what do they buy with her boyfriend's salary, to this Svetlana [laughs]. And maybe if something is left so this boyfriend might get a new shirt or something [laughs]. That is the way. But, I don't, I still don't kind of claim that Russian men would be somehow better than Finnish that, Finnish men are maybe, maybe more honest than Russian. Yes maybe they are a bit like yokels [laughs] but at least [they] maybe say things more straight (Female, 18 years, from Russia).

> /—/ [In Finland] women are quite equal with men, a bit too much even [laughs shortly]. That maybe men have then forgotten what is a woman. That it should be maybe respected more, the female sex. /—/ In our family I try to stress to children that Father is sort of head of the family, he has to be obeyed. /—/ I also gave [my husband] the power that when it comes to the upbringing of children he has more authority than I do. It has to be that one or the other, a little bit more, has more authority than the other /—/ (Female, 34 years, from Russia).

However, the questions connected to gender roles are complicated, and

understandings about them can differ according to the context. In practice there can be found many exceptions to the rules or ideals that are generally accepted. Later on in the interview the same woman, quoted above, talks about her father, who in a way deviated from the conventional male role described by informants. In addition to 'masculine skills' like building and renovating, he also knew how to cook and was in a way an embodiment of an ideal husband for her daughter.

> /—/ My Father took care of us a lot, and made food and, made soups here also and, I always remember that Father's soups were good. And he made pancakes and my Mother worked until six and if Father had came home at 4 o'clock then also a meal was ready. Sometimes, Mother said, he even baked a cake [laughs shortly]. So a multi, multi-skilled man. I always dreamed I would have a husband like that, who could do everything (Female, 34 years, from Russia).

Usually the role of a feminine woman also includes homework. As one woman said to me: "In Russian families at least in our family it's just normal that I make the food and I clean. /—/ I can't imagine that my old man would come home and start to wash dishes or something, well he does that too but, he's really like that [there are] women's things and men's things, yes we have these quite clearly separated in our family". Some of the women state that, in principle, they stand for equality and strive for it also when it comes to housework. Nevertheless, it is hard to get rid of internalised role differentiation, because "it's really automatic", as one young woman said to me. Finnish society has; however, a remarkable influence on gender roles, and sometimes this affects also the relations between spouses.

> /—/ Then when I lived in [Russia] the thought of getting a driving licence never even crossed my mind, because it was somehow just crazy, somehow such that no, I don't need it since my husband has a driving licence and we have a car and he drives it. So then I was quite dependent on him that when he comes, when he picks me up and when he takes me and, somehow he was pretty much like that he orders us around in our family, he was such a boss. Then when I came to Finland, the first thing I did, I went to study in a driving school. It was right away. That it came that kind of, then when I got that driving

licence, he was against it really he didn't, didn't want me to become so independent. /—/ Then when I got the driving licence, it was immediately another thing. I was somehow such that, it was me who decided then when and where do I go and what do I do. That maybe it also makes women in Finland much more such free, such independent. That you don't have to wait when your husband comes home and when will he take you somewhere. So this at least, what I have done here that. I was so proud then that I drive myself and can do it (Female, 40 years, from Estonia/Russia).

/—/ He started to do all such things, that he was a boss, he had those employees and all that he was such a self-confident person he is such. /—/ Well then when we moved here, here he was nobody, he was completely zero. He doesn't know Finnish at all, and then he was somehow so helpless. Then I had to go everywhere to ask some things which, I am used to that he took care of everything in [Russia], he bought me clothes, he did the shopping, he did everything, it was I who was just with the kids. So only at home, a housewife. /—/ But as we came here he was somehow so helpless. And it was so annoying. /—/ Then when I saw that he's not like he was in [Russia], that he was completely, completely different person, he has changed so much when he came to Finland, he was somehow so pathetic. And then when I also saw that I will get along quite well also without a husband in Finland, even if I do have [children]. In [Russia] I certainly wouldn't have divorced, under any circumstances because I couldn't be left alone in [Russia]. But in Finland when I saw that, here you don't starve to death even if you're alone, I get daily benefit, I get child benefit, and I didn't, didn't know then about maintenance support of course, didn't know, but nevertheless I wanted the divorce. It happened exactly because we moved to Finland, yes. And, because he was a completely different person immediately /—/ (Female, 40 years, from Estonia/Russia).

Suvi Salmenniemi, who has analysed Russian women's life stories, has stated that the discourse of biological determinism and gender identities defined by it has remained strong in Russia. These gender identities are seen not only desirable but also as a key to harmony both in the levels of family and society. However, this discourse is challenged by

both individualistic discourse and discourse of a working mother (Salmenniemi 2002b).[23]

The negotiation and reconciliation of different roles and discourses is probably even more emphasised in the case of immigrant women in Finland and also men have to solve problematic situations both in their personal life and in the public sphere. One informant has described the clash of different ideas accordingly:

> /—/ In Finland women try to fight for their own, like their own rights, to be equal, so that rights would be the same as men have /—/ people try to be so equal, they don't see any differences. One of my friends, a woman, got angry when I said that nevertheless men and women are different in some way from the psychological aspect. She got angry and said they don't differ in any way (Male, 24 years, from Russia).

According to Rotkirch, men in Russia are facing huge social expectations and uncertainties. Women seem to manage the stressful situation better because of their central role in the family. Indeed, questions of masculinity have been at the heart of long-standing debate about the demasculinisation of Soviet men (which was construed to be nourished by the cultural ideal of the strong, working Soviet woman), but the post-perestroika development has often been described as an aggressive remasculinisation (Rotkirch 2000: 263–270). This does not coincide well with the gender attitudes in Finland and the contradictory expectations probably make the immigrant men even more confused.[24]

[23] Temkina and Rotkirch have also discussed gender relations that prevailed during the Soviet time. According to them, an androgynous view of the Soviet citizen was complemented with the view of biology as women's destiny. Men and women were interpreted as 'similar', while actual male supremacy remained unquestioned. During the 1990s, a number of disparate and sometimes opposite trends emerged after the ideology of the Soviet working mother ceased to be the only officially acceptable alternative. The new prototypes of gender contracts are working mother, the career woman, the sponsored woman, and the housewife (Temkina & Rotkirch 1997: 8-14). Writers also mark that the women's previous 'deal' with the Soviet state, which provided day care and health care in return for wage work, has partly been replaced by greater dependency on the family and social networks for child and family care. Also, traditional gender values in the family and the articulation of feminine ideas have been enhanced (Temkina & Rotkirch 1997: 14).

[24] I hope to discuss this situation in greater detail in my future studies.

Transnational family ties

When we consider immigrant families in Finland, we can see that families have often disintegrated geographically and become transnational, since not all family members have the possibility or desire to move. For example, a number of the grandparents of the people I have interviewed are not interested in moving to Finland. They have their own lives in Russia or Estonia (work, house, summer cottage, (vegetable) garden, friends, relatives, etc.) and they have decided to stay there, even if this means that they will be separated from their children and grandchildren.

Middle-aged women seem especially to be worried about their ageing mothers as well as fathers far away not showing interest in moving to Finland. However, usually people understand, why they prefer staying in Russia or Estonia: "Here I think that [grandfather] would rot (away) little by little, here's nothing to do" (Female, 17 years, from Russia).

> /—/ Well Father is dead, and Mother lives alone now. He died twenty years ago. And this is sad because she is alone and old and sick. I'd like to help her and I can't leave [my son] alone [to Finland]. Well everything will be allright, I think that, I can help Mother /—/ (Female, 45 years, from Russia).

> /—/ I have hoped that [Mother] would come but she, she's already now [almost 70 years] and it would be nice if she was here closer but she has a house of her own, she has all her friends she, she, maybe I think it's better for Mother to be there. She wouldn't have anything to do here. Because she is, I have such a Mother that she works very hard and she has to have a (vegetable) garden of her own and what she has, a cow and pigs and everything, that if she came here and would only have an apartment in this some kind of block, live here I think she would become ill. So it's kind of difficult, do I want that she would come here or not, I can't even say myself. But I understood it this way that she hasn't done anything in order to come to Finland. That she likes to visit here but then after couple of days she wants to go back there /—/ (Female, 40 years, from Estonia/ Russia).

Many interviewees have also emphasised the importance grandma has

(had) in their families. As a child was born grandmother took care of him/her and helped; and often children have spent all the summers at grandma's place. As Rotkirch has pointed out, extended mothering remains important also in today's Russia, for both rich and poor. For businesswomen, grandmothers taking care of children and home are important especially in the beginning of their career and for people with less money the help of older generations have became even more crucial than before (Rotkirch 2000: 249, 253). One woman I interviewed remarked that her children and grandchildren were the most important reason for her for moving to Finland; she wanted to be near and help them when needed. People also consider it important to pass this tradition of care-taking to the younger generation.

> But it is quite a support, Mother has supported me. She is here to help me even if she has her own plans but when I call and say that now I'd need you here, she does come. Cancels all the other things if needed. Now she 'threatens' that she will move [closer to us]. /—/ She wants that my daughter would have a place to go to after school. /—/ I think Mother has in mind those times when she herself sent us to grandma's and she also feels it's her duty to be somewhere close here so that children would have a place to go to. 'Cause there are no others. And I probably have the same thing in my mind, I already talked to my girl that, she asked if I will look after their children when I'm old and I said of course [we laugh]. So that she would also think that it should be this way (Female, 34 years, from Russia).

Immigration will often cut off everyday connections to some relatives, as well as loosen the regional ties of immigrants to their "home-place". However, relations are maintained on another level. Calling and also mailing are common ways to stay in touch. Letters are not written so often nowadays, but people mention that they sometimes send letters and little parcels with acquaintances visiting the region in question. Visits on the both sides are quite frequent, depending on visa practices. When a visa is needed,[25] visits are more rare. Also Finnish authorities

[25] For example a visa is not needed for Russia, if the person has a Russian passport. Visiting Finland with a Russian passport is more difficult and expensive, as well as visiting Estonia with a Russian passport. Because of the visa practices some people do not seem to be very eager to apply for Finnish citizenship. A permanent residence permit gives them almost all the same benefits, as would Finnish citizenship, but does not make travelling to Russia difficult.

restrict travelling of the persons who are registered as unemployed and get unemployment compensation. Some people have remarked that they do not have to worry what to do during holidays as visiting relatives abroad is part of the compulsory programme. People want to maintain the family communion, sense of a family, also after immigration.

> /—/ I have lived in Finland for ten years and all our holidays, summer holidays, winter holidays, we have always went either to [Russia] or to Estonia with [my husband], either to [Russia] or to Estonia, all the time like this and. Others go abroad, to some "sun travels", our all holidays go into that, because we have to meet relatives, I mean I can't, I have to see them sometimes /—/ (Female, 40 years, from Estonia/Russia).

People are used to having family and relatives helping and supporting them. These contacts and networks will not disappear after immigration; instead, mutual support usually goes on in various forms, including economic aid. Transnational social networks will complement the local ones. As Annika Forsander has written, transnational relations create a continuum for immigrants' identity and helps thus to create a feeling of coherence (Forsander 2001: 52).

Conclusions

After moving to another country, questions of ethnic identity become topical in a new way. Immigration raises the need to define "we" as compared to "others". However, negotiation of self-image does not seem to work through clear binary oppositions but by combining different cultural backgrounds, for example Finnish and Russian. Different aspects of identity can be emphasised in different situations and changing contexts. As one young interviewee said to me, her Russian identity is not particularly emphasised in the Finnish context, but while in Russia she enjoys the Russianness surrounding her. Experiences of otherness can be met both in Finland and in relation to the former homeland and living in Finland often denotes, at the same time, feelings of belonging and not belonging.

Even if people would define themselves, above all, as Russians or Finns, the world seems to be open for them. Many of the young interviewees see their future place of residence neither in Finland nor in Russia. This reflects the new forms that ethnicity and belonging have

taken in the present-day world. As Forsander has stated, transnational identity experiences denote a belonging to a community that is not restricted by the borders of the country of residence. The meaning of ethnicity has not disappeared with globalisation but the networks connected to ethnicity have loosened their ties to locality and ethnicity has to be constantly redefined in relation to other(s) (Forsander 2001: 49–51).

Also, relations between family members have to be negotiated anew after immigration. Many informants are emphasising close relationships among their family (and kin) as compared to Finnish families and these relationships are sometimes reinforced because of immigration. However, in some cases the problems and challenges people meet may not bind the family together, but instead loosen the family ties. The surrounding gender roles and family values differ from the ones that people are used to in their former homelands and also this inevitably affects the relations between spouses and different generations. Family is not a closed unit and it does not remain unchanged in the new cultural environment.

Immigration will cut off everyday connections to some relatives staying in the country of origin, as well as loosen the regional ties of immigrants to their "home-place". However, trans-local contacts and networks will remain and complement the local ones, creating a continuum to immigrants' identity. Family stories are also of great importance here. Feelings of otherness and displacement can be a question of memory and stories (of dislocation) can help to relocate (Ahmed 1999: 336, 343). People need to reconcile different aspects of their identity: the one that is drawn from the past, the one that is tied to the present and yet another one, which lies in the future. Globalisation and trans-locality or apparent rootlessness does not lead to a refusal of the very desire for home or community (see Ahmed 1999: 336). Rather, experiences of migration make people look for new forms of identity and belonging, as well as redefine their ideas of family and other communities.

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Interviewees:
Female, 13 years.
Female, 14.
Female, 14.
Female, 16.

Female, 17.
Female, 18.
Female, 18.
Female, *c.* 25.
Female, 28.
Female, 34.
Female, 35.
Female, 40.
Female, *c.* 43.
Female, 45.
Female, *c.* 45.
Female, 46.
Female, 49.
Female, 59.
Female, *c.* 60.

Male, 22 years.
Male, 22.
Male, 24.
Male, 25.
Male, 27.
Male, *c.* 40.
Male, *c.* 43.

Immigrant worker.

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The Forest Nenets as a Double Language Minority

Eva Toulouze

The Forest Nenets are a small community living in Western Siberia, which has not been as thoroughly studied as the other native people in the same region. In spite of living in the first Siberian region to be colonised by the Russians as early as the 16th century, the Forest Nenets have been identified as a specific group only in the middle of the 19th century. It is true that, according to G. Verbov (1936: 57), a group mentioned as "kunnaya samoyad'" in a source dated 1602 may refer to Forest Nenets. Nevertheless, this group is but one between several other groups of "samoyads" (old Russian name for the Nenets) and is not directly opposed to the Tundra Nenets. The first scholar to have recognised the Forest Nenets as a specific group in dual opposition to the Tundra Nenets is the Finnish linguist M. A. Castrén, who collected language and ethnographic data by the Forest Nenets in the 1840s. At the end of the 19th century the Forest Nenets are newly discovered in Russia as a people called "nyah-samar-yah" which was considered to be unconnected to any other people of the region (Bartenev[1] 1998: 145–146). The confusion is cleared at the beginning of the first decade of the 20th century, with the works of Patkanov (1911) and Zhitkov (1913: 249–251); more reliable data about the Forest Nenets are due to the Finnish scholar Toivo Lehtisalo, who visited the Forest Nenets in 1914. The first comprehensive article about Forest Nenets culture, as a whole is the above-mentioned study published by Verbov in 1936. Afterwards there has been some systematic research about Forest Nenets language (grammatical sketches by Verbov 1973, Sammallahti 1974; Pusztay 1984); there has also been occasional research by Russian ethnographers, who have been dealing with problems of ethnical history and some questions of material and spiritual culture. Because of the scarceness of data about Forest Nenets, I shall start my paper with a

[1] Viktor Bartenev (1864–1921) was a democratic Russian activist, who spent 4 years in exile in the North of the Tobolsk region. His book was written in 1896.

general presentation of this people, and only afterwards concentrate on the linguistic issue.

Two main reasons may explain the Forest Nenets marginality.

First of all, they occupy the remotest areas in Central Western Siberia, the rivers' high streams, between lakes and bogs, the most difficult to reach, so the Forest Nenets have succeeded to remain isolated until the last decades (Gemuyev 1987: 32, Golovnev 1995: 56). Toivo Lehtisalo, who visited the Lyamin region in 1914, reports suggestively how complicated it was to reach their centres (Lehtisalo 1959: 139–141). Even nowadays some Forest Nenets groups, for example those living in the vicinity of lake Num-To, are connected to the rest of the world only by a helicopter flight once a week. For centuries the only contact of Russians with the Forest Nenets was the latter yearly visit to the local fairs (in Obdorsk or Surgut), where they brought reindeer skins for exchange in order to get the "Russian" products they needed. But even these contacts have not led for a long time to their identification as a distinct group. The fact is the Forest Nenets are very closely connected to another Nenets group, the Tundra Nenets, that occupy huge territories from the Kola to the Taimyr Peninsulas both European zones and in Siberia. They were the first people of the North the Russians met in their earlier expansion eastwards. So confusion with the Tundra Nenets has been the second reason explaining the Forest Nenets late discovery: all the Nenets were treated indifferently and called Samoyeds.

Still, besides some commun points, there are some peculiar Forest Nenets features in language as well as culture overall. Although linguistic analysis shows clearly the closeness of Tundra and Forest Nenets languages – that have been treated as two dialects of the same languege by Lehtisalo in his extensive dictionary (Lehtisalo 1956) – this closeness is not evident for the speakers themselves, for divergent phonetic evolution has led to a situation where there can be no real mutual understanding between the two groups. Therefore linguists as Johanna Laakso (http://www.helsinki.fi/hum/sugl/oppimat/sgrjohd/sip.htm) and Tapani Salminen (http://www.helsinki.fi/~tasalmin/ling.html) use to present Forest and Tundra Nenets as two separate languages. Moreover, the difference in ecological context – taiga versus tundra – explains that the husbandry model of both groups is significantly different. Thus we are justified in treating Forest Nenets as a distinct community. But this is still not a generalised approach. Presently the Forest Nenets live in two administrative units, the Yamal-

Nenets and the Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Okrugs (regions). If in the 1920s administrative authorities referred to the Forest Nenets in statistics – there were in 1926 1129 Forest Nenets (Khomich 1995: 23) – nowadays they do not distinguish them anymore from the Tundra Nenets. This means that nobody knows assertively the size of the Forest Nenets population: some groups live in contact areas with Tundra Nenets, and both populations are treated as a single people. There can be therefore only approximate data about the number of Forest Nenets nowadays: scholars mention figures between 1000[2] and 2000.[3] The only reliable statistic data we have are the figures for Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Okrug, for practically all the Nenets living in this region are Forest Nenets:

1970	1979	1989
940	1003	1144

(Khomich 1995: 22–23, data from the last official census in USSR).

The Forest Nenets occupy nowadays three main regions in Western Siberia: the higher flow of the Kazym River, the area of the Num-To sacred lake[4], the higher flow of the Agan River (a northern tributary of the Ob) with its tributaries Amputa and Vatyogan and the higher stream of the Pur, which is divided into two branches whose names refer to Forest Nenets clans: the Pyakopur and the Aivasedapur. My observations are based on my fieldwork in the Agan area, where I spent five months between 1999 and 2000. From the linguistic point of view, the Agan Nenets are in a specific position, very different from what Kaur Mägi has experienced in Num-To[5] (2001) and Tapani Salminen in the Pur region (1998[6]), as I will show further on. In order to understand the

[2] 1300, according to http://www.ethnologue.com/show_language.asp?code=YRK, about 1000 for Golovnev (1995: 71).

[3] This last figure is given by http://www.suri.ee/uralic.html as well as by the UNESCO (http://odur.let.rug.nl/~bergmann/russia/languages/nenets.htm#number).

[4] We know that at the beginning of the 20th century Forest Nenets occupied also the high stream of the Lyamin and its tributaries. According to oral information, after the village of Darko-Gorshkovski was closed in the 1960s, many Forest Nenets from the Lyamin migrated to the Num-To area. In 1972, there were on the Lyamin river 16 Nenets families (45 persons) (Vasilyev 1985: 81–82). There are certainly still some isolated Forest Nenets in the forest tundra of this basin.

[5] Cf. www.forestnenets.info.

[6] Oral information.

linguistic situation in that region, I must present first the ethnical situation in the Agan region and the Nenets' ethnical contacts.

The Agan Nenets' ethnical contacts

The actual Nenets population of the Agan Nenets is mixed: one branch, the Aivaseda and the Yusi clans[7], may be considered as early inhabitants of the Agan basin. The other clans represented in this group nowadays, the Tyot and the Vella clans, are known to have migrated to the high streams of the Vatyogan and Amputa Rivers in the 1930 from the northern areas around the village of Khalesovoy and perhaps from the region of Num-To.[8] This late migration is still present in the Nenets' consciousness for all the newcomers were registered by soviet authorities under the surname of Aivaseda[9], although the people themselves perfectly know that they actually belong to the Tyot or to the Vella clans.

As I have mentioned, during the tsarist period the Nenets had but occasional contacts with the Russian administration and the town's population. Because of their living far from the centres, most of the administrative relations of the Forest Nenets were dealt through mediators. The main mediators belonged usually to another Siberian people living in the same areas, the Khanty.[10] The eastern branch of the Agan Khanty used to live on the river's medium and lower stream; they had thus more contacts with the Russian administration, more people among them spoke Russian. We can thus argue that until the first decades of the Soviet period, the Forest Nenets had but very rare, occasional contacts with the Russians. In 1936 G. Verbov, who visited among others also the Agan Nenets, asserts that he has met no Forest

[7] The main social institution of the Forest Nenets until the Soviet era, and even in its first decades (*Obshchestvennyi* 1970: 203) was the exogamic clan, which has been loosing pertinence as main organiser of social life, but is still very much present in the conscience of the people: surnames are still clan names, and if not in discourse, in practice exogamy is still very much practised.

[8] Oral information by Yuri Vella.

[9] The reason of this error are not entirely elucidated: according to Ogryzko, the rich Aivaseda presented the poorer newcomers as their kins in order to dissimulate the fact they used their labour force (Ogryzko 1998: 171). According to Yuri Vella's oral information, the Vellas migrated from Num-To in order to avoid the repression following the Kazym uprising (Leete 2002).

[10] This function of mediators is well illustrated – although this example concerns another river, the Lyamin – by Toivo Lehtisalo's experience in 1914: as he was looking for the Nenets, he had to rely on the help of Khanty guides, who led him up to the Nenets camps (Lehtisalo 1959: 138–140).

Nenets speaking Russian (Verbov 1936: 66). But the contacts with the Surgut Khanty were already most developed, both southwards, with the Agan Khanty (the families of Sardakov, Aipin, Kazamkin) and westwards, with the Khanty living in the basin of the Tromyogan, and occupying the higher flows of this river and its tributaries. These early contacts are proved both by linguistic influence and by the fact that tradition has fixed marriage rules between the Nenets and the Khanty clans, establishing a kind of interethnic exogamy, which was still active at the end of the 1930 (Verbov 1936: 68–69).

The Soviet period changed radically the context of the Forest Nenets' life. If during the first decades the ruler's concerns were to strengthen their own positions, from the 1930s on their ambition was to rule effectively the whole territory and to have a general system implemented everywhere (Toulouze 1998: 154). This is the period where the first schools were opened and the collectivisation launched. Surely in these remote regions this process could not be so rapidly achieved as in Central Russia, and it took some decades to ensure a total control of the population in different types of collective farms. But the creation of these unities and the general trends in Soviet policy led to the concentration of all the natives into villages: in the Agan region, the new centre was Varyogan, where since 1937 there was a boarding school for the natives. If men where usually working for the collective farm in the taiga (as hunters or reindeer herders), women and children lived most of their lives in the village. As a matter of fact, Varyogan was a mixed village, where most of the population was is either Nenets or Khanty. Surely the new way of life has encouraged mixed marriages, bringing Khanty and Nenets ever more together.

Last but not least, the main difference between the Agan Nenets and the others groups of Forest Nenets is due to the peculiar economical developments in this area in the last few decades. The Agan Nenets occupy territories where since the mid-1960s huge oilfields have been discovered, whose exploitation has given Russia its main oil production and therefore currency resources. Oil industry has done what neither the tsarist colonisation neither the Soviet power had been able to do: to really occupy the Siberian taiga and hold it under thorough control. Oil industry has induced also an extensive migration of oil workers coming from all over the former Soviet Union. The demographic balance has thus been altered, and the native peoples have been reduced to a very small percentage of the overall population. New cities have been founded on former reindeer pastures to accommodate the newcomers.

This group is far from being ethnically homogenous, but I shall overlook here its inner ethnical subdivision: the immigrants' attitude in regard to the native people does not differ in essentials, they have all left their home region for a precise goal – the improving of their material life – and they all have Russian as a common tongue interfacing with the rest of the world. This new element is a key factor in the native's life as well as in language issues.

The Agan Nenets between the Khanty and the Russians

I come now to the linguistic issues, which are most directly connected with the demographic factor. The fact is that the Forest Nenets – although we have no precise data about how much they actually are, are clearly a minority both in regard to the newcomers as in regard to the Khanty. This numerical dimension was certainly of secondary importance when people lived scattered in the taiga. But it is very clearly felt when they form a community gathered in the village, and even more since the development of oil industry, for the foundation of new towns, as Raduzhnyi in 1984 on the middle stream, right on the pastures of the Kazamkin clan's reindeers, has chased Khanty families from their lands and led them to settle in Varyogan, increasing thus the number of Khanty.

This minority position has led to a clear domination of Khanty among the native tongues. It is interesting to notice that this seems to be a relatively recent phenomenon: in 1985, Vasilyev, according to whom the Agan Nenets were 45 families (150 persons) and the Khanty represented 51 families (250 persons), maintains that "the local Khanty know Nenets in a minor degree", and that "both ethnic groups have preserved the main features of their traditional culture, the consciousness of their identity and their mother tongue" (Vasilyev 1985: 82). Nowadays, anyhow, the situation has radically changed. Two factors prove this subordinate position of Forest Nenets compared to Khanty: on one hand the fact that there is no Khanty speaking or understanding well Nenets (the last, an old man called Mikhail Sardakov[11], died during our last expedition in September 2000); on the other hand, if a native language is preserved in mixed marriages, it is as a rule Khanty.

[11] Mikhail Sardakov, according to our experience, had a good understanding of Nenets – as we could notice by his way of following and commenting a Nenets tale told by an old Nenets – but did not use to speak it: in intercourse with his Nenets friends, he too used Khanty.

All the Nenets who still know their mother tongue are also skilled in Khanty.[12]

This stronger position of Khanty compared to Nenets appears clearly in the resistance to russification. The domination of Russian is a corollary to the domination of the Russians. It has been a direct consequence of the people's gathering into villages, with school and other institutions functioning in Russian. Certainly, at the beginning, native languages were also supposed to be used, but Russian soon became dominant: although for the responsible of education policy in the first decade of Soviet rule school had to be based on native languages, the lack of teachers did not allow its actual application (Toulouze 1999: 64). All the dimensions of modern life, both with its material and mental aspects, have been conceptualised through Russian. Other languages spoken by Russia's more numerous nationalities have tried to develop their means to express modernity, but these attempts have been cruelly repressed since the early 1930s[13]; the languages of the peoples of the North were very far from being adapted, and no attempt at all was made to achieve this adaptation: actually written languages started to spread only since 1934, when the political climate was more and more tense, more and more totalitarian. Thus all the contacts with the outer world were and are made through Russian. The knowledge of Russian is a compulsory element to get along with the world.

As in all the Soviet Union, there has been external pressure by the State's policy to make the nationalities adopt Russian as everyday language in substitution to the vernacular starting from the late 1950s, when native languages ceased to be taught at school. There has also been an objective pressure in favour of Russian due to the inaptitude of the actual idioms to express modernity, as new notions were much easier to be mentioned in Russian. And in addition there has been a subjective acceptation of these trends in the private sphere: the families have given up speaking their own language to their children. In the case of mixed marriages, the choice of Russian was even more evident, because of the above-mentioned situation: both parents did not know

[12] This fact was already noticed half a century ago by N. Tereshchenko (Tereshchenko 1959: 100)

[13] As by the Finno-Ugric peoples of Central Russia, whose attempt to develop their own languages according to their own internal rules and using their own lexical bases were considered since 1932 as the expression of anti-soviet and nationalist positions and severely repressed.

both languages, and usually they preferred to guarantee their children an easier future by adopting Russian since the beginning. There has thus been a generation gap in the transmission of the language, for the Nenets between 40 and 60 years of age have omitted to transmit it to their children, who have nothing to transmit to theirs.

Thus, at the beginning of the 21st century, no child in the Agan region has Nenets as family tongue; no child begins school speaking Nenets – so that the lessons in "mother tongue", reincluded since the 1980s in the programs as one of the subjects, are led as a matter of fact as lessons in a "foreign tongue". But if English as a foreign language benefits of high prestige, Nenets is felt by the younger pupils to be of no use at all, which complicates considerably the teacher's task from the psychological point of view. The youngest Nenets native speaker in the Agan region is a reindeer herder aged 27, who lives mostly in the tundra. The Khanty have resisted better: most of Khanty children starting school speak both Khanty and Russian. There has been no generation gap in Khanty language transmission.

As we see, there is in the Agan region a three-degree hierarchy in spoken languages: on the higher step, Russian, spoken by everybody; on the middle step, Khanty, not spoken by Russians and by younger Nenets generations, but spoken by the Khanty and by the elder Nenets; and on the lower step Nenets, known only by the elder Nenets generation.[14]

The language issue in the life and self-image of the Agan's Nenets

How do the people themselves refer to their language and the position of their language? I would characterise the Nenets' attitude towards the linguistic double minority issue as conscious and indifferent.

The Nenets are conscious of the linguistic trends they have been submitted to. They are perfectly aware of what has been lost and they are able to explain how and why. During our fieldwork with the Estonian linguist Kaur Mägi, we recorded Nenets speech from ten persons among whom the younger was 45 years old. Some of our informants were very assured about the preciseness of the information they provided: these were people whose life was mainly connected

[14] It is true that 1989 figures for the whole Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Okrug (region) indicate that 647 Nenets (out of 1144) consider Nenets as their mother tongue (Khomich 1995: 311). But this statistic includes the Num-To region, where Nenets is actually the main communication language, and does not take into account the younger generations.

with the taiga and with traditional skills. I may mention a couple that lives at the moment in the taiga. The man (49) is half Nenets half Khanty, but clearly his Nenets father's influence predominated, as his mother, a Khanty, suffered of a mental disease and died when her son was still a kid. Our informant's father has always lived with reindeer in the taiga; he has a good knowledge of Nenets oral tradition that he has transmitted to his son; after having lived for some years mainly in Varyogan, our informant went back in the last decade to live at some kilometers' distance from his father's camp. His wife is a pure Nenets, whose father quitted in the early 1950s the collective farm and has not been seen in Varyogan afterwards. His friends have built him a hut, but he still prefers to live in a conic tent. Often her husband refers to her as an authority in Nenets. Nevertheless, although these persons speak Nenets among them, they have not transmitted the knowledge of the language to their daughter, who is at the moment 21 years old.

Still most of our informants were dubitative about their own language skills and proposed us to turn to the one person "knowing well Nenets" – considered as an authority on these questions, the only educated Nenets from the village, the reindeer herder and poet Yuri Vella, our main informant. They consider that except Yuri Vella, all the Nenets in Varyogan have forgotten their language. This is clearly an exaggeration, for most of them still remember songs or tales and are able to talk to one another in Nenets. Nevertheless they considered the language they used as poor and limited, perhaps even erroneous, probably compared to what their remembrances may have been.

On this topic I had a significant conversation with Yuri Vella. When I asked him how a Nenets proverb quoted by him in Russian would sound in Nenets, he answered me after a small pause: "I can't find it now. Since Auli's death I haven't spoken Nenets". Auli was his elder neighbour and friend, a good singer and storyteller. I observed to Yuri that he had just spoken by phone in Nenets with his mother. But Yuri rejected this assertion: "This was not real Nenets. It was a commonplace language, which has nothing to do with our rich and expressive poetical tongue".[15] This reaction illustrates the attitude nowadays

[15] He has expressed this same idea in the preface to one of his collections of poems: "We, the Forest Nenets, we used to sing many stories, tales, laments and songs, we performed them with a popular melody or as intonational recited poetry (as for instance conversations with gods). The colloquial language is used in everyday life, it is poor, it has no colour, no taste, no smell, you don't feel either colder either warmer. You cannot tell a tale or sing a song in the colloquial language, and a common conversation about wood, food or money pollutes the artistic language" (Vella 1996: 5).

Nenets have towards their language: what they possess is not a value, for they have lost the essentials, the core of what the language should be. What they know seems to be but a shadow of what Nenets has been.

Still the Nenets are in some way proud of their language. Both Khanty and Nenets in Varyogan are positive in asserting that Nenets is much more difficult than Khanty. One Nenets informant even doubted of our capacity – of anybody's capacity – of learning Nenets. The assurance of having an exclusive language is conforting, for it gives psychological value to what they still have and to their culture as a whole, and is a practical means to explain the fact that practically no Khanty knows this language. Still there are also other reasons to this phenomenon. The most important is that Nenets has no practical function in social life. When I asked Yuri Vella's wife, a Khanty, whether she didn't find necessary to know her husbands mother tongue, she answered, "Wherefore?" True enough, her husband speaks good Khanty, so when they want to share private information they may use her language. This practical attitude is clearly inspired from the pattern dominating the whole society, for in the Soviet Union Russians did usually not make any effort to learn the languages of the regions they lived in, considering that Russian was enough to ensure communication. So the Russian attitude towards local languages is reproduced by Khanty, who expect Nenets to know their language[16], but do not make any effort for reciprocity.

This kind of attitude has led to a sort of allover indifference towards the language, which is shared by the Nenets themselves. They have not tried to react to the general trend. In some way, the Agan Nenets have clearly sacrificed their spiritual culture as far as it is connected with language. Storytelling, which is an interactive activity, requiring comments, questions, exclamations, has lost ground, for it seldom happens in that region that only Nenets would gather without the presence of Khanty. The latter automatically will induce the use of Khanty or Russian as a language of communication. Riddles remain very much alive, and they are popular among the children, but they are nowadays mostly told in Russian. The loss of the language affects even more radically the musical culture, for Nenets do not know instrumental music and their singing is most thoroughly connected to the language

[16] When 19 years old Yuri addressed his wife's mother to ask her daughter's hand, the old Khanty woman obliged him to do this in Khanty, pretending not to understand any other language.

(Ojamaa 2002). The gap between Nenets traditional music and European music is so deep, that it is difficult to imagine traditional songs sung in Russian. Moreover, the spiritual side of Nenets worldview is deeply affected: prayers during sacrifices are performed in Nenets by the elder generation, but the younger shall not be able to continue this tradition.

We could have the impression that indifference towards the language means indifference towards the survival of Nenets' identity in the Agan region. Nevertheless it is not so. The fact is that language does not, in the Nenets' understanding, play a key role in the community's survival. The fact is that the Russians' presence in the heart of the taiga affects the possibilities for the group to survive even physically.

When we examine the place of language in the demands of the associations defending the peoples of the North, we are surprised to observe that it is practically absent. The priorities are elsewhere: they are in the preservation of land, in the possibility of living in the traditional way.

The main concern of the Varyogan Nenets is a material one: how to live in villages where there are no jobs (or no jobs for them), and where alcoholism is rapidly degrading the health of younger and elder people? But how to live in the taiga – where pollution has spoiled the rivers and the fish, the presence of human beings has chased away the game and the pastures have been occupied by oil industry? This is the concern of most Nenets. In the last decade, some of them have chosen, as legislation has given them the opportunity[17], to live most of their time in their traditional kinship territories, and to try to save reindeer herding. Others have sold their rights to oil industry in order to get compensations allowing them to live in Varyogan without having to look for work. The most conscious of the Nenets are terrified by this encouragement to idleness and parasitism, and feel that this is the real murder of their people. Some Nenets are tragically divided between the desire of preserving nature and the need for money. There is no place for the language concern, when the main issue is physical survival: thinking of it is a luxury the Agan Nenets have given up long ago.

Yuri Vella shares this deep feeling. He tried in the early 1990s, to use

[17] In 1992, the local parliament of the autonomous region inhabited by the Agan Forest Nenets (Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Okrug (region)) has given the natives the use of their traditional lands, providing that the subsoil resources remain property of the State.

language as an instrument for revitalising his people and he published a periodical paper in Nenets. The initiative, as a matter of fact, was not his, but his uncle's, Leonid (Lyahu) Aivaseda, but Yuri continued it after his uncle's death and produced 8 numbers of *Tilhivsama* (Our life). He was the unique author writing in the paper, making the page sample and drawing manually the special Nenets letters. Thus, he invented an orthograph for Forest Nenets and even introduced a "reform" in this orthograph by introducing some new letters. He tried to diversify the texts presented: news from the Nenets community, poems, riddles, translations and linguistic explanations. But this experience did not last long: Yuri discovered that only very few persons readed his paper, and gave up any attempt connected to the language. Nevertheless at the end of the 1990, probably under the influence of his foreign contacts[18], and discovering that foreigners had not the same contempt for the Nenets language that he was used to at home, he took over again the language issue. In his last collection of poems[19] there are three poems presented in Nenets and the titles of the illustrations are also given in Nenets (Vella 2001). I have participated myselt at a writers' meeting, where Yuri Vella chosed to read his Nenets poems to an audience where there was no other Forest Nenets. But his new concern for the language is thoroughly integrated to his other, more political tasks. Yuri Vella's present project is to write a toponymic dictionary of the Agan basin. He intends to show how places considered to be inhabited and empty have always been integrated to the native's life, have names and have been used as pastures or hunting areas by specific clans. He hopes to give thus factual information that may be used in future by natives in order to prove their rights to land property. This attempt to reconstruct a kind of geography of the native's life is meant in three languages: Russian, Khanty and Nenets. Yuri wants to introduce the three possible names of rivers, lakes, bogs and places in general, commenting each one in the original language, without translation into the other idioms. This dictionary is at the moment but a project, only some pages have been written. But I consider the linguistic

[18] Yuri Vella is well known as a poet and a fighter for the right of his people in Russia as well as abroad: he has personal contacts with German, Estonian, French and Finnish researchers, has been invited to Budapest, Helsinki, San Francisco and Tartu.

[19] This is a bilingual collection with Russian texts and their French translation by myself. The three Nenets poems are presented without any translation.

approach very interesting. The information Yuri wants to deliver is not for curiosity and language is not put there for the sake of mere symbolical proclamation, but as a means of communication inside the ethnic group, to be used by it and by all those who are ready to make the effort to learn it. Yuri Vella thinks that by presenting his language (as well as Khanty) as self-sufficient, he may give an impulse to reality and help evolutions on this way.

Still he is quite alone on this mental position. The most active of the Nenets seem to think that if they succeed in maintaning alive some kind of life in the taiga, if they succeed in saving reindeer herding as a main form of traditional husbandry in their region, the main goal is achieved. The Agan Nenets have lost their language and do not see any means of getting it back. In half a century, nobody will speak it any more. But this does not mean that they have abandoned their values and their identity: they are only preparing to express them in a different way.

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Minority and Mission: Christianisation of the European Nenets

Laur Vallikivi

Christianisation and the role of Christianity among the Nenets (formerly called Samoyeds) and other Northern peoples of Russia have been analysed quite superficially and onesidedly. This may be explained by several reasons. At first, for a long time, researchers mostly endeavoured to find out phenomena of religion seen as "authentic" and "traditional", without paying attention to influences of Christianity on beliefs and rituals. Secondly, during the Soviet period, Marxist ethnography proceeded from a prescribed scheme and treated the impact of Christianity as *a priori* negative; it automatically presumed that the relationship between the missionaries and the Nenets could be exclusively conflictual (e.g. Bazanov, Kazansky 1936; Khomich 1979; see also Droogers, Greenfield 2001: 30). I suggest that, although conflicts existed indeed, the interaction between them was much more complex, and determined also by other considerations – both parties' worldviews, political and religious strategies, misunderstandings, shared interests etc.

In the current article, I shall analyse the Christianisation process by the European and, to a smaller extent, the Asian Nenets in its political and social context, paying special attention to the dialogue between the aborigenes and the Orthodox missionaries, to the reactions of both parties and to the evolution of the Nenets' belief system during the 19th century until the beginning of the 20th century. My main sources are contemporary Russian Orthodox journals, which have been very little used by other researchers, and different reports by scholars and travellers. The more relevant texts I relied on are notes by Veniamin, Sitnikov, Mikhailov and other missionaries and priests involved in Evangelisation campaigns, which have been published in the 19th and at the beginning of the 20th century.

Political and historical dimensions of Christianisation

The first really serious encounter of the European Nenets with Chris-

tianity took place during the years 1825 to 1830. Missionary work was assigned to the "Arkhangelsk Spiritual Mission", headed by Archimandrite Veniamin from the Antonievo-Siysky monastery. The mission also included 5 priests and one Nenets interpreter. Within five years, 3303 persons were baptised out of the approximately 4000 Nenets living in the Arkhangelsk Guberniya (Veniamin 1855: 114; Khomich 1995: 248). This was the only large-scale mission in that region: after Veniamin's campaign, missionary work was entrusted to the local clergy, but they didn't actually convert but a few persons. Besides this current work in local churches, there has been only one initiative aimed at the Nenets' conversion, the merchant Sitnikov's trip in 1861–1863 (Sitnikov 1864).

What were the missionaries' goals and strategies? During the first, i.e. the Veniamin's campaign, baptism was the main aim of the Orthodox Church, which was thus enabled to consider the Nenets as "Orthodox", i.e. full and equal subjects of the Russian Tsar. Therefore, the main goal was to baptise as many Nenets as possible. Indeed, the mission's work was geographically limited inside the boundaries of the Guberniya and did not therefore include the Nenets in Siberia. East of the Ural Mountains, there was another Orthodox mission based in Obdorsk, but its impact on the local Nenets reindeer herders was quite limited (Lebedev 1915, No. 12: 160; Minenko 1975: 267).

The Synod's requirements stipulated that the missionaries had to be gentle towards the aborigenes. They should try to baptise the most influent Nenets first – the wealthier and the elders. They had to find out how the Nenets reacted to them and then, at a suitable moment, disclose the falseness of their pagan beliefs and reveal the truth of Christianity (O pravilakh... 1830: 471). Baptism was a goal in itself: other issues as, for example, proper explanation of Christian doctrines were of minor importance. This appears clearly in both the instructions and the missionaries' diaries. "Having briefly presented the Holy Story to the Samoyeds and explained to them the main dogma of our Sacred Faith, I easily managed to have the majority of them adopt the Orthodox faith" (Sitnikov 1864: 191). In the writings of the time, in order to be considered Orthodox it was enough to be baptised.

Being at the service of the local Russians and Komis[1], the Nenets had

[1] The Komis are a people living mostly south of the Nenets areas. One group, called Izhma Komis, occupied the Northern tundras, took over reindeer herding from the Nenets and became in the 19th century the richest of the European reindeer breeders.

been in touch for a long time with folk Orthodoxy and Old Belief. According to a traveller's report, the Pustozersk Church had the visit of Nenets prior to Veniamin's mission (Lepekhin 1805: 292). Consequently, the encounter with the latter was, in a certain sense, the continuation of a contact situation that existed already. A large group of the European Nenets, particularly the westernmost ones, worked as herders for Orthodox Russians or Komi, or were indebted to them. In the middle of the 19th century, Vereshchagin writes that if in the Western tundras the majority of the Nenets had been contented with accepting Christianity, in the Eastern Bolshzemelskaya tundra they opposed a resolute resistance. He explains this difference arguing that in the Western tundras, the Nenets were "made poor and miserable" by their Russian and Komi masters (Vereshchagin 1849: 294).

Many Nenets avoided baptism either by escaping from the missionaries or by postponing baptism, without ever keeping their promise (Veniamin 1851: 66; Sitnikov 1864: 195). Others accepted it as an inevitable obligation, similar to the capitation[2] due to the State (Lebedev 1916: 170, 183). Thus there was much more than conflict in the contact situation of the two parties. Those who let the missionaries baptise them had different motivations. For example, according to the Nenets' themselves, baptism put them in an equal situation while trading with the Russians and released them from their debts towards the Russians, who used to cheat them (Bartenev 1896: 94).

They also wished to obtain highly valued objects, such as crosses, icons or shirts, the missionaries used to give to the neophytes (Sitnikov 1864: 192; Lebedev 1915, No. 12: 157). The cross for example was highly honoured not only by the baptised Nenets but also among the pagans, particularly the one given in a church. Therefore, many Nenets from the Obdorsk area went to the nearest church and asked the priest a cross. If the priest refused because of they were not baptised, they would come the next time and called themselves by the name of some baptised Nenets, and thus get the cross (Otchet... 1897: 45). Sitnikov also mentions that the cross was supposed to have supernatural power: "… there are so many idolaters who hang crosses on the lead reindeer of their herds and around the necks of their favourite idols" (Sitnikov 1864: 199). He infers that it is sufficient for a missionary to be himselt eager to convert, and all pagans will soon be Christians (ibid.).

The conversion process reveals the importance of power relations

[2] Called in this region *yasak*.

between the converts and the converters at different levels – from the use of direct force to the exercise of symbolic power. During the 1930s, the Soviet historians Bazanov and Kazansky claim that Veniamin's mission relied on the use of constraint (Bazanov, Kazansky 1936: 27). Understandably, we do not find in Veniamin's diary any report about the use of violence: his descriptions of conversion are inspired, as it seems to be the norm in the 19th century, by the New Testament; nonetheless we find in the same texts high praise of the activities of the police officers, accompanying the mission who were supposed to protect the missionaries and the Nenets against the local Russians. According to Veniamin, local Russians tried to prevent the conversion of the Nenets, in order to retain cheap labour force that could be fed with dead animals[3] (Veniamin 1850: 368). The mere presence of police officers might be for the Nenets a sign that the missionaries had the support of the civil authority: baptising turned out to be quite violent (Epizod... 1896: 680; Bazanov, Kazansky 1936: 25–28). In the 1830s, there were stories spreading among the Siberian Nenets that the Nenets in the Arkhangelsk Guberniya had been baptised by force. The Siberian Nenets were frightened and refused to comply to the missionaries, so that the newly opened Obdorsk mission had to interrupt its activities (Minenko 1975: 267–268). For the same reason, the priest of the Obdorsk mission had to seek the assistance of the police, in order to contain the Nenets who wanted to hinder one of their friend's baptism and tried to drive him away (Lebedev 1915, No. 12: 145).

As long as the activities of the missionaries were clearly connected with State authority, the Nenets avoided direct hostile acts against them. However, if the Nenets perceived that missionary work was not directly supported by the State, they might treat the missionaries in a hostile manner. For instance, at the beginning of the 1860s, as merchant Sitnikov proclaimed the Gospel, the Nenets, on the basis of rumours, thought he was doing it independently from the authorities and his Nenets guides left him alone in the tundra (Sitnikov 1864: 191).

One of the most spectacular examples of how missionaries exercised symbolic power was the destruction of the idols in the Nenets' sacred sites and their replacement by crosses. The members of Veniamin's mission destroyed dozens of sacred places, among them two of the most important Nenets holy sites, on the Vaigach Island and in the Kanin

[3] Christians did not eat meat of animals that died of natural death. By feeding their servants in this way, the Russian and Komi reindeer herders were able to limit their expenses.

tundra. As Veniamin emphasised, this destruction took place with the assistance of newly baptised Nenets themselves (Veniamin 1850; 1851). Veniamin describes the changes of the Nenets' attitudes towards their idols after the destruction of their *sjadei*s (wooden or stone images of gods), as they witnessed their powerlessness and nothingness (Veniamin 1850: 439).

Eighty years later, reports by a priest called Nevsky provide a different picture. He had proposed to the Nenets who accompanied him in the tundra to destroy the wooden statue of an idol. Although the Nenets laughed at the idol, they refused to give the clergyman an axe and said: "you are a priest, so the idol will not touch you, but we shall suffer evil" (Nevsky 1906: 271). It is possible to draw conclusions also from the reports of travellers who visited the tundra after the sack of sacred places, and noticed recent traces of sacrifices on the same site or elsewhere (Kozmin 1903: 69–70; Martynov 1905: 23–24; Evsyugin 1979: 93).

Incorporation of Orthodox rituals into the religious practice of the Nenets

Spiritual care following Veniamin's campaign was more than modest. Although three churches were built in the territory of the European Nenets (Nes, Pesha, Kolva) immediately after the completion of Veniamin's mission, there were very few clergymen who were ready to work in such tough natural conditions and were motivated to learn the Nenets' language. Russian Orthodox priests were as a rule ordinary clergymen with families: according to the traveller and writer Konstantin Nosilov, this did not allow them to migrate with the Nenets in the tundra, as their children could not be educated and medical care was inaccessible (Nosilov 1895: 275). The priests went rarely to the tundra, thus the Nenets' contacts with the Orthodox clergymen took primarily place when the latter came to the settlement to get supplies. If they wished to, the Nenets had the opportunity to avoid any meeting with the missionaries.

Russian Orthodox Church mainly focused on ritual observance by converts. In the Obdorsk Church, the clergymen carefully followed whether the Nenets and the Khanty[4] who had come to the church behaved correctly, crossed themselves and prayed in the proper man-

[4] The Khanty are an ethnic group living in the Northern areas of Western Siberia: in the Obdorsk region, there are Khanty as well as Nenets.

ner; if errors in the rituals were noticed, they were explained to the culprits after the service (Lebedev 1915, No. 12: 156). Baptism was the main sacrament required and for many Nenets, it was also the sole contact with official Orthodoxy. It was very difficult for the clerics to compel the Nenets to submit to the other sacraments – receive Communion, marry and confess their sins according to the prescriptions of the Church. A clergyman often baptised children aged 5–7 (Shashkov 1894: 72; Lebedev 1916: 179) and performed memorial masses several years after the actual decease and after the traditional funeral with sacrifices and offerings was held (Lebedev 1915, No. 9: 166–167; 1916: 183). Only few Nenets accepted Church wedding, although the clerics tried to convince them of the necessity of Christian matrimony. Usually the Nenets accepted it and even required it when children were ill (Shashkov 1896: 185). However, young couples happened to choose Church wedding when, for example, the bride's parents objected to the marriage because the bridegroom could not pay the bride price (Lebedev 1916: 182; Otchet... 1897: 45). At the same time, the missionaries complained that young Nenets maids would not accept baptism for this would raise obstacles to their marriage (Lebedev 1915, No. 12: 160). These are typical examples of how Orthodox rituals were used by the Nenets to solve problems within the community.

Sometimes however the Orthodox ecclesiastics themselves refused to administer sacraments, e.g. they refused to wed Nenets couples who went to church during fasting, when matrimony was forbidden (Shashkov 1896: 185). Because of their nomadic way of life, the Nenets reindeer herders could not follow most of the required Orthodox obligations. One Nenets told for instance the young botanist Alexander Schrenk that Christianity was generally not too bad, but fasting was indeed superfluous (Schrenk 1848: 413). The Orthodox Church prescribes up to 200 fasting days a year, which is in full contradiction with the Nenets' way of life (Finsch 1879: 515). Moreover, this requirement was difficult even to understand as for the Nenets meat, which is the bases of their diet, was symbolically very highly valued. Missionaries and clergymen adapted their activities to the actual circumstances and overlooked the prescription of fasting (Mikhailov 1898: 128).

One of the main problem in the Nenets' conversion, according to Bishop Makariy, was their nomadic way of life, wherefore "Samoyeds were not ready to receive the higher Evangelic truths" (Makariy 1878: 73). Nomadic way of life hindered most generally missionary work. Andrei Znamenski, in his comparative study on the Christianisation of

Alaskan Dena'ina Indians, Chukchis and Altai, points out that the nomadic groups within these people maintained, in contact situation with Orthodox missions, their traditional religious practice to a much larger extent than the settled groups (Znamenski 1999: 261). This applies also to the Nenets: the settled Nenets living in the Kolva village and Novaya Zemlya were significantly more closely connected with the Orthodox Church than the nomadic reindeer herders living in the tundra (Nosilov 1895: 161, Lebedev 1915, No. 10: 160). Settled Nenets went regularly to church, observed rituals and demonstrated a more thorough knowledge of Christian doctrine.

Because of the Orthodox pressure the European Nenets developed a complex religious practice. On the one hand, pre-Christian rituals were jealously concealed from the missionaries: e.g. the Nenets asked Nosilov, whether he knew anything about the missionaries' plans to travel in the tundra (Nosilov 1896: 66). At the same time, there are many reports showing that churchgoing and pagan rites were considered as natural phenomena that did not exclude one another. Some Nenets wondered why they could not both worship their gods and bring offerings to the church (Nosilov 1895: 160). The more contacts the Nenets had with Orthodox clergymen, the quicker they perceived the exclusive nature of Orthodoxy, i.e. they understood that for the clergymen animistic and shamanistic rites were unacceptable. When Schrenk saw a baptised shaman performing, the latter explained, "as I am baptised, I beat my drum and call the *tadebtsos* [shaman's helping spirits] quietly, so that the Russian God would not hear my voice" (Schrenk 1848: 399).

The power of healing

As mentioned above, many Orthodox elements found a positive response among the Nenets. Their attitude towards the missionaries depended more on actions than on sermons, i.e. was influenced more by events than by words. One of the events that, according to Veniamin, made the Nenets understand the superiority of Christianity was the miraculous recovery of one Nenets while being baptised. Veniamin reports how Vylkin, an elder of the Nenets, who had one hand shriveled and the other dislocated, managed after baptism to cross himself. Missionaries took Vylkin on their missionary trips and the news of the miraculous healing of his hands spread rapidly among the Nenets and encouraged many people to accept baptism (Veniamin 1850: 426). This story has a parallel in the New Testament, the healing of a man with a

shriveled hand by Jesus Christ (Mt. 12: 9–14; Mk. 3: 1–6). Veniamin presents himself as a genuine apostle, who mediates divine healing. Beyond this concrete example, the Nenets highly valued the healing power of Christianity. The healing activities of the missionaries were a clearly understandable alternative to shamanistic rites. The missionaries knew it: Sitnikov purposefully participated in nursing courses in order to use healing as a means for converting the Nenets (Lebedev 1915, No. 9: 161). In Obdorsk, one sick Nenets accepted to be baptised if the local missionary Averki succeeded in healing him. And so it happened. The brother of the same Nenets, however, stated that he would agree to be baptised only if Averki would make him ill and then heal him (Irinarkh 1905: 155; see also Nosilov 1896: 202; Znamenski 1999: 222). Similarly, Schrenk describes how a Nenets woman of the Kharyuchi clan from the Yamal Peninsula fell seriously ill and her husband made a journey to the most sacred place in the European tundra on the Vaigach Island, in order to bring sacrifices to their gods. Afterwards, he headed to Pustozersk and gave 10 reindeer as a sacrifice to Saint Nicholas (Schrenk 1848: 409).

Traditionally, healing is one of the most important functions of the shaman: thus curing missionaries became somehow rivals for them. Competition between Christian holy men and shamans gave the people more alternatives. The functional similarity of Orthodox priests and shamans appears clearly in many reports; one of the most illustrative is the following: when a Nenets woman asked a Soviet official in Peschanka, whether she could leave her baby unbaptised, she was given a positive answer. After this approval, the woman said: "That's good. I won't go to the priest as he asks a lot of money. I go to the *tadibei* (shaman), he takes less" (Skachkov 1934: 25).

This kind of pragmatic attitude by the indigenous people confronted to innovations is common in situations of cultural contacts. Healing in particular became one of such links in the communication between the missionaries and the Nenets, and opened the way for a dialogue between the two.

Dialogue: reciprocal understanding and misunderstanding

The acceptance or the rejection of Orthodox elements by the Nenets determined a peculiar dialogue between the two parties. The main feature of this dialogue was translation, in its widest sense. Firstly, there were a number of problems related to translation from one language to another, at the so-called **interlinguistic** level; secondly the

dialogue between the missionaries and the Nenets was moulded by **intercultural** or reciprocal cultural translation.

As far as interlinguistic translation is concerned, only few missionaries were sufficiently fluent in Nenets to proselytise in this language. In the majority of cases, preaching took place either in Russian, if the Nenets knew at least a little Russian, or with the help of interpreters. As a rule, women did not know any Russian at all, while the men living in the westernmost tundra could mostly speak colloquial Russian, but usually ignored all of religious terminology and Church Slavonic that was used in religious services. Easternmost European Nenets could only speak very little Russian even at the beginning (or at the end…) of the 20th century (Poezdka... 1913: 347; see also Vallikivi 2001).

Archimandrite Veniamin began to learn Nenets: this was also recommended by the Synod's decree on the Christianisation of the Samoyeds, issued in 1824 (O pravilakh... 1830: 471). With the help of a Nenets translator, he compiled a grammar and a dictionary, and translated most of the New Testament into Nenets; he also began to use this language while preaching. According to Veniamin, his mission work in Nenets was very successful; he wrote: "The Nenets were extremely impressed by the deep truth of the Gospel, when they heard them spoken in an understandable voice, in their own mother tongue" (Veniamin 1855: 114). However, the best specialist of Nenets in the 19th century, the linguist and ethnographer Matias Aleksanteri Castrén, who had personnally met Veniamin, evaluated his knowledge of the Nenets language as superficial (Castrén 1967: 120). Bazanov and Kazansky confirm this impression: they present some of the prayers translated by Veniamin, which were illogical and full of mistakes, so that the Nenets could understand nothing of the original message (Bazanov, Kazansky 1936: 48).

Usually the Nenets did not understand the sermons even when they were translated or when the missionaries preached in Nenets: the translators had trouble in finding Nenets terms for Russian notions. The clergymen of the Obdorsk mission's translation committee considered Nenets to be an "extremely poor" language and therefore, they recommended either to use Russian words or to have "ideas conveyed in a very free wording" (Otchet... 1905: 142).

Nosilov writes about the harmfulness of mission work done with the help of interpreters at the end of the 19th century: he considered such translations to be heretic. The interpreter is "an ignorant, who distorts every word; or a cheater who takes advantage of the missionaries'

confidence, deliberately translating in favour of the indigenous people…" (Nosilov 1895: 274). In addition, Nosilov blames the translators for taking side with the indigenous people in other ways: "… once I witnessed myself how such a translator, accompanying the missionary, took side with the savages: he suggested them to hurry in hiding the idols and expose the icons, hang the crosses around their necks…" (ibid.). Mission work in Nenets probably induced some Nenets to be baptised and its existence provoqued reactions and new forms of intracultural communication; but the result was not in essentials what the missionaries expected, a better understanding of the principles of Orthodoxy. That is what the Obdorsk clergyman Popov expresses: "… the inexactness and lifelessness of the ideas conveyed by the interpreters did not really help the indigenous people to understand and adopt the godly truths expressed by the preachers" (*Sudby*... 1994: 30).

Concerning **intercultural** translation, Tzvetan Todorov, in his book "The Conquest of America", shows how the dialogue between the missionaries and the Mexican indigenous people was based on analogy, seen as the cornerstone of interpretation mechanism (Todorov 2001). To use analogy is proper to human perception, which domesticates the unfamiliar according to its goals and to its context (Guthrie 1993: 46). The use of perceived analogies is a main feature in most mission situations, like in the dialogue between the Orthodox missionaries and the Nenets.

First, I would bring some examples of how the missionaries regarded the Nenets and interpreted their beliefs. For the missionaries, imbued with Enlightenment ideology, the Nenets were savages, with no higher mental development than children, wherefore they had to be instructed in the Christian faith with gentle and careful ways. "Therefore, the missionaries adapted their words to the level of infants' thinking, who could receive and retain merely the shortest teachings about God, His deeds, about man and his salvation through Jesus Christ, and on how to live in order to earn eternal salvation" (Makariy 1878: 72). It is usual for missionaries to simplify religious dogmas and to bring them "down" to the presumable "level of thinking" of the people they endeavour to convert. According to Fienup-Riordan, this is one part in the process of creating negotiated meanings between the missionaries and their partners (Fienup-Riordan 1990: 69).

The aim of the missionaries was not to understand deeply the Nenets' worldview, as most of them were convinced that they knew everything about "paganism". In this dialogue, the clergymen acted

according to their convictions and interests, and described the Nenets beliefs mostly through Biblical vocabulary and images. Archimandrite Veniamin, in his description of the Nenets beliefs, presents the so-called pagan moral code in the form of 25 commandments, whose clauses mostly coincide with the Christian doctrine. The first commandment states as follows: "Believe in the Almighty God and honour Him". Similarity with the first commandment of the Christian Decalogue is evident, both regarding the essence and the form. The following commandments call to honour St. Nicholas the Miracle Worker and the Devil (Veniamin 1855: 127). For the Orthodox ecclesiastics, the latter corresponded to Nga, the Nenets god of the Lower World. Once Nga has been identified as the Devil, the missionaries' descriptions confer him the features of the Christian Devil (ibid: 116). For the clergymen, the Nenets beliefs were assimilated to worship of the Devil, and this was also the official standpoint of the Orthodox Church. During baptism, the Nenets had to declare explicitly they renounced the Devil and joined in Jesus Christ (Otchet... 1897: 45). To demonise the "other's" gods is a common rule in religious contact situations, and Christianity is no exception.

Konstantin Nosilov admits that the missionaries knew very little about the Nenets' beliefs, explaining thus the lack of success of the mission work (Nosilov 1895: 40). Bishop Makariy's view is also characteristic of the time: he says that the Nenets beliefs are shamanistic "without any difference from other Siberian non-Christians" (Makariy 1878: 57).

The missionaries' texts and rhetoric reveal much about their way of thinking. In the missionaries' writings, the Nenets' conversion is abrupt: Veniamin describes in his diary how the Nenets, after some hours and sometimes after several days of missionary work, awakened and agreed to be baptised. This suddent change is due to the action of Christian supernatural power. From all points of view, this is in complete compliance with the descriptions of conversions in the New Testament, imitating primarily the conversion of Saul on his journey to Damascus (Acts 9: 26–28). At the same time, one of the characteristic features in Veniamin's texts is the absence of details in the conversion reports, which are merely based on rhetoric formulas, as well as numerous conversion narratives throughout history, present conversion through oppositional metaphors (see Fienup-Riordan 1997: 107). For example, the bad smell on the clothes and body of the Nenets, due to the dead animals they allegedly used to eat, miraculously disap-

peared thereafter. "As soon as the Samoyeds were baptised, at the very moment the neophytes were put into the water, all the smell vanished and after this the converts could hardly tolerate the smell coming from the non-baptised, even from their relatives" (Veniamin 1850: 420). The new baptised feel joy in their heart, whereas "the heathen do not get rid of their stink and remain deep in mendacity and in darkness" (ibid.).

Likewise, the Nenets' perception of the Orthodoxy was shaped by perceived similarities. Castrén reports a most enlightening example: a missionary told the Nenets how the prophet Elijah (Elias) went to Heaven and the Nenets did not express any surprise. One of them finally observed: "My brother also went to Heaven a couple of months ago" (Castrén 1967: 164). According to Castrén, the Nenets believed that if a respected person disappeared in the tundra, this meant that he has gone to Heaven, whereas when a bad person disappeared, he was supposed to have been eaten by a bear (ibid.). Probably the Nenets' vision of good persons going to heaven reflects former contacts with the Russian world and Orthodox folk beliefs.

Saint Nicholas as the own "stranger"

The Nenets selectively introduced supernatural characters and symbols connected with the Orthodox religion in their worldview and used them according to their own religious logic. The best example is the role of Saint Nicholas the Miracle Worker (Mikola) in the Nenets' belief system. Influenced by the local Russians and the Komi, the European Nenets worshipped Saint Nicholas the Miracle Worker even before the Evangelisation campaign of the 1820s. As early as in the 16th century, the Nenets called the Pustozersk church the House of Saint Nicholas the Miracle Worker (Bazanov, Kazansky 1936: 6; Okladnikov 1999: 17). In the 19th century, while Orthodoxy was penetrating amongst the Nenets, Saint Nicholas' cult expanded and became an important link between the Nenets beliefs and the Orthodox religion. The Nenets sacrificed to Saint Nicholas as they did to their own idols by smearing the saint's mouth on the icon with blood, grease or vodka. At the beginning of the 20th century Andrey Zhuravsky mentioned specific icons called *Sjadei-Mikola*s that were made for Saint Nicholas. "In the case of a successful hunt or escape from an ocean storm, a wax candle is lit in front of *Mikola sjadei* and larch resin is burnt as incense on a hot pan /—/ and at the same time, Mikola's face is smeared with blood, blubber, whitefish grease and snuff" (Zhuravsky 1911: 26–27). Kostikov describes a reindeer with a specific sign dedicated to Saint Nicholas by

the Nenets of the Gyda Peninsula. "The *Hasovo*s [the Nenets] considered him [St. Nicholas] one of their gods, and now he is not in any respect different from the ordinary gods (*hehe*s)" (Kostikov 1930: 122).

In most cases, Saint Nicholas cult required church with an icon of the saint where he could be worshipped and sacrifices could be brought to him and where the communication with him was the most effective. The Nenets found various ways to keep in touch with the saint. There was for example a tradition to bring to the church a reindeer consecrated to Saint Nicholas: a cross had been cut into the reindeer's flank hair and it was tied up to a picket near the church (Nosilov 1895: 407). In this example, the church and its icon of Saint Nicholas have been organically melted in the Nenets' own beliefs. Both baptised and non-baptised Nenets used to bring reindeer carcasses and furs to the church entrance, in front of the icon of Saint Nicholas. They smeared his mouth with blood but also lit candles in front of the icon according to the Orthodox custom and asked for good hunt, well-being for their reindeer as well as their own recovery or somebody else's (ibid.). The Nenets also used to walk around the church and throw silver coins on the roof of the church – this custom imitates the sacrifice at holy places in the tundra (Nosilov 1898: 358). Lebedev mentions a prayer said in Russian by a Nenets: "Saint Mikola, have mercy on me. My reindeer are sick, severely sick; they have a hoof disease; I will sacrifice a reindeer cow to you, I will sacrifice an alive one to you, I will bring it to this house, I will not deceive you..." (Lebedev 1916: 178). In that case the Nenets thought that it was necessary to say his prayers in Russian, which refers to the continuance of Nicholas' "external" or "other" identity.

Saint Nicholas is totally integrated in the Nenets' worldview, but at the same time, his identity remains thoroughly connected to the Orthodox Church. Thus, the almost almighty Saint Nicholas cannot help the Nenets against the Komi and the Russians who, according to the Nenets' words, erect for him more powerful shrines (Nemirovich-Danchenko 1881: 100). In legends from the Yamal Nenets, Saint Nicholas, alias Mikola, figures as a miracle-working deity who has come from the far South and entered the service of the Nenets supreme being Num (Lar 1998: 42).

According to Leonid Lar[5], on the basis of the material he collected during fieldwork in the 1990s, Mikola Mutratna, the Nenets equivalent

[5] Nenets artist and researcher in folk religion.

to Saint Nicholas the Miracle Worker, is even today one of the main supernatural beings in the Yamal Nenets' cosmology. He is the assistant to Num, the Nenets God of Heaven and lives on the fifth level of the Upper World. According to Lar, the icon of Saint Nicholas was one of the shamans' main means of communication with the Upper World, as the saint was the highest deity whom a shaman had personally access to (Lar 1998: 37). During my own fieldwork in the Yamb-To community of the European Nenets, in summer 2002, I was told that, even nowadays, all the men depicted on icons were considered Mikolas.

Besides Saint Nicholas, the Nenets worshipped Saint Elijah (Elias) and the Virgin Mary (Lebedev 1916: 171). Saint Elijah (Elias) was considered the patron saint of reindeer, and therefore, on the 20th of July, the Samoyeds of Yugorsky Shar gathered in great numbers in the local church to pray (Shashkov 1896: 180–12; Kercelli 1911: 98; see also Lambert 1999–2000). A report from the same region mentions that the Nenets considered also Saint George to be the patron of reindeer; therefore April the 23rd was a recognised feast (Mikhailov 1898: 126). The fact that Saint Nicholas, Saint Elijah (Elias) and Saint George are considered as Patron saints of reindeer demonstrates that the saints' functions were not thoroughly specialised.

Mikhailov reports that the Nenets call the Christian God, or "The Real God", by the name of the Russian God while their own idols are seen as the Samoyed gods (Mikhailov 1898: 294). According to Lebedev, "most of the baptised Nenets think there is a distinct "Russian" God and a "special" Samoyed god; but above those two, there is a higher god, Tjavui-Num[6], who is the creator of everything and who controls everything" (Veniamin 1855: 115; Otchet... 1897: 46; Lebedev 1916: 171). We are not sure of how the Nenets themselves saw these relationships, because the missionaries' descriptions have been greatly influenced by Christian signification practice. In Nenets oral tradition, Num appears as a Demiurge, who created the World and the Nenets[7] with his brother Nga (Lar 1998: 18).[8] His connection with the Heaven and "Num" being the Nenets name for Jehovah, "have apparently

[6]Apparently this form derives from Тю˝уй Нум, "The Higher Num".

[7] In Nenets, their own ethnonym – ненэця" – means "human beings".

[8] In the Nenets folk tales there are many motives analogical with the Christian cosmogony. So the heavenly origin of the Underworld Ruler Nga reminds of the Christian legends of fallen angels (see Lar 1998: 17–19). The motive of the Deluge is known in the Nenets' myths of World Creation. The origin of the similar motives is not clear: they might not be of the Christian origin (compare Khomich 1979: 24).

contributed to his identification with the Christian heavenly Father. Whilst Saint Nicholas is a "stranger" who had to be inserted into the Nenets pantheon of gods, Num is considered by the Nenets as their "own" and has only been enriched with "alien" qualities and functions. Laura Stark-Arola identifies two types of syncretisms: the first handles "pagan" deities as "Christian" and the second reinterpret Christian-based sacred beings as "wilderness creatures" (Stark-Arola 1999: 99). While Num was enriched with some features of the Christian Father in Heaven, Saint Nicholas has become equal to the other spirits and gods, although his external origin has never been forgotten.

The Dialogue of Worldviews

The process of interpretation carried out by both parties – the missionaries and the Nenets – proceeded in the dialogue from their respective worldview and systems of meaning. The first difference between them lied in purposes. While the Orthodox missionaries' aim, at a dogmatic level, was to take care of the salvation of souls, i.e. their attention was focused on man's fate after death, the Nenets were interested in attaining and maintaining a balance in communication with supernatural beings in order to cope as well as possible with everyday life in the Middle World or the People's World (cf. Stark 2002: 32). The missionaries from Obdorsk used to show the Nenets pictures of the Last Judgement and "explain all its details", emphasising the concept of the life in the world beyond (Otchet… 1897: 44). According to Lar, the contemporary Yamal Nenets do not ignore concepts as the Last Judgement or the further destination of the dead going either to the Upper or to the Lower World according to moral principles. These themes are widely represented in their folk tales (Lar 1998: 22–24): they are obviously echoes of missionary work. According to Ivar Paulson's estimation, the Nenets' dualistic eschatology beliefs based on ethical principles is of Christian origin (Paulson 1958: 249).

Secondly, the missionaries and the Nenets had a different perception of the role of beliefs and rituals. While for Orthodoxy, individuals had to be guided by abstract ideas and introspection – as the focus was on salvation, the Nenets required above all, in order to maintain social order and balance, the observance of rules based on reciprocity (see Townsend 1997: 437; Stark 2002: 29). The Orthodox elements in the Nenets' belief system were also integrated into the system of reciprocity: the Nenets started to sacrifice to the saints depicted on the icons, primarily to Saint Nicholas. The icon became a new medium in the

communication with supernatural beings, and its function was identical with the traditional idols' and was based on both giving and receiving.

The idea of usefulness, the orientation towards the solution of the problems in this world is also central in the Nenets' counter-arguments to the missionaries. "After having heard the words of wisdom, some refused to accept Christianity not because they had not recognised its truth, but because they did not know or see where it led. One of them asked: "If we stay in our religion we know it, but how will we live according to your religion, as we do not know it?" The others repeated: "At the present moment, it is good for us to live in our own faith; will yours be better?"" (Veniamin 1850: 413). In the dialogue with Veniamin, the Nenets also said that their religion, unlike the Russian's, made it easy to learn about future successes or failures and to find stolen things. The missionaries answered that this was only possible with the Devil's help (Veniamin 1850: 369). Neither did the Nenets take any interest in confession, in the Communion or any other sacraments, because these did not offer any solutions to their everyday problems.

One Nenets explained to Sitnikov that they could not accept Christianity because God had created the Russians, but the Nenets and the reindeer were created by the Devil. This explanation was based on the strongly modified traditional Nenets cosmogony, where the characters of Num and Nga have been reinterpreted as "God" and the "Devil". The Nenets were constantly told that they believed in the Devil and they had nothing against it, because the Devil was equated with Nga and had always been one of the main deities, although he was very different from the Christian Devil. "If we start to believe in your God, the Devil will leave us and take our reindeer away, but reindeer give us chums[9], food and clothes and we also pay *yasak* that we get from breeding of reindeer..." (Sitnikov 1864: 195).

An important counter-argument to the acceptance of "Russian faith" was that "the Russian God" was not useful for reindeer breeders, because faith in Him went hand in hand with poverty. Ylba, a rich reindeer breeder from Timan, told Sitnikov: "We don't want to pray; our grandfathers never prayed but they had more reindeer than we do; the poor have been baptised and they will soon die" (Sitnikov 1864: 187). In the Nenets' life, possession of reindeer holds the central place both on a practical and symbolical level – for everyday needs, social

[9] Nenets tent.

relationships as well as communication with the gods.

The missionaries' and the Nenets' understandings were linked by the true belief that both parties' supernatural beings had power. Whilst the missionaries demonised the Nenets' deities and Christianised their supreme being Num, the Nenets included in their worldview the so-called "Russian God" and some of the saints with whom they tried to live in mutual balance, assimilating them to their own gods to whom they made sacrifices and from whom they expected good deeds. At the same time, all the strange and incomprehensible as well as seemingly useless elements were rejected. A Nenets told Schrenk for instance that he believed God could simultaneously be one and the three just as little as the possibility of rising from the dead (Schrenk 1848: 413).

The way of communication with the Russian God did not require any major reorientation from the Nenets who had been converted to Christianity. Shamanism's main features were sacrifices and communication with spirits through the medium of a shaman: in the Nenets' perception of communication with the Russian God, these forms were replaced by prayers, offerings and the role of the priest. On Novaya Zemlya, the Nenets used to let the priest say prayers for certain purposes, e.g. to ensure the success of a hunt (Lebedev 1915, No. 10: 160). In both the animistic and the Christian rite the Nenets' goal was identical, although the mediums were different.

The dialogue between the Orthodox missionaries and the Nenets led to the syncretisation of the Nenets beliefs. This is a natural phenomenon in shamanistic-animistic religions, which are much more exposed to external impulses than the so-called world religions, included official Orthodoxy. Over the centuries, the Nenets beliefs were thus submitted to syncretisation processes also with the Khanty and the other neighbouring cultures. At the same time, the religions of the Northern People had an impact on the local Orthodox Russians as well. The Russian fishermen and hunters who lived on the banks of the Ob River adopted quite a lot of local beliefs and rituals. A Samoyed told Nosilov that earlier the Russians used to laugh at the sacrificing Nenets, but "now they bring sacrifices together with us to get a better fish haul and they even ask us to sacrifice to another Shaitan", bringing a cow to the holy place on river bank for that purpose (Nosilov 1898: 230). The clergyman Mikhailov, who was appointed to work in Yugorsky Shar for the summer, was told how Pustozersk Russians' reindeer refused to swim from the Nenets' holy island Vaigach back to the mainland and how they sacrificed a reindeer to the "idol", on the proposal of a well-

known Russian from Pustorezk. According to the same clergyman, "the Pustozersk people also go to the *tadibeis* [shamans] and believe their idle stories" (Mikhailov 1898: 295). This is not the only place in the Arctic areas where local Russians took over beliefs and rites from the indigenous people's shamanistic religious practice and conceptions (see e.g. Znamenski 1999: 175).

Conclusions

These differences in worldview reflect to two distinct discourses in the dialogue between the missionaries and the Nenets. For the Orthodox ecclesiastics, mission work has led to the Nenets' slow and linear evolution towards Christianity. The Nenets, on the other hand, felt they must try to adapt to a new situation, where unfamiliar notions and rituals had been imposed to them and had led to their selective acceptance of Orthodox elements. In essence, the Nenets had gained more alternative possibilities to communicate with supernatural powers. Thus, many imported elements became "traditional" (cf. Znamenski 1999: 6).

Texts from the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century present contradictory evaluations regarding the Christianity of the Nenets. Most of the authors see them as "simply baptised", but not as "authentic" Orthodox (Vereshchagin 1849: 294–295; Makariy 1878: 73), and only a few are enthusiastic about the eagerness of the Nenets in fulfilling Orthodox rituals and their openness to Christianity (Blagogoveynoe... 1894: 333; Nosilov 1898: 176; see also Leete 2000: 106). Bishop Makariy regrets a situation where "Samoyeds ask the witch-shaman to play the drum, then pray, then buy a wax candle and go to pray in Orthodox churches, but then again ask the shaman to their place and bring sacrifices to the idols" (Makariy 1878: 73). What was reprehensible to Orthodox ecclesiastics was a self-understandable religious practice for the Nenets.

The relationship of various European Nenets groups with Orthodoxy depended on the intensity of the contacts with the Church and on the missionaries' strategies. We may assert that the closer a Nenets group was to the Church and the clergymen, the more solutions these contacts provided them with, through the introduction of Orthodox elements into their own religious practice. Likewise, the attitude of the Nenets towards Orthodoxy altered during the period under observation. By the beginning of the 20th century, syncretic beliefs and rituals with Orthodox influences had become a relevant part of the religious worldview

and practice among the European Nenets, and, to a smaller extent, by the Siberian Nenets. Even pilgrimages to monasteries were undertaken: "Malei, a Bolshezemelskaya Samoyed, wealthy and fairly intellectually developed, made a trip to Solovetsk monastery to fulfill a vow. /—/ but on his way back, in order not to offend his idols, he sacrificed two reindeer and tied some pieces of coloured ribbon to the sacred tree. And the number of such instances is massive." (Kozmin 1903: 72).

The Nenets integrated elements of Russian Orthodoxy in their worldview and these became "natural" parts of it. For instance, even during the second half of the 20th century the Yamb-To Nenets, who live in the Bolshezemelskaya tundra, baptised themselves their children, although the sacrifice of the reindeer to the gods had not ceased (author's fieldwork 2002). This happened regardless of the fact that institutional pressure from the Orthodox Church had disappeared since the 1920s. Consequently, to consider the influence of Christianity merely "superficial" or non-essential (e.g. Khomich 1979: 28) is to a relevant extent to simplify the actual picture. The Christianisation of the Nenets cannot be observed as a process that resulted in total conversion or immunity from all influences. Likewise, it was not a situation where one party was active and the other, on the contrary, was passive, neither where one was the giver and the other the receiver. Here, like in any cultural contact situation, there is a dialogue where the parties create new cultural symbols, values and practices, proceeding from their own interests and pre-existing set of cultural codes, in a concrete economic and political context.

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Translated by Mall Leman

Nanai Shamans under Double Oppression. Was the Persecution by Soviet Power Stronger than the Power of Shamanistic Spirits?

Tatyana Boulgakova

"Let us hope that this young man will not become
a shaman, as there is a centre of cultural work
organised by the Soviet power at the mouth of the Kochechumo
River, which is able to deter the *ayami, khargi* and *khovon*,[1]
who are trying to settle in him."

Innokenty Suslov

The aim of the persecutions that were carried out at the end of the 1930s in the North in order to completely eradicate shamanism was not achieved. In spite of a remarkable decrease in the number of Nanai shamans, practising shamanism has survived in Nanai villages until nowadays. As the shamans themselves explain, one of the reasons for that, side by side with the persecution by the Soviet power, was that they were also oppressed by their own spirits-helpers who made them continue their shamanistic practice in spite of all prohibitions. Regardless of the harshness of the administrative measures taken against shamanism, the pressure exerted on shamans by their spirits-helpers was much stronger. The information published about these administrative measures is rather one-sided and has mainly been provided by the persecutors of shamanism and their disciples. During our fieldwork done in Nanai district, Khabarovsk Krai, in the years 1980–2002, we tried to find out about the attitude of the shamans themselves as well as their relatives towards the aforementioned measures.[2]

[1] *Ayami, khargi, khovon* – names of spirits.

[2] The material was recorded in the Nanai language from Alexander Khodzher, Lindza Beldy, Ivan Torokovich, Konstantin Beldy, Nikolay Beldy, Nesulta Geiker, Nyura Kile, Olga Kile.

Beginning of persecutions

The persecution of shamanism in the North and in Siberia started soon after establishing the Soviet power.[3] Shamans were called "the restrainers of socialist construction work" and fight against shamanism was proclaimed to be "one of the spheres of class struggle in the North" (Suslov 1932: 17). In 1924 the Presidium of the Central Executive Committee of Sakha adopted a special resolution "On the Measures in the Fight against Shamanism", which cited as the main measure the elaboration of mass cultural-enlightening work, and for the fight against shamanistic blackmailing and point-blank deceit – also administrative-legal measures (*Ocherki*… 1957: 118). The first stage of the anti-shamanism repressions was quite peaceful. On the official level the events taking place at this time were interpreted in the way as if the shamans themselves, being under the power of the Soviets, in a spell of enthusiasm and, according to the words of V. Bogoraz, against the background of "an unprecedented cultural exaltation", renounced their shamanistic practices. I. Suslov wrote, "In different places all over the territory of Siberia, shamans give up their practice, hand over their drums and robes to the local village soviets and renounce shamanism altogether" (1932: 157). Actually, it was only a few enthusiasts among the Nanais as well as the Ulchi (a nation close to them by their language and culture), who got carried away with the changes, and the drums were taken to the village soviets very unwillingly. "In the 1930s a universal process of eradicating shamanism took place," Konstantin Maktovich recalls. "By the order of the regional committee the members of the Komsomol organised a meeting in the village of Ukhta, Ulchi district, where the number of shamans was especially great. They (the members of the Komsomol) gathered one day and went there – to the village of Ukhta – from Nizhniy Gavan and (the village of) Bogorodsk. Young people, members of the Komsomol! Let us go! They searched through all the attics of the houses where the Ulchi lived, and collected all the idols. Earlier on, when a shaman was buried, the *sewen*[4] belonging to him was put on his tomb. They (the members of the Komsomol) collected everything also from there (from the tombs), then

[3] The experiments made to merge the traditional power with the new one, which were conducted in the very first years after the revolution (when shamans could even be elected for leading positions), failed (Bogoraz 1932: 143).

[4] *Sewen* – here it denotes an image of a shamanistic spirit.

piled them (all the *sewens*) up and set fire." Alexander Sergeyevich recalls an analogous case also in the village of Dzhuen. "People came to Dzhuen on a cutter. They convened a meeting, did not argue, did nothing. But after the meeting they started going from one house to another, collecting drums, *yangpans*,[5] *sewens*. Everybody knew already beforehand that they were going to come and collect these things. The only things left were *edekhe* (metal images of the *sewens* worn hanging around the neck) – these were the only ones people were able to hide!" – "After the meeting they went around the houses," the shaman-woman Nyura Sergeyevna, wife of Alexander Sergeyevich, also confirms, "they collected drums, *yangpans*, the chests for keeping *sewens*." – "They were going around the village," she recalls another time. "Wherever the lights were on, they entered and asked, "Are you practising shamanism here?" And then people hid from them the cock meant for a sacrificial ritual. They thrust it in the stove. Hid it this way…" A Nanai – member of the Komsomol – crushed the drum, completely, trampling on it! What can you do about it? Everybody kept silent." Olga Yegorovna also remembers how in Naikhin *sewens* and *toros* (wooden poles with carved images of spirits) were set on fire in the street. Alexander Sergeyevich recalls that in the village of Dokiada there was a big *saola*.[6] Until the period of repressions, "people from all over the region came there with pigs" in order to offer sacrifice to these spirits. "The Executive Committee of the Nanai district decided," says Alexander Sergeyevich, "that it was necessary to fight against that. Down with it! We'll liquidate all that! It is the Soviet power now! The Soviet power does not allow to practise shamanism! They did it. They did away with everything."

The fact that the ritual requisites were taken away from shamans, exerted the least influence on maintaining the shamanic tradition. Practically immediately, not waiting for the end of repressions, the Nanais started to make new drums and *yangpans* (shaman's belts), new images of spirits and, little by little, as Nyura Sergeyevna put it, they again started practising shamanism. In some houses people practised shamanism even despite the fact that they had not decided to restore the drums. The practice of using pot lids instead of a drum that became known all over Siberia also dates back to this period. "Anyway, people

[5] *Yangpan* – shaman's belt with metal pendants.

[6] *Saola* – a clay vessel in which, according to the belief, the spirits of a dead shaman lived.

practised shamanism at nights," Ivan Torokovich says, "clanging the pot lids!" Anyway!" – "But where did you put the drums?" I asked. "What drums! They were all taken away! They are prohibited! If you happen to have a drum, you will be arrested!" The practice of replacing drums with pans that survived among the Yakuts until the 1990s was also described by Marjorie M. Balzer. According to the words of one of her friends-assistants, a true shaman was able to turn the drum-pan into a real drum during the shamanistic ritual (1995: 26).

The Nanais hid everything they could from the Komsomols; the rest of the things were restored after some time and taken into use covertly. So in the past all Nanais used to have *mio* (images of the names of deities called *endur* on cloth). "When people were prohibited to practise shamanism," says Alexander Sergeyevich, "they hid them, but after some time took them out in private, talked to them (performed a ritual), and then hid them again. Now everything has been liquidated, but it still exists! Only now it is not kept in a special outbuilding but right in the dwelling." If the shamans maintained that the image of the spirit that had been thrown out and crushed in the course of the anti-shamanism campaign was not empty, but there was a spirit residing in there, it certainly had to be restored in secrecy. So in Dzhari a *saola* was restored little by little. If there is a *sewen* in it," Alexander Sergeyevich said, "the Nanais will never leave it (the *saola*)."

The administrative measures aimed at the eradication of shamanism resulted in the passive resistance of the population to the measures taken by the Soviet power: a low percentage of participants at pre-election meetings, systematic non-complete classes at indigenous schools due to parents' refusal to send their children to boarding schools; refusal of any medical or veterinary help" (Suslov 1931: 128). After some time had passed, the initiators of repressions started to recognise the ineffectiveness of demolishing the shamanistic requisites as well as the prohibitions set on shamanism. I. Suslov wrote, "I have learned about a great number of cases when shamans have handed over their robes and drums to the medical doctors or instructors of the Soviet construction work, promising to give up their practice forever. The instructors described it in their reports as a victory on the anti-religious front. However, when checking on it later on, it turned out that as soon as the instructor had left, people made a new robe and a drum for the shaman, but they did it secretly (ibid.: 128–129).

Arresting of shamans

After a certain lapse of time, the authorities probably realised that the prohibitions and destruction of shamanistic requisites did not even decrease the dimensions of shamanistic activities. As a result, in spite of the slackening of warnings against "sheer administration" and "harmful administrative oppression" in the early 1930s, which only produced an outward effect and yielded no positive results, the next step in the fight against shamanism was taken. It was the time when the mass arrests of shamans (the so-called purge) began, which, as a rule, are not mentioned in literature. "They assaulted upon shamans," says Ivan Torokovich. "They used to call it a troika (the representatives of the official power who did it usually acted in groups of three). They "purged" of shamans! Arrested them! Shot them! This is what they did. And now what! A shaman! How can you practise shamanism? Why did they do it? We had an old man in Dzhari – Sangila *mapa*. He had neither a daughter nor a son. Lived with his wife only. They came and took him, and they even did not put him in prison. They shot him somewhere. It is not good, is it? Many shamans were imprisoned. That's why only a few (shamans) were left on the Amur River." – "Shamans were arrested at that time," shaman Lindza confirms. "Nobody needed shamans then, nobody was interested in them. Only now they become active again. But at that time it was prohibited." Shamans were arrested, taken away and quite a few of them were reported missing. The relatives of the arrested shamans confirm that they were not even informed about their whereabouts. Elderly people say that, trying to provide proof to the authorities about their active and successful activities in liquidating shamanism, the members of these "troikas" did not strive for being very objective and, under the pretext of shamanism, sometimes arrested just any person they did not take a liking to. "In 1937 there was a "troika" working in each village," Ivan Torokovich says. "They did what they wanted! They could write that a person was a shaman and a vermin, and that was that! People came after them from the NKVD, took them and that was that! Shot them!" – "A great many people were arrested at that time," Lindza also confirms. "In Dzhari there were no elderly people left." Nesulta Borisovna maintains that there was even a kind of plan, a task assigned to the local authorities to arrest a certain number of shamans. One of them was arrested right in the middle of performing a ritual called *kasa* (seeing the dead off to the beyond). "The plan was said to be big! It was necessary to fulfil the tasks! Somebody denounced us, and they found us (at the ritual)." – "It

happened during haymaking," she recalls. "We were just making hay in the kolkhoz in summer. Then he performed the *kasa*." – "I remember it as well," Lindza, listening to her, confirms. "We were going through the *kasa*," Nesulta continues, "it had not been completed yet, when people came and arrested the shaman." – "And they took the old man away," Lindza finishes her story. "I went into hiding and saw everything." – "What monsters, aren't they?" Maria Vasilyevna is getting indignant. "Why did they torment people like that?" Lindza adds. "They were mocking at people, torturing them, doing such horrible things!" – "Mocking!" Maria Vasilyevna echoes back. "They had a law for torturing people! "Purging" them!" Lindza continues. "In the summer some old men were taken away. After that some more followed. Sandil, father Kiachkan, Korka. How many of them were there? Four or five, perhaps? They were taken on horseback, two together, barely alive. They were put in prison in the village of Troitskoye. How we cried when they went on foot! They were hardly able to walk, they were so old! They had to walk as far as Khabarovsk. They were not able to do that. People were criticised and tortured at that time! Does any of the shamans torture anybody like that?"

Ivan Torokovich, another of our informants, also recalls his experiences related to the arrest of his grandfather. "My grandfather was also a shaman," he says. "I was working in a lumbering camp far in the taiga. I came home. We finished work in April. We used to start in November and finish in August. The kolkhoz had sent us there. I arrived home, and my grandfather was not there. "Where is Grandpa?" – "Well," they say, "we do not know if he is alive or already dead. They arrested him and took him to Khabarovsk." But at that time, in Khabarovsk, the isolator was overcrowded. So whether you want it or not, you will plead yourself guilty. They beat them there! Sign it and that's that! They present a written indictment and make you sign it. But he (the grandfather) says, "You can kill me, but I am not going to sign it! Because I did not do it!" A commission came from Moscow. They started working. They were sent specially from Moscow here, to Khabarovsk Krai. The isolator was overcrowded. And they let all of them go. And our grandpa also came home. "Well, how was it?" we asked him. "Oh," he says, "if they had not come from Moscow, I would also have been… They drag somebody (from the interrogation), throw them down on the floor, and that's that! They won't stand up any more! Dead already!" So this was how it was! It was the work of the Central Committee, the NKVD, Yezhov! Beria, Yezhov – it is them! The things

they did!"

Other forms of fighting against shamanism

By the way, not all shamans were persecuted. Those who promised to give up practising shamanism, were not repressed, but actually they did it secretly from the authorities. "How did they take shamans?" Nikolay Petrovich says. "If you are not going to practise shamanism, we will not touch you. They also said it to my mother (shaman Dekhe, who was not arrested). Besides that, some shamans were given official permission to practise shamanism. Usually it was connected with a concrete situation, when a shaman was able to help a representative of the authorities or just make a strong impression on them. So, when Mikhail Sergeyevich Beldy, the present leader of administration of the village of Naikhin, caught a dangerous disease and was about to die in his childhood, doctors were unable to help him and decided to send for Dekhe, the shaman-woman. They came to her together with the doctor. "My uncle told me that," Nikolay Petrovich recalls. "The doctor was treating and treating Mikhail Sergeyevich. Without avail. He was about to die. And he was brought home from hospital. And on this very night he (the uncle) came after my mother and (afterwards) took her back to Naikhin. It was her who saved Mikhail Sergeyevich. We, children, we driven out of the house, windows were covered with blinds and a shamanistic ritual was performed. (Mikhail Sergeyevich was cured.) After some time my mother was given a document certifying that she could help the doctor treat sick people. She received this document and started practising shamanism quietly; people also came to her." As a result, Dekhe appeared to be working as if in unison with the new authorities, which made it possible for her to practise shamanism without being punished.

A more widespread means in the fight against shamanism (especially at the beginning of this campaign) was the force of word persuading people to change their world view. So quite a few communists who sincerely hoped to help those who under their very eyes caught the shamanistic disease, were naïve enough to believe that if you convinced such a person of changing their views, they would give up practising shamanism forever. I. Suslov offered the following recommendations for those fighting against shamanism, "In the period between nervous fits when the sick person (suffering from shamanism – TB) is conscious, the atheists and cultural-enlightening workers have to help them understand the reasons for this kind of diseases, and explain

the absurdity of animistic views which the sick person believes to have caused the illness" (1931: 126).

I. Gurvich has spoken, quoting the words of G. Naumov, a participant in the partisan movement, about still another original form of fighting against shamanism, a kind of spiritual session, where the members of the Komsomol participated, considering it as a means of fighting against the "religious narcotic". "Romanova, a Yakutian woman, informed the others about the fact that she heard the voice of her late husband at nights, and even started organising public spiritual sessions for meeting him. Willing to disclose this miracle, the members of Komsomol from a partisan detachment asked the widow to have a session in their barracks. Vodka and snacks were put on the table and the lights were switched off. In complete silence people suddenly heard the rustle of a bird's wings, and then a male voice asked if the snacks were good, and then they heard smacking. The widow started asking the "husband" questions, which he answered in a loud voice. Finally a person from the audience asked how long the Soviet power was going to last. The answer was – not long. This remark gave rise to anger in the audience. When the soldiers of the Red Army jumped to catch the deceased, they only caught one another." In the end the widow had to (or was made to) confess that she was a ventriloquist. "The soldiers made her swear that she would not repeat these sessions, and then let her go" (Gurvich 1971: 83).

Arguments

The main argument of the authorities persecuting shamans was the accusation that they belonged to the class of exploiters against whom the revolution was directed. "Shamanism used to be the most faithful supporter of Tsarism, tribal chiefs and local tycoons, their most effective detachment in the fight for enslaving wide masses of working people in the Far East," someone hiding behind the initials I. A. has written. "Shamanism was and has remained a reactionary force striving for decelerating the development of culture; it was and has remained a support for counter-revolution" (1938: 107). When finding excuses for repressions, their executors confirmed that shamanism, like any other religion, strengthens and consecrates slavery and exploitation"; that, being "a phenomenon of an especially reactionary order", it fosters the "strengthening of animosity between tribes, the development of national hatred", slowing down the process of "Sovietising the North, raising the cultural level of the Northern regions and, besides that, also

influences the wasting of social energy and social forces" (Suslov 1931: 26–27). Shamanism was declared to be the inhibitor of the socialist construction work, and, consequently, the fight against it was an inseparable part of the socialist construction work. Fight against shamanism consisted, as it was described at that time, in "disclosing the political and class role of shamanism". It was indispensable, as it was said, to "show on living and concrete examples the damage caused by shamanism on the development of national economy in the North, what heavy load it constitutes on the budget of the native working people" (Suslov 1931: 132). "Shamans constitute a non-working element" (Kosokov 1931: 70). Besides all that, shamans were accused of counter-revolutionary anti-Soviet activities. "Shamans constitute a reactionary counter-revolutionary force" (ibid.). Reports about the killing of teachers, poor peasants and cultural workers by shamans can be found in literature (Budarin 1968: 192). So, in the village of Yandygan, a Chukchi shaman Tayungi shot dead Attungi, chairman of the National Council. "Shamans move against all the party and government activities both publicly and covertly. Shamans were and will be the worst enemies of the working people of the Far East. They tried to foil elections and persuade people not to join the kolkhoz" (I.A. 1938: 110). According to the words of I. Suslov, from a few "more advanced" regions of the North "signals" came from administrative workers "about the shamans' attempts to foil one or another undertaking of the Soviet power" (1931: 128). "Shamans persuaded their fellow countrymen not the send their children to school, frightened with all kinds of horrors those who turned for medical assistance to hospitals, threatened with the revenge of the spirits those who followed the advice of veterinarians, visited the community centre, or went to the cinema. During rituals shamans often did direct anti-Soviet agitation work, /—/ spoke viciously and heatedly against schools, made use of the religious superstition of the backward and illiterate population, called people for not sending their children to boarding schools" (Gurvich 1971: 82). There also occurred really mean accusations against shamans. So, they were even accused of contributing to the spread of such "social diseases" as "syphilis, trachoma, tuberculosis, gonorrhoea and leprosy" (Kosokov 1931: 68). All this argumentation leaves a strange impression due to its forthright ungroundedness; it seems as if, quite deliberately, something important has been left unsaid. It can only be detected to a certain extent in I. Suslov's remark stating that in order to consolidate the new order, we face "extensive work not only in the sphere of

economy, but also in the sphere of *transforming the people's minds* (my italics – TB)" (Suslov 1932: 16). I. Suslov is trying to explain this argument with vague words about a shaman "working out mystical ideology and contributing to the wasting of social energy" (ibid.: 17).

The arguments voiced against shamans caused a wave of disputes. The discussion was obviously so heated that until present shamans, the children and grandchildren of the people who suffered because of the repressions, continue arguing with the accusers from the past, most probably long dead by now. While doing it, they make use of the specific terminology of the political documents of that time, which has sunk into their minds. For example, one of the regulations denouncing shamanism determined it as "especially detrimental, hindering the cultural-national awakening and political development… equal to the *daze* created by all religious cults". About seventy years later, Ivan Torokovich voices this accusation as follows, "Sick people would have gone to the doctor and got well, but you perform your rituals and *stupefy* people!" The Komsomols-enthusiasts probably so diligently repeated the arguments against shamanism learned by them that even many years later the informants remembering them, while speaking about the repressions, again and again start arguing with them, especially emphasising that shamans had not been well off and had not exploited other people's labour. "What were the Nanais' riches at that time?" Ivan Torokovich asks. "Nothing! They caught fish as much as they needed for their own food. They even did not know how to sell fish. How were they supposed to sell it? They did not have any horses! Why do that (why arrest shamans)? They were not kulaks, far from that! They were ordinary (poor) people!" Recalling the arrest of one of the shamans, Ivan Torokovich emphasises his poverty. "He was poor," he says, "he did not take anything from people for the rituals. I was working in the taiga at that time, taking logs to the river on a sleigh drawn by horses. Once in the evening they brought this old man to us. I asked him, "Why did you come here?" He says, "They made me come here, to work here." I tell him, "You are an old man, how can you work here, lift logs on the sleigh? They are heavy! Who sent you here?" – "The *predsedatel* (chief) of the kolkhoz, the village soviet. Work yourself, don't speak much! It is difficult there!" – he says. Many people were arrested."

Until now the Nanais continue confirming that shamans were actually not exploiters at all, living from the labour of other people, as they were shown to be in the 1930s. "Shamans were taken for nothing!"

Ivan Torokovich is indignant. "Shamans were really poor! If they had had at least ten dogs! But they had only one or two. But they were told, "You are a shaman, an exploiter, you take pigs from people" (for annual sacrificial ritual). Actually shamans never took much (for their service). A silver rouble or a coin (wrapped into a piece of cloth) is put round his neck when he plays his drum. (This money is for the shaman and is meant as a payment to his spirits.) And they pour a hundred grams of vodka. But anything else? In the autumn people bring him a pig for the *кэсиэ гэлэгуйч* (sacrificial ritual). But this pork is meant for treating everybody. Everybody eats it! But how he works! Performs the ritual, suffers torments! In the summer his robe is drenched with sweat. Try it yourself! To dance and sing for hours in such heat!"

As a result of the repressions, shamans were always afraid that someone can threaten their free activities,[7] they also developed the habit of justifying their practice, intentionally emphasising the positive sides and not mentioning the dangers related to it. "What was the idea of persecuting shamans?" asks Lindza, pretending that shaman's activities consist only in healing people and feasts. "Is it bad to get well?" she continues. "If you get well and slaughter a big or a small pig, if all people sit together at table and eat pork and drink vodka, what is bad about it? People cooked food, ate, stood up and left. Is it really bad?" Resuming the same topic another time, she protects shamanism in the following way, "Is it easy to be a shaman? Is it easy, is it good for a shaman? It is not simply that you repeat the things in *yay* (shaman's chanting) that people tell you. Everything has to be correct! It is necessary to find out what the person's problem is. You have to try hard! It is not as easy as to scold people. Scolding – this is bad! But is shamanism bad? Not at all! You only ask for grace for people! You want your friends to be well! If your friends are well, it means everything is all right! If all people are well – it is good! Isn't it good that you get well, recover from the bad things that torture you? You become a shaman-woman and you can take leave of your senses, you can even die when you practise shamanism. If you perform rituals, you can catch a disease, you can fall ill and die. You ask for *кэсиэ* (luck) from different *dyakas* (creatures) and you do not know if they hear you or not. So you bow and ask for mercy, and you cannot be not sure if they hear you. So it

[7] For example, having got acquainted with the researcher professor J. Pentikäinen, shaman-woman Lindza asked me if he was not going to arrest her.

was recently."

Shamans' persecutors

Recalling the years of the persecution of shamans, elderly people confirm that usually it was not the Russians but the indigenous people, Nanais themselves who carried out these repressions.[8] This fact is also confirmed by the materials from the other regions of the North as well as Siberia. So, according to the words of Marjorie M. Balzer, in Yakutia "in the late 1920s and early 1930s hundreds of shamanic drums were burnt, first and foremost, by young enthusiasts-Komsomols who mainly came from among the indigenous people who had turned to communism, and not by the visiting Russian revolutionaries" (1995: 26). "My brother arrested shaman Bogdan Oninka," confesses Nikolay Petrovich. "He was the first militiaman among Nanais." /—/ "The Nanais themselves set afire the *mio* (the image of deity on fabric) and the *toro* (trees or poles with carved images of spirits)", confirms Alexander Sergeyevich. Harsh torturing sometimes resulting in the death of the victim, which the Nanais kept in prison together with Ivan Torokovich's grandfather were subjected to, was carried out by their own fellow countrymen. Here is another story about this: "I came home, and grandpa was not there. I asked for him. My mother says, "He was taken away, to Khabarovsk." And later on, in May, I went to Khabarovsk by boat to give away fish. (Arriving home), I enter the house. Grandpa is there. "What the hell!" I think. "I ask him. "Well, there, in Khabarovsk, in the isolator, my turn did not come yet. If it had come, I would not have endured it, I would have immediately…! There were two Nanais there. From Naikhin. They beat very hard! Want it or not, you have to sign! They beat you so hard that you could not get up any more, covered with blood all over! But then three men came from Moscow, started to look into the matter and release everybody. And so our grandpa was also released!"

The Nanais tried to defame and arrest even Ivan Torokovich himself,

[8] The informants do not differentiate between the persecutors and victims as Russians and Nanais also because many Russians (above all, believers) also suffered from repressions. In pre-revolution time there were churches in some Nanai villages. "The Komsomols and pioneers took everything away from there (the churches). "The bell was big," Maria Innokentyevna says. /—/ The priest vanished." Actually the fighting atheists of these years did not care much which religion to fight against. "Neither a shaman nor a priest belongs in the socialist society, and they will both vanish forever," Vladimir Bogoraz wrote. "The fight against shamanistic religion, i.e., shamanistic animism, has to be closely connected with the fight against Orthodoxy" (Bogoraz 1932: 157).

but not in connection with shamanism, but for his supposed belonging to the class of middle peasants. At that time he was engaged in logging works and was one of the most leading/advanced workers. One day he was asked to come to the settlement of Troitskoye,[9] the centre of Nanai district. "Where do you work?" – "In Troitsk forestry enterprise, fulfil my plans." – "What did you give to the kolkhoz?" – "Me and my father had two horses, we gave those. And four nets. Now I fulfil my plan with the horse we gave away." – "All right, wait," they say. Some time later the door opened. "Come in!" they say. And then the chief of the kolkhoz, the head of the village soviet and the economic director came. The entering chief asks them, "Why did you give him a note certifying that he is a middle peasant? Is he really a middle peasant? He is still young, he only started working. And he works well in the taiga. Why are you doing so? You gave a document to your fellow countryman certifying that he is a middle peasant. Is it correct that he gave two horses (to the kolkhoz)?" – "Yes, that's right," they say. "And four nets?" – "That's right," they say. "Don't you dare do it again! There are no rich people among the Nanais!" And then they say to me, "You can go! They will take you back tomorrow!" He really said so, "Don't you dare do it again! There are no rich people among the Nanais!" And I went back to the taiga. But that old man (the shaman) was there. Two days later he was taken away. They came from Troitsk with militiamen. We learned only later on that he had not returned home. First he was taken to Troitsk prison and then to Komsomolsk. He was a shaman, and, when performing rituals, he received different things people gave him; this is what was said in the documents. Later on we got to know that he was shot in Komsomolsk. The Nanais themselves betrayed him!"[9]

[9] The respondents used name Troitsk.

[10] Ivan Torokovich himself tells this story as follows, "We have Stakhanovist movement. (We are competing) for the first prize! (The kolkhoz) *Novyi Put* (New Way) and Dzhari are having a competition to find out who is the first to fulfil the plan. And I am keeping the flag (for shock work). The challenge flag. They allocated me a bonus of 40 roubles. 40 roubles – this used to be a lot of money! And then suddenly the head of the village soviet orders me to go to the district centre. (On the accusation) as if I were a middle peasant! What a middle peasant? (We had) a pair of horses. One of them we gave to the kolkhoz, the other I exchanged for a double-barrelled gun. What a middle peasant am I? And I am ordered to come specially from there, with an escort. I arrive there and say, "I will go to the district executive committee tomorrow, but now I'll go home." – "No, they say, "wait here!" They won't let me go. I was sitting there, and then my father also came. And they called us. I was the first to go. "Tell us how it is there," they say. "I don't know anything," I say. "We had a pair of horses. We gave one of them to the kolkhoz. We also had four pieces of seines. We gave them to the kolkhoz as well. I have

When Lindza tells me about the arrests of shamans, I try to specify, "Did the Russians arrest shamans?" – "No," she says, "it was the Nanais themselves. I don't know why these people were arrested." Konstantin Maktovich is trying to explain why the Nanais took such an active part in the repressions against their own fellow countrymen. "They were members of the Komsomol. At that time it was considered as an expression of patriotism! /—/ Those who were registered members of the Komsomol, regarded themselves as heroes! So, I'll go and commit/ perform a heroic deed! Against my own people's culture!" Besides that, the present informants who condemn the repressions now were also members of the Komsomol at that time. "I was a kid then, and I was for Stalin!" Nikolay Petrovich confesses, laughing. "It is very difficult to confess it now, but I have to. So it was! I cannot deny it!"[11]

When telling us about the repressions, the informants oppose not the Russians and Nanais, but, as they put it, *the educated* and all the others. "It was the literated, "says Alexander Sergeyevich in Russian, "who said that shamans were not needed any more. They were prohibited! They said that you had to go to the doctor, not the shaman! But we were born at such time! The educated people said that there

nothing left. Now I am working for a forestry enterprise, the kolkhoz sent me. I am the first in my unit. I am the keeper of the challenge flag at the moment. We have two horses and three men, and I am the first." – "Are you a Komsomol?" – "A Komsomol." The chief of the kolkhoz, the chairman of the executive committee and the first secretary of the district committee – all the three are there. And they call the head of the village soviet and the economic director and tell them, "What documents do you issue? He is not a middle peasant at all. He joined the kolkhoz, one horse gave away, and the other exchanged for a gun. Is he a middle peasant? He is the first in logging. The kolkhoz collects 20 percent of his wages. What are you doing? If you continue acting like that, you will soon have nobody in the kolkhoz. Stop doing it! You issue such documents to the members of your kolkhoz which confirm that they are middle peasants, so that they are taken away." And then they say to me, "Go home, and don't go anywhere tomorrow. Tomorrow we will send you a horse, and you can go back to your district." Well, I left and went home. And then, in the morning, they sent me a horse and took me back to the taiga. We arrived at two in the afternoon... My comrades say, "Oh, you came back!""

[11] Nikolay Petrovich, who was a child during the years of repressions, recalls this period as follows, "I was a pioneer, I went to the pioneer camp twice. It was such a fun! Everything was so beautiful! It was so elating! I was brought up in such atmosphere...! I joined the Komsomol, and then the war started. It was all so elating! Do you understand? Sincerely! I was fighting for the party. I served seven years in the army, I was educated in the communist spirit. And, apart from that, I remembered my childhood and loved my mother (a shaman-woman). I had dreams about her. She did not speak to me in my dreams, only went past me, dancing like a shaman, and disappeared. I wake up and feel offended. What a mother! Appears only in my dreams and won't even talk to me! I did not see any contradiction between these two things."

would be no shamans any more! They will be liquidated!" The communists who arrived were regarded as educated people, and the people considered the Communist Party as the main initiator of these repressions. "These things were led by the party," summarises Konstantin Maktovich his thoughts about the years of repressions. Actually during these years the Union of Fighting Atheists was founded, "the northern units of which defined as their main task ruthless disclosure of shamans' anti-Soviet counter-revolutionary work, which they carry on, hiding behind shamanism and relying on it, in order to help the Soviet power to treat them as the enemies of revolution" (Suslov 1931: 135). In the first order, these units were organised in educational institutions (the Institute of the Peoples of the North in Leningrad, indigenous technical schools, workers' faculties, teachers' courses). At that time it was considered as necessary to conduct special teaching, special conversations, open special study rooms for anti-religious, especially anti-shamanism work, in order to educate the necessary propagandistic staff for fighting against shamanism. "Not a single student," wrote I. Suslov, "can leave an educational institution without "the necessary atheistic steeling"" (1931: 148). It was these students with "atheistic steeling" who, in the eyes of the population became *the educated*, who actually persecuted the shamans. Vladimir G. Bogoraz confirmed that the representatives of the indigenous people acted not only as executors of the repressions, but also as initiators of the fight against shamanism. He wrote, "The basis for the critical approach towards the elements of religion was established, first and foremost, by the young indigenous activists, pupils of the northern schools as well as the students of the Institute of the Peoples of the North." As a proof, he presents passages of an article written by a student called Ankakymylgin, who arrived in Leningrad from the settlement of Uelen in Chukotka. In this article the student repeats like an incantation one and the same thing for several times, "What deceitful shamans! There are no evil spirits! They do not have any spirits-helpers! They are only lying!" Vladimir G. Bogoraz comments on these words as follows, "He brought the spirit of his young contemporaries to Leningrad. He simultaneously expressed the sheer hatred towards the shaman as a deceiver, an exploiter of the helpless poor, a collector of fees for healing people" (Bogoraz 1932: 143). According to the way of thinking of the indigenous people, the shaman stands side by side with the evil spirit. They are both vermin, they can both cause

illnesses and death" (ibid: 146).[12] Educating the Nanai youth in the spirit of the new ideology resulted in a continuing and still persisting conflict between generations, in serious contradictions between the "indigenous active" (as it was called at that time) educated in the modern educational institutions, and the rest of the population. "Who remembers now how people survived these years!" recalls Ivan Torokovich. "Young people were taken to be taught in Leningrad. They came back absolutely different, changed. They denounced on their own people in the NKVD, in the GPU, spoke against shamans, "Let us do away with them!" they said. They did not pity old men and women! People were crying!" In the literature of that time the process is described differently, "Now the cultural class awareness and political literacy have increased enormously in the North… This resulted in the creation of their own national intelligentsia", which, in its turn, "severely limited the enslaving strivings of the local kulaks and half-feudals and undermined the positions of their ideological weapon – shamanism" (I.A. 1938: 107).

Soviet power as the power of spirits

The bearers of the traditional culture interpreted the new world opening for them as a result of "socialist transformations" in their own way (the same way as communists understood, or, to be more exact, did not understand, shamans). For example, the ability of the communists to publicly deliver a speech from a rostrum they explained with their being overpowered by some communist spirits with which they had, similarly to shamans, concluded an agreement. Among those who went to Leningrad to continue their studies, there were young people of shamanistic origin. They also interpreted in their own way the new world opening up for them, evaluating it in the context of their familiar spiritual laws. The universal worshipping of J. Stalin, the abundance of his portraits everywhere they explained, for example, with the fact that J. Stalin was an *endur* (deity). In order to guarantee their safety and not to provoke the anger of an unfamiliar spirit hiding in the portraits of the great leader, the Nanai students, just in case, paid homage to the

[12] In the last statement Vladimir G. Bogoraz, a good expert of the traditional Chukchi culture and shamanism, although in an exaggerating manner but quite correctly presents the really existing traditional beliefs of a shaman, although in the case when the shaman is a stranger, representing the interests of another group. Unfortunately, he does not specify it.

portraits of J. Stalin and performed sacrificial rituals in front of them as if they were deities. "Semen Kile left for Leningrad together with other Nanais to study there," Olga Sergeyevna tells us. "They made a drum in Leningrad themselves. Although they were young, they were skilful. Grown-ups! Grown-up men and women! (Before leaving for Leningrad) they had already worked back at home, caught fish. Semen (before leaving) was already married. His wife returned to her father, and he was not able to get her back. Then people took him to Leningrad. He practised shamanism there. He was good at *meuri* (shamanistic dancing). He went (performing rituals) from Leningrad to his own territory (Nanai district, Khabarovsk Krai)." In Leningrad Semen Ivanovich also performed *undy*, i.e., a sacrificial ritual for the shamanistic spirits including a procession led by a shaman and accompanied by the members of his congregation. He also had one in Leningrad. "Many people – Russians, Nanais – interested in the event followed him. And the deity – Stalin – made from paper and put in the corner was given (a glass of) vodka (as a sacrifice). So he practised shamanism there." Shamans are not able to manage even all the Nanai spirits; the more difficult is for them to gain victory over an unfamiliar spirit of another nation. Semen Ivanovich was obviously not able to manage the communist spirits he worshipped so faithfully. He was not able to graduate from the institute. He died of tuberculosis during his studies in Leningrad.

The mutual influence of the shamanistic and communist world views led to their peculiar synthesis, which resulted in the appearance of a new figure – a shaman-communist. In any case, five of my informants were shamans and communists simultaneously.

The power of shamanistic spirits

The anti-shamanism campaign turned out to enjoy only "quantitative" success. The number of shamans decreased, and those who continued practising shamanism did it covertly. The bearers of the tradition explain it with the influence exerted on them by their own native shamanistic spirits. Shamans were not only persecuted by the authorities, they were under double oppression. On the one hand, they were oppressed by the authorities, and, on the other, they were subjected to the influence of their own spirits-helpers, who insisted on the continuing of their practice. It is interesting to mention that this kind of treatment of the problem (the authorities fighting not with people but with shamanistic spirits) was expressed even in the articles written by

the fighting atheists. In one of his articles I. Suslov almost directly maintains that the Soviet power is stronger than the shamanistic spirits. Speaking about a young man suffering from a shamanistic disease, he writes, "Let us hope that this young man will not become a shaman, as there is a centre of cultural work organised by the Soviet power at the mouth of the Kochechumo River, which is able to deter the *ayami, khargi* and *khovon*,[13] who are trying to settle in him" (1931: 126). The shamans, however, maintained that it is not the Soviet power with its prohibitions that is stronger, but it is spirits that they were not able to fight in spite of all their wishes. The period of repressions coincided with the time when Lindza became a shaman-woman. She was working in a fishing unit, and experienced seizures of shamanistic illness right at work. This was twice as dangerous for her. She was afraid not only of the management finding out about her being overcome by shamanism, but also, as shamanistic illness could not be diagnosed by medical means, of being accused of simulating the illness and finding excuses for shirking work, which, at that time, was a similarly serious accusation. "They tortured me as well!" she says. "They almost put me in prison! How long they tortured me! When I was lying in hospital, the chief called me, asking me why I was lying there, saying I had to go to work. So he was calling me. I can't understand how I survived!" – "This was before the war," she says another time. "Then they were "purging" people! I had a fit at work, I fell down and sang shamanistic songs. I don't know why I fell." – "During war-time I was nearly arrested. I had a fit, I fell on my back and started singing *yay* (shamanistic chants) right at work, in the unit where I worked," Lindza complains. "I started rolling myself over on the ground. However well I worked, at this moment I lost everything. Why did they (the authorities) consider shamans to be bad? Did I ask them for food or what?" Here is one more of her stories on the same subject, "How was it for me to become a shaman-woman when shamans were arrested all the time? I sang the shamanistic chants, I cried right at work! The things I did! When you become a shaman, you will fall ill, you cannot live any more if you don't sing these songs, if you don't do everything in the right way!" – "I come to work, I feel unwell, and I start chanting. I cannot keep silent! It is shaking me! Either a day or a night – it does not matter! When I fall ill, I'll sing these shamanistic songs! I thought I was going to get a medal

[13] See footnote 1.

for good work. And I lost my medal. Who gives a shaman a medal? Only because of that, although I worked hard, I failed to get the medal. I sang these shamanistic songs right at work. People kept silent… There were many people there; everybody was sitting quietly, listening. Was somebody (a shamanistic spirit) torturing me, or what? I was not able to sit. They took me to hospital." – "We arrived at the hospital, but the illness was gone. It had passed!" Nesulta, who knows this story, supports her words. "We reached the hospital," confirms Lindza, "and I am all right! They say I am a malingerer. And they give me a typewritten note." "We know how a person is ill, we have seen it," they say. "But there's no such illness as yours!"

Being afraid of the fact that the power of shamanistic spirits might still be stronger than the Soviet power, the Nanais offered passive resistance already during the repressions. It was not considered as dishonourable to pretend meeting the demands of the authorities and give up practising shamanism, and secretly still continue it. Alexander Sergeyevich (1914–2000), who in the years of repressions was a young Komsomol, had to go round the village together with other activists, destroying the attributes of the shamanistic cult. While doing it, he was more careful than his comrades, which, in his opinion, helped him to save his life from the revenge of the shamanistic spirits and survive. "My father told me then, "You only keep quiet!"" says Alexander Sergeyevich. "I followed his advice, although I was a Komsomol. But some of the zealous Komsomols shouted, "We don't need *endurs* (spirits)! We don't need anything!" And they all died. It all happened under my very eyes. No one of them survived! The heavenly *endur* (spirit) knows everything!" Nyura Sergeyevna (b. 1907), granddaughter of a shaman-woman and a being one herself, did not go round the village with the Komsomols, but she remembers how the latter had come to their house, ordering them to hand over all the shaman's attributes. "I told my grandma, "There they are! Give them, and that's that!" I gave them everything myself when they came to our house and started demanding. We had been forewarned that they would come and demand these things. People kept only *edekhe*.[14] These were the only things that they were able to hide. I myself gave them everything, and also made new ones for my grandma afterwards."

The other Komsomols-Nanais were not so careful. Encouraged by

[14] *Edekhe* – a metal image of a spirit worn around the neck.

the authority of the Soviet power, they were trying to get free from the power of the tribal shamanistic spirits who, as a rule, did not leave alone any of the representatives of the shamanistic descent; they sincerely believed that if they simply declared that spirits did not exist, and broke with the existing tradition of shamanistic rituals, they would really become unattainable for these spirits. But the shamanistic spirits themselves, as the tradition bearers assure, would not let them turn away from them. The repressions became the cause of the demonstration of this invisible spiritual force. Even if the Komsomols took away the ritual requisites from shamans, the latter (being, obviously, blamed for yielding them) were immediately subjected to the repressions of not the Soviet power, but much more dangerous, invisible spiritual "repressions", and they died. "All the *sewens* of old Geiker were collected in one place and set to fire," says Lindza. "The old man immediately fell ill and died. What for?" – "It was forbidden to practise shamanism," she tells about another shaman-woman, "and the old woman (shaman) fell ill and died. They treated them like dogs! They yelled at them like dogs! (After that) the old woman was not able to perform *ningmachi* (a shamanistic ritual), or nothing else, either. And so she died." Only those were doing quite well who were able to hide the things in a likeable place. Shaman Sergei Beldy "wrapped his *sewens* (images of spirits) in birch bark for the water not to get in, went into the woods, hewed out a hole in the trunk of a big tree and put the *sewens* into this hollow. This old man really survived. "Don't take me," he said to his spirits, "for leaving you forever!" He lived until the age of 115." Another shaman Gogoli Kile (from the village of Dzhuen) had a chest (with the requisites) for *kasa*," says Nyura Sergeyevna. "When it was prohibited to practise shamanism, he dug it into the ground somewhere. And he died at once!" – "Why did he die?" – "He buried his own robe, that's why he died!" A similar story happened to a shaman-woman from the village of Bolan. "She had such a robe, and a hat, and footwear, and gloves – all of them decorated with *sewens*, says Olga Yegorovna. "Once a year, in the autumn, she put it all on. When shamanism was prohibited, she put all these things into a bag, dug a hole and buried them. And she also died quite soon after that!"

But the ones to suffer most were not the shamans, but their persecutors, the young Nanais. Quite often after their "heroic" (as they themselves thought) deeds, the Komsomols fell ill and died. "Two or three people a day (died)," Nyura Sergeyevna says. "They just fell ill and died immediately. The ones who persecuted shamans!" – "The

Komsomol who cut to pieces Kile's *toro* (a tree with a carved image of a spirit on its trunk) that stood at the end of their kitchen garden, died exactly a week after!" recalls Nikolay Petrovich. "When the Komsomols took from shamans the images of their spirits-helpers, they hang them on the walls in the community centre and laughed at them, " says Olga Yegorovna. "They didn't live more than for a year after that, they all died. Only one of them survived. But he went mad and only laughed until the day he died. He suffered such torments! He laughed days and nights! Three years later he also died." Nanais-Komsomols, carried away by the spontaneity of demolitions, similar to the well-known Pavlik Morozov, denounced their own parents and destroyed shamanistic attributes in their own homes. Alexander Sergeyevich told us that one of these Komsomols, having crushed his father's drum, fell ill. He was ill for a long time, became big-bellied. He died of dropsy. He was so young! And educated! His father took a knife with him, and at the grave cut his stomach open. Otherwise they could not have buried him. He had such a big belly. There was not enough space in the coffin! Much liquid flowed out of his stomach! All the people who said that shamans were not needed, they all died!" Here is one more story about the same person, told by Nyura Sergeyevna, "His belly was like that! He fell ill with dropsy. The one who crushed the drum! And later on (when he died) his father – he was a clever man! – took him to the grave, put him down on the ground, and cut his stomach open. Yellow liquid flowed out of it. (Otherwise he was too big for the coffin.) It is not good to prohibit! Let them practise shamanism!"

The Russian persecutors of shamans were also avenged. So a Russian called Yevpakov, who, according to the story, did not believe in shamanism and, being, besides that, economically thinking, decided to make use in his household of the demolished wooden hut *дёкан*, which had earlier been used for keeping the objects of the shamanistic cult.[15] "He wanted to take this hut apart and use it for a cattle shed," says Konstantin Maktovich. "So he did it… He was young. Worked as a teacher. When he was pulling out the last piece from the soil, something happened to his head, as if he had gone mad. After that the logs were taken to Nizhniy Gavan. But he (Yevpakov) got worse and

[15] The Nanais consider the shamanistic spirits dangerous, and therefore they try to keep them not in their dwellings, but in special outbuildings called *дёкан*. These idols were brought inside only during special rituals.

worse year after year. Eventually he died. But before that all the people who participated in this undertaking, also died. Not in one year, of course, but one after another, all of them died of the same illness – insanity! All of them died of insanity. All (the Nanais) who participated in it! And the Russians who took part in the burning of the idols – they also died of insanity. Yevpakov, when he already had problems with his head, attacked his bull… went into the cattle-shed! He did not realise what he was doing! Took a knife and attacked the bull! Afterwards he also attacked his wife in the same way – with a knife, or a stick! Before these fits he became reticent, gloomy." As a result of the repressions, it was not only the number of shamans that decreased, but also that of their persecutors who served the interests of the "cultural revolution"" – "There are no persecutors any more, not even their children. All of them have died!" summarised Ivan Torokovich.

In the 1930s the "heroes"-Komsomols themselves also began to realise how dangerous it was to openly fight against shamanism. Scared of the idea that all the illnesses suddenly caught by them could be regarded as punishment imposed on them by the shamanistic spirits they had denied, the young Nanais regretted their activities and turned for help to the same shamans. "Many of them fell ill," says Nikolay Petrovich. "They went to the same shaman (who they had persecuted) and said, "I had a dream of this or that. What if I die!" But he said, "How can I perform a ritual if I gave you a signature that I am never going to practise shamanism again?" "And those who were vicious enemies of shamanism, died. Those who violently attacked religion – died! I know three of them in Dada." One of such activists, who destroyed the images of shamanistic spirits and cut down trees with carved images of spirits, and fell seriously ill and regretted what he had done, decided that the insulted shamanistic spirits had imprisoned his soul and locked it in a nasty place. According to the words of Nikolay Petrovich, he had come to the offended shaman and "begged him on his knees to get him out of it". The ritual was performed and the spirits informed the victim through the shaman, "You cut us down, and you'll die for that now!" This is exactly what they told him! He went down on his knees, but the shaman told him, "I don't know what and how. You did it yourself. You have been told since your childhood that you must not chop and touch anything connected with shamanism." When we were growing up, we were afraid of even going near the places where people used to worship," Nikolay Petrovich comments on his story. Those few Komsomols who had fallen ill after the repressions, but whose lives

shamans still helped to preserve, were transformed from members of the Komsomol into active shamans. "Their parents told them, "Don't do it again if you get well!" And they prayed to God or maybe somebody else, came to my mother (a shaman)", says Nikolay Petrovich. "Gradually the sick person got better. And you couldn't make him do this kind of things again!" All this often nullified the progress the authorities had made in the fight against shamanism.

Conspiratorial shamanistic practice

The policy of repression that so clearly demonstrated the riskiness of the open fight against shamanism, even at present serve as a warning to be remembered. Recalling them, the present shamans threaten, "You must not touch God! You must not touch the shaman! You will become paralyzed, and then…!" Nowadays, as Lindza says, "nobody believes (in shamanism)! But all those who do not believe, are not going to do well! Even if you don't believe, better keep silent! Now they think that you can tread it underfoot, and do whatever you like!" It was partly inertia that played a certain role in the preservation of shamanism among the Nanais. The tradition that had been maintained for centuries, presented such a remarkable force in itself that it was not possible to destroy it in the course of one campaign. Besides that, the illnesses, insanity and death, which struck the activists who fought against shamanism, exerted influence on those who were ready to break with this tradition and become the bearers of the new materialist ideology. As a result, it led to the secret passive opposition to the authorities. Only the mass rituals that attracted crowds were eradicated, for example, *undy* – offering sacrifice to shamanistic spirits, which also included a procession led by a shaman around the whole village, as well as *kasa*, which used to continue for several days and where people gathered from several villages.[16] But other rituals, in spite of all prohibitions, were continued secretly at night. The fact that some

[16] As a result of the new policy, it was not only the mass shamanistic rituals but also other non-shamanistic mass rituals that disappeared. So, in these years the traditional Nanai weddings stopped to be performed. As an answer to the question if the authorities had prohibited this kind of weddings, Ivan Torokovich said, "No, the wedding were not prohibited, but it was forbidden to get drunk. When they caught a drunk person, they sentenced him to labour camp. They drew up a document stating: fighting here and there – and in the morning they took him away, and that was that! People were doomed for no reason! So weddings were not performed any more. People sat at home for a while, having a booze, and that's that! Now they have again started to perform weddings, but not according to our tradition! But until the 1930s the Nanais had everything. They went by boats, made two or three

Nanais became communists and members of Komsomol and even representatives of the Soviet power, did not keep them from turning to shamans upon necessity. "I joined the Komsomol, but I still prayed to God," Alexander Sergeyevich confesses. In the course of many years I was a leading worker, and then a communist and the chief of a kolkhoz. From the early years the shamanistic skills Nikolay Petrovich had inherited put up a fight with the communist world view he had acquired. He was a member of the krai committee, member of the Bureau of the Troitsk Forestry Enterprise, and also a member of the District Committee of the CPSU! "How could I become a shaman the way I was?" he laughs. "You can tear yourself apart, but you have to go to the district committee, and then a plenum gathers in (the village of) Troitskoye, and now, well – some kind of shamanism!" Despite that, he experienced a spell of shamanistic disease, knew the peculiarities of shamanistic rituals in detail and was, as he put it himself, a disguised shaman (he had not gone through the inauguration ritual) and a *tudin*.[17] Actually, as P. Smidovich put it, it was the most peculiar mixture of an obstinate and fervent wish to build up the life on a new, Soviet foundation, and a sympathy and blind trust in shamans" (1930: 7).

Some consequences of the cultural transformation

The cultural innovations carried out by the Soviet power resulted in a cleavage in the Nanai society. Some young Nanais were "recruited" into the process of cultural transformation and became its advertisers. The rest of the Nanais offered passive resistance to the alien for the traditional culture innovations actively spread among them, and remained the bearers of their native language and culture for a long time. This opposition ceases to be topical only now when those people, who had already developed a traditional world view by the 1930s, the time of the most radical transformations in Nanai society, start disappearing. Yet, during all these decades, from the moment of the cleavage until the present time, the bearers of the traditional culture were actually in

rounds at the village, and then started saluting. They sailed and fired guns. Stood on the bank and also fired guns. You know how it was! Afterwards the boats came ashore. People on the bank stood like a corridor, and the ones who came by boats went through this corridor. The bride was the first to go. They came and treated everybody to vodka. And you couldn't refuse it! When those arriving had reached the house, everybody was already chatting, they were getting into a good mood! But under the Soviet power people stopped doing all that. They were afraid!"

[17] *Tudin* – a person possessing spirits-helpers and supernatural abilities like a shaman.

cultural separation, which was intensified by the linguistic isolation. In many Nanai families it was a customary situation in recent years that, for example, the grandmother who did not know Russian, could not speak with her grandchildren, who did not know the Nanai language. In order for them to communicate an interpreter was needed, i.e., the grandmother's daughter, as it was only one generation that was bilingual. "Our children don't know the Nanai language, they can speak only in Russian," Lindza bitterly says. "All right, let them live like that! Our children are going to be like people from another nation!"

Referring to the aforementioned, it would not be correct to say that the transformations carried out by the Soviet power were accepted by the population only in the negative key. The tragic opposition between the representatives of the traditional and innovative culture was mainly applied to shamanistic practice. Many other innovations were accepted by people, and this can be proved mainly by the appearance of a great number of lyrical songs extolling the Communist Party and the Soviet power. It was neither a show nor play-acting, but it was for themselves that people sincerely sang about the marvellous boats running on the earth (cars and trucks) and even fly in the air (aircraft) that had appeared in their lives together with the Soviet power, wondered about refrigerators and TV-sets, and were grateful for all that to the Communist Party. This kind of songs was so widespread among many peoples of the North that researches started to speak about a new song genre called "lauds to the new life". Here is an example of the songs of this genre expressing loyalty to the authorities; it was recorded by the author from Ulyana Beldy (1909–1986) in the village of Iskra, Nanai district, Khabarovsk Krai, in 1981:

Friends, how joyful life has become now!
How interesting it is to think about the (communist) party!
Life is interesting now!
People used to live in the past knowing nothing!
Now life is so good! So good!
If we get weak, somebody will take care of us.
We will thank and respect the people who lived before us and established the new order.
Friends, my friends, I tell you: little children are so delighted
And old people feel so good!
When you get old, other people will support you,
When you lose your strength, they will take care of you.

Now you can live long!
(Only) a bad, lazy woman suffers torments,
Only a lazy woman cannot find anything.
If we follow the same route in our lives, we will be so rich!
Friends, it would be nice if we were younger,
As we used to be until the time we already lived!
I am weaker now, and older.
(But) people won't forget even the aged,
and they take care of those who are getting weaker.
Friends, people have done everything!
The whole (communist) party has arranged it this way
That the living people would live
And the growing people would grow!

As regards shamanism, in spite of the efforts made by the authorities to eradicate it, even in 1971, decades after the beginning of the period of repressions, Taras Mikhailov had to admit that atheists have to "manifest more activeness, fighting spirit and perseverance" in order to "stop in places underestimating and indifference towards shamanistic survivals" (1971: 68). At present there are no fighting atheists in the North any more. They arrived and left, but shamans have continued practising until now.

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Gathering the Female Body in Komi Everyday Life and Rituals

Lyubov Sazhina

Recently the researchers dealing with the notion of a human being as such in traditional culture have become quite popular in Russian humanities. The interest that the authors of this kind of works have shown towards the studying of the human body is especially remarkable. A number of articles by Galina Kabakova, Svetlana Tolstaya, Tatyana Agapkina, Nikita Tolstoy, V. Usacheva, Anna Plotnikova and O. Ternovskaya dealing, in one way or another, with the human body, are included in the encyclopaedic dictionary *Slavonic Antiquities* (*Slavyanskiye*… 1995–1999). Natalya Mazalova's monograph *Human Composition: Human Being in Traditional Somatic Conceptions of the Russians* (2001) is dedicated to the popular concept of the human body, its structure and functioning in Russian tradition. The author of the monograph pays special attention to the position that the human body occupies in the world view. Within the framework of generic research we could mention several works with the female body as the research object. Different sides of the life of the female body are touched upon in a number of articles included in the collection *Sex and Eroticism in Russian Traditional Culture* (*Seks i erotika*… 1996) edited by Andrey Toporkov. Galina Kabakova's survey *Anthropology of Female Body in Slavonic Tradition* (2001) dwells upon the mythology of the female body. The researcher has made an attempt to "reconstruct the image of the body through the relations of the human being with other people and the universe" (Kabakova 2001: 11). Bearing in mind the aforementioned, the author of the monograph has analysed the linguistic, folkloristic and ethnographical data.

Women's behaviour, contrary to that of men's, is much more regulated, which is expressed in a number of everyday conventionalities (stereotypes) restricting their freedom, as well as ritual situations aimed at supporting her status. The purpose of this article is to give a survey of the ideas of the Komi people about the woman and the female body, to analyse a few manipulations performed with the female body in everyday life and in the context of rituals, as well as indicate how the

peculiarities of the female body bring about some behavioural stereotypes.

In the world mythology the woman is often related to chaotic forces. According to Eleazar Meletinsky, "the female element… is sometimes associated with the element of water as well as with chaos, and is usually interpreted as part of "nature" and not "culture"" (1976: 208). In the mythological texts of the Komi people the mutual relation of the woman with the underworld, the world of chaos, is expressed in the idea that the "dark" demiurge Oməl directly participates both in the creation of the first woman and in her subsequent life.[1]

The connection of the woman with the underworld is also confirmed by linguistic data. The expression *энь омла* in the Komi language meaning "womb", which, according to Nikolay Konakov, is semantically and etymologically related to the term *Омöль*, is an indication of the symbolism of chaos, as both the womb and chaos possess the meaning of a **place for giving birth**. This fact makes it possible for us to establish a correlation between the bottom part of the female body and the spatial/cosmic bottom.

As the bearer of the chaotic element, the woman in her everyday life has to structure herself in order to be in correspondence with the established cosmic order. Owing to that, her behaviour is regulated and

[1] According to an anthropological version of the Komi, both creators participate in the process of making a human being Yen, which is the bearer of the light element, and *Oməl* representing the dark one. While creating a human being, it happens that Yen makes a male, while *Oməl* succeeds in making a female figure, which is brought to life by Yen, who possesses the life-giving element (Limerov 1996: 18). Another version of the myth attributes to the "dark" demiurge the creation of female genitals. *Oməl* spat at the perineum of the woman created by Yen, and as a result, the corresponding sexual organ was formed there (Ulyashev 1999: 293). While unfolding the following mythological plot, the woman always turns out to be connected with the underworld and the negative element. This especially manifests itself in the texts in the form of a love affair between the woman and the "dark" demiurge. So, Adam's first wife, who submitted herself to the influence of the evil-minded *Oməl*, killed her new-born children, and, by doing so, infuriated Yen and, consequently, was cursed. Transforming into Death, she, together with the daughters she had killed, went underground, i.e., the underworld. Yen makes Eve for Adam from his own rib (cf. the biblical myth of the creation of Eve from Adam's rib), a woman virtuous and pure in mind and body. Yet, Adam's second wife also comes into contact with *Oməl*, i.e., the underworld (Limerov 1996: 20). In the myth about the Flood, the woman also turns out to be the reason why Evil invades the world. The idea of the myth is the imposing of punishment by God on people for their sins followed by the rebirth of mankind from the family of the pious Noah. The Evil, however, personified in *Oməl*, remains in the world, and Noah's wife also has a share in it. Due to the fact that the first woman is connected with *Oməl*, people's descendants are far from perfection (Limerov 1996: 64).

more ritualised that that of men. This is, first and foremost, manifested in women's everyday activities that are directed to smartening herself and her body, in other words, the woman has to make herself look neat and tidy day in day out.

Above all, this is related to the customs of everyday dressing habits and wearing clothes. In addition to the utilitarian meaning (cover and protect the body from the influence of outward factors), clothing also possesses a symbolic meaning. According to Yan Chesnov, "this as if gathers up the whole body, attributing integrity to its vital forces" (Chesnov 1998, quoted in Agapkina, Toporkov 2001: 12). In this connection, we should also mention the fact how the Komi-Zyrians follow a certain sequence in putting on different articles of clothing, as well as in taking them off for the night. The Zyrians maintained that the violation of this order by people resulted in different diseases and inconveniences for them. So there were special regulations for taking off everyday clothes. For example, the *sarafan* (long sleeveless garment worn on a shirt) was to be "taken off inside out over the head, but it was a sin to take it off over the feet, as "in this way it was taken off only from a deceased person"" (Sharapov 2000: 205). The everyday clothing that was taken off for the night was not left lying inside out, as people held that if you did so, "the devils will wear it afterwards"(ibid.: 105). In order to avoid unfavourable consequences, it also had to be hung in a strictly fixed way (Sharapov 1999: 288).

It should be mentioned that the supporters of the tradition perceive clothing as an indication of the fact that "the human being belongs to the world of culture" (Agapkina, Toporkov 2001: 12). Nakedness/ undressing, on the other hand, eliminates a person from the cultural frames and returns them to the natural state (ibid.), i.e., to the world of chaos. So, for example, missing clothes often serve as a distinctive feature for demonic creatures: Vas (water elf), Vörs (sylvan spirit), and others. The upholders of traditional culture frequently perceive nakedness as a characteristic feature attributed to witches and exorcists, whose connection with the Great Beyond is above any suspicion. In order to transform into a bear, "the witch first takes off the clothes and after that turns three successive somersaults against the sun" (Sidorov 1928: 15). Alexey Sidorov also mentions witches who, having taken off all their clothes, fed with their milk repulsive insects who were crawling along their bodies like small glow-worms (Sidorov 1928: 72). From the social point of view, nakedness or half-nakedness is characteristic of drunkards, beggars, imbeciles and the like, i.e., the people

from the periphery of culture and society" (Agapkina, Toporkov 2001: 12). Consequently, the less dressed a person is, the farther they are situated from the centre of culture and the nearer they are to the underworld.

In this connection it is important to pay attention to the importance of the completeness of the costume. Any missing element in the set is regarded as the violation of the existing norms. So, a married Zyrian woman never appears in public without her headgear; it is also obligatory to wear a belt, and so on. As Vasily Nalimov has noted, "married women are more dressed than girls" (1999: 139). This is connected with the fact that married women who lead sexual life, are infected by sexual impurity called *пеж*.[2] This is why they have to wear more clothes, so that they could protect the surrounding people from the harmful influence of their organisms (Nalimov 1999: 141).

On the other hand, clothes protected people from the negative outside influence. Serving as a supplement to the body, they were actually considered as part of the latter. Owing to that, any disconformity to the norms in clothing – torn garment, unfastened belt, etc. – was considered as the violation of the established order, and consequently, as harmful for the owner. This is connected with the idea of their possible magic influence on the human body. Any manipulations with articles of clothing were regarded as variants of witchcraft. So, people condemned any kind of changing clothes during the day as they saw it as conjuring. According to Valery Sharapov, "women who put on a *sarafan* in the morning, tried not to take it off during the day, and, if necessary, put another garment on it. Only in the holiday period it was not prohibited to change clothes several times during the day, although even in this case, many women put on several sarafans all at once, one on top of another, and the same way several skirts – for the grandeur of the festive attire" (Sharapov 2000: 105). Also, the Zyrians maintained that any damages inflicted on clothing resulted in consequences for their owners (Sharapov 1999: 284). For example, according to Alexey Sidorov, at Udor "young maidens who aroused envy in others with their appearance, health, deftness, etc., vehemently observed their clothing, as a malicious exorcist could cut off a piece of a garment, kerchief, or any other article of clothing, and through this, damage them" (1928: 46).

An important element in everyday body care is also setting one's

[2] *Пеж* in the Komi language has the meaning of "impurity", "evil".

hair. There are two kinds of ritual hairdos known as "maidenly" and "womanly". The conversion of the hairdo from the former to the latter form symbolises the change in the status of the woman. In this connection we should especially emphasise the aspect of making the first hairdo, which provides "the child with the "cultural" characteristics of her sex" (Baiburin 1993: 59). In this way, the plaiting of the first braid serves as an important stage in the socialising of a girl, adopting her into the world of culture. The maidenly hairdo (the braid) remains unchanged until the girl gets married. It is noteworthy that the changing of the hairdo takes place in sacred places: in the sauna, in the church, at the window. The godmother unravels the bride's braid and sets her hair in a "womanly" hairdo – *баба юр*. An obligatory feature of the married woman is her headgear. As Vasily Nalimov has put it, "without the headgear women are not supposed to participate in the church service or bake bread; the latter is an activity that is considered to be sacred" (Nalimov 1999: 139).

Here we should also mention the negative attitude of the surrounding people towards the "wrong" hairdo and untidy hair in everyday life, as it was regarded as the violation of the "cosmic balance" (Victor Semenov). It is noteworthy that uncovered and loose hair is often a feature characterising some demonic creatures (mermaids, witches, revenants, sylvan spirits and others). In this connection the requirement of uncovered and loose hair set for fortune-tellers seems to be well grounded. According to Semenov, in the context of fortune telling, loose and uncovered hair served as a characteristic of "the other" world (Semenov 1991: 71). An unfastened belt was also considered as a necessary precondition for fortune telling.

Ornaments were also supposed to be one of the obligatory features of smartening the female body. Women's attire, according to archaeological finds, included ornaments, such as necklaces, pendants, earrings, frontal ornaments, bracelets, and rings. As a rule, ornaments were the last to be put on and they were worn on clothes. Some parts of the body were especially accentuated by ornaments; these were the head, neck, chest and waist, which were the most vulnerable to the penetration of malicious powers.

It is important to note that the amount of the worn ornaments was the greatest at festivities, i.e., at the time "when the forces of the chaos /—/ prevail over the cosmic organisation of the world" (Toporov 1992: 330). As V. Toporov has stated, the cosmos "actualises the idea of aesthetically marked order, ornamentation" (ibid.: 9). Consequently, by adorning

herself, the woman frees herself from the underworld revelations.[3] The ability to ward off the undesirable influence of the world of chaos was attributed to small bells and tinklers. They were given special preference, "they were worn at temples, plaited in hair, attached to the rings worn at temples or fastened to the headband" (Savelyeva, Korolev 1990: 57), as well as to the belt. According to A. Sidorov, among ancient women's ornaments we can also find large silver earrings shaped after the webbed feet of a duck called *чусы* (Sidorov 1924: 44). They are peculiar as they depict the Komi totemic animal – the duck – that performs the protective function. Infrequently we can also find a few shells among the ornaments of the Komi women, which originally had the function of a talisman (ibid.: 135).

In traditional culture one of the elements for decorating women's costumes was embroidery. Embroidery was positioned "round the neck /—/ and on the chest; and, for example, a three-quarter sleeve was embroidered at the elbow, and a full-length sleeve – at the wrist" (AILLH, No. 1237). The embroidered patterns were also concentrated on shoulders. As V. Sharapov has mentioned, sometimes the hem of the shirt was also decorated with embroidery (Sharapov 1999: 98). It is characteristic that red yarn was used for embroidering the patterns, as it was considered to be a colour with a protective force (AILLH, No. 1237). Each pattern had its own meaning: "a circle, for example, /—/ denotes a talisman, and cubes and rhombi /—/ this is like your own yard, your home" (ibid.). Festive costumes were decorated with more complicated and brighter patterns, which was connected with the idea of festivities as the time for chaos.

The process of structuring the body is manifested more clearly in such ritual situations as childbirth and wedding, in which the manipulations with the female body are directed at dismantling it and gathering it again afterwards, which guarantees the alteration and the consequent strengthening of her status. The mythological category of chaos is even more clearly expressed in such sacramental situations as losing the virginity and pregnancy.

It is interesting to note that, to denote a virgin, the spoken Komi language uses the term *дзонь,* which semantically expresses the intactness of a person, the state of being undamaged, uninjured. In the dictionary this notion possesses the following meanings: "whole,

[3] *Хтонос* – mythological underworld, the world of chaos and impurity.

incommencable, intact, uninjured, pure, in order, healthy and undamaged, in good health" (*Sravnitelnyi*… 1961: 105). Incommencability, purity correlates with the ideas of the intactness of the chaos, which comprises all the component parts of the would-be world, that is why in the context of the wedding ritual the violation of the intactness of the virgin seems as an act of building up and organising the cosmos, which comprises both the dismantling and the consequent gathering of the bride's body (Baiburin 1993: 71–73).

Pregnancy as intactness-chaos requires sprucing it up through childbirth. A pregnant woman stands much nearer to the world of chaos as, according to Albert Baiburin, her child can be regarded as a messenger of the other world. Her closeness to the underworld prescribed to her certain behavioural orientations. On the one hand, she became more vulnerable, and therefore she was prescribed to strictly observe the measures directed at protecting the embryo and herself from the evil eye. So, it was forbidden to her to wear beautiful new clothes, speak about her good health, participate in wedding or funeral rituals, have her hair cut. It was also prohibited for her to have any contacts with witches. On the other hand, due to her closeness to the other world, the pregnant woman herself was considered as impure and dangerous for those surrounding her. Therefore it was forbidden for her to take care of children, breast-feed, touch any men's possessions, the fishing and hunting gear, and so on (Ilyina 1999: 175).

It is noteworthy that the sauna was the place where a child was born. It was also customary to do it in a cattle shed, on the doorway of a dwelling, on the basement or the lid of a well (Ilyina 1999: 175). A common feature of all the aforementioned places is the fact that they are all situated on the symbolic borderline between our own and the other, unfamiliar world. Their marginal position proves the child's afterlife nature, its coming from the Great Beyond.

The following ritual activities concerning the woman in childbed are directed to the recreation of her physical structure. In order to do that, the woman is rubbed and massaged already in the sauna, accompanying these activities by prayers. After the childbirth the woman is recommended to wash herself with the cake of soap she had once used before her wedding, still being a bride. According to the words of an informant, "the woman was to hide the bar of soap and, after the childbirth, or during illness, wash herself with it, as the spell cast on it said that beautiful as she was at the time and physically strong, so she was supposed to be during her whole life, and she kept

this cake of soap with her all her life and washed herself with it after the childbirth or when she was ill" (AILLH, No. 1237).

In this way, putting herself in order daily, adorning herself and smartening herself and her body, the woman is prepared for everyday activities. In the context of a ritual, dismantling and gathering the body symbolises the situation of the chaos and the consequent building of the cosmos, which is expressed in the change of the woman's status. In this way, "gathering" her body, the woman is separated from the world of chaos and introduced into the sphere of culture.

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Confessional Factor in the Ethno-Cultural Processes of the Upper-Vychegda Komi

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This article serves as a preliminary survey of the materials of the joint ethnographic expedition of the Russian Museum of Ethnography and the National Museum of the Republic of Komi, which was organised in the summer of 2001 (June 23 – July 13) to the Ust-Kulom district of the Republic of Komi.[1]

The programme of the aforementioned expedition covered both the continuation of the formerly studied fields (clothing, dwellings, folk art) and the elaboration of the new ones, which were related to the spheres of interest of the participants of the expedition: the worshipped landscape objects (holy stones, springs, votive crosses), the annual church holidays and local religious feasts, the Vychegda Komi's manuscript tradition, and others.

1. Ethnographic characterisation of the region: local and confessional groups, characterisation of the Upper-Vychegda dialect, collective nicknames (anthroponyms)

From the ethnographical point of view, Upper-Vychegda arouses special interest as a region of interaction of different ethno-confessional and ethno-cultural traditions.

The formation of the Upper-Vychegda ethnographic group dates back to the 2nd half of the 15th century, when the Komi resettlers from

[1] The participants of the joint expedition of the Russian Museum of Ethnography and the National Museum of the Republic of Komi to Upper-Vychegda in 2001 were the following: Olga Smirnova (head of the expedition), researcher of the NMRK; Vladimir Lipin, researcher of the NMRK; Valery Sharapov, researcher of the Department of Ethnography of the ILLH KSC UD RAN; Vitaly Galiopa, researcher of the REM; Alexander Chuvyurov, researcher of the REM. The author expresses their gratitude to their colleagues for their help in collecting the materials.

the Vym region started populating the basin of the Vishera River. Later on, in the 16th–17th centuries, the Vym-river Komi were followed by the resettlers from the other regions of the Komi Territory – Lower-Vychegda, Sysola, Priluzye and Udora, – who settled down in the area of the Upper-Vychegda and its tributaries (Vishera, Keltma and Lokchim Rivers). Apart from the different groups of the Komi-Zyrians, the Russians, Komi-Permyaks, and, to a certain extent, also the Ob-Ugrians (Khanty and Mansis) were included in the formation of the Upper-Vychegda population (Konakov 1994: 38–39). As a result of all these migration processes, the Upper-Vychegda Komi ethnographic group (*вылысэжвасаяс*) with a mixed composition was formed. The differences among the Upper-Vychegda Komi can be noticed both in the material culture and in everyday life. So, ethnographer Lyubomir Zherebtsov suggested that, within the borders of the Upper-Vychegda ethnographic region, the peculiar Lokchim micro-region should be elicited with its specific features both in the material culture (dwellings, clothing) and everyday life (ibid.: 39). From the linguistic point of view, the population is not homogeneous, either. According to the usage of the l-sound at the end of a syllable the researchers of the Upper-Vychegda dialect distinguish between four types of sub-dialects (Batalova 1993: 228). From the confessional point of view, the Upper-Vychegda Komi were divided into several groups: in addition to the official Orthodoxy, a considerable part of the Upper-Vychegda population were Old Believers. The spread of the latter confession among the Upper-Vychegda Komi is connected with the resettling of the Russian Old Believers from Solikamsk, Tobolsk and Cherdynsk districts to this region (the Upper-Vychegda villages of Voch, Pomozdino and Kerchomya) in the middle of the 18th century (Gagarin 1978: 105). As the researchers have noted, the Upper-Vychegda Komi Old Believers, although they considered the Orthodox Church with the new rituals as "heretic", nevertheless, recognized baptizing and wedding rituals in this church, as "although a heretic is baptizing, the priest is wearing a robe, he is not a common man" (Zherebtsov, Lashuk 1960: 88). When the churches were closed down, baptisms started to be performed by widowed elderly women (*пыртысь баб*) who knew the church prayers. In order to do that, they had to be blessed by an authoritative old woman who performed sacramental rituals (funerals, baptisms) in a particular region. In the late 19th century also a peculiar religious movement called *бурсьылысьяс* (Bursylysyas – the ones singing hymns to God) sprang up in Upper-Vychegda (the villages of Myeldino and

Ust-Nem), which in the religious-ritual life possessed several similar features (prophesising, revelations, etc.) with the Russian mystic-ecstatic movements (Khlysty[2], Pentecostalists) (Gagarin 1978: 218–221). At the beginning of 1920 the Bursylysyas' movement spread in eight Upper-Vychegda communes, including Kerchomya, whose population was mostly Old Believers. In the 1920s–1930s the majority of the leaders of this movement were arrested, and many rank-and-file members of the Bursylysyas were also subjected to repressions. At present there does not exist any religious community in Upper-Vychegda, which could be directly related to the Bursylysyas. At the same time, the manuscript tradition created by this movement continues to exist and develop actively.

The collective nicknames (the ones referring to the population of a whole village – anthroponyms), which were used in the past to refer to different population groups of this region, testify to the ethnographic and confessional differences between the Vychegda Komi. The renowned Russian ethnographer Dmitry Zelenin pointed out that "sayings (except for the purely geographical ones) are concerned with concrete ethnographic groups, i.e., groups of inhabitants differing from each other by their living conditions and sub-dialects. In sayings people give us the ethnographical division of themselves" (Zelenin 1993: 51). Our fieldwork materials, which were collected in the course of the ethnographic expedition in the Upper-Vychegda-region in 2001, confirmed Zelenin's remark about the origin of the nicknames and mocking songs among the heterogeneous (both from the confessional and ethnographical point of view) population. We wrote down the following collective nicknames and sayings:

Kerchomya village – *кержаки*[3] (Old Believers);

Voch village – *вочса кержакъяс лешак кодь жаднӧйӧсь* (the Old Believers from Voch are stingy like devils);

Myeldino village – Bursylysyas (the ones singing hymns to God), *Ен веритысьяс, богомолъяс* (prayers), *лысва панялысьяс* (slurping the dew: in Myeldino people were hard-working, started work early in the morning when the dew was still on the grass);

[2] Russ. *Khlysty* – from the verb *khlestat'* – to get enraptured, drunk with religious joy.

[3] The denomination of the Old-Believer faction which originates from tributaries of Kerzhenets-River in Nizhny-Novgorod district, so-called '*Kerzhenskiye Lesa'* (Kerzhensky Forests).

Ust-Nem village – Bursylysyas (the ones singing hymns to God), *гӧрд (вир) кулакъяс* (bloody kulaks – quarrelsome);

Ust-Kulom village – *чай юысьяс* (those being fond of drinking tea, idling), *ёсь кокъяс* (those wearing modern footwear with sharp toes, being keen on prancing);

Nosim village – *порсь кокъяс* (pigs' feet – as people kept many pigs in this village);

Don village – *еретникъяс* (witches), *тыдорса* (those living near the lake (Lake Don));

Dzhezhim village – *вор ва юысьяс* (those drinking moonshine from a trough) (the grapevine said that the inhabitants of Dzhezhim used wooden troughs for making moonshine); *сьӧд кокъяс* (dirty feet, as many people in Dzhezhim village walked barefoot);

Lebyazhsk village – *кач кокъяс* (feet made from bark). It was said that in Lebyazhsk village people were poor; they added different ingredients to their bread dough, peeled bark from trees (*кач*), mixed it with flour and baked bread from this mixture;

Parch village – *парчса тржъяс* (prattlers from Parch – they prattled too quickly);

Parma village – *пармаса тшыкӧдысьяс* (witches from Parma).

This way, these collective nicknames reflected the ethnographic and confessional reality of the Upper-Vychegda Komi: the differences in everyday life and in religious belonging (Old Believers, Bursylysyas). Certainly we should not be seeking for any historical truth in these nicknames and sayings. The main aim of these nicknames is to ridicule one's neighbours: to expose their most important and characteristic peculiarity (for example, their religious belonging – *кержаки*: Old Believers – the villages of Kerchomya, Voch, etc.) and show it in a humiliating way (the Old Believers from Voch are stingy like devils).

The religious life of the contemporary Komi population in Upper-Vychegda is characterized by a number of special features, which can be explained by the historical-cultural peculiarities in the formation of the population in this region.

2. Local religious leaders and their role in the village community

In 1999, in the course of an ethnographic expedition to Upper-Vychegda, in the village of Kerchomya we recorded stories about the local religious hero Vasily Nikolayevich Gichev (with the village nickname – Поп Васьо (Photograph 1)). Local inhabitants provided to

varied information about him. The plot of these stories written down from different informants was generally similar; yet, the accentuation of the story-tellers, their commentaries given on one or another deed of the hero varied to a great extent. Undoubtedly, these accentual, emphatic differences are very important and enable us to reveal a few peculiarities of religious cognizance in different population groups, therefore the author here allows of dwelling upon them in greater detail. Before we start treating of the accentual peculiarities of the stories about Vasily Gichev, a few words should be said about the village of Kerchomya. In the past this village served as the centre of Old Believers among the Upper-Vychegda Komi (Gagarin 1978: 105). By the present time, the conceptions of the Old Believers' past and their ideology have considerably faded among the local inhabitants. They remember a few Old Believers' preceptors, also the different norms and prescriptions of ritual purity for the Old Believers' everyday life – eating apart from others, their restricted contacts with the surrounding people, their custom to make the sign of the cross with two fingers, and so on; however, they could not elicit the main postulates of their religious doctrine. The informants ran into difficulties when they had to answer questions concerning one or another peculiarity of the Old Believers' religious life. So, when asked to explain the symbolics of the Old Believers' rosary (beads), one of the informants said the following, "Actually six *lopostkii* are needed (four triangles made of cloth, mounted on cardboard or any other hard material, fastened to the end of the rosary and symbolizing the four evangelists – ACh; OS), as the angel has six wings: with the first pair they fly, with the second and third pair they cover their faces and feet, respectively." In order to confirm her words, she quoted a religious verse *Öні и херувимъяс: Öні и херувимъяс Тройца водзын сулалöны. Куим святöй сьылöн сьылöны Троицаöс и прославитöны /—/ Кыдзи царöс петкöдöны. Квайт борда и Ангелъяс лэптöны и лэдзöны. Царöс моз и качайтöны. Кык бордöн чужöмнысö веттьöмась, кык бордöн и кокнысö веттьöмась, кык бордöн и лэбалöны.* /—/ (And now the cherubs are standing in front of the Trinity. They exalt the Trinity with three hymns. /—/ They lead them like a Tsar. Six-winged angels lift them and put them down again, rocking them like a Tsar. They have covered their faces with two wings, another two cover their feet and with still another two they fly. /—/) According to the informant's words, the beads are needed for counting the Lord's Prayers. If you do not have the beads, she said, the prayers could be counted on the knuckles of your left hand. But it is forbidden

Photograph 1. Vasily Nikolayevich Gichev (first on the left) with his relatives. 1950s. Photograph from Evdokya Zhikina's family archive (village of Kerchomya, Ust-Kulom region). Copy by A. Berman.

count the prayers with the help of your fingers (by crooking them): this is as if you were playing the accordion (Informant Kiprusheva).

Some years ago (on August 10, 1998) an Orthodox church was opened in the village, but at present services are not being held there as the clergyman who was fulfilling the duties of the priest in the church, left for Syktyvkar, which resulted in different negative gossips about his activities. The ethnographic research conducted by us in this village indicated that the remembrances of the Old Believers' past had been preserved to a different extent in the memories of the inhabitants of Kerchomya. The village is divided into nine parts: *Катыдпом* (Katydpom), *Лютӧйсикт* (Lyutoeisikt), *Ӧньӧсикт* (Oenoesikt), *Вичкосикт* (Vichkosikt), *Епӧсикт* (Epoesikt), *Ванькасикт* (Vankasikt), *Катшасикт* (Katshasikt), *Рочсикт* (Rochsikt), *Кылтыдпом* (Kyltydpom). The inhabitants of the upper part of the settlement (Katydpom, Lyutoeisikt, Oenoesikt, Vichkosikt) are, according to tradition, the supporters of the official church, although, undoubtedly, the events of the past few years (the fact that the priest left his congregation, etc.) exerted their influence on them and, in a certain way, are expressed in the relations of this group with the church. In the lower part of the village – Kyltydpom – there is a small group of believers who, in one way or another, relate themselves with the Old Believers' tradition, even

despite the fact that the religious recollection of the Old Believers' dictates and norms has, to a great extent, already faded or been transformed.

As we have already stated, the plot of the stories about Vasily Gichev is generally similar. It is usually constructed in the following way: in his early years Gichev attended a higher party school, but he did not succeed in his social career as, due to his passion for spirits, he was not able to keep to any jobs. But while in the upper end of the village people mention this devotion as a mere fact, the informants in the lower end treat it as God's providence. So, one of the informants noted, "God needed this kind of religious hero, that is why he was kept being fired." After that, according to the words of the informants, Gichev started studying the Holy Scripture and, after some time, he underwent a radical transformation. He was said to have made a pilgrimage, walking from Kerchomya to the Pochayevsk Monastery. After returning from his pilgrimage he started preaching, going from one village to another. He translated different parts of the Bible as well as other religious texts into the Komi language, and also compiled his own sermons. And, as one of the informants noted, he walked "by land like Jesus Christ – even in the severest frost he wore a worn overcoat and was barefoot".

After his radical religious conversion he led quite an ascetic life: he did not drink any alcohol, refused any conjugal relations with his wife, slept in another room, separately from her.

Gichev is said to have had prophetic abilities. In one of the stories, this ability has been described as follows. *Воскресеньö лунö вöлі мунö и аддзö Педöр Егöр пывсян лэптö и сыа кежис и мыйкö шуö: "Педöр Егор сотчас пывсяныд. Дугды пывсянтö лэптömысь." А мöдыс заводитöма да дерт оз дугды. А со временем, точнöя, ме ог помнит, кутшöм годын, но пывсянныд сотчис*" (Informant Zhikina) (On a Sunday he (Gichev – ACh,OS) has walking along the street and saw that a man (Yegor Fyodorovich (Педöр Егор) – ACh,OS) has building a sauna. Gichev approached him and said, "Yegor Fyodorovich, your sauna is going to burn down. Leave it." But the other man (Yegor Fyodorovich – ACh,OS) kept building. But after some time, I don't remember exactly which year it was, but the sauna burned down.")

The National Archive of the Republic of Komi comprises a number of materials related to the religious activities of Gichev. So, among the materials of the Commissioner for the Religious Affairs at the Council of Ministers of the USSR there is a report from Yuri Gagarin, who for many years worked as a propagator of scientific atheism (reviewer of

the Komi Department at the Society for Disseminating Political and Scientific Knowledge) and later on took up research into the religious movements in the Republic of Komi. The report dates from October 1964 and, among other things, notifies us about the following, "V. I. Gichev is the leader of the True Orthodox Christians in Kerchomya. Earlier on he worked as an inspector at the Ministry of Finance of the Komi ASSR and did not exhibit any signs of practising religion. After being sacked due to heavy drinking, instead of starting a new honest working career, he returned to his native village and organized a group of believers around him, who started to keep him" (National Archive of the Republic of Komi, F. 1451, descr. 1, file 14, pp. 245). The report by Gagarin by mistake quotes the initials of V. N. Gichev as V. I. This mistake might have occurred in the course of typing.

The fact mentioned in the report that V. Gichev belonged among the True Orthodox Christians explains much about his religious activities. The True Orthodox Christians was one of the branches springing up in the Russian Orthodox Church after 1927, after the well-known appeal of Metropolitan Sergius, the representative of the Holy See in the Russian Orthodox Church, in which the leaders of the Russian Orthodox Church expressed their loyal attitude towards the Soviet authorities. Part of the community members and the clergy of the Russian Orthodox Church did not accept this appeal and they established their own organizational centre called the True Orthodox Church. In the 1940s another branch separated from it under the name of True Orthodox Christians, which comprised the most radical members of the True Orthodox Church. Part of the members of this branch supported celibacy as well as evangelism: some of the activists of the True Orthodox Christians travelled from one village to another, preaching the Christian doctrine among different people.

Another document that mentions the name of V. Gichev is the memorandum written by M. Punegov, Commissioner of the Council for the Affairs of the Russian Orthodox Church at the Council of Ministers of the Komi ASSR called "Memorandum on the Status and Activities of Religious Communities and the Clergy on the Territory of the Komi ASSR as of January 1st, 1964". It reads as the following, "In Kerchomya village a group of True Orthodox Christians is operating: 6–8 stray sheep led by Gichev. There occur such facts as the sectarians' refusal to participate in elections, their leaving the collective farm and attempts to forbid their children to go to school. A characteristic feature of Gichev's activities is his method of disseminating his religious convictions

among the supporters of other religious doctrines as an itinerant. He has been translating the Bible into the Komi language. In order to put an end to Gichev's antisocial activities, we have turned to the public prosecutor's office" (National Archive of the Republic of Komi, F. 1451, descr. 1, file 15, p. 16).

Obviously these repressive measures of the state machinery were actually put into practice quite soon. According to the words of the informants, V. Gichev was arrested and taken to psychiatric hospital in Syktyvkar. The question about the concrete date when this happened causes difficulties for the informants. So, in 1999, when an informant was asked about the time when Gichev had been taken to hospital, she answered that it had happened 39 years ago, i.e., in 1963. Later on, when we had received archival data which differed from the aforementioned, the informant, when asked to specify the date, said, "*…ог төд точнӧя кутшӧм воын сійӧс нуӧдісны, комын ӧкмыс во ли, унджык ли. Ог төд точнӧя* (I cannot say exactly which year it was. It seems that 39 years have passed, or more. It is difficult to say it exactly now.)

In the house registers of the Kerchomya Village Soviet we found some notes which could be identified with V. Gichev, and through them we were able to determine his birth date as well as the year when he was shut in hospital. In these books dating from the period 1961–1963 the following entry could be found: "Zolotaryova Paraskovya Stepanovna, head of the family, born in 1907, Komi. Rank and file collective farmer, housewife. /—/ Boarder – Gichev Vasily Nikolayevich, born in 1925, Komi, unemployed" (National Archive of the Republic of Komi, F. 2053, descr. 1, file 294. Похозяйственная книга с. Керчомья за 1961–1963 гг.). The house registers from the years 1963–1965 inform us about V. Gichev's leaving for Syktyvkar: "Gichev Vasily Nikolayevich, male, Komi, education – 7 forms, employee. Left for Syktyvkar in February 1964" (National Archive of the Republic of Komi, F. 2053, descr. 1, file 339, лицевой счет 621. Похозяйственная книга с. Керчомья за 1963–1965 гг.). In this way, on the basis of these notes, it is possible to establish that V. Gichev was shut in psychiatric hospital in February 1964.

According to the informants, V. Gichev spent some time in the psychiatric hospital in Syktyvkar. The believers from Kerchomya kept visiting him there, which irritated the doctors (and most probably, also the authorities who had initiated the idea of shutting him in there). So, one of the informants recalled that during one of her regular visits she found many of her fellow villagers in the hospital. The doctor to whom

she turned in order to be allowed to see V. Gichev, commented, "Today a whole crowd has come to visit Gichev, as if he were a priest." The frequent visits of the believers might have been the reason for resettling V. Gichev to a remote northern region of the Republic of Komi – the hospital in Sizyabsk village (Izhma district) where he died after some time and where he was also buried.

The cause for such an early death (according to the data in the house registers, he was 39 years old when he died) is unknown. By the words of the informants he was not known to have had any fatal diseases. Even in the winter, when he was going barefoot from one village to another, preaching, he did not suffer from any colds (V. Gichev himself explained this as a divine revelation from God to show "God's power": he walked barefoot in the winter and was not ill, whereas the others who took care of their health in all aspects, nevertheless were subject to all kinds of colds). It can only be presumed that such an early death might have somehow been related to his staying in psychiatric hospital as well as the methods of his "treatment" there.

All that was left after V. Gichev's death was copybooks with his notes. In the course of the expedition in 2001 we acquired eight copybooks left behind by him as a donation from Yevdokiya Zhikina (b. 1941). These are ordinary copybooks used at school, with twelve pages each. They include the translations of different religious texts into the Komi language: Ordeals of the Blessed Feodora; Life and Sufferings of the Great Martyr St. Pelageya; Reminiscences of Zosim, Bishop of Babylon; Reminiscences of St:s Alexander and Antonina, the Great Martyrs; Maiden Muza; Reminiscences of the Great Martyr St. Panteleimon; of the Apostle St. Mathew; of the Pious Sysoi the Great; of the Great Martyr St. Kindei; of the Great Martyr St. Yulian; Sermons of Father Ioann of Kronstadt – *Öткамын бöрйöм гижöдъяс протоиерей Иоанн Ильич Сергиевлöн* (Collected Sermons of Archpriest Ioann Ilyich Sergeyev). These are the texts that up to now have been found only in V. Gichev's copybooks. He might have translated these texts into the Komi language himself. Some individual peculiarities in the translations included among these writings, which cannot be found in any other collections, speak in support of this theory. However, it is still unclear if he used some other ready-made translations while doing it.

These translations arouse interest both by the composition of the texts and the manner of translating. When Gichev encountered a complicated religious term or notion, he, besides the Komi equivalent of the term, also gave in brackets the original lexical basis (Russian,

Church Slavonic), inserting it in the context in accordance with the syntax and grammar of the Komi language. So, for example, the name of the third ordeal in the "Ordeals of the Blessed Feodora" he translated as follows: *лӧжнӧ шувӧм* (*клевета*) – scandal, lie (gossip). Russisms play a significant role in his translations (the Christian lexis non-existent in the Komi language): *гееннаыс* (Gehenna), *эпиопъяс* (evil spirits), and others. As we have already mentioned, one of the characteristic features of his translations is the presentation of lexically different but synonymous range of words: *мыж* (*грекъяс*) – (guilt) sins; *прӧстӧ сейысьяс* (*тунеядцы*) – freeloaders (spongers); *мисьтӧм* (*мерзкӧй*) – monstrous (disgusting), and so on.

This is, undoubtedly, an indication of his exceptionality as a translator who, obviously, through his translations realized the complicacy of translating religious texts and made attempts to solve this problem in a practical way (elaborating the Komi religious terminology).

An interesting feature in the author's manner is different kinds of cryptograms (transfer of the first letters of the word to the final position) put down by him like autographs. So, at the end of the "Ordeals of the Blessed Feodora" we can find the following inscription: СПА КТЭМАПУ. This fragment can be read neither in Komi nor in Russian, and only if we rearrange letters and syllables, we can get a meaningful and understandable text in the Komi language: *Пас пуктӧма* – signed by. The texts of the author's cryptograms are not always understandable and the explanation of their meaning is aggravated, as V. Gichev's idiomatic, metaphoric language is extremely individual and remarkably differs from the traditional literary and colloquial language.

We have already mentioned that the general evaluation of his life and deeds differs among the informants. While in the upper end of the village the information about the hospital is just limited to stating the fact that he was kept there, then in the lower end this information is overgrown with details, constructed by the canons set for hagiographies: martyrdom, suffering for the faith. So, one of the stories describes Gichev's staying in hospital in the following way. "The nails of his great toes were pulled off with pincers. The toes started swelling. On the following day the doctor came and deliberately stepped on his foot, expecting his reaction, but Gichev suffered the pain in silence. After some time the doctor visited him again and said, "You can endure a lot, Gichev!"" In the course of another conversation in the upper end of the village, an informant, winding up her story about V. Gichev,

remarked, "He was such a strange man. I could not understand what his confession was. He threw icons out of his house; maybe he was a Baptist. I don't know." When we asked a woman who lived in the lower end of the village and had been baptized in the Old Believers' church in Moscow (Rogozhsky graveyard) to comment on the aforementioned, she said, "I don't know what his confession was. People said that he had taken icons out of the room where he lived, but he didn't throw them out and didn't tell us to do that, either. We prayed together when he came round, although we always had icons in our house. He said that a person had to act according to his understanding. I don't know anybody else who would serve God so faithfully, with all his heart…" In a way, this remark is noteworthy.

The woman for whom the real faith was that of the Old Believers', considered as important not the pedantic observation of dictates and norms, but the fact of faith itself – renouncing of the worldly in order to serve God. And later on, when conducting ethnographical research in Upper-Vychegda, we again quite often encountered the same kind of situations when informants considered as most important not some confessional differences, but selflessness as such, the idea of self-sacrificing on behalf of faith. This is what the peculiarity of the contemporary religious situation in Upper-Vychegda consists in: particularly elevated religiousness and a certain latent religious tension. A good example of it in this respect is the religious literature found in the libraries of local peasants: books published before the 18th century, manuscript collections written in archaic Slavonic script, as well as translations of the New Testament into the Komi language published by the Institute for Bible Translation (IBT, Stockholm) and the collections of sermons by the well-known Komi evangelist preacher V. Popov (*Ыджыд гусятор* – Great Mystery). The manuscript collections are also quite eclectic. In addition to the translations of the hagiographies of the venerable Orthodox heroes and Christian martyrs, we can also find the translations of various religious hymns from the collections (hymnals) of evangelical Christians-Baptists ("Kettledrum", "Psaltery", "Dawn of Life", "Zion's Songs", "Cymbal", "Songs of First Christians"). Also, there are eschatological texts: "Visions of Fiokla" (1902), "Mysterious Manifestation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Heavenly Tsarina in the Town of Lvov in 1968", "Petrification of Zoya in the Town of Kuibyshev in 1956". This kind of texts are quite widely spread in the North of Russia and, most probably, originate from some religious-biased publications (Pigin 1997: 43).

It must be mentioned that the "cult" of local Christian heroes plays an important role in the religious life of the inhabitants of Upper-Vychegda. During our ethnographical expeditions in Upper-Vychegda in the years 1999–2001 we recorded stories of the local religious heroes. One of the most honoured local heroes is Stepan Artemyevich Yermolin from the village of Myeldino, the founder of the religious movement called Bursylysyas, who was the initiator of such a quite unique phenomenon as the Upper-Vychegda manuscript tradition (*Vologodskiye*… 1912: 504–512; Gagarin 1978: 218). We wrote down several stories about S. Yermolin. One of them reads as the following: "Stepan Yermolin was in the Pechora area and saw that religious hymns were sung in the Komi language there. After his return to Myeldino he started to translate the hymns into the Komi language himself. People came from Moscow and took his translations in order to check them. They took several bags full of books with them. After some time the books were returned with the words that everything was correct in them and that they were allowed to be used" (Informant Matyusheva). The aforementioned checking of S. Yermolin's manuscripts for their religiousness really took place. S. Yermolin was deprived of his manuscripts, and they were sent to Vologda Ecclesiastical Consistory to be inspected, and after that they were returned to the author with the following verdict: "No manuscript or book revealed any ideas opposing the Greek Orthodoxy and there is no reason to think that their owners stick to any sectarian fallacies." During the ethnographical fieldwork in Ust-Kulom region we were able to get to know the names of a number of other renowned local Christian heroes – Timon Yefimovich Shakhov (Ефим Тимӧ – (1885–1958)), translator of religious literature from the village of Shakhtsikt; Ivan Prokopyevich Martyushev from the village of Pozhegdin, a copyist and compiler of religious manuscript collections[4]; Agafiya Yegoryevna Kiprusheva and Christina Ivanovna Tkachenko from the village of Ust-Kulom, who played an important role in the restoration of the church and the revival of the parish life in their native village.

3. Worshipped landscape objects: holy springs, crosses, stones

The ethnographical research conducted by us in Upper-Vychegda revealed that worshipping, services held at holy places, play an

[4] I. P. Matyushev is mentioned in Y. V. Gagarin's report, see: Gagarin, Dukart 1972: 167.

important role in the religious life of the contemporary Komi population. There exists a kind of hierarchy of these holy places; they can be divided into two groups. The first one comprises shrines, holy places that are worshipped by the inhabitants of several villages. The second one includes the objects whose renown is limited to the borders of one village only. To the first group of village shrines belongs the Spring of the Manifestation of the Blessed Virgin Mary (*Нюр Курья* – Nyur Kurya), which is situated not far from the district centre Ust-Kulom; also the votive cross dedicated to the Icon of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Tikhvin in the village of Myeldino.

The spring of the Manifestation of the Blessed Virgin Mary worshipped by the Upper-Vychegda Komi is situated in a place called Nyur Kurya (*Куш-шор*), at the distance of three kilometres from the village of Ust-Kulom (Photograph 2). Services at this spring are held on the religious holiday dedicated to the icon of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Vladimir (August 26/September 8). The local people call this feast the Cross of Moons. One of the first to mention this feast was Pavel Zasodimsky, a writer and populist, in his stories of everyday life under the heading "Wild Kingdom" (1878) (Zasodimsky 1999: 125–126).

The legend written down by Valeri Sharapov at the beginning of the 1990s gives the following explanation to the worshipping of this place by the inhabitants of Ust-Kulom: "At Nyur Kurya a man saw the manifestation of the icon of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The icon descended from the night sky on a white stone, which was similar to a *челпан* (a round loaf of bread). Early in the morning the man brought the icon to his granary. Yet, the icon left the granary and on the following morning it was seen at the spring again. So it occurred repeatedly, for three times. At night a woman had a revelation: the Blessed Virgin Mary asked that her icon be taken back to the spring and put in a church there. So it was decided to build a chapel for the icon right at the spring, but on the place of the manifestation of the Blessed Virgin Mary – next to the holy stone – a big wooden cross was set up" (Sharapov 1995: 14–15). The chapel on the spring of the Manifestation of the Blessed Virgin Mary stood there until the 1930s. The spring itself was filled up with earth a few years ago, when a road was being built to the village of Nosim, but later on it was again cleaned out and restored by the inhabitants of the Kebanyol settlement. In 2000, by the request of the local people, Father Iona, the priest of the Ust-Kulom Petropavlovsk Church, had a cross erected on the site of the chapel and he also held a service there. A procession led by a cross to the spring takes place

Photograph 2. Nyur-Kurya (Kush-shor) – a place of worship of the Upper-Vychegda Komi. Village of Ust-Kulom. An eight-pointed cross welded from metal tubes and covered with a coat of white paint, and a table for offerings. Photograph by Alexander Chuvyurov, 2001.

Photograph 3. Votive cross on the former site of the chapel dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary of Tikhvin. The cross was set up in commemoration of the 2000th anniversary of Christianity, by Father Tikhon, priest of the St. John the Baptist's Church in Myeldino. Photograph by A. Chuvyurov, 2000.

several times a year: the inhabitants of the village of Ust-Kulom visit it on the Day of the Manifestation of the Icon of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Vladimir (August 26/September 8); the inhabitants of the Kebanyol settlement – on the Sunday before St. Peter's Lent and also on the Feast of the Protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary (October 1/14).

Another holiday celebrated by the Upper-Vychegda Komi is the Remembrance Day of the Icon of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Tikhvin in the village of Myeldino. The votive cross is situated in a place called Денисикт (Denisikt), right on the bank. The cross was restored by Father Tikhon, priest of St. John the Baptist's Church in Myeldino (Photograph 3). The worshipping of the Icon of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Tikhvin is explained with the following legend: "A man who was looking for a place to resettle, had a dream of Virgin Mary. And he was told that if Virgin Mary were worshipped, his life would be blessed. And people

took the icon of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Tikhvin and started to go up the River Vychegda. They could not come ashore anywhere, and only at Mys (Myeldino village) the boat ran ashore in itself. And then in a revelation it was said that if the icon of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Tikhvin were worshipped, Mys (Myeldino village) would always be a quiet harbour (*лӧнь пристань*)" (Informant Yelkina). According to another legend, the Blessed Virgin Mary herself appeared sailing on a rock: "This cross will be called the Cross of the Manifestation of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Once the Blessed Virgin Mary came here sailing on a rock. Elderly people still remember the place where the rock lay." According to the informants, in the past, on the Day of the Icon of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Tikhvin sick people used to come to the cross, and children's dresses, diapers, towels, and kerchiefs of those suffering from one or another disease hung all over it. At present it is also maintained that at this holy place recovery from any illness can be expected. On the Day of the Icon of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Tikhvin (June 26/July 9) Father Tikhon, priest of St. John the Baptist's Church in Myeldino together with the local people organized a procession led by a cross from the church to the cross (Photographs 4–5). To participate in the procession, people also come from Timsher settlement, the village of Ust-Nem and other settlements nearby.

There are a number of other places of worship in the village of Myeldino. The village is divided into nine parts that are historically connected with the hamlets incorporated in the village of Myeldino: *Чойвыв* (Choivyv), *Тимсикт* (Timsikt), *Грезд* (Grezd), *Попсикт* (Popsikt), *Ӧнисикт* (Oenisikt), *Денисикт* (Denisikt), *Коджувдор* (Kodzhuvdor), *Кирсикт* (Kirsikt), *Куръядор* (Kuryador). In the past each of these hamlets used to have their own church holidays. In addition to the holiday of the Icon of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Tikhvin, the other one celebrated all over the village was the church holiday dedicated to St. John the Baptist's Church in Myeldino – the birth of St. John the Baptist (*Иван лун* – June 24/July 7). There were three more chapels in the village: the chapel of the Icon of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Tikhvin (Denisikt), not far from the present location of the cross of vows; in the hamlet of Kuryador – the chapel of St. Nikolay Mirlikiiski; in the hamlet of Kodzhuvdor – the chapel of the Great Martyr St. Catherine (Ekaterina) (November 24/December 7). In other hamlets with no chapels there were big altar crosses. In the hamlet of Kirsikt the local holiday was the Assumption of the Virgin Mary (August 15/28); in the hamlet of Kuryador people celebrated the Day of St. Nikolay Mirlikiiski, as well a

Photograph 4. Procession led by a cross on the Day of the Icon of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Tikhvin (July 9, 2001). A group of the members of the congregation together with Father Tikhon, priest of the St. John the Baptist's Church in Myeldino, participating in the procession from the church to the memorial cross on the former site of the chapel dedicated to the Icon of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Tikhvin. Photograph by A. Chuvyurov, 2001.

Photograph 5. Service held at the memorial cross on the former site of the chapel dedicated to the Icon of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Tikhvin. Photograph by A. Chuvyurov, 2001.

Photograph 6. Votive cross dedicated to the Feast of the Protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary (October 1/14), village of Myeldino (hamlet of Kuryador). The cross was restored by Father Tikhon, priest of the St. John the Baptist's Church in Myeldino. Photograph by A. Chuvyurov, 2000.

that of Transfiguration (*Шöр Спас* – August 6/19). Every year on these holidays a priest held services in these chapels and worshipping took place at the altar crosses. After that all the people participated in a procession round the village, also visiting the crosses in its vicinity. In the 1930s the chapels were closed down and then dismantled. Later on the inhabitants of the village erected votive crosses on the sites of the chapels, and they were periodically renovated. In all, there are nine votive crosses in the village and its vicinity at present. Part of the crosses have been erected on the sites of the former chapels, others are in the places worshipped by the local people.

Near the village border, in a place called Kuryador, there is a cross erected to commemorate the Feast of the Protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary (October 1/14). According to the informants it was set up by Grisha Ivan, and that is why it is also called *Гриша Иван крест* (Grisha Ivan's Cross). In the past, there used to be a spring on this spot, which was supposed to possess curative properties. Sick people used to come to this spring (as they also went to the Cross of the Manifestation of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Tikhvin, draw water from the spring and wash their faces and hands with it. The spring water was considered to be the most effective for curing eye diseases as well as various head complaints. The cross was hung all over with different things – diapers, kerchiefs, towels – belonging to the people suffering from either physical or mental illnesses. A few years ago, when a road was being built there, the spring was filled up with earth. The new cross was erected by Father Tikhon, priest of St. John the Baptist's Church in Myeldino (Photogaph 6). By the words of the informants, the local people organized processions led by a cross to the votive crosses on the Assumption of the Virgin Mary (August 15/28) and the Feast of Transfiguration (*Шöр Спас* – August 6/19). At present on these days people also come to the votive crosses, say prayers and put coins there. In the hamlet of Kodzhuvdor each year on the Day of the Great Martyr St. Catherine (Yekaterina) (November 24/December 7) a group of religious women gather at Nina Yelkina's place, in whose yard on the site of the chapel dedicated to the Holy Great Martyr, a votive cross has been erected (Photograph 7). They read hymns and the hagiography of the Great Martyr St. Catherine (Yekaterina), hold a service. In the course of these religious meetings Yelkina reads and interprets various religious texts: different parts of the New Testament (*Новый Завет. Свято-Троицкий Посад.* 1994); the hagiography of the Great Martyr St. Catherine (Yekaterina); Visions of Fiokla.

Photograph 7. Votive cross on the former site of the chapel dedicated to the Holy Great Martyr St. Catherine, village of Myeldino (hamlet of Kodzhuvdor). Photograph by A. Chuvyurov, 2000.

Photograph 8. Votive cross on the site of the old graveyard in the village of Myeldino. Service at this cross used to be held on the day of commemorating prophet St. Elijah (July 20/August 2). Photograph by A. Chuvyurov, 2001.

According to the informants, a number of other votive crosses were standing on the outskirts of the village. On the site of the old graveyard, in the upper part of the village, there is a votive cross (Photograph 8) to which processions used to take place on the Remembrance Day of the Prophet Elijah (Ilya) (July 20/August 2). One of the crosses was erected at the distance of seven kilometres from the village, in a pine forest, next to the miracle-working spring called *Бурдӧдчан ключ* (Key to Recovery). In the past people used to come to this cross in order to hold a service to recover from different diseases (Informant Zhiryutina). In open country, not far from the village centre (Popsikt) there was said to have been a cross, dedicated to Reverend Serafim Sarovski, to which on the Remembrance Day of the reverend people gathered for praying (Informant Zhiryutina).

In a number of Upper-Vychegda villages and hamlets important places for holding all-village religious services are the sites of remembrance crosses erected in the graveyards. As a rule, religious services at them are held on local church holidays: in the village of Ust-Nem (Photograph 9), the hamlet of Shakhtsikt, this kind of holiday is the Day of the Birth of St. John the Baptist (*Иван лун* – June 24/July 7); in the hamlet of Vomynbozh – the Day of the Apostles St. Peter and St. Paul (*Петыр лун* – June 29/July 12). In the hamlet of Kekur the day for a public service and suffrage is the first Sunday after St. Peter's Lent, which is here called *Енвайлан лун* (the day when "God" is taken out, i.e., icons are taken out). The cross is also visited on other more important holidays: at Easter, Whitsunday, the Commemoration Day for the Dead (a week after Easter) *Radonitsa*, the Nativity Day.

This kind of public religious services were also characteristic of other Vychegda hamlets. The aforementioned memorandum drawn up by the Commissioner of the Religious Affairs in 1964 says, "In the settlements of Smolyanka and Ust-Nem the members of the Orthodox Church gather for praying in the open in graveyards, where they have erected a big cross, with a long table and stools for sitting at it. In Smolyanka, for example, the number of believers participating in the services amounts to 150. The same way religious services are held in the villages of Ust-Nem and Lebyazhk" (National Archive of the Republic of Komi, F. 1451, descr. 1, file. 15, p. 8).

An important role in the life of the Vychegda Komi is played by the worshipped "holy" places. In the village of Lebyazhk a brook near the village – *Сотчем-шор* (the Burnt Brook) – is considered to be a holy spot. According to a local legend, once in the autumn, a woman was visited

Photograph 9. Votive cross in the graveyard of the village of Ust-Nem. Service at this cross is held on the day of the birth of St. John the Baptist (June 24/July 7). Photograph by A. Chuvyurov, 2000.

by an itinerant who asked permission to have a rest at her place.

The woman asked her to come in and sit at the fire to warm up. The itinerant left her bundle at the door and sat down on the plank bed. After some time the woman had to go out for some reason. Passing the bundle, she noticed that there were small stones in it. "What a strange woman," the landlady thought to herself. When she returned to the house, the itinerant started to hurry, climbed down the plank bed, thanked the woman for receiving her and, taking her bundle, went out. At the same time a neighbour entered the house. The landlady started to scold her for not greeting the stranger. The neighbour said that she had seen nobody. The landlady rushed out of the house and saw the itinerant walking across the field. She ran after her and caught up with her at the Sochem-shor Brook. There the itinerant vanished, turning into vapour. The landlady understood that it had been the Blessed Virgin Mary herself. Beginning from that time this spot has been worshipped. On holidays people come to this brook, draw water from it and wash their faces and hands with it.

In the village of Dzhezhim the all-village holiday is the Remembrance Day of the Holy Great Martyr St. Blasios (Vlas). According to the local legends, this day started to be celebrated after the following happened: "One woman's husband was a sorcerer (*мӧдысь*), he was

called Klim (Klimenti). Not long before his death he had told his wife that after his death his body should be laid with his face down, otherwise he would harm her. When he died, the relatives gathered in the house, sitting and talking, but in the evening, when they were about to leave, they asked the widow if she was not afraid and if anybody should stay there to keep her company. The widow answered that she had not been afraid of her husband when he was alive and the less was she scared when he was dead. Exactly at midnight the deceased suddenly got out of the coffin and started to climb to the woman on the plank bed. The woman crossed her fingers in order to make the sign of cross and started to say a prayer in a whisper. Next to the stove, behind a partition, there was a newborn calf. The sorcerer started to chew its leg. Then the door opened and a grey-haired man in a white robe came in. He hit the sorcerer, and then the ground opened and the sorcerer sank into the ground. The woman climbed down the stove, bowed to the man and said, "Thank you, God, for helping, for saving me." But the grey-haired man answered, "I came here after my creature", and he pointed at the calf. Beginning from this day the Dzhidzhem people celebrate the Day of St. Blasios (Vlas)." At present on this day (February 11/24) people also gather to hold a service in the house where the icon of the Holy Great Martyr St. Blasios (Vlas) is kept.

In the past votive crosses could also be found in other villages. In the photographic collection of the Russian Museum of Ethnography there are two photographs of the votive crosses made by Tatyana Kryukova during the expedition to the Ust-Kulom district in 1935: one in the village of Don (Photograph 10) and the other in the village of Ust-Nem (Photograph 11). The index card of the photograph from the village of Don says the following, "Wooden octagonal cross set up in the ground, standing at the back wall of a wooden hut, near the fence… This kind of crosses were set up by farmers (in the yards, near the house or in the field) in order to cure of a disease or parry off evil spirits from the house (for example, when it is haunting in the house, i.e., you could hear strange sounds); during processions led by a cross services were held at these crosses and the water was given a blessing". Unfortunately we did not find any more detailed fieldwork notes by Tatyana Kryukova. From the enquiries made during the expedition in 2001 it became clear that in the past there used to be three votive crosses in the village of Don: one in the centre of the village, another on a hillock, and still another in the field. Even nowadays elderly women go to the sites of the crosses on the local religious holiday – Birth of St. John the Baptist (*Иван лун* –

Photograph 10. Votive cross in the hamlet of Don, Ust-Kulom district. Collection of the Russian Museum of Ethnography. C. 6055, No. 44/1. Photograph by Tatyana Kryukova, 1934.

June 24/July 7) and hold a service there.

This article has dwelt upon only a few aspects of the diversity of Christian life in the modern Komi villages. It was deliberately that we did not touch upon the canonical range of religious and church holidays as well as local annual church holidays, and confined ourselves only to the range of the phenomena that sprang up spontaneously in the community. Some of these phenomena, such as, for example, the Bursylysyas movement, or the life of the religious hero V. Gichev from Kerchomya, came into existence in spite of the canonical tradition of the official church and separately from it. When speaking about the role of the saints in the lives of the contemporary Komi population of this region, we maintain that they serve as certain spiritual orientations and signs in their everyday Christian life. These worshipped local saints together with the collection of manuscript texts

Photograph 11. Votive cross in the village of Ust-Nem. Collection of the Russian Museum of Ethnography. C. 6055, No. 45. Photograph by T. Kryukova, 1934.

related to the religious activities of the Bursylysyas, constitute the general cultural background against which the present relgious and ethno-cultural processes in Upper-Vychegda unfold.

In conclusion we can say that the religious processes taking place in Upper-Vychegda at the end of the 19th century played an important role in the formation of the local groups of the Upper-Vychegda Komi. Especially we should emphasise the significant role of the Upper-

Vychegda manuscript tradition (which came into being at the end of the 19th century under the influence of the Bursylysyas and has survived until nowadays) in the preservation and development of the Komi language. Certainly this article touched upon only a few aspects of such an interesting phenomenon as the cult of the local village saints and renowned religious heroes in the culture of the contemporary Komi people, which, undoubtedly, requires further fieldwork and research in archives.

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Translated by Tiina Mällo

Latvians' Ethnic Stereotypes Regarding the Ethnic and Cultural Minorities of Latvia

Ilze Boldāne

The multi-ethnic composition of the Latvian population is defined by its place on the map of Europe. In the progression of time, ways, interests and cultures of four ethnic groups – Baltic Finns, Balts, Germans and Slavs have crossed here, but the greatest changes in the ethnic composition of the Latvian population were carried out in the second part of the 20th century. The ethnic structure of Latvia became more like that of the USSR at that time. Therefore, after restoring the independence of the Republic of Latvia the solving of the integration problem was one of the most important tasks for the newly formed state. The government of Latvia is still working on this complicated and delicate problem. To my mind, ethnic stereotypes, as models for the behaviour of people regulating social intercourse between ethnic groups, are part of the problem. Moreover, ethnic stereotypes could be a powerful weapon of political manipulation and might influence and start processes of consolidation or separation among ethnic groups.

Ethnic Stereotypes and their main causes

Psychologist H. Didot gives such a definition of *stereotype*: "Stereotype is: 1) A common concept or heuristic; 2) A generalized perception ascribing particular traits, characteristics, values, aspects, behaviour of a group or to a member of a group without regard to accuracy or applicability; 3) An act of making such a judgement with unwillingness or inability to alter a personal point of view" (*The Dictionary…* 1999: 944; the same explanation in *Sovremennyi…* 2000: 626). The author will operate with the conception that *ethnic stereotypes* are biased, oversimplified, inflexible, with a frequently erroneous conception usually of ethnical group members' mental, moral and physical features. In the course of time and in a concrete economic and political context, ethnic stereotypes originated and had taken place in people minds. The steady and final keeping of images about some ethnic group's mental, moral and physical features in peoples' senses, whether

well or ill disposed, then the direction of these images depend on stereotyping background.

According to the psychologists V. Trusov and A. Filipov opinions, the creation of ethnic stereotypes depends on: 1) The really existing traits of the ethnic group that make it different from the others; 2) An ethical system and perception of people that do the evaluation; 3) An interface experience on the cultural, economic and social level (Trusov, Filipov 1984: 13–14). The process of raising national awareness is one of the most important causes for the bearing of ethnic stereotypes. During that period of national history, people start evaluating the ambient environment through an ethnocentric viewpoint and the classification of the closest ethnic group has mostly an ill disposed direction at that time. So, in the period of the so-called first Latvian Revival (second part of 19th century) the Latvian press contains a lot of negative information about German mental and moral features. The same situation with the Russian ethnic group takes place in the beginning of 1990s. Confrontation and conflict between states also creates a lot of negative ethnic stereotypes (Malikova 1997: 60).

Individual sense of belonging to a definite ethnos is defined by family (family's life style, parents' personalities and notions), ethnic and language environment and culture (education, interests), "occasional conditions" (specific living conditions that influenced people minds' eye, events in national history, etc.) (Karpova 1989: 17).

Table 1. The largest ethnic groups in Latvia (%) from 1935 until 2000

	1935	1943	1959	1970	1979	1989	2000
Latvians	75,5	81,9	62	56,7	53,7	52,06	57,6
Russians	10,59	9,5	26,5	29,8	32,9	33,9	29,6
Jews	4,79	–	1,7	1,5	1,1	0,8	0,4
Belorussians	1,38	2,7	2,9	4	4,4	4,4	4,1
Poles	2,5	2,1	2,8	2,6	2,5	2,2	2,5
Ukrainians	0,1	0,6	1,4	2,2	2,6	3,4	2,7
Lithuanians	1,2				1,5	1,3	1,4
Estonians	0,4				0,1	0,1	0,1

Sources: *Nacionālās*... 1996: 88; *Latvijas*... 2001: 33.

The competition and availability of working places among origin inhabitants and incomers are also influenced by factors arising from ethnic stereotypes. As a necessity to share with ethnic and cultural minorities, the state offered economic, social and other profits to create

a negative evaluation of a specific ethnic group (Oganjanyan 1989: 52). Here, we could see migration processes as promoters of stereotyping. The most ancient inhabitants of the Latvian territory – Baltic Finns and Balts – since the 12th century, had to learn to co-habit with Russians and Germans. This was followed in the 16th century – with Jews, Poles and Swedes, since the 17th century – with Belorussian and the Russian Old Believers, but since the 18th century (after the annexation of the territory of Latvia by the Russian Empire) – also with orthodox Russians. But the greatest changes in ethnic composition of population of Latvia took place in the second part of the 20th century (Table 1). At that time, a lot of people – representatives of ethnic group never living in Latvia before, members of ethnos from the Caucasus and Middle Asia, for example, – joined the traditional ethnic group. As shown by the results of the research work directed by Dr. Edwin Poppe, economic competition and migration processes are the main promoters for elevating ethnic stereotypes in post Soviet countries (ERCOMER). Latvia is not an exception and results could be the same if that research work would be carried out here.

The Research of Ethnic Stereotypes in Latvia

Ethnic stereotypes used to be divided into automatic stereotypes (images of ones own ethnic group) and other stereotypes (image of other cultural, ethnical or national groupings). The most ancient Latvians' auto-stereotypes we could find in the folk songs and tales that usually stress the Latvians love of work and songs. Starting with the second part of 19th century, the Latvians' characteristic and main values are described by native prose authors and poets. Press materials have to be used as a source in researching ethnic stereotypes in Latvian society because the official point of view on national questions and peoples' thoughts about themselves in concrete historical period turns up here. At different periods of the 20th century, native and foreign psychologists and ethnologists did research work asking for Latvian opinion about their own traits and main values. Folklorist P. Birkerts (Birkerts 1937), psychologists J. A. Students (Students 1935), Ā. Karpova (Karpova 1990), G. Dimdins (Dimdins 1998), I. Austers (Austers 2001), politologist I. Apine (Apine 2001), ethnologist S. Ryzhakova (Ryzhakova 2001) evaluated Latvians' images about the most characteristic features of their own ethnic group.

The self-estimation of ethnic grouping that we could see in auto stereotypes creates its attitude and reaction to the environment, events

and human beings around it. As mentioned before, ethnic hetero-stereotype is a generalised perception ascribing particular traits, characteristics, values and behaviour to other ethnic group without regard to accuracy and applicability. What kind of features – positive or negative – will dominate in that evaluation depends on the social intercourse of both nations and on the context of the social – political situation. The oldest Latvians' images about their closest neighbours – Estonians, Germans, Gypsies, Jews, Lithuanians, Poles and Russians – appear in Latvian folklore materials. For example, Latvian folk legends and anecdotes describe Gypsies as artful, sticky-fingered and quick-witted people, but according to Latvian folk songs Estonians are "short, fat" (ALF 212, 84 comp., ALF 2212, 286), "black men" used to dressing in black clothes (LD 2851, 2850, etc.) and the Estonian mother brings up pretty and beautiful singing daughters (LD 13288, ALF 1900, 2613) (Rozenbergs 2000a). A lot of Latvian proverbs evaluated ethnic groups that live alongside: "Bad as a Russian shirt" (Birkerts 1927: 33); "Jew needs money as strong as the devil – soul" (Birkerts 1927: 49) and so on. According to ethnographic analysis in Latvian folk songs, the historical and cultural relations between the Latvians and the other ethnic groups may be considered from four aspects: 1) Ethnic relations; 2) Economic ties; 3) Language contacts and 4) Traditional customs and interpersonal relations (Rozenbergs 2000a: 151).

Beginning with the 19th century and until nowadays, fictional publications, journals and newspapers were used as sources for worming out Latvian hetero stereotypes. Latvian prose authors described and evaluated not only Latvians but also neighbouring ethnic groups – Gypsies, Jews, Russians, etc. – in their novels. Press materials could give us, not only fixed stereotypes of definite historical period, but they could show the changing process of that evaluation and could reveal a background of that spelling. Nobody has yet worked with this material in Latvia. Latvian evaluation about the cultural and ethnic minorities of Latvia, mostly images of Russians, comes from sociological quizzes (*Pētījumu*… 1998: 119, etc.). Researchers – G. Dimdins (Dimdins 1998), I. Austers (Austers 2001), S. Ryzhakova (Ryzhakova 2001) – also build up their questionnaires or interviews asking Latvian respondents to evaluate Russians – the largest ethnic minority in Latvia.

View in Our Conception

The author, taking an initiative from research work searching for the evaluation of Estonians by Russians living in Estonia (Johansen 1998),

carried out the inquiry in Riga and its nearest proximate districts. The questioning took place in the summer and autumn of 2000. The inquiry was done in order to learn the Latvian image of the traditional ethnic minorities such as the Belorussians, Estonians, Jews, Lithuanians, Poles, Russians, Ukrainians and also Georgians. In the research, a quantitative method of collecting material was used. The questionnaire was completed with the purpose of discovering the perception of Latvians regarding the mental, moral and physical features of the members of the designated ethnic groups and it contained 28 specific questions.

The questionnaire included such things as: 1 asking how to evaluate such mental and moral features of the ethnic group: 2 Assumption, civility, hospitality, love for work, male domination in family, national awareness, patriotism, preciseness, religion, responsibility, sense of humour, tolerance to other ethnic groups and wisdom. The choice in evaluating was between: "not at all", "very weak", "weak", "reasonably", "definitely","very definitely". Informants were also asked to characterise the physical parameters (height, tendency to corpulence, colour of hair and eyes, shape of nose) of ethnic groups. Classification accepted by the largest part of respondents will be mirrored in the following text.

For giving an opinion as to how respondents build up their viewpoint about the estimated ethnic group, questions about interethnic contacts at the respondents work, or study, place and interface experience in their social life were added to the questionnaire. The item asking for the main source of information – newspapers, journals, TV and radio programmes, colleagues, relatives, neighbours, others – and the language in which respondents received, was included in the questionnaire with the same aim.

Three hundred questionnaires were handed out to different sexes, old age and varied educational background people in schools, libraries, universities, and offices. We received only 131 back in the allotted time. Ninety-eight Latvians participated in questionnaire. Further evaluation of cultural and ethnic minorities of Latvia, given by Latvians that took part in the process, will be analysed.

Mental and moral features

In everyday life 25,2% of respondents encounter Belorussians and 18,3% of them work together with members of this ethnic group. 23,7% of respondents used to meet Ukrainians as neighbours, friends, people

on the street and 22,9% of them work or study together with representatives of this ethnic minority in Latvia. According to respondents, patriotism, national awareness and religiosity do not characterise Belorussians and Ukrainians. As a definite trait of these ethnic groups, the respondents quoted hospitality. The patriarchal family model, as seen in the answers, is a characteristic feature of Ukrainians to the Latvian mind.

Estonians are one of the smallest ethnic minorities in Latvia. In everyday life, the Estonians encountered by 12,2% of respondents and 9,9% of them work or study together with representatives of this ethnic minority in Latvia. The Estonians are patriotic people according to Latvians. They have a definite national awareness. Latvians name assumption as a definite trait of Estonians. According to the view of the respondents, Estonians love to work, are very responsible and precise people.

In everyday life, Georgians encounter 2,3% of respondents. According to the mind of the respondents, Georgians have a definite national awareness. Latvians evaluate them as patriotic people. Hospitality, civility and assumption also characterise Georgians. They have, at the same time, a good sense of humour and a patriarchal family structure.

23,7% of respondents meet Jews in their everyday life and 22,1% of them work or study together with members of this ethnic group. According to respondents, Jews have a very definite national awareness. They are a very patriotic and religious people. The research shows that wisdom is a very definite trait of the Jew's character. Jews love to work. The Latvians see them as a responsible and a very precise people. Jews are very civilised and confident at the same time. A patriarchal family structure characterises Jews according to respondents.

16,8% of respondents encounter Lithuanians in their everyday life and 13,7% of them work or study together with members of this ethnic group. Latvians see Lithuanians as patriotic and religious people. They have a definite national awareness. Lithuanians love to work and they are a responsible people according to respondents.

In everyday life, Poles encounter 15,3% of respondents and 12,2% of them work or study together with representatives of this ethnic minority of Latvia. The poll shows that the Poles have a very definite national awareness and that they are very religious people. Poles are hospitable. They also have a patriarchal family structure as a characteristic feature in the mind of Latvians. Furthermore, Latvians evaluate Poles as very assumptive people.

Russians are the largest ethnic minority of Latvia. Due to the results of the questionnaire, 93,1% of respondents used to meet Russians in their everyday life as neighbours, friends, people on the street, but 81,7% of them work or study together with Russians. Therefore, respondents have close contact with this ethnic group. Respondents think that Russians are patriotic and have a definite national awareness. Russians are very hospitable and they have a very definite sense of humour. They are assumptive people yet at the same time have a patriarchal family structure as a characteristic feature according to the mind of respondents.

Physical features

Through the questionnaire we would like to know the informants valuation of the Latvian ethnic and cultural minorities by such physical features. Height – (the choice was between "tall", "above average", "middle", "under average", "short", "another opinion"). Tendency to corpulence (the choice was between "not at all", "very weak", "weak", "reasonably", "definitely", "very definitely"). Colour of hair (the choice was between "blond", "red", "brown", "black", "other opinions") and eyes (the choice was between "blue", "green", "brown", "grey", "other opinions"), shape of nose (the choice was between "up-turned", "straight", "hooked", "tall", "snub", "like a potato", "other opinions"). Very often, all possible variants on answers describing physical features were used on the answer sheets by the respondents and this created a problem in the process of analysing the results of the questionnaire.

The inquiry shows that, according to respondents, Jews are not as tall as other discussed ethnic groups. In the subject of hair colour, the statistics show that Estonians are blond people, Jews and Georgians are black-haired people, but other investigated ethnic groups have a brownish hair colour. According to the respondents' opinion, Estonians and Russians are blue-eyed, Lithuanians and Belorussians are grey-eyed, but Georgians, Jews, Ukrainians and Poles are brown-eyed people. In the subject of nasal shaping, input shows that Georgians and Jews have hooked noses; the other offered ethnic groups have straight ones.

Conclusions

The results of the author's very first research work show there are definite images about mental, moral and physical features of ethnic and

cultural minorities in Latvian society. But because of the fact that not all features describing cultural and ethnic minorities of Latvia, resulting from written sources, were included in the questionnaire and that there were not a sufficient number of informants, the author, for the present, could talk only about the hypothetical tendencies of the stereotyping process in Latvia.

The personal experience, media (the newspapers *Diena*, *Neatkarīgā Rīta Avīze* and informative TV and radio programmes) due to the questionnaires turn out to be the dominant factor in forming images about ethnic minorities. According to the analysis of data emerging from the questionnaires, personal experience is not the main stimulus for stereotyping process, because respondents have a very definite image for an ethnic group – such like Estonians, Georgians, Jews – with which a very low percentage of informants have had any contact. So according to the results of the poll, the image of those ethnic groups, with whom respondents have the smallest social intercourse experience, is more definite.

Latvians very often used the variant "reasonably" ascribing traits of Belorussians and Ukrainians that led us to think – respondents associate these ethnic groups with Russians as one.

The results of poll show that in characteristic with Slavonic ethnic groups (Belorussians, Poles, Russians and Ukrainians) dominate one kind of trait (hospitality, for example), but in the image for Estonians and Lithuanians – another one (love for work, responsibility, precision).

The evaluations of ethnic and cultural minorities of Latvia, given before, simply characterise hypothetical tendencies of the stereotyping process in Latvia. Improving upon the research work, the most widespread opinions existing in people's awareness about Latvian ethnic groupings will reduce, but use of a qualitative and structured element method in following research works will help to define promoters of developing of ethnic stereotypes more precisely.

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Translated by Natalia Shorohova

On the Identity of the Members of the Võru Society in Tallinn

Marju Kõivupuu

From the year 1988 onwards we can speak about the so-called Võru Movement in Estonian cultural space. This movement unites Võru-minded people speaking the Võru dialect, who consider as their main objective to bring into people's consciousness Võrumaa as a value, first and foremost, in local but also Estonian and world cultural context. The first years of the Võru Movement were characterized by the endeavours to gain cultural autonomy (the movement compared themselves to, for example, the Jews and Armenians in Estonia) and considering themselves as a separate nation (comparison with Coastal Swedes) who had resided in the area historically known as Võrumaa already for thousands of years. This kind of approach is inherent not only to Estonia, but also to the whole spirit of the era, with international power structures exerting control over nation states and inside the latter small groupings spring up which are based on ethnic peculiarities and can apply for regional autonomy or make attempts to separate in order to achieve ethnic self-determination (Berg 1994: 175). Undoubtedly one of the most vital ingredients of South-Estonian culture is the Võru dialect and the corresponding culture. They have survived better due to the peripherality of this linguistic and cultural area (Laul 1999: 63).

The Võru Movement culminated in the foundation of the Võru Institute in 1995. In addition to the aforementioned, there is an interdisciplinary unit under the name *Centre of South-Estonian Linguistic and Cultural Studies* (*Lõuna-Eesti keele- ja kultuuriuuringute keskus*) operating at the Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Tartu, whose aim is to coordinate and organize research into the cultural area of the historical South-Estonian dialect and the respective academic studies. The research activities of these institutions are also supported by the state programme "South-Estonian Dialect and Culture".[1]

[1] The volume of this article does not enable the author (and it is not her aim, either) to give a survey of the linguistic and cultural studies in South Estonia. The reader can obtain more detailed information on the subject from the home page of the Võru Institute (http://www.wi.ee).

In 1998 the Võru Institute conducted an ethno-sociological survey "Customs, Language and Identity of South-East Estonians in 1998", one of the aims of which was to get answers to the following questions: Who are natives of Võrumaa? How many of them are there and how they identify themselves? The survey was conducted in three south-eastern counties of Estonia (Põlva, Valga and Võru), which almost completely cover the territory of the historical Võrumaa. The results of the survey were published by the working group in 2000 in the transactions of the institute as a collection under the heading *A kiilt rahvas kynõlõs... Võrokeste keelest, kommetest, identiteedist* (But People Speak a Language. The Language, Customs and Identity of the Natives of Võrumaa), edited by Kadri Koreinik and Jan Rahman (Koreinik, Rahman 2000).

The status and development of the Võru dialect has certainly been influenced by the fact that for a long time Estonian has been the predominating language in its linguistic area. This has created a dense network between the two similar languages and the natives of Võrumaa have developed a two-level identity – they are the natives of Võrumaa and Estonians simultaneously (Eichenbaum, Pajusalu 2001: 487).

Yet, people who consider themselves as natives of Võrumaa and for whom the local dialect and culture are still essential categories from the point of view of identity, live sporadically also outside the historical Võrumaa. In Tallinn and Tartu, the largest towns of Estonia, they have joined into societies: the Võru Society in Tallinn (*Tal'na Võro Selts*) and the Society of Võro-minded People of Tartu (*Tartu Võru Vaimu Selts*). In addition to the aforementioned, the Võro Society VKKF (*Võro Selts "Võro Keele ja Kultuuri Fond"*) uniting the natives of Võrumaa all over Estonia is operating in the town of Võru (Kõivupuu 1998).

On the bases of the experience that I gained while participating in a working group for an ethno-sociological survey conducted by the Võru Institute in 1998, I sent out a short questionnaire to the members of the Võru Society in Tallinn in March 2002. One of the objectives of this questionnaire was to find out what are the characteristics on the basis of which the members of the society identify themselves as the natives of Võrumaa, and to compare the results with the ones of the corresponding survey conducted by the Võru Institute. Second, I was interested in how well the members of the society are in touch with the present cultural life in the Võru dialect and, third, what the members of the society think should be done to preserve the Võru dialect and culture. Namely, according to the Articles of Foundation, one of the main tasks of the society is to preserve the Võru dialect and the sense of

identity both in historical Võrumaa and in Tallinn.

In addition to the aforementioned reasons, I also considered it necessary to conduct this survey as, although a certain number of the members of the society actively participate in the cultural life in the Võru dialect, the society as a whole has remained in the position of a bystander in shaping the ideological side of the Võru Movement and acts on its own. On the traditional yearly get-togethers of the natives of Võrumaa and their friends at Kaika Open University the members of the society always emphasize the fact that they are from Tallinn and, by doing so, draw a certain symbolic line between themselves and the rest of the participants in the Võru Movement.

The great interest that the members of the society showed towards the survey might be explained by the fact that officially they had never been asked to express their opinion about the Võru Movement and its activities. According to the board, instead of the usual forty or fifty, more than eighty members participated in the "survey meeting". The keen interest in the survey was also proved by the fact that those members who were not able to participate and fill in the questionnaire on the spot, asked the interviewer to send it home to them not to stay on the sidelines. Through the questionnaire and the disclosure of its results the members of the society saw a possibility to have a say – publicly and on a scientific level – in the issues close to their hearts, doing it on behalf of the society but remaining autonomous on the personal level.

The data necessary for the survey were obtained by questioning the members of the society by the closed method (i.e., providing them with multiple choice answers), yet, the respondents were also allowed to add their own commentaries and remarks, which have been taken into consideration when making generalizations. Also they were allowed to mark several answer variants if they found them to be suitable/correct. The answers had to be individual but anonymous. As seniors dominate among the membership, this also determined the volume of the questionnaire – the board suggested that the number of questions should not exceed ten.[2]

[2] Here I would like to express my gratitude to Kadri Koreinik, researcher of the Võru Institute, for her competent advice given to me in compiling the questionnaire.

Overview of the Võru Society in Tallinn

The association uniting the natives of Võrumaa who live in Tallinn can boast of an almost 13-year history – the official date of foundation is April 8, 1990. The Chairperson of the Board is Viivi Eksta. According to the Articles of Foundation the main aim of the society is the preservation of the Võru dialect and the sense of identity of the natives of Võrumaa both in Tallinn and in historical Võrumaa, and as of 2001, the society has 151 members. The members get together once in two months on Sundays. The meetings are characterized by certain rituals. The snacks offered to tea and coffee are mostly connected with traditional calendar festivities (cottage cheese, gingerbread, Shrove buns, etc.) and, as a rule, are home-made. The get-togethers are usually started with songs in the Võru dialect sang by the female ensemble of the society called "Liiso" (conducted by Inda Kõiva). Usually two papers are read. The first is on cultural history, which is not necessarily always connected with Võrumaa, and the other is the so-called generally educative one. One of the papers is always read by a guest, who is not a member of the society. The papers are followed by an unofficial part. In addition to the ensemble there is also a handicraft circle supervised by Valve Pruuden, and an amateur drama group supervised by Ants Kõiv, who is also a productive playwright in the Võru dialect. It has become a tradition that to Kaika Open University the Võru Society in Tallinn always comes with a new production of a play.

As was already mentioned above, the majority of the members of the society is constituted by seniors: the average age for women is 73 and for men – 70 years. It is somewhat remarkable that attempts have been made for quite a long time to found a junior assembly on the initiative of Toivo Tootsen (b. 1943), whose birth date suggests his belonging more to the seniors than the juniors.

A considerable part of the members of the society settled down in Tallinn in the 1950s. For many people the choice of the place of residence was caused by the Stalinist repressive politics, which made it impossible for the deported people or their children to return to their former homesteads, not to mention their parents' farm. Most of the members of the society have never been able to visit many places in historical Võrumaa, neither can they speak different Võru subdialects.[3]

[3] The data are taken from the home page of the society http://www.zone.ee/tvselts, which has been available for those interested in it since September 2002.

A relatively great part of them have found their home and work in Tallinn after the graduation of a local higher educational institution. Although the majority of the members of the society have lived in Tallinn for 40–50 years on an average, part of them still call themselves natives of Võrumaa in Tallinn rather than citizens of Tallinn. It is remarkable that, although the questionnaire did not include a question about it, several respondents found it necessary to emphasize it in their answers about the year when they came to live in Tallinn. Also, my earlier surveys and observations have proved that, at least the natives of Võrumaa consider as a local resident the one who has not moved house as far as people remember, and a family's permanent residence is a value in itself (Kõivupuu 2001: 194–196).

General characterization of respondents

100 members of the society, sixty of whom were women, filled in and returned the questionnaire. This constitutes two thirds of the total number of the members.

Fig. 1. Composition of the respondents by age.

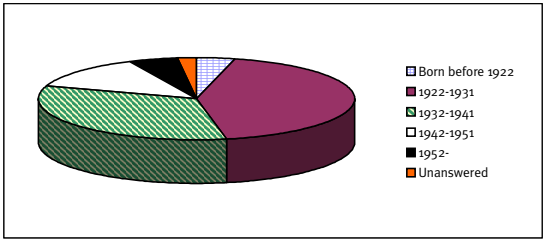
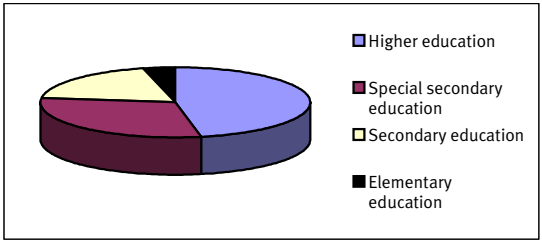


Fig. 2. Composition of the respondents by education.



When compiling the questionnaire, I became interested in how many of the members of the society settled down in Tallinn during the Soviet period, what was the respective number in the so-called transition period and also during the period of the re-established Republic of Estonia. The majority of the respondents (and also members of the society) have settled down in Tallinn during the Soviet period (the average length of time lived in Tallinn is 42 years) and only a very small minority of the members have been living in Tallinn less than ten years. There were no respondents who had lived in Tallinn 10–15 years.

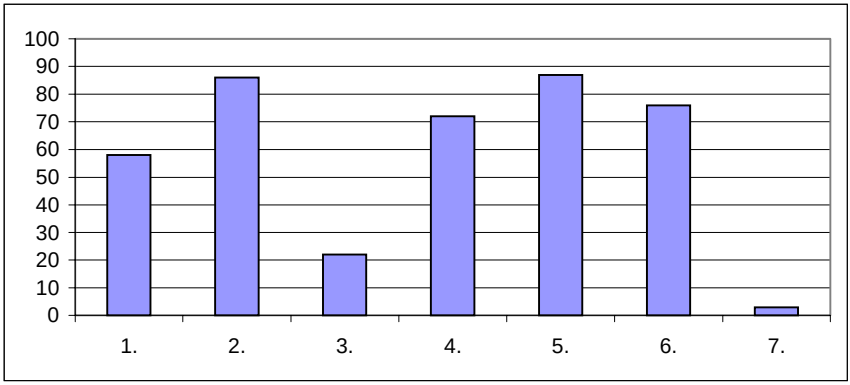
The sample is acceptable, as the aforementioned indicators are also valid for the whole membership of the society (source: Membership list of the society).

About the identity of the natives of Võrumaa residing in Tallinn

One of the objectives of the survey was to find out what are the features on the basis of which the members of the society identify themselves as natives of Võrumaa. According to the results of the survey conducted by the Võru Institute in 1998 in historical Võrumaa the language is considered as the main characteristic feature of the native of Võrumaa (by 84% of the respondents). The local origin and place of residence, which are inherent to the natives of Võrumaa, were not considered so important. A little over half of the respondents considered these indicators as essential (Koreinik, Rahman 2000: 43). However, the results of this survey revealed that for the members of the Võru Society in Tallinn the Võru dialect is a relatively less important factor in determining the identity, ranging only as fourth. The identity of the natives of Võrumaa in Tallinn seems to be made up of several different component parts, among which prevail the birthplace in historical Võrumaa, parents originating from Võrumaa and the belonging to the Võru Society (see Fig. 3). For the interviewer it was also surprising that a relatively great part of the respondents identified themselves as the natives of Võrumaa because their spouses came from this part of Estonia.

The commentaries to answers were characterized by a nostalgic, even mythical relationship with childhood-Võrumaa as a paradise lost forever. This might be due to the fact that in many cases the decision to move to Tallinn was not made voluntarily, but was forced upon them. Part of the elderly members of the society have not been to their native Võrumaa for the last 10–20 years.

Fig. 3. I feel like a native of Võrumaa because....



1. I talk/speak the Võru dialect
2. I was born in Võrumaa
3. My spouse is a native of Võrumaa
4. I belong to the Võru Society
5. My parents come from Võrumaa
6. Some of my relatives are natives of Võrumaa
7. Other (specify)

As the society has set as one of its main tasks the promotion of the preservation of the Võru dialect, first and foremost, in historical Võrumaa, as well as among the natives of Võrumaa residing in Tallinn, the following questions were asked about the possibilities of speaking the dialect. The members of the society have the possibility to use the **Võru dialect** (the local subdialect, not the so-called modern Võru literary language) mainly among themselves (82 affirmative answers) and in Võrumaa (65 affirmative answers). As the answers reveal, the residents of Tallinn seldom use the dialect at home. It is mainly used when speaking with their peers and former schoolmates (57 affirmative answers), and much less with the children and grandchildren. 12 respondents admitted that they had nobody to talk to in the Võru dialect and a few of the members of the society (5 respondents) asserted that actually they were not able to speak the Võru dialect at all.

Proceeding from the aforementioned, the society fulfils a certain function in the preservation of the Võru dialect. A remarkably great number of the members of the society considered it necessary to

emphasize the amateur drama group and the ensemble as linguistic environment and a valuable communication medium.

The infrequent use of the Võru dialect at home can be explained by the almost fifty years' long period in the Soviet educational and cultural policy, which condemned the speaking of the dialect as it was supposed to hinder the acquisition of the Estonian language. However, it is a generally known fact that a family as a language environment is not sufficient, if the surrounding environment does not support the domestic language use.

As the members of the society are rather old, many of them have been able neither to visit their native place for a long time nor communicate in the Võru dialect with the local population. This is indirectly also proved by the levelled language usage, which manifests itself, for example, in the inconsistent use of the vowel harmony (*hindätunnetusõ*: pro *hindätunnõtusõ*); declination of words (*võrokõistõ:* pro *võrokõisi*), etc. In the open answers the respondents stated that they willingly speak the Võru dialect with anyone who responds to that. Here we should draw parallels with the survey conducted by the Võru Institute in 1998, which also revealed that the number of respondents using the Võru dialect when speaking with their peers and parents is much greater than the number of those who use it with their children and grandchildren. This might, however, mean that the knowledge of the Võru dialect among the natives of Võrumaa and the dialect as a sign of their identity are not necessarily eternal.

The natives of Võrumaa in Tallinn and the media in the Võru dialect

1. Written media in the Võru dialect

With the support of the state programme *South Estonian Language and Culture* a monthly paper called *Võromaa rahva uman keelen kuuleht Uma Leht* started to be published beginning from August 1, 2000 as a supplement to Põlva county paper *Koit* (Dawn) and Võru county paper *Võrumaa Teataja* (Võrumaa Newsletter). People who have subscribed to any of these newspapers, can find *Uma Leht* in their post-box. *Uma Leht* can also be subscribed to separately. In Tallinn you can buy the monthly at the newsstand in the National Library of Estonia.

The answers to the questionnaire revealed that the aforementioned monthly paper has not gained much popularity among the members of the society. Only 18 respondents regularly read *Uma Leht*, and four of them claimed that in Tallinn the paper is hardly available. 26 respondents said that it was the first time they had heard about the

newspaper. This was one of the questions that many of the respondents skipped. They might have been ashamed of their ignorance. On the basis of the answers given we can indirectly presume that the members of the society are obviously not active subscribers and readers of Võru and Põlva county papers.

In the year 1998, when the ethno-sociological survey was conducted, no periodicals in the Võru dialect were published in Võrumaa. However, 20.4% of the respondents considered it necessary to have such a newspaper or a magazine. If we add to this also South-East Estonians (44.7%), who were for the existence of a periodical in the Võru dialect, it became evident that *in spe* the number of the supporters of the written media in the Võru dialect was greater than the number of its opponents. However, approximately a third of the respondents who supported the usage of the local language in the media, did not consider it necessary to have a separate newspaper or a magazine in this language. This can partly be due to the fact that people are used to reading feuilletons, stories and articles on culture in the Võru dialect, but they do not consider as acceptable obituaries and political news written in it. Part of the people also find that the dialect is not official enough to have a whole periodical in it (Koreinik, Rahman 2000: 110–111).

In order to obtain additional data, I had a telephone conversation in early January this year with Ülle Harju, Editor-in-Chief of the newspaper *Uma Leht*, who claimed that due to the shortage of money they have so far failed to conduct an official opinion poll in Võrumaa in order to find out about the popularity of their newspaper, although the editorial board has been really interested in it. The editorial board last (in December 2002) questioned the readers of the Põlva county paper *Koit*, whose supplement *Uma Leht* is. 42 respondents out of 89 said that they always read *Uma Leht,* 27 of them said that they never did it and 20 claimed that they did it sometimes. By the readers' estimations the contents of the newspaper are interesting, yet the Võru literary language is difficult to read. The editor-in-chief considered it remarkable that the people who claimed that they did not read the paper, very vehemently criticized the paper as such, including the materials published in there.

2. Electronic media in the Võru dialect

According to the survey conducted by the Võru Institute in 1998, the South-East Estonians assume a favourable attitude towards media in

their own dialect as well as in general (by the BMF (Balti Meediateabe AS) survey conducted in the autumn of 1998, South-East Estonians outnumber the Estonian average in watching TV, and listen to the radio as much as the Estonians in Tallinn). It is highly probable that this is due to the fading of stationary cinemas, the infrequent guest performances of theatres in the remote areas and so on. Mass media, however, is the entertainment most easily and cheaply available for people. On the basis of my long-term experience gained during the expeditions to historical Võrumaa, I can say that even on average and modest farmsteads the video is quite a common commodity, which is used during seasonal work period to record all the day-time soaps to watch them in the evening after the daily work has been completed.

The Võru Radio founded in 1990 (which, by the way, was the first non-state radio station on the territory of the Soviet Union) used the Võru dialect in broadcasting. In 1991–1993 programmes in the Võru dialect predominated, a special children's programme was launched, and so on. The Võru Radio operated only for a few years and at present no entirely Võru-dialect programmes are made any more. Within the framework of the state programme "Võru dialect and culture" *Vikerraadio* (one of the Estonian radio stations) completed a series called *"Paigavaim"* (Local Spirit) in 2002, which deals with the issues related to the Võru dialect and culture but is not in the Võru dialect throughout.

By the 1998 survey the South-East Estonians found it most acceptable for the Võru dialect to be used on television, where 60.4% of the respondents claimed they would watch the corresponding programmes. Only 5.1% of the respondents said that they would never watch programmes in the Võru dialect (Koreinik, Rahman 2000: 114).

Only 14 members of the society watched the whole six-series' programme introducing the life in contemporary Võrumaa called "*Kaemi perrä*" (Let's Have a Look), which was shown in the spring and summer of 2001 on Estonian Television channel. A few of them were watched by 52 respondents (*the time was not convenient; it is a pity that there was no rerun on Saturday morning*) and 29 members of the society heard about this programme for the first time. As in Tallinn cultural events are quite frequent, in the case of modest advertising the TV and radio broadcasts connected with Võrumaa might not reach their target group at all. Unfortunately it is also not possible to compare the answers given to this question to the interest the local inhabitants of Võrumaa expressed towards the aforementioned series, as a poll

pertaining to this has not been conducted on the spot and the producers have no feedback.

Natives of Võrumaa in Tallinn and Võru literary language

Reading in the Võru dialect

Reading in the Võru dialect is a relatively new means of culture consumption for contemporary natives of Võrumaa and is still arousing conflicting opinions. In their answers to the questionnaire, the members of the society claimed that they would rather read periodicals (46 affirmative answers), fiction (25 affirmative answers) and textbooks (20 affirmative answers) in the Võru dialect. In open answers plays in the dialect were most often mentioned. A few of the respondents do not read texts in the dialect as the literary language is difficult (15 answers) and *reading is very time-consuming*. Two of the members of the society are convinced that the Võru literary language is not necessary at all and instead of this world languages should be taught and learnt more.

Võru (literary) language at school

As in the Articles of Foundation of their society the members have found it necessary to deal with the preservation of their language in historical Võrumaa, I was also interested in what they thought about the necessity of teaching the language at Võrumaa schools. 63 respondents consider it necessary as an optional subject, 15 – as an obligatory one, and 14 – indispensable as an obligatory subject.[4] None of the respondents marked the choice "I do not care".

The issue of the Võru literary language is still polemical. As I am connected with the compiling and editing of the publications in the Võru dialect myself, it might have influenced the results in the positive direction to a certain extent. At the same time it was a pleasure to learn that a heated discussion on this subject started on the spot when people were filling in the questionnaire (just before I conducted the survey, the Võru-Estonian dictionary had been published, which was introduced by A. Kõiv at the meeting). Namely, a considerable part of the members of the society see the propagating and teaching of the Võru dialect as a confrontation to the Estonian language and culture, not to mention the world culture(s) and languages, – or, in other words, as a cultural

[4] 14 respondents had replaced the choice "necessary" I offered with the word "indispensable", obviously wishing to especially emphasize the necessity of language learning.

regress, a "back-to-the past" attitude. The same attitude is not unfamiliar also for several ideological leaders in the Republic of Estonia (e.g., the polemics published in Estonian daily newspapers in the spring of 2002). On the other hand, the formation of this kind of aggressive attitude is favoured by the over-extreme speeches of some of the figures of the so-called Võru Movement about the Võru dialect and culture as a suppressed and harassed minority culture.

As the society mainly unites seniors, I also asked a question (see the Articles of Foundation) about what should be done to preserve the continuity of the Võru dialect and culture in Tallinn. The members of the society maintained that linguistic, literary and folklore circles should be established (71 affirmative answers) and the so-called Sunday schools should be organized for schoolchildren (28 affirmative answers). As options they offered to send children to a linguistic camp to Võrumaa in the summer, to establish a Võru community centre in Tallinn, to organize a folklore group comprising people from different generations, and intensive communication with one's great-grandchildren in the Võru dialect. Only one of the respondents claimed pessimistically that language learning and culture propagation should have started in Tallinn already immediately after Estonia regained its independence; now it is hopelessly late.

Choice of the final resting place

The main reason why I asked a question on such a delicate topic as the choice of the last resting place resulted from my research subject (death culture and funeral rituals) as well as the knowledge of the fact how important the topics related to death and funerals are from the point of view of identity of the historical Võrumaa people. In this survey Tallinn cemeteries predominated as the final resting places (35 affirmative answers). Most of the respondents gave pragmatic considerations as to the reasons for their choice – if they were buried in Võrumaa, nobody would come to take care of their gravesites. Also several respondents had had their spouses buried in Tallinn cemeteries already, which is also a factor worth considering when choosing the last resting place. Cemeteries in historical Võrumaa or "their own cemeteries" (according to the tradition-bearers it generally refers to the cemetery where one's (great)grandparents are buried) were preferred by 28 respondents giving as a reason the fact that the family gravesite is there and all the people close to them rest there (*several of our generations have been buried in Võrumaa cemeteries and it feels right that I am in my*

birthplace). For 23 respondents this question was not essential. A few respondents wanted to be cremated and their ashes taken to Võrumaa, and some of the respondents claimed that they had not thought about this problem yet. In quite a few cases the respondents also admitted that the final choice might not depend on their own will but that of their children (relatives).

Võrumaa cemeteries were preferred by women with a secondary professional education, cemeteries in Tallinn – by women with a higher education, whereas most men with a higher education did not consider this question as essential for them. It is remarkable that it was namely this question that first clearly revealed connections between the respondents' sex and education. In the case of other questions such clear connections were not obvious.

Conclusions

As was already mentioned in the introductory part, the natives of Võrumaa residing in historical Võrumaa have determined their identity mainly through their dialect, especially in the past few years.

A great part of the natives of Võrumaa residing in Tallinn determine their identity at least partly through their own and/or their parents' birthplace, which is a relatively extensive geographical region – historical Võrumaa. In historical Võrumaa, however, a great part of the natives of Võrumaa most probably identify themselves through a geographically much narrower local ethnonym: *mehka* (person from Mõniste area), *haanikõnõ* (person from Haanja area), *tsjolklanõ* (person from Tsolgo area), and so on. Certainly the natives of Võrumaa also identify themselves as Estonians, especially when they communicate with, for example, Russians, Latvians, or any other peoples living in the neighbourhood (see also: Dundes 2002: 45–48). It needs a separate research to find out in which situations and for what reasons the people with a two-level identity, i.e., the identity comprising, apart from being an Estonian, also a component connected with another ethnic identity (Setu, native of Võrumaa, native of Viljandimaa, native of Saaremaa, native of Hiiumaa, etc.) identify themselves first as, for example, Estonians and then the natives of Võrumaa, or vice versa.

For the members of the Võru Society in Tallinn, dealing with the Võru dialect and culture and identifying themselves through this seems to mean, first and foremost, delving into their reminiscences about their childhood (ancient) Võrumaa as well as the so-called Estonian time: memoirs are popular among the members of the society, as well as

introducing the cultural peculiarities of the Võrumaa parishes mainly through the reminiscences from the youth, and so on. The Võru dialect is used among the members both in speech (songs, plays) and, to a lesser extent, also in writing (poetry, prose), as well as in traditional work (handicraft circle, national food). The newest manifestations from the sphere of the Võru dialect and culture (for example, through the mass media) reach the members of the society rather by chance or not at all. The people support the teaching of the Võru dialect and culture both in Võrumaa and in Tallinn, yet they have not been able to grow a considerable number of offsprings for the society from among their own close relatives (children, grandchildren). Unfortunately, the values of the traditional culture can be passed on only through firsthand experience, participation in the respective processes, not through theoretical studies offered by specialists. Therefore, the children and grandchildren of the natives of Võrumaa who were born in Tallinn might not identify themselves with Võrumaa at all.

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