



# **Body, Personhood and Privacy: Perspectives on the Cultural Other and Human Experience**

APPROACHES TO CULTURE THEORY 7

**Body, Personhood and Privacy:  
Perspectives on the Cultural Other and  
Human Experience**

Approaches to Culture Theory  
Volume 7

**Series editors**

Kalevi Kull (Tartu, Estonia)  
Valter Lang (Tartu, Estonia)  
Monika Tasa (Tartu, Estonia)

**Editorial board**

Eileen Barker (London, United Kingdom)  
Regina Bendix (Göttingen, Germany)  
Anu-Mai Kõll (Södertörn, Sweden)  
Tom Moring (Helsinki, Finland)  
Roland Posner (Berlin, Germany)  
Marek Tamm (Tallinn, Estonia)  
Peeter Torop (Tartu, Estonia)

**Aims & scope**

The Approaches to Culture Theory book series focuses on various aspects of the analysing, modelling, and theoretical understanding of culture. Culture theory as a set of complementary theories is seen to include and combine the approaches of different branches of science, among them the semiotics of culture, archaeology, environmental history, ethnology, cultural ecology, cultural and social anthropology, human geography, sociology and the psychology of culture, folklore, media and communication studies.

# **Body, Personhood and Privacy: Perspectives on the Cultural Other and Human Experience**

Edited by

Anu Kannike, Monika Tasa & Ergo-Hart Västriik



UNIVERSITY OF TARTU  
Press

This volume has been financed by the Centre of Excellence in Cultural Theory (CECT, European Regional Development Fund), and supported by the Research Centre of Culture and Communication (University of Tartu) and by the institutional research funding IUT2-43 (Estonian Research Council).



European Union  
Regional Development Fund



Investing in your future

Managing editors: Monika Tasa, Anu Kannike  
Language editor: Daniel Edward Allen  
Technical editors: Kaija Rumm, Tuuli Kaalep, Helen Kästik, Ergo-Hart Västrik  
Design and layout: Roosmarii Kurvits  
Cover layout: Kalle Paalits

Copyright: University of Tartu, authors, 2017

ISSN 2228-060X (print)

ISBN 978-9949-77-459-3 (print)

ISSN 2228-4117 (online)

ISBN 978-9949-77-460-9 (online)

University of Tartu Press, [www.tyk.ee/act](http://www.tyk.ee/act)

## Contents

List of photographs . . . . .	8
List of figures . . . . .	9
Notes on contributors and editors . . . . .	10
Acknowledgements . . . . .	15
Introduction: multiple disciplinarity, human experience and the cultural Other . . . . .	18
Anu Kannike, Ergo-Hart Västrik	
<b>I. Field</b>	
Experiencing and interpreting truth . . . . .	32
Essay by Aet Annist	
Mimetic knowledge in the ethnographic field . . . . .	35
Art Leete	
“If you’re really interested in scientific research, you should study the Bible!” Ethnographical fieldwork among evangelical Christians . . . . .	53
Piret Koosa	
<b>II. Body</b>	
Bodily experiences and biopolitics . . . . .	74
Essay by Katrin Alekand	
Owning the body: patents and transformations of the body in Cambodia . . . . .	77
Darcie DeAngelo	

The biopolitical turn in post-ideological times: a trajectory of Russia's transformation . . . . .	99
Andrey Makarychev, Alexandra Yatsyk	

### III. Public-private

Dynamics between public and private . . . . .	118
Essay by Halliki Harro-Loit	

Changing media and privacy conventions . . . . .	121
Halliki Harro-Loit	

The construction of the 'other' through private stories: Japan in the travelogues of Estonian seamen, as published in Estonian newspapers during the second half of the 19th century . . . . .	145
Anu Masso, Ene Selart	

Small stories, trivial events – and strong emotions. Local event narratives in hand-written newspapers as negotiation of individual and collective experiences . . . . .	163
Kirsti Salmi-Niklander	

Meaning-making and ethnicity in different contexts: Russians in Estonia, Russia and Kazakhstan . . . . .	179
Triin Vihalemm, Cynthia S. Kaplan	

### IV. Space

Setting up space . . . . .	214
Essay by Franz Krause	

Creating spaces of food experience: pop-up restaurants in Estonia . . . . .	217
Ester Bardone, Anu Kannike	

Shoshone as a text: a structural-semiotic analysis of reading the river as a whitewater raft guide . . . . .	245
Jamie Kruis	

## V. Death

Death as the transformation of personhood . . . . . 268  
    Essay by Kristiina Johanson & Pikne Kama

Individual and collective burial places:  
an analysis of the Viimsi *tarand* graves of northern Estonia . . . . . 271  
    Maarja Olli, Anu Kivirüüt

Tricking Death? The Role of the awareness of death  
in self-transformation of personhood according to Georges Bataille . . . . . 293  
    Normunds Titans

## Interviews

Autoethnography and applied cultural analysis . . . . . 314  
    Interview with Billy Ehn

Bodylore and embodied knowledge . . . . . 324  
    Interview with Katharine Young

Embodied seeing-with-the-world . . . . . 328  
    Interview with John Wylie

Personhood in archaeology . . . . . 332  
    Interview with Chris Fowler

Index of names . . . . . 337



## List of photographs

Maharajadhiraj Maharaja Mahimahendra Maharao Raja Shri Sir Umed Singh II Sahib Bahadur. Street art by Mina Ja Lydia in the so-called Freedom Gallery, Tartu Freedom Bridge (Vabadussild). Photo: Ruudu Rahumaru, 2013 . . . . .	front cover
Põhja Konn. Street art by Edward von Lõngus in the so-called Freedom Gallery, Tartu Freedom Bridge (Vabadussild). Photo: Liina Luhats, March 2016 . . . . .	16–17
Ur Mother Parade. Street art by Maari Soekov ja Satinka on garages next to Puiestee street 77, Tartu. Photo: Liina Luhats, March 2016 . . . . .	30–31
A Girl With Four Legs. Street art by Mina Ja Lydia on the wall of Kaseke, a former restaurant, Tähe street 19, Tartu. Photo: Liina Luhats, March 2016 . . . . .	72–73
Live Fast, Die Young. Street art by Mina Ja Lydia at Kompanii street 12, Tartu. Photo: Liina Luhats, March 2016 . . . . .	116–117
A Man Catching Money. Street art by 69 in the so-called Freedom Gallery, Tartu Freedom Bridge (Vabadussild). Photo: Liina Luhats, March 2016 . . . . .	212–213
The Fisherman's Inn at the Port of Kärdla. Kärdla Cafe Day. Photo: Ester Bardone, 2 August 2013 . . . . .	224
Restaurant Day in Uus Maailm district. Kirsi and Marko from Savolax restaurant. Photo: Anu Kannike, 19 May 2012 . . . . .	227
Swedish Goose Supper invitation and menu. Courtesy of Tallinn Supper Club, 2013 . . . . .	231
Ants Uustalu, <i>chef de cuisine</i> at the Ööbiku gastronomy farm. Photo: Lauri Laan, 2014 . . . . .	235
Kalevipoeg 3.o. Street art by Edward von Lõngus in the so-called Freedom Gallery, Tartu Freedom Bridge (Vabadussild). Photo: Liina Luhats, March 2016 . . . . .	266–267
Chinese torture <i>ling chi</i> ('death by a thousand cuts') performed as punishment for the gravest crimes. Photo from Bataille 1989 [1961], 204 . . . . .	305
LAN Party. Street art by Edward von Lõngus on the wall of Tartu Jewish cemetery at the corner of Rooski and Jänese streets. Photo: Kaija Rumm, April 2016 . . . . .	312–313

## List of figures

Location map of Cambodia with Battambang Province highlighted. From Wikimedia Commons, the free media repository . . . . .	78
The symbiotic nature of the conventions of mediated privacy . . . . .	139
Structural characterisation of the Russian populations in Estonia, Kazakhstan and Tatarstan . . . . .	183
Religious affiliation of the Russian populations in Estonia, Kazakhstan and Tatarstan . . . . .	183
Description of interview participants . . . . .	211
Low water orientation on the Soshone river . . . . .	257
High water orientation on the Soshone river . . . . .	257
Distribution of bone clusters, cremated and inhumed bones in the Viimsi I grave . . . . .	278
Distribution of the artefact groups in the Viimsi I grave . . . . .	280
Distribution of bone clusters and artefacts, men with crossbow fibulae and cremated juveniles in the Viimsi I grave . . . . .	281
Distribution of bones and artefacts in the Viimsi II grave . . . . .	283

## Notes on contributors and editors

**Katrin Alekand** (katrin.alekand@ut.ee) is a PhD student in ethnology at the Institute of Cultural Research and Arts, University of Tartu. Her research focuses on techniques relating to the body, traditional arts of altered bodies, and the contemporary uses of these arts with an emphasis on the use of henna as a traditional technique and as a developing form of body art. She is also a practicing henna artist.

**Aet Annist** (aet.annist@ut.ee) is a senior researcher at the Department of Ethnology, Institute of Cultural Research and Arts, University of Tartu. Her research and publications currently focus on social fragmentation and dispossession both in rural and transnational settings, as well as on the effects of heritage institutions in stratification.

**Ester Bardone** (ester.bardone@ut.ee) is a lecturer in ethnology at the Institute of Cultural Research and Arts, University of Tartu. Her research interests and publications focus on rural entrepreneurship and tourism in Estonia in the context of the experience economy, performing rurality and heritage; and historical as well as contemporary developments in Estonian food culture.

**Darcie DeAngelo** (darcie.deangelo@gmail.com) is a doctoral student in visual and medical anthropology at McGill University, Canada. She obtained her Master's degree in visual cultural studies at the University of Tromsø, Norway. Her ethnographic film *Touching Ground* (<https://vimeo.com/latitudereadjustment>) has been shown at several festivals and conferences. She conducts research mainly in Cambodia.

**Billy Ehn** (billy.ehn@umu.se) is professor of ethnology at the Department of Culture and Media Studies at Umeå University, Sweden. His research interests include ethnographic and cultural studies, based on fieldwork in various environments in the former Yugoslavia and Poland, and at a pharmaceutical plant and various preschools in and around Stockholm.

**Chris Fowler** (chris.fowler@ncl.ac.uk) is a senior lecturer in later prehistoric archaeology at Newcastle University, United Kingdom. His research interests include Neolithic and early Bronze Age Britain; personhood, the body and

identity in archaeology and anthropology; mortuary practice in prehistoric Europe; and cosmology in prehistoric Europe.

**Halliki Harro-Loit** (halliki.harro@ut.ee) is professor of journalism at the Institute of Social Studies, University of Tartu. Her research interests include journalism culture and diachronic changes in mediated culture. She was head of the cultural communication research group at the Centre of Excellence in Cultural Theory.

**Kristiina Johanson** (kristiina.johanson@ut.ee) is a researcher in archaeology at the Institute of History and Archaeology, University of Tartu. Her research focuses on the secondary uses of Stone Age artefacts in later periods, concentrating mostly on their use as magical thunderbolts.

**Pikne Kama** (pikne.kama@gmail.com) is a doctoral student in archaeology at the Institute of History and Archaeology, University of Tartu. He combines archaeological and folkloristic sources to study the information connected with human remains in wetlands.

**Anu Kannike** (anukannike@yahoo.com) is a researcher in ethnology at the Estonian National Museum. Her research focuses on the home from historical and contemporary perspectives, particularly home decoration and food culture.

**Cynthia S. Kaplan** (Kaplan@polsci.ucsb.edu) is professor of political science, University of California, Santa Barbara, and co-convener of the Research Focus Group on Identity at UCSB. Her research interests include ethnic identity, social movements, political participation and youth political culture.

**Anu Kivirüüt** (anu.kiviryüt@gmail.com) is a doctoral student in archaeology at the Institute of History and Archaeology, University of Tartu, and has completed an MSc in human osteology and funerary archaeology at the University of Sheffield. Her research focuses on human osteology, cremation burials and *tarand* graves.

**Piret Koosa** (piret.koosa@gmail.com) is a researcher at the Estonian National Museum and a doctoral student in ethnology at the Institute of Cultural Research and Arts, University of Tartu. Her current research focuses on religious change in the post-Soviet Russian North.

**Franz Krause** (f.krause@uni-koeln.de) is currently a senior researcher at the Department of Cultural and Social Anthropology and the Global South Studies Center (GSSC), University of Cologne. He works on the relationships between humans and their environments, in particular water. Krause has conducted research in Mali, the Philippines, Finnish Lapland and Estonia.

**Jamie Kruis** (jakruis@gmail.com) holds a Master of Arts degree in semiotics from the University of Tartu and a bachelor's degree in anthropology from Purdue University in the US. She is interested in the field of ecosemiotics, relations between nature and culture, and focuses her research on environmental learning.

**Art Leete** (art.leete@ut.ee) is professor of ethnology at the Institute of Cultural Research and Arts, University of Tartu. His research interests relate to subsistence technologies and social and religious changes, as well as history of descriptions of northern Finno-Ugric indigenous peoples in Russia (the Khanty, Mansi, Tundra and Forest Nenets, and Komi). He was the head of the ethnology research group at the Centre of Excellence in Cultural Theory.

**Andrey Makarychev** (asmakarychev@gmail.com) is a guest professor at the Johan Skytte Institute of Political Science, University of Tartu, and a senior associate at CIDOB, Barcelona. In 2017 he is also a visiting professor at SciencePo, University of Bordeaux. His areas of research include political theory, discourse analysis and different conceptualisations of power and politics.

**Anu Masso** (anu.mass@ut.ee) is a senior researcher at the Institute of Social Studies, University of Tartu. Her research focuses on personal social space, various forms of spatial mobility and research methods in social sciences.

**Maarja Olli** (maarja.oli@ut.ee) is a doctoral student in archaeology at the Institute of History and Archaeology, University of Tartu. Her research focuses on material culture, *tarand* graves, decoration and ornaments of the Roman Iron Age in Estonia.

**Kirsti Salmi-Niklander** (kirsti.salmi-niklander@helsinki.fi) is an university lecturer in folklore studies at the University of Helsinki. Her research focuses on interaction between oral and literary communication, narrative analysis, oral history and book culture from below.

**Ene Selart** (ene.selart@ut.ee) is a junior researcher at the Institute of Social Studies, University of Tartu. Her research focuses on media history, Estonian–Japanese relations and the construction of identities.

**Monika Tasa** (monika.tasa@ut.ee), MA, is a series and managing editor of the book series *Approaches to Culture Theory*, and a senior specialist for projects in the Faculty of Arts and Humanities, University of Tartu. Her current research focuses on interdisciplinary cooperation in the humanities from an anthropological perspective.

**Normunds Titans** (normunds.titans@lu.lv) has a PhD degree from the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago. He is a part-time professor at the Faculty of Theology, University of Latvia, where he teaches philosophy of religion, philosophy, modern theology and ethics.

**Ergo-Hart Västriik** (ergo-hart.vastrik@ut.ee) is an associate professor in Estonian and comparative folklore at the Institute of Cultural Research and Arts, University of Tartu, and editor-in-chief of the *Journal of Ethnology and Folkloristics*. His research interests concern folklore and mythology of Finnic peoples concentrating on questions of representation and research history.

**Triin Vihalemm** (triin.vihalemm@ut.ee) is professor of communication research at the Institute of Social Studies, University of Tartu. Her research interests are collective identities and various forms of identity communication, the theory of social practices, personal and social time acceleration, minority transition culture and the media.

**John Wylie** (J.W.Wylie@exeter.ac.uk) is professor of cultural geography at the University of Exeter, United Kingdom. His main research area is cultural geographies of landscape, embodiment and performance. His other current research interests include spatial theory and philosophy, cultures of travel and exploration, and spectral geographies.

**Alexandra Yatsyk** (ayatsyk@gmail.com) is a Alexander Herzen junior visiting fellow at the Institute for Human Science in Vienna, Austria, and a visiting researcher at the Uppsala Centre for Russian and Eurasian Studies, Sweden. She is also director of the Centre for Cultural Studies of Post-Socialism at the Kazan Federal University, Russia. Her research fields encompass studies of cultural

## Notes on authors and editors

production, politics of representation, and the role of mega-events in post-Soviet nation building.

**Katharine Young** (kgallowayyoung@yahoo.com) is an independent scholar, writer, and visiting lecturer at the University of California, Berkeley, and San Francisco State University, USA, in the fields of folklore, anthropology, and rhetoric. She is currently studying the relationship between gestures and narrative, body image, space, interiority, consciousness, volition, thought, emotion, memory, and time in somatic psychology.

## Acknowledgements

Most of the chapters of this volume have evolved from inspiring presentations and discussions at the fifth annual conference of the Centre of Excellence in Cultural Theory (CECT). The five-panel conference, entitled *Embodiment, Expressions, Exits: Transforming Experience and Cultural Identity*, took place at the University of Tartu, Estonia, from the 30th of October to the 1st of November 2013.

The stimulating atmosphere of the conference, which embraced a wide spectrum of topics, was initiated in plenary lectures by professor Billy Ehn (Umeå University), Dr Chris Fowler (Newcastle University), professor John Wylie (University of Exeter) and Dr Katharine Young (San Francisco State University), to all of whom we express our deep gratitude. The process of organising this conference involved some procedural experiments and therefore we thank panel organisers Aili Aarelaid-Tart, Katrin Alekand, Madis Arukask, Ester Bardone, Halliki Harro-Loit, Kristiina Johanson, Kirsti Jõesalu, Maarja Kaaristo, Pikne Kama, Roland Karo, Kadri Kasemets, Franz Krause, Anne Kull, Riin Magnus, Merili Metsvahi, Tarmo Pikner, Anu Printsman, Katre Pärn, Maaris Raudsepp, Tiit Remm, Pihla Maria Siim, Indrek Tart and Kadri Ugur for their dedication and patience.

We would like to thank all the authors who developed their conference presentations into chapters and submitted their contributions for consideration, and the reviewers for their valuable comments. We are most grateful to photographers Liina Luhats, Ruudu Rahumaru and Kaija Rumm, as well as the street artists of Tartu whose works are used as illustrations in this publication. Our final thanks go to the team responsible for producing the series of which this book is part.





# Introduction



## **Introduction: multiple disciplinarity, human experience and the cultural Other**

Anu Kannike, Ergo-Hart Västrik

### **The quest for interdisciplinarity**

Cooperation beyond the borders of disciplines can be considered one of the preconditions for successful research and development within modern academia. Models of interdisciplinary cooperation have been more productive in those domains where research problems have required the participation of specialists from various disciplines. In the humanities and social sciences the opening up and crossing of disciplinary borders has taken place in connection with the upsurge of new cultural domains of an interdisciplinary nature as well as of novel emphases on aspects in culture and society that had previously been unnoticed. Looking back on recent developments in the humanities one can see that new ideas in culture theory, too, have often been born in the contact area between disciplines, allowing practitioners to deal with phenomena that were previously outside any single traditional discipline.

Interdisciplinarity and transdisciplinarity have been buzzwords since early 1970s, when Erich Jantsch coined these terms for a broader audience (Hoffmann et al 2013, 1857). These keywords figure frequently in various documents relating to science policy and appear often in higher education development plans; in addition to which many universities worldwide host interdisciplinary research centres designed to stimulate cooperation beyond the borders of research domains. Striving for multiple disciplinarity is a topical issue in many spheres of academic life, despite the fact that the use of terms such as interdisciplinarity, transdisciplinarity and multidisciplinarity is quite fluid (as there has been until recently no clear consensus concerning their precise meaning) (Lawrence & Després 2004, 399). However, in about a decade and a half a variety of influential works have been published to map the relationships between these concepts, the authors of which have called for more attention and awareness

---

Kannike, A., Tasa, M. & Västrik, E.-H. (eds) (2017) *Body, Personhood and Privacy: Perspectives on the Cultural Other and Human Experience*. *Approaches to Culture Theory* 7, 18–29. University of Tartu Press, Tartu.

in using corresponding vocabulary. For example, in their thought-provoking article on relationships between multi-, inter- and transdisciplinary research in health studies, Canadian scholars Bernhard C. K. Choi and Anita W. P. Pak (2006, 351) have stated:

Multidisciplinarity draws on knowledge from different disciplines but stays within their boundaries. Interdisciplinarity analyzes, synthesizes and harmonizes links between disciplines into a coordinated and coherent whole. Transdisciplinarity integrates the natural, social and health sciences in a humanities context, and transcends their traditional boundaries.

Moreover, the authors illustrated these taxonomical differences with mathematical formulae (such as  $2+2=4$ ;  $2+2=5$  and  $2+2=\text{yellow}$ ) and culinary examples:

[M]ultidisciplinary is like a salad bowl (such as a vegetable platter or mixed salad, in which the ingredients remain intact and clearly distinguishable); interdisciplinary is like a melting pot (such as a fondue or stew, in which the ingredients are only partially distinguishable); transdisciplinary is like a cake (in which the ingredients are no longer distinguishable, and the final product is of a different kind from the initial ingredients) (Choi & Pak 2006, 359–360).

In the *Oxford Handbook of Interdisciplinarity* Julie Thompson Klein (2010) offers a thorough overview of the variety of forms of interdisciplinarity, such as encyclopaedic, indiscriminate, pseudo and composite interdisciplinarity; narrow and broad, shared and cooperative, methodological and theoretical, instrumental and critical interdisciplinarity, etc. Klein also underlines that in the case of multidisciplinary “the disciplines remain separate, disciplinary elements retain their original identity, and the existing structure of knowledge is not questioned”, indicating that this “tendency is evident in conferences, publications, and research projects that present different views of the same topic or problem in serial order” (Klein 2010, 17). From a certain viewpoint multidisciplinary can, therefore, be labelled pseudo-interdisciplinarity (Alvargonzález 2011, 388).

If, in the case of interdisciplinarity, central keywords are interaction and integration, then transdisciplinarity can be characterised by the keywords transcendency and transgressiveness. As stated by David Alvargonzález (2011, 394), “[t]ransdisciplinarity claims to provide holistic schemes that subordinate disciplines and look at the dynamics of whole systems”. Transdisciplinary approaches would have more to do with a “fusion of disciplines”, this kind of research implies that the final knowledge is more than the sum of its disciplinary components and

the outcome of transdisciplinary research can be associated with the expression “knowledge coherence” (Lawrence & Després 2004, 400). The same idea is also formulated by Klein, who defined the current trends of transdisciplinary research as follows: it is the contemporary version of the historical quest for systematic knowledge, it puts emphasis on transgressive nature of research, attempts to transcend narrow scope of disciplinary worldviews moving towards synthetic paradigms, and focuses on problem-solving of the life-world (Klein 2010, 24–26).

### **Forms of cooperation within the Centre of Excellence**

The Centre of Excellence in Cultural Theory (CECT) was established in 2008 and functioned as a multidisciplinary consortium for eight established research groups from the University of Tartu and Tallinn University until 2015. The CECT brought together research groups from the fields of archaeology, contemporary cultural studies, cultural communication studies, ethnology, folkloristics, landscape studies, religious studies, and semiotics. One of the aims of the consortium was to develop multi-, inter- and transdisciplinary cooperation between the research groups in order to generate new knowledge within culture theory by combining various approaches within and between the humanities and social sciences (see CECT: Introduction).

The Centre of Excellence provided the research groups of this consortium an opportunity to test various forms of interdisciplinary cooperation. The main outcome of these endeavours was manifested in joint seminars, open scholarly conferences, special issues of research journals, collective monographs and a variety of joint articles. The aim of the Centre’s cohesion oriented events was to find common ground in approaches to the same research topics and to address the problems of interaction between close and more distant disciplines. In the process of testing different forms of cooperation it was initially necessary to map theoretical and methodological similarities and differences in handling the same research subjects. Common discussions demanded the need to define, or redefine, core concepts as these may have been conceptualised and interpreted differently, or disciplines may focus on different aspects of the same subject. This kind of heterogeneity was determined, for example, by diverse research traditions as well as by the position of the entangled disciplines within the humanities and social sciences, some of which have been more theory oriented than others.

In order to initiate and support cooperation within the CECT the annual theory incubation seminars were organised between 2010 and 2014 at the Nelijärve holiday centre. These events, which brought together members from all research groups, concentrated on particular key concepts or categories in culture research

(such as time and space, materiality, border, identity) and guided the choice of topics for the annual CECT conferences. All the seminars included individual or research group based presentations that laid foundation for further discussions and teamwork sessions. Despite the fact that the initial input for the seminars was discipline based, i.e. preparations were made within separate research groups, the guiding principle of the incubation seminars was to break down disciplinary borders in teamwork sessions. The teamwork groups integrated members of three to five research groups representing different disciplines; the final output of the discussions (such as topics of the panels for annual conferences and series of joint seminars) were designed bearing in mind interdisciplinary scope. The friendly atmosphere of these incubation seminars provided ample opportunity for socialising and resulted in several plans and agreements for joint publications beyond disciplinary borders. These events also created *communitas* among the members of different research groups, embracing all strata of academic hierarchy from eminent professors to first year PhD students.

In the course of years forms of cooperation were varied within the activities of the CECT in order to identify and implement the most effective solutions. This kind of experimentation was most clearly manifested in the ways in which the Centre's regular theory seminars were organised throughout the operating period, testing each year slightly different procedural formats and moving clearly towards greater interdisciplinarity. In the first half of 2009 the CECT's introductory seminars illuminated aspects of cultural theory from the viewpoint of five disciplines (archaeology, ethnology, folkloristics, history and semiotics), although in the second half of the year the process of mapping the meta-level of culture research, as well as striving for common vocabulary in cultural theory, had already been initiated in seminars led by professor of semiotics Peeter Torop. In the 2010 seminars, members of each research group introduced current theoretical concepts, research methods and literature from a particular discipline or research domain; presentations received comments from members of other research groups. In 2011 and 2012 theoretical seminars were of an interdisciplinary nature with members of the different research groups making presentations centred on the same keywords in an attempt to find a common core for their approaches. As a result of joint seminars theoretical platforms were mapped for the research groups in order to "move towards the creation of a common theoretical network and a more complete understanding of cultural research" (CECT: Theory seminars).

## **CECT annual conferences and the demand for cohesion**

There were changes and experimentation in the organising principles of the annual CECT conferences in order to choose the most suitable topics for the scholarly forums. While the first conference, in 2008, titled Analysability of Culture, was addressed to researchers in Estonia and introduced the variety of approaches to culture theory within the Centre's research groups, the second conference, in 2009, orientated subsequent interdisciplinary events towards the international community of researchers and concentrated on a particular theoretical concept or aspect of current culture research.

These keywords were proposed by the executive committee of the Centre and discussed at the annual incubation seminars. Thus, the second annual CECT conference was dedicated to the spatiality of culture (see Peil 2011),<sup>1</sup> the third to the temporality of culture (see Tüür 2010), the fourth conference to the materiality of culture (see Kannike, Laviolette 2013), and the fifth, in 2012, to the topic of cultural borders (see Kannike, Tasa 2016). At these conferences there were, on the one hand, always some research group for whom the chosen central theoretical concept was closer than for others (for example the topics of spatiality and borders for the landscape studies research group and the topic of temporality for the cultural communication research group). On the other hand, the level of generalisation of conference topics was broad enough that all the research groups were able to find a place for their more specific research questions. However, on the occasions when some conference topics the inclusion of research group members was not enough, changes were made to organisational procedures. Since the fifth CECT conference the presentations were organised through focused panels designed to discuss more specific subtopics.

For the sixth annual CECT conference, in 2013, a bottom-up approach was used in the process of deciding panel topics for the conference after the Centre's executive committee had singled out the keywords *personhood*, *embodiment* and *subjectivity* for general discussion. While preparing the theory incubation seminar, held in January 2013, each research group formulated topics and research questions linked to the proposed keywords according to their expertise and interest in order to develop a spirit of interdisciplinary cooperation. During the course of seminar discussions similar topics and research questions were grouped and expanded in the teamwork sessions into five panel descriptions (see CECT: Panels). As members from all research groups participated in formulating focal points for the panels, these were attractive for the research groups and encouraged participation. The general title of the conference, Embodiment, Expressions, Exits: Transforming Experience and Cultural Identity, was articulated in the final

stage with the aim of covering the wide scope of the panel topics reflecting the current stage and interests of CECT members and their exploration of cultural theory.

The panel topics also determined the choice of conference keynote lectures by professor Billy Ehn from the Umeå University (Making the Familiar Strange: Autoethnography and Reflexivity in the Cultural Analysis of Home), Dr Chris Fowler from Newcastle University (Death as the Transformation of Personhood: Relationality beyond the Grave), professor John Wylie from the University of Exeter (Eye-opener: The Phenomenologies of Landscape Drawing) and Dr Katharine Young from San Francisco State University (The Mimetic Series of the Body: Narrative, Memory, and Time in Somatic Psychology). These distinguished scholars were introduced to a wider audience in a series of interviews in the cultural weekly *Sirp* before the conference (see Jõesalu & Siim 2013, Alekand & Metsvahi 2013, Krause & Semm 2013, Johanson & Kama 2013), with English versions published in the Interviews section of this book.

### **Contributing chapters**

This volume brings together 12 chapters by 17 scholars with backgrounds in archaeology, ethnology/anthropology, folkloristics, media studies, religious studies, political studies and sociology. The contributions are set out in five sections, starting with issues of fieldwork methodology and experience (Field) through transformations and politics of the body (Body), the dynamics of the public and private (Public–Private) and its spatial representations (Space) to transformations of personhood (Death). Each section is introduced by short essays from members of the CECT research groups.

The chapters address a broad span of topics, suggesting innovative tools with which these major concepts can be expanded across disciplinary borders. Notwithstanding the diversity of empirical material and theoretical frameworks, the chapters tackle common key issues: dialogue with the cultural Other, the appropriation of space, and personality. Human embodiment and ethical aspects of representing and regulating cultural (bodily) practices are a major focus through much of the volume.

Over the past few decades the body has become one of the primary topics in cultural theory for understanding the complex interrelations between nature, culture, and society, and a number of influential studies and volumes have been published dealing with this subject (Blackman 2008; Fraser & Greco 2005; Hancock et al 2000; Mascia-Lees 2011). Discussions about embodiment are inherently interdisciplinary and related to overarching questions about power, agency, and



ethics. In the 1970s the anthropologist Mary Douglas wrote about the body as a natural symbol with which to think about nature, society and culture (Douglas 1970). Since then phenomenology and practice theory, which emphasise the central role of the body as a way of experiencing the world, have been particularly influential in social and cultural studies. Sociologists highlight the growing importance of the body as constitutive of self-identity along with the fact that in late modernity the body has become more flexible or malleable, a part of projects or a project in itself (Giddens 1991, 7–8). Bryan Turner introduced the term “the somatic society”, arguing that “the prominence and pervasiveness of images of the body in popular and consumer culture [...] and the emphases on pleasure, desire, difference and playfulness [...] are part of a cultural environment [...] brought about by post-industrialism, post-Fordism and postmodernism” (Turner 1996 [1984], 2). Studies of the creation and perception of space have also highlighted spatial aspects of body culture. Concurrently, bodily issues are not a private or subjective matter, but subject to regulations created by those holding power, which gives rise to a number of ethical issues. In those disciplines that involve fieldwork, the reflexive approach is long rooted, yet increasing attention is paid to the researcher’s body, acknowledging that it is also entangled in the research process.

The authors of the present volume tackle a diversity of aspects related to theoretical and methodological ways of studying the body, personhood and privacy. **Art Leete** examines the challenges the researcher has to face when trying to comprehend field data, relying on his own experience among the Komi and Khanty people. Focusing on storytelling situations, he argues that fieldwork is a mimetic play, a dialogue in which the scholar has to accept the relative and ambivalent nature of the knowledge transmission process. There is no unique pattern for understanding the narratives. The narrator’s personality and the situation itself give clues for interpretation, yet absolute truth is often unattainable. In the same vein, **Piret Koosa** addresses the dynamic relationship between the researcher and informants. Drawing on her fieldwork among evangelical Christians in the Komi Republic, Koosa highlights the problematic aspects of this dialogue: negotiating diverging values and understandings of the ethnologist and members of the congregation. She emphasises how the importance of respect and recognition of cognitive differences enable a mutual understanding, at least to some extent, of academic and religious forms of truth.

**Darcie DeAngelo** provides an insight into the life of people implicated in biomedical intellectual property debates. Her contribution is based on ethnographic fieldwork conducted in Cambodia among people working on amputee rehabilitation. She demonstrates that the Western biomedical model of the body, premised

on categories such as the body–mind dichotomy and the nature–culture divide, is not always applicable to everyday conceptions of the body in other cultures and that, therefore, any efficient medical rehabilitation needs to integrate local knowledge and local concepts of the body and the self. **Andrey Makarychev** and **Alexandra Yatsyk**, in their chapter on Russian regimes of power and hegemony, depart from the biopolitical framework of thought, providing new insights into the theoretical debate on biopower. Focusing on four specific fields – immigration, education, religion and the Chechen region – they examine the specific mechanisms and models of biopolitical totalisation that have become dominant in Russia in recent years.

The next section tackles issues of identity building and embodied experiences as expressed through narratives against the backdrop of the private–public relationship. **Halliki Harro-Loit** explores how journalistic conventions have influenced and also reflected changes in the notions of public and private. She demonstrates how conventions of mediated privacy are very dynamic due to a complex framework of factors that are embedded in journalistic discourse, are influenced by the development of technology and also by legal and ethical practices. Harro-Loit argues that while the border between these two domains is diminishing, the actor's role in mediated privacy conventions increases, underlining the individual's ability to use his or her informational self-determination. **Anu Masso** and **Ene Selart** apply narrative analysis to the travelogues about Japan published in Estonian newspapers during the second half of the 19th century. It becomes evident that cultural emphasis was the preferred theme in private stories and several Estonian national references were used to explain the foreign context and events. These texts not only mediated knowledge about world culture to the Estonian reader, but, through the construction of the Other, also helped to consolidate their national identity. **Kirsti Salmi-Niklander** continues to deal with the methodological challenges in narrative research, focusing on emotions and embodied experiences in historical archival material. She gives a fascinating insight into local event narratives in Finnish hand-written newspapers at the turn of the 20th century. These texts were used as means of identity construction at a time of rapid social change, as well as a medium for coping with the tensions created by these transformations. Identification narratives also become a central issue for the next contribution by **Triin Vihalemm** and **Cynthia S. Kaplan**. Their analysis, based on qualitative interviews, compares ethnic Russian discourses of ethnicity, identity and power in Estonia, Kazakhstan, Tatarstan and Moscow, concentrating on how people adopt, reject or modify public identification narratives and construct their own private stories in a creative manner. The authors argue that Russians in Estonia give prominence to the Russian language, Russians

in Tatarstan are characterised by a more Soviet understanding distinguished from that of Russians in Moscow, while Russians in Kazakhstan have adopted a hybrid approach embracing local, ethnic and civic dimensions.

Two next contributions examine creative spatial practices, relying on empirical material from both natural and urban environments. The chapter by **Ester Bardone** and **Anu Kannike** argues that pop-up restaurants create new liminal spaces where the borders between the private and public are challenged and innovative ideas about the community, home and food are negotiated. Through such temporary institutions dynamic spaces allowing for experimentation and innovation emerge. **Jamie Kruis** seeks to test theoretical and methodological approaches to human perception of the environment, aiming towards a new semiotic research model. She analyses how whitewater raft guides read the Shoshone river, outlining the similarities and differences between perception of the environment and reading a cultural text.

Finally, chapters by **Maarja Olli** and **Anu Kivirüüt**, as well as by **Normunds Titans**, explore the transformations of personality after death. The dead are regarded as having an active role, despite the end of their bodily existence, influencing the minds and deeds of the living. Olli and Kivirüüt discuss the relationship between the individual and the collective, based on a case study of Roman Iron Age graves in northern Estonia. The finds reveal that, although the burial places are mainly of a collective character, traces of individuality are clearly manifest. Thus, collective and individual identities were entangled in the community and the graves give evidence of the close connection between the living and the dead. The chapter by Titans raises issues of death and personhood from another angle: how does awareness of one's mortality influence self-transformation practice. He focuses on the texts by the French thinker Georges Bataille in a wider context of contemporary culture, tackling issues of the banalisation of death through spectacle, awareness of death and the idea of sacrifice.

This publication is illustrated with the works of street artists whose graffiti enrich the Tartu cityscape. Tartu has the reputation of being Estonia's capital of graffiti because since the mid-2000s there has been no sharp border between street art and other forms of art in Tartu and throughout the last decade the city authorities have been rather liberal towards street art (Pilv 2014, 32). The Tartu graffiti scene was initiated in the 1990s by the members of the punk rock band Nyroc City and by the local hip-hop club people, clearly representing alternative subcultures. After a short low tide, characterised by campaigns of cleaning up the urban space, a new wave of more elaborated stencil technique pictures appeared, many of them in the very heart of the city. Among them were emblematic works

of street artists like Edward von Lõngus, Mina Ja Lydia and Von Bomb, many of whom are graduates of Tartu Art College (op cit).

Several art pieces photographed for this book by Liina Luhats and Ruudu Rahumaru were or are 'exhibited' in the so-called Freedom Gallery under Freedom Bridge (Vabadussild) at the edge of the city centre that has become one of the best known graffiti sites of Tartu's street art scene. Despite the fact that pieces of street art have been repeatedly removed from the concrete constructions of the bridge, new artworks have emerged rapidly. However, the recognition of street art by city and official art institutions is manifest in the fact that the template for a work by Edward von Lõngus was bought by the Tartu Art Museum, and that since 2010 Tartu has hosted the annual street art festival Stencibility (see also: Street art map of Tartu).

More elaborate stencil-based graffiti has reached art galleries and copies of street artists' works on canvas have gained popularity in art auctions. In addition to artists and art historians the textual side of Tartu graffiti has attracted the attention of folklorists, who have compiled a database of Tartu's paremiological graffiti (see Grafiti andmebaas, Voolaid 2012).

### Internet sources

- CECT: Introduction. <http://cect.ut.ee/eng.html> [accessed 7 February 2017].
- CECT: Theoretical seminars. [http://cect.ut.ee/work/theoretical\\_seminars.html](http://cect.ut.ee/work/theoretical_seminars.html) [accessed 7 February 2017].
- CECT VI Autumn Conference: Panels. [http://cect.ut.ee/tegevus/Autumn\\_Conference\\_VI\\_Panels.html](http://cect.ut.ee/tegevus/Autumn_Conference_VI_Panels.html) [accessed 7 February 2017].
- Grafiti andmebaas. Compiled by Piret Voolaid. <http://www.folklore.ee/Grafiti/> [accessed 7 February 2017].
- Street art map of Tartu. <https://www.google.com/maps/d/viewer?mid=18SlC1k3vQeasHnKN84E7XaNKmJE&hl=en&ll=58.37703598284571%2C26.718713699999967&z=13> [accessed 7 February 2017].
- Tüür, K. (ed) (2010) Centre of Excellence in Cultural Theory III Autumn Conference Time in Culture: Mediation and Representation. Program and Abstracts. Tartu, October 28–30, 2010. [http://virtual.cect.ut.ee/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/III\\_AC\\_abstracts.pdf](http://virtual.cect.ut.ee/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/III_AC_abstracts.pdf) [accessed 7 February 2017].

### References

- Alekand, K. & Metsvahi, M. (2013) Kultuuriteooria tippkeskuse VI sügiskonverents: Kehapärimus, *Sirp*, 24 October, 5. <http://www.sirp.ee/s1-artiklid/c9-sotsiaalia/2013-10-24-12-12-05/> [accessed 7 February 2016].

- Alvargonzález, D. (2011) Multidisciplinarity, interdisciplinarity, transdisciplinarity, and the sciences, *International Studies in the Philosophy of Science* 25 (4), 387–403.
- Blackman, L. (2008) *The Body: The Key Concepts*. Berg, Oxford.
- Choi, B. C. K. & Pak, A. W. P. (2006) Multidisciplinarity, interdisciplinarity and transdisciplinarity in health research, services, education and policy: 1. Definitions, objectives, and evidence of effectiveness, *Clin Invest Med* 29 (6), 351–364.
- Douglas, M. (1970) *Natural Symbols*. Vintage, New York.
- Fraser, M. & Greco, M. (eds) 2005. *The Body: A Reader*. Routledge, London, New York.
- Giddens, A. (1991) *Modernity and Self-identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age*. Stanford University Press, Stanford.
- Hancock, P., Hughes, B., Jagger, E., Paterson, K., Russell, R., Tulle-Winton, E., Tyler, M. (2000). *The Body, Culture and Society: An Introduction*. Open University Press, Buckingham.
- Hoffmann, M. H. G., Schmidt, J. C. & Nersessian, N. J. (2013) Philosophy of and as interdisciplinarity, *Synthese* 190, 1857–1864.
- Johanson, K. & Kama, P. (2013) Kultuuriteooria tippkeskuse VI sügiskonverents: Personhood'i uuringud, *Sirp*, 24 October, 4. <http://www.sirp.ee/s1-artiklid/c9-sotsiaalia/2013-10-24-12-19-46/> [accessed 7 February 2016].
- Jõesalu, K. & Siim, P. M. (2013) Keha, vaimu ja isiksuse osa teadmiste loomisel, *Sirp*, 31 October, 4–5. <http://www.sirp.ee/s1-artiklid/c9-sotsiaalia/keha-vaimu-ja-isiksuse-osa-teadmiste-loomisel/> [accessed 7 February 2016].
- Kannike, A. & Lavoilette, P. (eds) (2013) *Things in Culture, Culture in Things*. Approaches to Culture Theory 3. University of Tartu Press, Tartu.
- Kannike, A. & Tasa, M. (eds) (2016) *The Dynamics of Cultural Borders*. Approaches to Culture Theory 6. University of Tartu Press, Tartu.
- Klein, J. T. (2010). A taxonomy of interdisciplinarity. – Frodeman, R. (ed.) *Oxford Handbook of Interdisciplinarity*, 15–30. Oxford University Press, New York.
- Krause, F. & Semm, K. (2013) Kultuuriteooria tippkeskuse VI sügiskonverents: Näha koos maailmaga, *Sirp*, 24 October, 6–7. <http://www.sirp.ee/s1-artiklid/c9-sotsiaalia/2013-10-24-12-08-20/> [accessed 7 February 2016].
- Lawrence, R. J. & Després, C. (2004) Introduction: Futures of Transdisciplinarity, *Futures* 36, 397–405.
- Mascia-Lees, F. E. (ed) (2011) *A Companion to the Anthropology of the Body and Embodiment*. Wiley-Balckwell, Malden, Oxford.
- Peil, T. (ed) (2011) *The Space of Culture – the Place of Nature*. Approaches to Culture Theory 1. University of Tartu Press, Tartu.
- Pilv, A. (2014) Notes from the capital of Estonian street art, *Estonian Art* 2, 32–34. <http://www.estonianart.ee/art/notes-from-the-capital-of-estonian-street-art/> [accessed 7 February 2016].
- Turner, B. (1996 [1984]) *The Body and Society*. Sage, London.
- Voollaid, P. (2012) *In graffiti veritas*: A paremic glance at graffiti in Tartu. – Laineste, L., Brzozowska, D. & Chlopicky, W. (eds) *Estonia and Poland: Creativity and Change in Cultural Communication 1: Jokes and Humour*, 237–268. EKM Teaduskirjastus, Tartu.

## Notes

This essay was supported by the ASTRA project “Competitive research in the academic fields of responsibility of the Estonian National Museum” (European Regional Development Fund), and the Estonian Research Council grant IUT2-43.

<sup>1</sup> All the CECT conferences, except the first and the third, resulted in collections of articles. Selections of presentations were developed into research articles that were peer-reviewed and thoroughly edited by the editorial team of the CECT series *Approaches to Culture Theory*. Series volumes also contain some additional contributions from invited authors.



# Field





## Experiencing and interpreting truth

Aet Annist

Usually, when we interpret our experiences as researchers we presume truth holds a central place. Some famous examples of lies in sciences come to mind. For instance the *Eoörnns pteroveloX gobiensis* hoax in biology (Fotheringham 1928) lied about the existence of the research subject, whilst Horace Mitchell Miner's clever anthropological 'study' of the Nacirema (1956) interpreted existing reality in a deceitful, albeit revealing, way. But most of the time, researchers across disciplines make an effort to produce as accurate a representation of reality as they can, with the help of the tools for interpretation provided by their field.

So where do we stand when facing subjects who knowingly lie to us, or attempt to feed us their truths, which we have no will to swallow? For many, a science like this would be unfathomable. Anthropologists, however, take this to a wholly different level, considering the controversial relationship between the fact and its representation to be an ontological conundrum, rather than an epistemological one. Meeting the fundamental alterity of other ontologies, they know they cannot simply state the truth value of their own experiences or the interpretations they are offered, nor can they be sure of whether their subjects care to present them with the Truth, a half-truth or nothing but a lie.

The following articles reveal the importance of considering the (local) truth and the relationship that the researchers form with it through their experience and its interpretations. Uneasiness about truth engages the fieldworker with the field in a way that collecting seemingly smooth and assumedly truthful facts about reality never would. It requires us to question over and over again what it is that we think we know. Being converted to the Truth or getting hooked on contended lies and tall tales is an experience that needs to be reflected on and interpreted in itself. This might reveal the value of uninterpretability, of weirdness in experience. Weirdness – unexplained inconsistencies with presupposed facts – opens our eyes to authentic lies, hidden truths and the value of ambiguity.

Experiences with truth can be far more multidimensional than we could expect from such an apparently one-dimensional subject. Ambiguity, lack of clarity or outright weirdness accepted by Komi hunters appears in the first instance to be in stark contrast to Truth as perceived and embraced by Evangelicals. Yet both depend on the uncertainty and fluidity of both the story and its relationship

with both perceivable experiences and possible interpretations. The lack of certainty, its liminality and the 'hesitant cognitive condition' is the basis of belief of the Evangelicals who have to find their way through endless multitude of interpretations of the Bible, of the audiences listening to hunting tales, and also of fieldwork. This paves our search for the way to clear out the mundane mess and establish the validity of transcendental experiences – or to keep the messiness firmly in place to emerge with the authority as a story-teller and interpreter. This search in its weirdness and its distance from the obvious provides as much knowledge about the meaning and value of human life as nailing down plain facts. Anthropologists and ethnologists are lucky in their ability to move between the two in both their experiences as well as their interpretations.

## References

- Fotheringham, A. C. (1928) *Eoörnīs Pterovēlox Gobiensis*. Bughleigh Press.  
Miner, H. M. (1956) Body ritual among the Nacirema, *American Anthropologist* 58, 503–507.



## Mimetic knowledge in the ethnographic field

Art Leete

**Abstract.** The aim of this chapter is to analyse the process of ethnographic knowledge production during fieldwork. In the framework of a variety of factors, I concentrate on the mimetic effects of understanding that enable the researcher to comprehend field data in a short time perspective. In order to achieve the goals of this chapter, I explore a few storytelling episodes, documented during my fieldwork among the Komi hunters in the Russian North and the Khanty people in Western Siberia. As a result of analysis I established the concept of truth as highly relevant in decoding the Komi hunters' narrative episodes. Complicated treatment of the truth activates the Komi hunters' storytelling process. Truth is also a prominent analytical tool in the Khanty presentation of belief narratives. Understanding of the truth is qualitatively different in the Komi and Khanty cases, although it influences narrative process prominently in both traditions. Mimetic conduct serves as a useful cognitive tool for an ethnographer in order to understand storytelling situations in the field. Mimesis enables at least preliminary understanding of culture-specific narrative strategies and serves as a basis for later analytical efforts.

### Introduction

Storytelling in the Russian North and Siberia sometimes has peculiar forms that demand mimetic efforts of comprehension by an ethnographer. The Komi hunters follow a specific narrative code or 'hunting language' (see Konakov 1983, 192–193) and in Western Siberia, narrators used a rhythmic poetic mode, the 'language of tales', when talking about sacred issues (Vella 1996; see also Toulouze 2004, 44), making it impossible to understand their stories directly. This Komi 'hunting language' included a strategy to make constantly indirect notions to wild game and fish as well as hunting equipment and other terms used in regard of hunting. Different problems of understanding are related to the belief narratives of Western Siberia (the Khanty, in this chapter). In their stories, objective reality and the mythological realm can be mixed in such a way that the audience can easily get confused. These narrative domains are empowered by the hesitant

---

Kannike, A., Tasa, M. & Västriik, E.-H. (eds) (2017) *Body, Personhood and Privacy: Perspectives on the Cultural Other and Human Experience*. Approaches to Culture Theory 7, 35–52. University of Tartu Press, Tartu.

effect of the audience. Not everything that the Komi or Khanty storytellers tell provokes doubt. In this chapter I concentrate on regional narrative strategies in the storytelling tradition. I consider that understanding the rules that regulate peculiar domains of tradition may also be illuminating for analytical efforts directed towards the main body of oral literature in the region.

My Komi colleague Vladimir Lipin and I have completed a few studies on Komi hunting narratives (Lipin & Leete 2000; Leete & Lipin 2006; 2014; 2015). These articles are dedicated to collaborative analysis of hunters' vernacular ethics, taxonomies based on hunting skills and the concept of truth in hunters' oral narratives. However, as my co-author is simultaneously my research fellow and a hunter,<sup>1</sup> it has been complicated to explore purely the outsider's perspective on local narrative strategies.

Hunting-related stories have been published in several general collections of Komi folklore (Limerov 2005; Rochev 2006 [1984]). Editors of these collections have made random comments on different details of these narratives. On the other hand, Komi (Il'ina & Uliashev 2009) and non-Komi scholars (Konakov 1983), and both in cooperation (Siikala & Ulyashev 2011), have used stories in order to develop their analytical approach to Komi hunting practices. Again, as most of local authors are of Komi origin, their analysis is based on and assumes certain natural cultural competence. But for a scholar, coming from far away, understanding local narrative style is a complicated task.

Khanty belief narratives have been published and explored even more intensively (see, for example, Kulemzin 1981; 1984; Lukina 1990; Moldanov 1999; Moldanova 2001; Kulemzin et al 2006). Again, the indigenous scholars can easily distinguish the prominent cultural mechanisms that bound vernacular religion and storytelling (see, for example, the analysis, presented by Timofei Moldanov and Tatiana Moldanova (2000), on the way in which the Kazym River Khanty relate their personal commitment to specific gods to overall cultural behaviour). At the same time, non-indigenous researchers struggle a lot, trying to position their analyses adequately in regard of cultural framework. A few studies have also been made on the Forest Nenets narrative practices (Toulouze 2004), which is significant for contextualising regional vernacular storytelling traditions.

As a rule, one can detect a lack of analysis of fieldwork encounter in collections of stories and analyses of these narratives. Exceptions to this approach can be found in a few studies, as well. For example, Toulouze and Niglas (2012) discuss how an outsider scholar can grasp the Forest Nenets' worldview through negotiations with cultural insiders.

The aim of this chapter is to explore the limits of understanding stories in the field. The emphasis of the chapter is on theoretical and methodological

reconsiderations regarding narrative episodes that make researchers hesitant in respect of their fieldwork partners' performative agenda. On several occasions, the ethnographer may encounter difficulties in comprehending the intentions of narrators and the background of cultural rules that frame particular storytelling episodes.

While keeping my approach predominantly in the domain of theoretical discussion, the empirical condensation points of this chapter are constituted by the analysis of narrative events, documented during my field research among the Komi people in European part of Northern Russia and the Khanty people in Western Siberia. Selected stories represent different domains of generic taxonomy (hunters' experience narratives and belief legends). Regardless of generic qualities, these stories share a performative peculiarity that positions them on the cognitive borderline of truth and lie. This fluid truth-value of selected narratives is essential for my study.

It is also possible to approach the truth in folk narratives through the prism of vernacular genres. There may be different folk genres designating stories with similar content but varying truth-value (Enges 2012). However, it is also possible that the genre of a narrative depends situationally on the attitude of a storytelling company towards the truth-value of a told story. The generic belongingness of a story is sometimes established after a particular storytelling event in the course of negotiations between a narrator and an audience (Toulouze 2004, 58). However, generic paradigm is not the focus of my study. I concentrate on the way in which a researcher is able to comprehend narrative situations in the field regardless of the truth-value and genre-specifics that cultural insiders may negotiate between themselves. In this respect, a lie also serves as valuable evidence for an ethnographer. My aim is to elaborate on the issue of a researcher's possible understanding of vernacular narratives similarly to the way in which the people under study understand those stories.

My attempt to approach vernacular storytelling practice is made on the basis of "native hermeneutics" as stated by Thomas DuBois (1996). According to DuBois, in narrative communities there are accepted diverse ways of interpreting similar texts in the framework of the same strategic approach. Traditional interpretation may be anchored around described situations (through narrativisation or proverbialisation), persons or cultural rules. Storytelling and singing thus engages a few possible "hermeneutic pathways". These interpretative strategies involve either individual or situational dominants. Audience perception is often complicated, as a text alone does not determine the way of understanding even if rules of performing and understanding are commonly established. A performer can always manipulate an audience's expectations (op cit).

Hermeneutic understanding re-establishes the course of text production on the basis of its fixed results by intrusion into the consciousness of the 'other' (Ricoeur 1995, 4). When interpreting, I do not claim to be able to really grasp the consciousness of my fieldwork partners, rather I aim to imitate the original indigenous mechanism of text production. Hans-Georg Gadamer argues: "Verbal form and traditional content cannot be separated in the hermeneutic experience" (2006, 438). Although revealing the truth is the prominent task of any researcher, verification of analytical results is often complicated. If we explore texts that are not meant to reflect merely the correct order of things but also individuality and a relative approach to performative acts, we can learn something about the relationship between the recognised truth and the possibilities of verbal expression (see op cit, 436-452).

My analysis of mimetic aspects of knowledge production in the field is inspired by Michael Taussig's approach to mimesis as "the nature that culture uses to create second nature, the faculty to copy, imitate, make models, explore difference, yield into and become Other" (1993, xiii). I use this notion (and discussion built upon it) as a clue for reconstructing situations of fieldwork encounter and its implications on analytic effort in general. I argue that mimesis is not only a strategy used by cultural actors but can also be used as an analytical tool by an ethnographer.

### **Narrative strategies, the relationship with the audience, tradition and individuality**

According to my long-term impressions, Komi hunters give a lot of significance to the content of their stories and to the connection between the narrative and real events. However, this relationship between real life events and stories is ambivalent and depends on individual treatment of vernacular storytelling rules. Understanding the modes of manipulating this dialogic relationship of things that have happened and things that are told is vital in establishing a basis for adequate treatment of vernacular narrative efforts.

When communicating the content of a narrative, the storytellers also put certain effort into executing "the strategies elaborated by the storytellers in order to establish a relation to the audience" (Cocq 2008, 18). This communicative attempt is crucial in achieving a holistic expression of the collective frame of discourse as well as revealing individual or circumstantial peculiarities of conversation. Narrative strategies cover the specificity of the local vernacular tradition and individual storytellers' connections to the collective rules of narrative practices.

Narrators can change and adapt their stories, depending on their audience or even their mood (op cit, 18-19; Enges 2012, 263-265).

Storytellers simultaneously keep in their minds seemingly contradictory demands of vernacular performative strategies. In the course of narrating, storytellers can change their approach by manipulating the audience through a narrative shift. This may involve, for example, a change of emphasis in a prototypical storyline, manipulation of the description of an ordinary practice or focusing on the specific actualisation of a particular vernacular belief. It is also important to comprehend a larger body of narrative motifs, circulating in a narrative community and to be adequately familiar with local cultural habits in general. This is significant in order to contextualise narrative performances and trace possible intertextual links.

A storyteller can handle the relationship between a particular story and communally shared tradition by increasing or reducing intertextuality (Briggs & Bauman 1992; Cocq 2008, 19). When adapting a story to ordinary generic patterns, a storyteller may avoid specific contextualisation and apply references to earlier narrators. Communication of personal experiences with convincing contextualisation often indicates the extension of “intertextual gaps”. These elastic in-between textual areas enable the storyteller to indicate personal creativity and authority and to regulate a storyteller’s relationship with audience (op cit, 19-20).

This logic of intertextual dynamics is not necessarily fully indicated by references to social or situational contexts and previous tellers of a particular story, or by emphasising personal experience. The degree of the declared personal intimacy, the amount of specific detail provided or references to vernacular rules and authorities does not always allow adequate estimation of the degree of narrative manipulation. However, application of these indicators makes the analysis adequately coherent and serves as a useful framework for revealing highly relevant points regarding storytelling practice. At the same time, one must consider the possibility that a storyteller intentionally imitates generic rules or manipulates a description of practical details. This can create an illusion of a story with certain qualities but which is actually a shifted variant of itself or even a conceptual opposite to its formal appearance.

The potentially ambivalent relationship between narrative’s form and content is a result of vernacular heteroglossia. Individual dialogue reflects double-voiced discourse the components of which are not particularly coherent or conflicting (Bakhtin 1981, 325). Polyphonic appearance of competing voices during a narrative event is produced by a storyteller’s individual perception of collective narrative rules and determined treatment of a proper social etiquette (Cocq 2008, 21).



Narrators can change the meaning of a story through polyphonic manipulation even if the rules of storytelling are followed on other levels of narrative structure (thick intertextuality, recognition of collective tradition and generic rules). Heteroglossia enables the transformation of story meaning even if no single rule of a particular narrative tradition is violated. This indicates that manipulation of a vernacular narrative scheme provides an opportunity for a traditional storytelling approach to produce stories that have alternative meanings simultaneously.

### **Complications regarding the truth in Komi hunting stories**

Komi hunters tell a very different kind of stories, some of which are rather simple in a spiritual sense. These narratives are meant to instruct an inexperienced audience in forest matters or to exchange knowledge between skilled hunters. An audience learns some skills and general rules of behaviour while also obtaining knowledge of overall forest conditions and the hunter's worldview.

Other stories are designed in order to confuse skilled hunters who have a life-long experience in hunting practice, storytelling and listening. It is most complicated for a researcher to cope with this level of cultural expertise. During an ethnographic interview situation, narrators may simply entertain themselves by bewildering a researcher with their stories. An outsider is an easy victim for them in these situations. A hunter can practice his storytelling skills on a researcher before going to perform in front of the real audience, experts of his own kind.

In the case of telling hunting stories, often it is not important that the whole story must be recognised as truth or lie, but rather the configuration of narrative details is significant. One of the basic rules of Komi hunters' storytelling is that a lie must sound like a true story and the truth must be expressed as a lie. If an audience is able to see through the trick, it is recognised as a dialogue of experts. If even the expert listener is confused, the performance is considered a masterpiece.

Normally, an audience is able to understand stories on some occasions and stays puzzled in others. This enables balance to be maintained in hunters' narrative communities. Hunters may not be happy if an ethnographer understands stories too well. Although it is not likely that a researcher can manage to decode all narratives correctly, one must be aware of the threat of being too smart. However, in most situations the problem is found to be the reverse. Researchers must imitate understanding of a few things in order to maintain some respect. It is a cognitive dialogue on the borderlands of expertise and ignorance.

To illustrate the problematic nature of an outside ethnographer understanding narratives, I present for analysis two stories told by the same hunter during my fieldwork trips. These stories reveal the problematic nature of storytelling in a more explicit way. At the same time, those narratives and the storyteller's comments help to clarify the limits of the ethnographer's ability to comprehend the storytelling practice in general.

One really skilled Komi hunter, Aleksei<sup>2</sup> (b 1966), told me in 1996:

Recently a militiaman found a bear's den. And from a militiaman's viewpoint, he thought that somebody has been hiding some stuff there. As it appeared, the bear happened to be behind them. Not in the den but somewhere nearby. The militiaman started to scream and the other one was supposed to fire some shots towards the bear. It will be much better, if you don't put your head into the bear's den (FM 1996).

In 2003, the same man told another story that sounds somehow similar despite the issue that it describes an event that happened to different people in a different situation and has a different level of intimacy for the storyteller himself:

Two of us went to search for a bear's den. We found it and the bear escaped. My partner started to track the bear and I crawled into the den. I wanted to see what is inside of it. I looked around – everything was normal, clean, civilised. Suddenly I heard my friend screaming. He was really frightened. I came out of the den. As it appeared, the bear made a circle and ended up behind me. And he was standing right next to me observing. He was curious as my legs were hanging out of the den. My partner could not shoot, as the bear was too close to me. And my friend decided to scream. And the bear escaped, again. So, you see, what may happen (FM 2003).

It seems to be quite obvious that the second story imitates the plot of the first. However, it is tricky to estimate a possible connection of these stories to the real life events. It is reasonable to assume that people do not crawl into bears' caves too often. As it is not a random event, the hunter must have remembered in 2003 that a few years earlier he was disseminating a similar story about militiamen. The first story seems a quite obvious lie (as a variant of anecdotes about stupid militiamen). But in the second case, there was no need for the narrator to present himself and his friend as unskilled hunters in a fabulated story. The didactic grain of truth in the second story may be that even if a hunter is experienced, it may still happen that he miscalculates wild animal behaviour on some occasions.

In the forest, it is impossible to concentrate all the time and to avoid any kind of dangerous situations (see also Leete & Lipin 2006, 335).

It is possible to estimate potential truth in the other story using the details provided. I was told how the bear escaped after he heard hunters coming, how the interior of the den looked and the way in which the bear returned. All these elements can potentially be true. This coherence of details makes the narrative trustworthy. In addition, it is important to recall that Aleksei noted in 2006 that he was not willing to tell stories, as people tend not to believe him, although he always tells the truth. But one cannot avoid hesitation, as these stories do not sound like the unquestionable truth. It is hard to imagine why these skilled hunters ironically copied a mistake supposedly made by ignorant militiamen.

During the recent fieldwork trip in 2013, I tried to discuss these stories with Aleksei again. He remembered both stories but did not recognise any resemblance. The first story about militiamen was for him just something he had heard from another hunter and so he did not take any responsibility for its truthfulness. But he claimed the second narrative to be the correct reflection of a true-life event and was able to repeat the story with all details, including the 'civilised' appearance of the interior of the bear's den.

Again in 2013, I asked another Komi hunter, Timofei, how he knows whether his friend Kirill (also a hunter) tells him the truth or not? He answered: "Because I just know him and I know what could actually happen." These two perspectives – knowledge of the narrator's character and hunting practice – are crucial in understanding the stories. One must also add the third component, which is knowledge of vernacular narrative strategies. Even if an ethnographer can list these keys to understanding, actual comprehension is still complicated, as we cannot "just know".

Understanding of the concept of "just knowing" is even more complicated among the Komi hunters. During one of our conversations Timofei argued that "there is a type of person who just knows, even if they don't know" (FM 1998). This demonstrates ironic discourse concerning people who consider themselves unfoolable. But it may also happen that people perform in a variety of ways in different situations. This ambivalent vernacular positioning of narrators complicates the ethnographer's possibilities to estimate adequately any of studied narrative events. However, during fieldwork it may sometimes be reasonable to imitate this direct knowing because it does not suppose elaboration of particular analytical elements.

Taussig argues that in anthropology, there "is resistance to leaving weirdness weird, and no recognition of the stuff that won't fit" (Taussig 2003). Komi hunters claim that their narrative strategy aims to establish a hesitant cognitive condition.

By the end of a good story, the audience must remain unsure about truth or lie in the narrative. The hunters expect that the researcher will guess what the truth is.<sup>3</sup> But it is not easy to establish how to approach this kind of data in proper academic research. At the same time, unquestioned recognition of weirdness is still possible in a fieldwork encounter, although Komi hunting stories are not particularly strange in a spiritual sense. One can consider that the slight indication of a mythological component in the second story is the recognition of the human-like design of the den. This can be connected to the traditional worldview of the Komi, who have historically considered the bear to be a human-like creature (Konakov 1983, 186–193). So, these stories do not take us to the domain of real strangeness.

### Mimetic death in the Khanty story

In order to illustrate this narrative strangeness more explicitly, I present for discussion another story. A young Khanty man, Andrei (born in 1970), told me this story during one of my early field trips to Western Siberia in 1992. Before getting to the story itself, it is necessary to provide a little bit of background information about mythological context of the narrative that was also touched upon by my host.

The location depicted in the story is related to the Yuilsk village on the Kazym River, the tributary of lower Ob River. The story itself was also told on the Kazym River, in another village, Amnya, where my informant lived. But it is necessary to describe the way in which in local narratives the place has become so important in local Khanty worldview. Andrei first introduced the myth about the sacred place at Yuilsk:

God flew over Yuilsk village and stuck his *khorei* [reindeer driving stick] into the land surface. A pine tree grew in that place and a birch tree grows on top of it. Now it is the most holy place. But perhaps that tree has dried out already (FM 1992).

In documented Khanty mythological songs, the god moving through Yuilsk is named Kasum Imi ('the Lady of the Kazym River'). Kasum Imi asked his father, the supreme god Numi Torum, to send her an assistant, the spirit-guardian of Yuilsk. Numi Torum fulfilled the request of his daughter and sent a "big-eyed forest spirit" to guard the location. Not far from Yuilsk, Kasum Imi left her reindeer driving stick, which turned into a tree with both pine and birch branches simultaneously (Moldanov & Moldanova 2000, 12). The sacred place of Yuilsk

is also rather important today and the local Khanty have organised collective reindeer offerings in that place in recent decades (Balzer 1999, 189).

We can see that Andrei started his narration with a summary of the local myth. This part of his story is widely known among the Kazym River Khanty and easily verifiable (as the myth is touched upon in literature). In this way it somehow assures the audience that all that follows must be the truth, as well.

Andrei continued his storytelling with a local legend that explained a little bit of Yuilsk village history:

The inhabitants of Yuilsk village established a graveyard next to the castle.<sup>4</sup> People also built their houses nearby. The people built a lot of houses and finally they started to erect buildings at the graveyard. After that they [the deceased] started to terrify people. They scared humans continually and finally a shaman was invited. The shaman asked: "What's the matter?" And they explained that you see, people started to build their houses on the graveyard. "Let people build their houses in another place. If people will not remove their houses, they will continue to scare people off." After that the location was abandoned and people moved upstream<sup>5</sup> from the castle; today the village is still situated there (FM 1992).

Andrei thus continued his introduction to his main story. We can learn that the Khanty of Yuilsk have close connections with their ancestors as they have active on-going communication. At the same time, the Khanty are not too fond of these otherworldly matters as these cause them certain troubles if people do not please their deceased relatives enough, although the people have their own means of handling these problems. If they need to know what the creatures of the other world want to tell them, the local Khanty can find a way to cope with the issue (in this case, the shaman helped the Khanty out).

After providing me important background knowledge about spiritual issues concerning the Yuilsk Khanty, Andrei continued with a narrative that is significant for my current discussion:

My father-in-law lived earlier, since his childhood in Yuilsk. But later he moved to Khanty-Mansiysk. Suddenly the god of Yuilsk tells him that his wife is going to die. The wife was in Yuilsk, drank too much and fell down dead. All their children also died. After some time, Anna's father [Andrei's father-in-law] lost his mind and departed from Khanty-Mansiysk to Yuilsk. He walked directly through the forests. That god of Yuilsk invited him. He was supposed to become the guardian of the Old Yuilsk. Anna's father didn't

realise at all, what he was doing. The god held his head and continued to call him to Yuilsk. Finally he reached the destination and only after that he regained consciousness. He had been travelling three months. His hair had grown long. From that time he lives in Yuilsk and guards that place (FM 1992).

From the viewpoint of syllogistic logic, all this does not make much sense. A man's father-in-law cannot lose all his children in their childhood. Apart from this, the empirical fact was that I had seen Andrei's wife Anna with my own eyes a few days before this narrative was told to me. Furthermore, in the middle of a later conversation Andrei announced that Anna's mother lived in 1992 in the forest, close to the old settlement, next to the castle's location.

At first, it seemed that Andrei was teasing me. Then I looked at him one more time and all this (mostly, his honest appearance without the devious spark in his eyes) felt rather natural. He did not seem to be playing a trick on me but was just telling a nice story. As an undergraduate student, I had a rather vague idea about proper academic research, and so I decided to 'leave weirdness weird'. I imitated someone who would take this story as perfectly normal. I attempted to yield to this odd perception of the world, where in the course of storytelling, the dead can be alive, and vice versa.

I suppose that this case has helped me in later fieldwork not to get too excited if something, seemingly not totally logical, has been told to me. But if you are patient, some day you can get to know why people talk like that. For my fieldwork partners there is usually a rather reasonable logic in being illogical. And I liked the spell that was somehow present in the story. Anyhow, for a while, I did not even attempt to analyse this narrative situation I went through with Andrei.

### **Empowering through copying**

I suppose that the attempt to apply a somehow reasonable framework for exploring such seemingly illogical plots in storytelling on the borderline of the truth and lie can be made through analysing mimetic patterning. Taussig argues that there are certain ways to strengthen a narrative and proposes that the storyteller's self can be divided in order to achieve this goal:

It was from this encounter that the story gathered its existence and power, just as it is in this encounter that we discern the splitting of the self, of being self and Other, as achieved by sentience taking one out of oneself – to become something else as well (Taussig 1993, 40–41).

This idea of narrative reproduction of alternative life versions can be easily applied to the audience or some other people around. In the case of the Khanty story, told by Andrei, presenting living people as already dead may have something to do with empowering the story and making mythological processes and people's lives mimetically coherent. The story becomes stronger, the relationship with vernacular beliefs closer, when compared to a less intimate connection between heroes of the story and real life people. It is important that the accident is a very dramatic one and spirits make a rather strong statement and the real person is related to this through the mimetic illusion.

Contact can be also treated as a gate to mimesis. In mimetic conduct, one simultaneously becomes different and maintains sameness through alterity (Taussig 1993, 129). In this case it is even more pertinent to recall that "hearing something is to be in contact with that something" (op cit, 21) because in culture-bound cognition, contact and copy will be merged. In the presented Khanty story, the wife of the storyteller becomes existentially intimate to the spiritual world through the death of her alternative narrative image or textual incarnation (the same can be argued concerning his mother-in-law). Life-world and narrative are related through the real contact agents and the shift between life and death adds significantly to the existential efficacy of the story.

One cannot be sure that this mimetic explanation is even close to local cultural reality. I was able to find the example of a vernacular way of treating this style of storytelling. I documented actual description of a similar narrative approach, presented by the Forest Nenets reindeer herder and writer Yuri Vella. As Yuri's stories are often related to real-life events and reflect an indigenous worldview quite intimately, Vella's explanation can be used as a key for understanding aspects of Andrei's narrative that somehow puzzled me as a researcher.

The important point for this discussion is that in Yuri's narrative, someone from the audience died in the past (similarly to Andrei's narrative). Yuri Vella explained that although it sounds weird it is rather normal for Forest Nenets stories. According to Yuri, "it is just the way we tell stories" (FM 2000). This way, I have managed to document more than one independent story about a living person described as dead in a narrative.<sup>6</sup> I decided that it is not a hoax and can be used in analysis as something real and truthful. This mode of vernacular interpretation is not specific for the death stories. Yuri has also explained the Forest Nenets understanding of reindeer's spiritual influence over people in a similar way: "this is a serious thing and we do not get to the bottom of its mechanism" (Novikova 2002, 135). This way of explaining something by applying a cognitive model of "just knowing" or "just the way as things are" does not provide any

clear hints for an ethnographer, if one attempts to explore the way that people think or narrate.

It is not easy to decide how to deal with this piece of vernacular philosophy, proposed by Yuri Vella. It seems that Yuri suggests that we leave the weirdness in peace. Scholarly speculations, proposed above, may still explain something. But the hesitation continues, as we cannot establish an explanation for sure. The indigenous people avoid precision and scholars are left alone with their speculations. Our fieldwork partners' explanations and hints lead us to a certain point. These suggestions suppose that one is able to comprehend narratives by applying a tradition-related 'intuitive leap'. But if ethnographers move further with their interpretation, one cannot be sure how adequately we can continue our discussion in regard of specific narrative traditions.

## Discussion

Understanding of narratives immediately after they have been told in the field requires mimetic effort in many cases. An ethnographer must apply at least a minimal set of analytical tools (knowledge of cultural practices, vernacular beliefs and storytelling rules) in order to make a quick judgement and choose how to react. There may remain a gap between understanding and reaction, although one must act as if one understands what was told.

Re-interpretation of field knowledge is an endless process and depends on accumulating experience as a listener. In general, it is a deconstruction of the false feeling of comprehending all the vernacular wisdom at first glance. Although the researcher's knowledge remains fragmentary, an adequate level of coherence can be achieved if one has performed as an expert audience in the field.

Taussig argues that, "scientific knowledge is obtained through mimetic reproduction in many ways. We see and comprehend hidden details of familiar objects. We become aware of patterns and necessities that had hitherto invisibly ruled our lives" (1993, 25). If we study societies, distant and different from our own, at first it takes considerable effort to become familiar with anything. Understanding things that are weird for cultural insiders may then work as a double mimesis. At first one needs to establish knowledge of normal conditions of local life-worlds, and then try to comprehend weirdness from the vernacular perspective that we attempt to reproduce in our minds.

Inside of mimetic processes a researcher can distance him- or herself from the imitated, and, at the same time, avoid a constructionist cognitive stand (Tausig 1993, xix). Through imitation, knowledge becomes immediate but clearly different from wisdom, gained by 'looking through the eyes' or 'over the shoulder'



of the native (cf Malinowski 1999 [1948]). When copying, we experience cultural processes as natives but make clear cognitive difference because our connection with experienced phenomena is fragmentary, temporary and out of holistic local social context. Discussing Taussig's concept of mimesis, Simon Coleman (2002, 76) proposes that fieldwork "can be seen as a sophisticated form of sympathetic magic". In the field we encounter something in a more immediate way and are able to build our interpretation on this intimate mimetic experience, rather than just figuring everything out by distant logical moves. At the same time, "the constant conversations and mimetic practices that constitute fieldwork are necessary but incomplete: the 'magic' of imitation has limited powers" (op cit, 77).

It is also possible that doubt may be dialogic during storytelling episodes. Anna-Leena Siikala and Oleg Ulyashev argue that in Komi stories, hunting becomes "poetically compared with the battle field" (2011, 209). The same can happen to the narrating event that turns into spiritual competition. It may be significant to leave a storyteller doubtful in regard of a listener's response – was a narrative understood adequately or was an audience tricked. This kind of mimetic dialogue (where understanding copies a lack of comprehension, and vice versa) can create culturally proper narrating process and nurture or provoke further narratives. It may also happen that if doubt progresses mutually, both sides feel a growing need to discuss the issue. At this cognitive moment a researcher is able to obtain information regarding the vernacular approach to narratives in the most natural way. Too perfect detection of truth by an audience, as well as the complete and clear ignorance, are frustrating for a narrating process and for a dialogue between a scholar and narrators.

The analysed mimetic conduct embodies certain risks. During a narrative episode in the field, adequate intuition is required to make quick decisions regarding one's response (to imitate understanding or not). Intuition may be an unreliable cognitive tool if we miscalculate our cultural expertise. But if we manage to apply mimetic behaviour successfully, it may turn our fieldwork enterprise into an exciting 'intellectual adventure' (cf Toulouze 2000, 9-10) and enable us to access cultural mechanisms we cannot reach by a direct question-and-answer approach. This does not mean that hypothetical discoveries, made through mimetic reproduction, cannot later be tested (verified or falsified) during interviews.

The problem is even more complicated, as not everything in storytelling is regulated by shared traditional rules. Storytellers have an individual approach to the whole practice and every one of them may manipulate vernacular narrative rules differently. This means two things simultaneously. Firstly, every storytelling episode must be analysed specifically, depending on the narrator's personality.

Secondly, storytellers themselves often stress their role as mediators of common rules and they do not recognise improvisation as something worth practicing. This contradiction determines the need to calculate possible deviations from the common rules of storytelling even in cases when the narrators themselves do not recognise their approach as individual at all (for discussion on individual and collective in vernacular discourse, see also Leete & Koosa 2012). At the same time, it is also possible that storytellers imitate common practice but consciously act individually.

Recognising the fragmentarity and ambivalence of knowledge building, it becomes tricky to merge details of understanding into a coherent whole. Field experience appears to us as a mimetic play of superficial and fundamental, ideological and physical, essentialised and dialogic. One needs to accept the relative and ambivalent nature of the knowledge transmission process (that can be supposedly comprehended through mimesis). This cognitive position enables us to establish adequate concision points for further analysis.

## Interviews

FM = Fieldwork materials of the author, Komi Republic and Western Siberia, Russia, 1992–2013. Recordings in possession of the author.

## References

- Bakhtin, M. M. (1981) *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*. Slavic Series 1. The University of Texas Press, Austin, London.
- Balzer, M. M. (1999) *The Tenacity of Ethnicity: A Siberian Saga in Global Perspective*. Princeton University Press, Princeton.
- Briggs, C. & Bauman, R. (1992) Genre, intertextuality and social power, *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* 2 (2), 131–172.
- Cocq, C. (2008) *Revoicing Sámi Narratives: North Sámi Storytelling at the Turn of the 20th Century*. Sámi Studies 5. Umeå University, Umeå.
- Coleman, S. (2002) “But are they really Christian?": Contesting knowledge and identity in and out of the field. – Spickard, J. V., Landres, J. S. & McGuire, M. B. (eds) *Personal Knowledge and Beyond: Reshaping the Ethnography of Religion*, 75–87. New York University Press, New York, London.
- DuBois, T. A. (1996) Native hermeneutics: traditional means of interpreting lyric songs in Northern Europe, *The Journal of American Folklore* 109 (433), 235–266.
- Enges, P. (2012) “Minä melkein uskon”: Yliluonnollinen ja sen kohtaaminen tenonsaamelaisessa uskomusperinteessä. Scripta Lingua Fennica Edita. Seria C, tom 338. Annales Universitatis Turkuensis. Turun Yliopisto, Turku.
- Gadamer, H.-G. (2006) *Truth and Method*. Continuum, London, New York.

- Il'ina, I. V. & Uliashev, O. I. (2009) *Muzhchina i zhenshchina v traditsionnoi kul'ture komi*. Institut iazyka, literatury i istorii Komi NTs UrO RAN, Syktyvkar. [Ильина, И. В. & Уляшев, О. И. (2009) *Мужчина и женщина в традиционной культуре коми*. Институт языка, литературы и истории Коми НЦ УрО РАН, Сыктывкар.]
- Konakov, N. D. (1983) *Komi okhotniki i rybolovy vo vtoroi polovine XIX – nachale XX v. Kul'tura promyslovogo naseleniia taezhnoi zony Evropeiskogo Severo-Vostoka*. Nauka, Moskva. [Конаков, Н. Д. (1983) *Коми охотники и рыболовы во второй половине XIX – начале XX в. Культура промыслового населения таежной зоны Европейского Северо-Востока*. Наука, Москва.]
- Kulemzin, V. M. (1981) O metodike sbora polevykh materialov po religiozным predstavleniiam. – Pletneva, L. M. (ed) *Metodologicheskie aspekty arkheologicheskikh i etnograficheskikh issledovaniy v Zapadnoi Sibiri*, 141–143. Izdatel'stvo Tomskogo universiteta, Tomsk. [Кулемзин, В. М. (1981) О методике сбора полевых материалов по религиозным представлениям. – Плетнева, Л. М. (ред.) *Методологические аспекты археологических и этнографических исследований в Западной Сибири*, 141–143. Издательство Томского университета, Томск.]
- Kulemzin, V. M. (1984) *Chelovek i priroda v verovaniiah khantov*. Izdatel'stvo Tomskogo universiteta, Tomsk. [Кулемзин, В. М. (1984) *Человек и природа в верованиях хантов*. Издательство Томского университета, Томск.]
- Kulemzin, V. M., Lukina, N. V., Moldanov, T. A. & Moldanova, T. A. (2006) *Khanty Mythology. Encyclopaedia of Uralic Mythologies 2*. Hoppal, M., Napolskikh, V. & Siikala, A.-L. (ed). Akademiai Kiado, Budapest; Finnish Literature Society, Helsinki.
- Leete, A. & Koosa, P. (2012) *The churches were opened and lots of missionaries arrived: dialogue between Komi identity and faith, Folklore. Electronic Journal of Folklore 51*, 171–190.
- Leete, A. & Lipin, V. (2006) Profannoe i sakral'noe v traditsionnoi okhotnich'ei kul'ture komi. – Fadeieva, I. (ed) *Semiozis i kul'tura: sbornik nauchnykh statei*, 333–337. Izdatel'stvo Komi pedagogicheskogo instituta, Syktyvkar. [Леете, А. & Липин, В. (2006) Профанное и сакральное в традиционной охотничьей культуре коми. – Фадеева, И. (ред.) *Семиозис и культура: сборник научных статей*, 333–337. Издательство Коми педагогического института, Сыктывкар.]
- Leete, A. & Lipin, V. (2014) Komi hunter narratives. – Bowman, M. & Valk, Ü. (eds) *Ver-nacular Religion in Everyday Life: Expressions of Belief*, 282–300. Routledge, London.
- Leete, A. & Lipin, V. (2015) The Concept of Truth in the Komi Hunting Stories, *Acta Borealia 32* (1), 68–84.
- Limerov, P. F. (author-compiler) (2005) *Mu püks'öm – Sotvorenie mira*. Komi knizhnoe izdatel'stvo, Syktyvkar. [Лимеров, П. Ф. (авт.-сост.) (2005) *Му пуксь'ом – Сотворение мира*. Коми книжное издательство, Сыктывкар.]
- Lipin, V. & Leete, A. (2000) The Komi hunters' ethics at the end of the 20th century, *Pro Ethnologia 10*, 77–85.
- Lukina, N. V. (ed) (1990) *Mify, predaniia, skazki khantov i mansi*. Nauka, Moskva. [Лукина, Н. В. (ред.) (1990) *Мифы, предания, сказки хантов и манси*. Наука, Москва.]
- Malinowski, B. (1999 [1948]) The role of myth in life. – Hicks, D. (ed) *Ritual and Belief: Readings in the Anthropology of Religion*, 40–48. McGraw-Hill College, Boston.

- Moldanov, T. (1999) *Kartina mira v pesnopeniakh medvezh'ikh igrishch severnykh khandov*. Izdatel'stvo Tomskogo universiteta, Tomsk. [Молданов, Т. (1999) *Картина мира в песнопениях медвежьих игрещ северных хантов*. Издательство Томского университета, Томск.]
- Moldanov, T. & Moldanova, T. A. (2000) *Bogi zemli kazym'skoi*. Izdatel'stvo Tomskogo universiteta, Tomsk. [Молданов, Т. & Молданова, Т. А. (2000) *Боги земли казымской*. Издательство Томского университета, Томск.]
- Moldanova, T. A. (2001) *Arkhetipy v mire snovidanii khandov*. Izdatel'stvo Tomskogo universiteta, Tomsk. [Молданова, Т. А. (2001) *Архетипы в мире сновидений хантов*. Издательство Томского университета, Томск.]
- Novikova, N. I. (2002) *Kak zhivetsia oleniu prezidenta Rossii*. – Sokolova, Z. P. & Funk, D. A. (ed) *Rasy i narody*. Вып. 28. Institut etnologii i antropologii im. N. N. Miklukho-Maklaia, 133–145. Nauka, Moskva. [Новикова, Н. И. (2002) Как живет оленю президента России. – Соколова, З. П. & Функ, Д. А. (ред.) *Расы и народы*. Вып. 28. Институт этнологии и антропологии им. Н. Н. Миклухо-Маклая, 133–145. Наука, Москва.]
- Ricoeur, P. (1995) *Germenevtika. Etika. Politika. Moskovskie lektzii i interv'iu*. Izdatel'skii tsentr Academia, Moskva. [Рикёр, П. (1995) *Герменевтика. Этика. Политика. Московские лекции и интервью*. Издательский центр Academia, Москва.]
- Rochev, Iu. G. (ed) (2006 [1984]). *Komi iözkostsa vazh vis't'uyas – Komi legendy i predaniia*. Komi knizhnoe izdatel'stvo, Syktyvkar. [Рочев, Ю. Г. (ред.) (2006 [1984]). *Коми йöзкостса важ вис'тъяс – Коми легенды и предания*. Коми книжное издательство, Сыктывкар.]
- Siikala, A.-L. & Ulyashev, O. (2011) *Hidden Rituals and Public Performances: Traditions and Belonging among the Post-Soviet Khanty, Komi and Udmurts*. *Studia Fennica Folkloristica* 19. Finnish Literature Society, Helsinki.
- Taussig, M. (1993) *Mimesis and Alterity: A Particular History of the Senses*. Routledge, New York, London.
- Taussig, M. (2003) The diary as witness: an anthropologist writes what he must, *The Chronicle of Higher Education* 50 (17): B 12. <http://chronicle.com/weekly/v50/i17/17b01201.htm> [accessed 31 July 2013].
- Toulouze, E. (2000) Adaptational models of intellectuals among northern peoples, *Pro Ethnologia* 10, 7–15.
- Toulouze, E. (2004) On Forest Nenets narrative genres. – Leete, A. & Valk, Ü. (eds) *Peoples' Lives: Songs and Stories, Magic and Law*. *Studies in Folk Culture* 2, 36–64. Tartu University Press, Tartu.
- Toulouze, E. & Niglas, L. (2012) Native spirituality in (re)constructed personhood: observing and filming Yuri Vella, *Folklore. Electronic Journal of Folklore* 51, 133–170.
- Vella, Iu. (1996) *Belye krika. Kniga o vechnom*. Severnyi dom, Surgut. [Вэлла, Ю. (1996) *Белые крики. Книга о вечном*. Северный дом, Сургут.]

## Notes

This research was supported by the European Union through the European Regional Development Fund (Centre of Excellence in Cultural Theory), ERA.Net RUS Plus program's project No. 189 (CORUNO) and the Estonian Research Council grant PUT590.

1 The problem of a hunter's identity has been one of the most problematic issues during our negotiations. My field partners usually refuse to be labelled as hunters despite the fact that they have been engaged to hunting practices for decades. They may claim that the real hunters lived hundred years ago, or just puzzle the ethnographer with statements like, "in the natural sense I'm not a hunter!" (see also discussion in Leete & Lipin 2014).

2 Names of informants are changed in the article to guarantee their anonymity. Yuri Vella is presented with his real name as he was a well-known public figure.

3 Eva Toulouze (2004, 57-60) presents the example of the Forest Nenets story telling episode in which the narrator and his audience start to argue whether the story was true or not. Curiously, their discussion ends inconclusively and neither side is sure about their position regarding the issue.

4 Yuilsk castle – the 'Khanty city' of Kazym near the contemporary Yuilsk Village was first mentioned in a Russian chronicle of the 16th century. Remains of the Yuilsk castle were observable until the 1970s. In the mid-1970s the remnants of those structures were taken to Novosibirsk.

5 According to the Khanty worldview, one must always move a new building upstream as the deceased occupy the abandoned buildings. The world of the deceased always lies downstream from the world of the living people.

6 On a more general scale, the relationship between living and dead objects is complicated in narratives that depart from the animistic frame of reference. For instance, Yuri Vella describes heaven, land and rivers as alive and wild game as waiting to be killed. People die in Yuri's stories randomly. Death is a rather common topic for Yuri, and, supposedly, for the Forest Nenets oral narratives as well (see Vella 1996). Putting Vella's remarks into the same category as other hunters' comments is complicated as Yuri was very conscious of his integrated private and public roles as the representative and promoter of indigenous culture and as a writer.

# **“If you’re really interested in scientific research, you should study the Bible!” Ethnographical fieldwork among evangelical Christians**

Piret Koosa

**Abstract.** In this chapter I discuss my experiences as a non-believer doing ethnographic fieldwork among evangelical Christians in Komi Republic, Russia. While acknowledging the limits of objectivity, an empathic and impartial approach is generally still valued as a scholarly ideal within the principles of conducting ethnographic research and presenting field data. However, the attempt to hold a noncommittal stance in questions of belief is strongly challenged by the evangelicals. I will consider the interplay of my own and believers’ motivations for and tactics relating to mutual interaction and examine the problematic that is involved in negotiating diverging values and understandings of the ethnologist and the research subjects in the field. This chapter aims to provide an account of an open-ended methodological sketch that enables an outline of a few trends within a researcher’s behaviour and cognition while doing ethnography among believers.

## **Introduction**

More or less explicitly, anthropologists have often tended to position themselves as atheists or agnostics. Moreover, the tendency to count disbelief as the ‘objective’ stance has been said to be a systematic bias that runs through most academic studies of spiritual belief (Hufford 1995, 61). This has prompted critical analyses of the role of anthropologists’ own convictions and worldviews in studying religion. The point of concern in regard to the insider/outsider opposition has broadly been “to what degree, if any, [...] the motives and meanings of human behaviours and beliefs [are] accessible to the researcher who may not necessarily share these beliefs and who does not necessarily participate in these practices” (McCutcheon 1999, 2). On the one hand, the basic distinction between insider and outsider is an obvious and useful one: it is undeniable that members of certain groups have privileged access to knowledge, resources, and authority;

---

Kannike, A., Tasa, M. & Västriik, E.-H. (eds) (2017) *Body, Personhood and Privacy: Perspectives on the Cultural Other and Human Experience*. *Approaches to Culture Theory* 7, 53–71. University of Tartu Press, Tartu.

on the other hand, in the study of religion, this basic empirical distinction has often been held to have deeper epistemological implications (Gardiner & Engler 2012, 239). A few of the more radical thinkers have concluded that in fact only religious insiders are truly able to meaningfully grasp any faith system. At the other end of the scale, some scholars have considered the insider/outsider opposition in studying religion to be a kind of pseudo problem, suggesting that the distinction tends to be mystified in social sciences (Jensen 2011, 30-31, 46). Jeppe Sinding Jensen (op cit, 30, 32, 46), for example, has insisted that this distinction is worthless in the scholarly repertoire as it has no methodological or theoretical value in studying religions, being rather a politically expedient concept. Similarly, Mark Q. Gardiner and Steven Engler have argued against “the view that something about the language or experience of religious insiders provides some insurmountable barrier to knowledge about the meanings of their language or practices” (Gardiner & Engler 2012, 241).

As much as anthropology would like to see itself as an objective observer, we cannot ignore the fact that this discipline

[...] is itself situated within the broad discursive field constituted by secularism and religion and that it has always also been an interested party in the debate between them, pulled between explanation and interpretation, demystification and appreciation, transcendent reason and immanent experience (Lambek 2012).

As disbelief cannot be considered an impartial view from nowhere (Hufford 1995, 61), it is important for the outsider-researcher to critically consider her or his own disposition and premises, all the more so as these are seen as crucial by our interlocutors in the field. Without simply propagating the self-image of the ones studied (Jensen 2011, 33), in the context of ethnographic research I feel it to be my responsibility to attempt to tackle the issues raised by my fieldwork partners as well as my own perceptions in connection with the insider/outsider division.

In this chapter I intend to discuss my position as a non-believer doing ethnographic fieldwork among evangelical Christians. In addition to the different ideological stances I will also consider the contextual factors that have shaped our relationship. By discussing my personal experiences from the field, I hope to contribute to the on-going discussion over

[...] the involvement of personal beliefs and attitudes in anthropological theory and practice, and their consequences not only for the production and publication of scientific knowledge but also for the construction of personal

relationships and social interaction during ethnographic practice (Blanes 2006, 224).

When first entering the field, I had several worries stemming from the chosen subject of study. First of all, I was concerned with the probability of the believers' indifference or even hostility towards the 'scientific project', and thus possible unwillingness to communicate for my stated reasons, if I was able to explain my purposes at all. Furthermore, regarding religious experiences as a rather private matter<sup>1</sup> increased my uncertainty of people's disposition to share these with an outsider. While having these anxieties about gaining access to the evangelicals at all, I was also concerned with the possibility of becoming an object of heavy or even aggressive conversion attempts and was worried that the interaction would be accepted only in terms of my readiness to convert – an inclination which I did not feel and thought to be dishonest to claim otherwise.

I will start this chapter with a brief introduction to the 'field' discussed in this text and ponder my experiences, thoughts and feelings about the specificities of studying believers as a non-believer. I will then turn to the believers' responses to my presence, and how my positioning as a researcher has shaped the interaction between us. I will also consider the different kinds of motivation for this interaction, examine the problematic that is involved in explaining the purposes of my queries to the evangelicals and how they have interpreted my endeavours.

### **Contextualising the field**

Together with Art Leete I have been conducting joint research on a small evangelical congregation in Don village, Kulömdin district of the Komi Republic, Russia, since 2008 (see Koosa 2010a; Leete & Koosa 2012; Koosa 2013; Koosa & Leete 2014; Koosa 2015). In 2006 we started our research with a general interest in the dynamics of religious life in the post-socialist context of the Komi countryside. Carrying out interviews with followers of the local majority religion, Russian Orthodoxy, in Kulömdin (see Koosa 2010b; Koosa & Leete 2011), we soon learned about the evangelical group active in one of the district's villages. As a number of people appeared to be quite stirred up by this fact, it prompted us to turn our ethnographic attention to the local evangelicals. We sought out contact with the group's pastor, Andrei, and broadly explained our interest and scholarly aims to him. Andrei then introduced us to William, the American missionary who started the group, and later on to the rest of the congregation.<sup>2</sup> In fact, Andrei has repeatedly introduced us from the pulpit as scholars interested in local religious life and encouraged people to talk to us and share their experiences – if they



should wish to do so.<sup>3</sup> This kind of introduction has been very helpful indeed, as in a way their pastor has assured people that we are 'safe', although of course it does not follow that this has somehow automatically granted 'access' to every individual member of the group.

Despite Andrei's public references to us as scholars and our own explanations over the years, our position as ethnologists has often been and remained confusing to the believers: at least some of the group members still tend to think of us as fellow-believers. I can see two main reasons for this. First, as the group has active connections with believers and congregations abroad, the local evangelicals have become accustomed to visitors, brothers and sisters in faith as they are referred to, from America, Germany, and indeed from Estonia. Thus, the local believers' first logical assumption has often been that we are guests of the same kind, and therefore, even after Andrei's reference to us as researchers from a university, people would still come to enquire about *our* church and so on. Moreover, foreign visitors to the peripheral village are automatically associated with the evangelicals by non-evangelical villagers as well. This was well demonstrated during recent fieldwork – as I stepped into the village shop, the saleswoman straightaway recognised me as a non-local and was curious to know where I was from. Hearing that I was from Estonia, she immediately concluded – “oh, you're from there”, pointing to the direction of the evangelical church. Secondly, as the local specificity is that the surrounding society mainly regards the evangelicals with suspicion and antipathy, the non-judgemental sympathetic approach and readiness to listen on our part somehow blurs our outsider status too. Even incorporating a recording device into conversation does not necessarily suggest our outsider status as people are used to reading evangelical publications with believers' testimonies and some have had personal experience of telling their conversion story to an evangelical journalist.

So it is often difficult to comprehend what a specific person understands my personal position to be with regard to religious belonging. Retrospectively, I have also come to be more aware of my own biased perception – that referencing my academic background should necessarily imply a secular worldview to my religious interlocutors. Misidentification can create awkward situations when a believer has conveyed some very personal struggles and emotions concerning her spiritual life and then expects me to share mine and is confused or even a little bit disturbed to find out that I do not regard myself a believer at all.

### **Studying believers as a non-believer**

In this section my aim is to ponder the specific challenges I have encountered in studying (evangelical) believers. Some of the problems discussed in the following are not restricted to studying religious communities, but are quite typical in any ethnological research. However, there is undoubtedly specificity in studying the religious sphere that brings forth certain questions not only among the believers but from the academic colleagues as well. Over the years I too have encountered the assumptions among colleagues in regard to my choice of research material that other researchers of evangelical Christians have reported (see Harding 1991, 375; Cannell 2006, 4).

I will cite three small incidents as examples to characterise the prejudices and premises people have expressed when acquainted with my research topic. After a presentation of my study in a seminar, a fellow doctoral student patronisingly (being male and quite some years my senior very possibly additionally influenced his tone) enquired if I too was already converted; following another presentation, I was surprised that, judging by a question from a senior colleague, it appeared that she took for granted that my interest in Christians as research subject stemmed from my personal belonging to the community; another colleague, herself having been studying non-Christian religionists, was curious whether studying evangelicals was not ethically challenging or personally vexing for me because of their inclination to impose their universal truth on others. In relation to the researcher's identity the evangelical Christians are thus still often seen as somehow more controversial or presupposing subject of study than many other possible topics. To clarify my point of departure, I must say that I do not have experiences of belonging to a congregation, following or participating in some kind of religious tradition in my personal history and I consider myself to be nonreligious or agnostic. While being interested in different religious and spiritual traditions, my interest has not been motivated by search for personal meaningfulness, but rather by anthropological interest in different possible ways of conceptualising the surrounding world.

Conducting ethnographic research in a religious community predictably brought forth the necessity to articulate my own worldview in conversations with the believers. When first entering into the field, my initial research focus was on Russian Orthodox believers. Compared to the evangelical Christians, the Orthodox generally pay little attention to proselytising. Furthermore, they frequently tend to associate religious belonging with ethnicity. Although this meant that there were no overt attempts to convert me,<sup>4</sup> people were naturally still curious about my own religiosity. Responding this kind of enquiries, I explained that

I was not a believer (*неверующая*) as this kind of answer seemed to be the most honest one. I somewhat revised my tactics after encountering an elderly woman who was very much displeased with such an answer and agitatedly declared that no matter what one has in one's heart, one must never openly renounce God as this is a greater sin than lying about believing. After that encounter I became more conscious of the risk that my wanting to be as frank as possible about my own position, considering this part of fieldwork ethics,<sup>5</sup> could actually result in hurting my interlocutors' religious feelings. As there could hardly be any straightforward solution to this intricate problem, my response has been simply to be vague about my spiritual disposition and perhaps express more openness to the possibility of becoming a believer than I actually feel. This means that when answering the question of whether I am a believer, I would reply that I do not go to church, or (in the evangelical setting) that I would agree to the suggestion that God has not yet touched my heart. However, even when quite plainly stating the status of a non-believer, this does not mean that fieldwork partners unequivocally accept the proposed position. As other researchers of evangelical Christians have reported, the active interest the outsider dedicates when talking with people about their religious experiences, visiting services, etc., is often interpreted as a sign of the researcher's inner search for God regardless of her/his own explanations (see Harding 2000, 40; Coleman 2008, 43; Meintel & Mossière 2012, 145; cf Crane 2012, 14-15 on a Buddhist community imposing a seeker's role on the researcher).

With the aim of gathering material for my doctoral dissertation the general focus of my interest has been on the evangelical congregation's interactions with Orthodox and secular agents and how the group negotiates its presence in the wider society. In the Komi Republic, the Orthodox Church holds a historically formed dominant position in the religious sphere and the general public is often ill-disposed towards evangelical Christians as they are considered to be culturally foreign and dogmatically erroneous. This kind of view frequently results in evangelicals experiencing a disparaging attitude from the non-evangelicals because of their religious preferences. Thus the believers at least partly recognise my research questions as relevant in their everyday lives. However, the way each of us makes sense of these social issues is related to our respective worldviews. From the secular point of view, for instance, I would observe that a discriminating attitude towards evangelicals in Komi villages has to do with people having little knowledge of any other Christian denominations besides Orthodoxy, and with the role that religion has in local identity building. Most of my evangelical interlocutors have referenced these factors too. However, an interpretation from the religious perspective is frequently added to these, according to which true

believers are bound to encounter hardships as this unites them with the first Christians who were persecuted and strengthens believers in their faith.

The fact that the Don church is rather inclusive and liberal in conduct is very likely the main reason why accessing the group to conduct fieldwork did not require much effort in itself. The evangelicals' usual readiness to talk about their religious experiences has helped to establish a friendly rapport. Nevertheless, especially in the early stage of fieldwork among the evangelicals, I often felt discomfort and uncertainty in my role. On the one hand, these feelings are certainly to be expected by a (young) ethnologist entering a new field, and particularly poignantly when tackling people's spiritual lives. On the other hand, I suppose that the lack of earlier personal contact with (overtly) religiously committed people strongly added to my timidity. The ritual context of the church service in particular made me anxious as to what was the correct or expected conduct for me in order not to offend believers' feelings. At the same time I wanted to avoid creating a false impression of myself as their fellow believer.

It seems to me that the experience of feeling awkward and unsure of myself when visiting church services without prior 'training' and with a sense of lacking the necessary know-how has been useful in the sense that it has helped me to gain a better insight into neophyte congregants' struggles to shape their behaviour and learn to express their religious identity.

Our relatively long relationship with the community has contributed to the blurring of our outsider status. Some of the women with whom I have established a friendly rapport, greet me with embraces – an embodied practice which is otherwise typically employed within the believers' group. The board on the wall of the sermon room that displays photos of church events, short thematic comments on Scripture and suchlike, includes a group photo where we are also present. We are also reminded in the prayers uttered at the end of services – on the one hand, asking the God in a common prayer to guide us and watch over us is definitely part of the converting tactics, on the other hand, I understand such addresses to express genuine sympathy toward us. Pastor Andrei has addressed our ambiguous status with a certain amount of jest by referring to us as “almost our own” (*почти наши*). The ambiguity of such a categorisation was once further illustrated when Andrei made this comment while handing us a handful of cards celebrating and explaining the Transfiguration so that we could distribute these to our acquaintances in Kulömdin.

In an interesting way, we are not the only people connected with the congregation who occupy a kind of in-between or ambiguous position. As mentioned, the group is very inclusive and not all of the people who come to the weekly services are unequivocally committed to the specifically evangelical worldview.

For example, some also go to the Orthodox services in the district centre (a few even admit that if they had an Orthodox church in the village, they would probably prefer to go there), others convey that God has not yet touched their heart, but they come for the sake of supporting friends and relatives. Probably the variety of motivations and backgrounds of church-goers has also helped to accommodate our agenda. Nevertheless, there is of course an underlying difference between the aims of scholarly enterprise and vernacular rationales for being engaged with the community. Differing perceptions of the Christian faith are a source of a certain tension in our relationship. While I as an ethnographer approach (evangelical) Christianity as one possible framework for understanding and being in the world, for the believers this view marks an inherently fallacious position. Pastor Andrei has pondered this issue at length, in the interview excerpt below some of his main points are quoted:

It's the biggest misconception nowadays, when they say that humanism<sup>6</sup> [is most important]. [...] If we place a human in the centre of the universe then what about the creator who created this human? [...] It's a pity of course that Europe regards itself as post-Christian or post-modern or something. [...] Humanism offers a very relativistic conception, this kind of [relativistic] attitude towards moral values. – Well, you think it's bad, but I think it's good! [...] This leads nowhere. It follows that if there are no absolute truths then who's right? [...] All values will crumble if there are no absolute truths (FM 2011).

Although Andrei is not openly saying that our position is erroneous, his general comment on Europe and relativism contains indirect critique of our own scholarly perspective. The principle of cultural relativism that for ethnologists is of fundamental importance when making sense of the 'field', is understood as moral relativism in the evangelical view.

Certain confusion over the aim of our research has to do with vernacular understandings of ethnological subject matters. For example, one woman in the group had had an experience of collecting local folklore as part of a college course. As we arranged an interview with her, we explained our interest in her experiences and local religious life. When visiting her, she had prepared a conspectus for herself, covering topics such as pagan Komis struggling against Christianisation in the 14th century, Komi mythology and beliefs, and what she thought of as bizarre customs of the Old Believers living in a neighbouring region. Although ready to talk about them, she did not think of her own conversion and personal experiences in the evangelical community as subject of a 'scientific project'.

As this example illustrates, believers do not see evangelical Christianity as a possible subject for ethnographic study (cf Vallikivi 2011, 87), which in turn refers to the fundamental differences between the worldview of my religious interlocutors and myself. While surpassing these differences is problematic, my role as an outsider remains conditional to an extent, as the Don evangelicals are very inclusive in their orientation. There is no clear-cut or univocally shared attitude toward me or my role as a researcher among the believers, which brings forth the need to consider the different approaches evangelicals have applied in our interactions.

### **Evangelicals' interpretations and strategies toward researchers**

I will next outline three particular approaches our interlocutors from the evangelical community have taken in interacting with us. Each approach is presented through quotations from our partners in the field who have most saliently expressed these different attitudes or tactics. By exploring these dispositions I aim to analyse the ambivalences in the dialogue between evangelicals and ethnographers. Investigating the uncertainties in these negotiations allows a conceptualisation of the ways in which certain common ground is produced in the course of the (to some extent always) discordant interplay of religious and fieldwork agendas.

Since the first contact with the group the question about the source of any true or relevant knowledge has been raised. We were interviewing William, when towards the end of our conversation, he suddenly became a little worried about why we were interested in their enterprise, as he had had several negative experiences with journalists who had contacted him and later written things that, according to William, were a lie. As we tried to explain our aim as ethnologists and assure him that our interest was of the academic kind and what it meant, he addressed us with great urgency in his manner, pleading that we must only tell the truth, and briefly went on to articulate what and where the truth is, announcing that "If you're really interested in scientific research, you should study the Bible."

William: I probably should've talked with you before we started. I ask only one thing from both of you [...] that you won't lie. That you tell only the truth. That you do not add or take away. [...] Many television reporters [have been] coming here, next time we know, we read about it or hear about it on television and it's a lie. They've added some things that're not true. And I just ask you to, please, only tell the truth. [...] If you're really interested in scientific

research, you should study the Bible. And see if it comes true. How can you put down a book if you're never read it? (pause) Why don't you read it, find out, see if it's true or not. [...] Because it's the truth (pause) (FM 2008).

On the one hand, William confirms here in a certain concentrated way the somewhat stereotypical picture that outsiders tend to hold of (evangelical) believers. On the other hand, this approach does represent and characterises well the common viewpoint expressed by evangelicals that sees the Bible as the source of ultimate meaning and truth. At the same time, as I have learned from conversations with group members, regardless of the doctrinal importance of studying the Word not all of them actually read the Bible very often. Some members admit that instead they prefer to listen to religious radio programs, for example, as they find those to be easily compatible with daily chores or simply do not feel competent enough to grapple with the Bible by themselves.

Furthermore, there are actually two different 'levels' of truth that William invokes in his comments. First, when speaking of the journalists, he refers to claims such as him being a spy for the United States, or that evangelicals bribe people to join their group; that is, William categorises these statements as lies from a certain mundane perspective. Then, insisting that we should seek the truth in the Bible, he switches to a thoroughly religious viewpoint from which the truth that really matters is transcendental and only accessible to a believer.

The question of the truth has emerged many times in the course of our fieldwork as most of the research subjects – members of the evangelical community – feel that they have found it and sense an urgency to communicate it to those who are still blind, including non-believing ethnologists. On the other hand, as an ethnologist I am inherently reluctant to accept the idea of one truth and much more willing to see ambiguity and relativity in any kind of statement or experience. Correspondingly, there is a certain attitude of superiority in the believers' attitude towards the non-believer, who is in their view groping in the dark and unable to grasp the liberating truth. No matter how understandingly one can analyse this as a researcher, subjectively this kind of patronising can be quite challenging to bear (cf Clough 2006, 265-266).

Quite interestingly, demonstrating his own prejudice, William ended his plea to be truthful by rather bluntly stereotyping us as secular scholars from the evangelical viewpoint, calling on us not to 'put down' the Bible. In fact, we had not indicated any such inclination. Considering the importance of personal conversion in evangelical ideology, it is perhaps somewhat surprising that sometimes it has been difficult to explain that it is indeed the personal experiences that we are most interested in. The believers tend to conceptualise the importance

of individual experience, mainly in the context of witnessing, as a proof of the general message according to the Gospel. However, how much interest a person has for interacting with other people certainly depends very much on the specific person. In the case of William in particular, he had little interest in us as individuals as he simply placed us in the broad category of the ‘unsaved’.

Then, following William’s straightforward statement and confrontation of any possible alternative to his own perception of the world, Andrei, also present at the conversation, cut in using quite another kind of discourse. He addressed us in a much milder, kind of conciliatory manner by saying that “for your general background knowledge it won’t hurt you any” to read the Bible, convincing us that this “background information” will help us in our research:

Andrei: Or at least for your general background knowledge it won’t hurt you any ...

William: Yes.

Andrei: ... if you know Bible. Because most of the world’s civilisation, you know, culture, music, architecture is somehow connected with biblical stories, [with] Christianity. And the better you know it, you know, the more background information you will have. Even in your *research* (FM 2008).

Andrei, who has a higher education in philology, is here seemingly in a quite profane manner arguing for the benefits of reading the Bible in terms of intellectual gain. At the same time, the evangelicals believe that God’s words as revealed in the Bible have such intrinsic power that even an indifferent or sceptical reader can be converted by reading the text even without having explicit religious motivation. As an example of this kind of potency of the holy word, the Komi evangelicals often reference the linguist who converted while translating the Bible into Komi.

Although his basic message in the end is the same as William’s, Andrei expresses much more consideration of his specific audience and takes into account our secular and academic background. During the subsequent fieldwork trips, Andrei has showed quite keen interest in our work, discussing our research methods and principles. In addition to having the experience of studying in a university (some other congregation members also have a higher education), apart from William, Andrei is the only one in the group who speaks English and is thus able to read our scholarly papers, which are predominantly published in that language. Thus, he probably has a better understanding of our work than any other member of the congregation.



Andrei's approach to us as non-believing scholars is further illustrated by the discussion presented in the following excerpt, recorded at a gathering at one of the congregation member's homes:

Andrei: But when you write an article, of course you correct something, you leave something out. How do you place your emphases? Do you write about what God, Jesus Christ, has in reality done in our lives?

Art Leete: Well, we would probably write in our research that you believe it to be so. [...]

Andrei: I agree with you and it's your work and in certain places you have to be neutral – but on the other hand I think that in your work ...

Shura: Acts the Lord.

Andrei: Acts the Lord.

Irina: I think the same.

Andrei: How is truth established in a court? [...] It is established through the testimonies of the witnesses – one witness stands forth, [...] another stands forth, the third and the case is built upon them. So it is done in every court, [this is] how to establish the truth, who is right and who is not right. It is done so even in the court of non-believers. And thus, that you gather information here, you in fact in a certain way gather witnesses' testimonies from people who have lived through something in their lives. And thus, I think, it is quite valuable material. I don't know if it is possible to call it the basis of proof, because it is not possible to prove the existence of God to a person who doesn't believe it. That is exactly why God is believed. If the existence of God were possible to prove, it wouldn't be necessary to believe in him. Right? Because to prove it from a scientific perspective is not realistic, because there are always sceptics. But there will be sceptics until Judgement Day. [Then] there will be no sceptics (laughing) (FM 2012).

Here Andrei again aims to address us in a sort of scientific discourse, acknowledging our position as secular researchers and expressing comprehension of the idea that scientific claims must be based on empirical and provable material. He then goes on to make the point that even though we are (so far) unable to recognise it, it is our own inner search for God that has led us to our research subject and in fact God already uses us as tools as we are gathering and spreading testimonial material for God. Ultimately, Andrei is explicitly arguing against the possibility of the neutral (detached, 'scientific') position that we are trying to take and for its harmfulness in spiritual matters, ending his argument with a certain sense of superiority or irony when indirectly addressing us as the sceptics.

The degree of attention the evangelicals pay to explicit proselytising, to an extent seems to be related to their status/role in the congregation (see also Blanes 2006, 226). While the pastor and a few other core members of the group have at some point critically addressed the issue of our spiritual state, a number of our other interlocutors, more loosely connected with the group, have refrained from overt evangelising. Some of them have expressed distress over the fact that despite knowing the importance of spreading the gospel they still lack the confidence and proficiency to do so. As even witnessing to their neighbours or other fellow-villagers so far often proves to be challenging to the neophytes, it makes sense that they would like to refrain from approaching foreigners whom they probably see as having a certain authoritative position.

Still, even the core members' approach to this issue is not unambiguous. While generally certainly recalling the importance of living with God, even the most active members of the group have not been too persistent in trying to convert us. The Don evangelicals rely heavily on the importance of setting a personal example by their behaviour, which they hope will lead people to contemplation and eventually to conversion. Thus, even when aiming to provoke us to reconsider our secular viewpoints, these challenges have not led to aggressive proselytising. Pastor Andrei has remarked that "I don't know whether you believe in God or not, this is your personal matter, but I believe in him", which well illustrates the group's relatively low pressure on this matter.

Andrei has been the only one of our evangelical field partners who has to some extent actively engaged in discussing our scholarly goals, while most others have remained rather indifferent. Notwithstanding this, even Andrei has admitted some confusion over our aims, as according to him we "already know everything and there is nothing new to tell". Occasionally he has made friendly teasing remarks in regard to our queries, for example by asking at the end of recording: "Well, have you gathered the material for the next study?" While we have sent Andrei our papers written on his group, he has commented upon them very briefly with remarks such as "Well, I mainly agree with you" but has not shown any deeper interest in any particular writings. I suppose this has to do with the fact that our papers concentrate on issues that are not essential from the evangelical point of view, or perhaps deal with these matters in an overly detached manner. However, as long as we "don't tell lies" in the sense of not contradicting our common reality, Andrei apparently does not feel the need to confront our scholarly discussions.

My third and at least in some ways quite different example of the approaches our field partners have taken to us is represented by Irina. Irina is a woman in her late fifties who says that she has been in search of God throughout her life and

has had several somehow transcendental experiences in her life. However, deep interest in spiritual matters and a more intense commitment to churchgoing began after her retirement a few years ago. Having had more connections with the Orthodox tradition earlier in her life, she now eagerly visits the evangelical services, although every now and then she still goes to the Orthodox church as well. Although she ardently believes in God and preaches the importance of faith to her friends and family, she finds herself confused by different denominations and their specific doctrines. Furthermore, Irina's husband disapproves of his wife's relations with evangelicals, which is also a source of some concern to her.

Having been introduced to her as scholars studying religious matters, Irina views us as specialists in religious affairs in a somewhat unexpected manner. During our discussions she has repeatedly asked for the assurance that the evangelical faith is indeed a good one. I was quite taken aback by her reasoning, which was that if young, nice and educated people like us study their group it is evidently all right to go to this church. (Actually, in similar terms – young, nice and educated – and making the same conclusion, she has referred to pastor Andrei and his wife.) In Irina's understanding scholarly enterprise and connection with university is imbued with certain value in itself. It therefore places us in a kind of authoritative position and we are expected to give concrete evaluations and say what is right.

I haven't decided that I will only go there [to the evangelical church], I also want to go to the Orthodox church and stand there. [...] But I haven't been to anywhere else. But you have been everywhere. But how is it with the Pentecostals, do they only believe in God, Jesus Christ? And then there are the ones who only believe in the Mother of God. [...] But do you also know the Jehovah's Witnesses? This [Jehovah] is God's name, it is written in the Bible as well so that we'd all say this name. And I wonder why is this name hidden now – these religions get mixed up for me. [...] But I read the Bible a lot, you know more than me, but it is written there that they will come by my name. But it is not revealed there, by which name. We know that one must pray to Jesus, but I suppose to Jehovah as well. Or what do you think? [...] It is such a mess, the more you read [about different denominations] – and there will be porridge in your head. It turns out to be so (FM 2013).

So, in this case our outsider status is not foremost understood to deprive us of deeper insight, but rather, due to our academic background and assumed diversity of empirical knowledge, we are ascribed competence in theological issues Irina herself has found perplexing. On the one hand, our presence and interest is interpreted in terms of validating the community's respectability, on the other

hand we as scholars are thought to be able to say what the proper way to believe is; that is, the purpose of scholarly enterprise is seen in establishing some kind of certainty, or the truth.

In the above I have described three distinct evangelical responses to our positioning as researchers: an attempt to unconditionally impose the evangelical interpretational mode on the outsider (William); making discursive compromises with the aim of diminishing the conceptual gap between the two sides (Andrei); and willingness to surrender competence to the 'scholar' (Irina). However, most of our evangelical interlocutors have not expressed such clear-cut approaches. It is common that the believers make some quite mild efforts to convert us by insisting the importance of living with God and how their lives were bettered once they truly understood this, while on the other hand, to a degree, I feel that some of them also seek reassurance for their own spiritual choices. For instance, although Andrei himself has no qualms over his theological preferences, he is well aware that most of the congregants now and again hear from other villagers that their religion is 'wrong'. Stemming from that, during church events Andrei has occasionally turned to us to confirm that in Estonia (in Europe as whole) evangelical Christians are not discriminated against as they are in Russia.

Of course, it is possible to recognise other considerations for our field partners to be in dialogue with us. For example, Irina has also quite intriguingly expressed appreciation for our position as listener-outsiders to whom one can convey discontent and frustration with other group members. While Irina does not want to appear judgemental of her fellow believers, there are certain issues that she is not happy with. Before commenting on the kind of behaviour she disapproves of, she assured us that "you are the first to whom I tell – I don't love gossiping but you need it for the science of course". Irina was thus justifying her critical comments in terms of providing relevant information considering our scholarly purposes. Although other members of the group have not articulated such an explicit association between our roles as 'objective' researchers and making critical remarks, it is still discernible that sometimes our outsider status allows people (more or less openly) to discuss matters that are not directly addressed inside the community.

Besides all the particular agendas people may pursue when communicating with us, it would be unfair not to mention basic human interest in us. Likewise, I imagine it would be difficult to conduct ethnographic research about something and with people that I as a subjective individual found uninteresting.

## Discussion

In this chapter my aim has been to address the dynamics of the relationship between the researcher and the researched. I have tried to do this by discussing my own predicaments in studying people of faith and by outlining my interlocutors' interpretations of and engagement with me as a researcher/non-believer. My analysis points to the multidimensionality of our dialogue, in which it is possible to reach a mutual understanding to an extent, while conceptual unity on certain issues remains unattainable.

While doing research and presenting field data, an empathic yet impartial approach is generally valued as a scholarly ideal (regardless of acknowledged limitations in achieving this). Yet a neutral stance in questions of faith is not acceptable for the evangelicals, who regard the Bible as the ultimate source of knowledge. The main terrain of potentially conflicting understandings of my field partners and myself remains around the concept of truth. I acknowledge the need to understand the evangelicals' concepts and practices in their holistic meaning, being fully aware that the process of evangelical truth-making is principally different from academic cognitive practices (cf Lambek 2012). While the believers sense the urgency and importance of delivering their message of the liberating and saving Truth to the listener, as an ethnologist I resist the idea of one truth. I make sense of the evangelicals' faith within an academic discourse that departs from principles of relativism and is based on empirical observation.

In general, my ideological approach represents something, ironically described by pastor Andrei as "humanism". I realise that the intellectual tradition I fall into while doing research on the evangelicals is rather contradictory and inconsistent, if compared to the Christian one (see Hufford 1995, 71). But my own, somehow imperfect, not fully harmonised professional perceptual standpoint enables me to recognise the coherence of the evangelicals' worldview and to discuss it without being too categorical in my conclusions. I cannot claim to be able to produce a fully truthful representation of the group in the evangelical sense. The believers' reality, based on the transcendental truth, is not wholly observable or accessible to me. It thus remains problematic to say to what extent our cognition of reality is compatible and to what extent could we achieve a shared sense of truth.

However, as the believers have still been willing to interact with me for my stated reasons (and even ascribed me with the role of mediator of their message regardless of my own intentions or focus), this indicates that they do not consider me as in principle unable to give a somehow truthful account of them. At the same time, it is important to bear in mind that both the specific social

context of the evangelical congregation in the Komi countryside and their particular theological orientation have also influenced my access to the group and shaped believers' attitude towards me. Moreover, as it is reasonable to assume that the generally negative view of evangelicals in their immediate cultural environment has eased my access to the group simply by expressing an empathic approach, I must be especially careful in presenting my findings and interpretations to avoid ethical ambiguity.

Fieldwork with evangelicals is a dynamic dialogue which each side – with its own specific agenda – loads with its own meanings. This dialogue has certain limits because I have not converted, and furthermore, am not actively willing to do so. However, neither do I actively challenge the evangelical worldview. Our interaction is thus not functional on the issue most central to the evangelicals. Social matters that I am interested in are to an extent relevant to the evangelicals, but not necessarily essential for their discursive self-identification. As our perception of the world differs there is inevitably certain cognitive distance between us. However, the dialogue is possible because as partners we have sufficient respect for each other, and as the academic truths and forms of truth-making are incommensurable with those of religion, they do not necessarily replace, supersede, or contradict religion (Lambek 2012). We recognise our principal cognitive differences and somehow we are articulate and useful social actors for each other.

My discussion can be taken as an attempt to provide a methodological sketch of fieldwork among evangelical Protestants. Still, all this reasoning must be considered conditionally as it applies only in regard of one particular group in their specific social context and the specific configuration of personalities within that group. In any other evangelical group, one's methodological approach must be adjusted, depending on the specific level of spiritual intensity and tolerance shared by group members.

## Interviews

FM = Fieldwork materials, Komi Republic, Russia, 2008–2013. Recordings in possession of the author.

## References

- Blanes, R. L. (2006) The atheist anthropologist: believers and non-believers in anthropological fieldwork, *Social Anthropology* 14 (2), 223–234.
- Cannell, F. (2006) Introduction. The anthropology of Christianity. – Cannell, F. (ed) *The Anthropology of Christianity*, 1–50. Duke University Press, Durham, London.

- Clough, P. (2006) Social thought and commentary. “Knowledge in passing”: reflexive anthropology and religious awareness, *Anthropological Quarterly* 79 (2), 261–283.
- Coleman, S. (2008) The abominations of anthropology: Christianity, ethnographic taboos and the meanings of ‘science’. – Pine, F. & Pina-Cabral, J. de (eds) *On the Margins of Religion*, 39–58. Berghahn Books, New York, Oxford.
- Crane, H. K. (2012) Flirting with conversion: negotiating researcher non-belief with missionaries. – Crane, H. K. & Weibel, D. (eds) *Missionary Impositions. Conversion, Resistance, and other Challenges to Objectivity in Religious Ethnography*, 11–23. Lexington Books, Lanham.
- Gardiner, M. Q. & Engler, S. (2012) Semantic holism and the insider-outsider problem, *Religious Studies* 48 (2), 239–255.
- Harding, S. (1991) Representing fundamentalism: the problem of the repugnant cultural other, *Social Research* 58 (2), 373–393.
- Harding, S. (2000) *The Book of Jerry Falwell: Fundamentalist Language and Politics*. Princeton University Press, Princeton.
- Hufford, D. J. (1995) The scholarly voice and the personal voice: reflexivity in belief studies, *Western Folklore* 54 (1), 57–76.
- Jensen, J. S. (2011) Revisiting the insider-outsider debate: dismantling a pseudo-problem in the study of religion, *Method & Theory in the Study of Religion* 23 (1), 29–47.
- Koosa, P. (2010a) Sur une communauté protestante dans un village komi. – Toulouze, E. & Cagnoli, S. (eds) *Les Komis. Questions d’histoire et de culture*, 171–183. L’Harmattan, Paris.
- Koosa, P. (2010b) *Õigeusk kaasaegses komi külas*. Studia ethnologica et folkloristica Tartuensia 12. Tartu Ülikooli Kirjastus, Tartu.
- Koosa, P. (2013) Sowing the seeds of faith: the study of an American missionary in the Russian North, *Journal of Ethnology and Folkloristics* 7 (1), 31–48.
- Koosa, P. (2015) *Sometimes we’ll have to prove that we’re not crocodiles*. Evangelical Christians’ stigmatisation as sectarians in a Komi village, *Études finno-ougriennes* 47, 89–114.
- Koosa, P. & Leete, A. (2011) Revolt of grannies: Komi folk Orthodox movement Bursylsyas, *Journal of Ethnology and Folkloristics* 5 (1), 45–61.
- Koosa, P. & Leete, A. (2014) Serving God by being neighbourly: Komi Protestants and local community initiatives, *Suomen Antropologi. Journal of the Finnish Anthropological Society* 39 (2), 39–57.
- Lambek, M. (2012) Facing religion, from anthropology, *Anthropology of this Century* 4, May. <http://aotcpres.com/articles/facing-religion-anthropology/> [accessed 15 August 2014].
- Leete, A. & Koosa, P. (2012) *The churches were opened and lots of missionaries arrived: dialogue between Komi identity and faith*, *Folklore. Electronic Journal of Folklore* 51, 171–190.
- McCutcheon, R. T. (ed) (1999) *The Insider/Outsider Problem in the Study of Religion: A Reader*. Continuum, London, New York.
- Meintel, D. & Mossière, G. (2012) Going through the back door. Studying ethnicity via religion. – Snellman, H. & Hirvi, L. (eds) *Where is the Field? The Experience of Migration*

- Viewed through the Prism of Ethnographic Fieldwork*. Studia Fennica. Ethnologica 14, 128–149. Finnish Literature Society, Helsinki.
- Vallikivi, L. (2011) *Words and Silence: Nenets Reindeer Herders' Conversion to Evangelical Christianity*. Doctoral dissertation. University of Cambridge, Scott Polar Research Institute (in the possession of the author).

## Notes

This research was supported by the Estonian Research Council grant PUT590 and the ERA.Net RUS Plus programme's project No. 189 (CORUNO), as well as by the European Union through the European Regional Development Fund (Centre of Excellence in Cultural Theory).

1 I am aware that such a view of faith can itself be seen as influenced by Protestant conceptions.

2 The Don evangelical congregation has about 15 regular members, mainly female, with various denominational backgrounds (see more on the formation and nature of this congregation in Koosa 2013).

3 The re-introductions have been motivated by our succeeding field trips when some new church-goers who had not met us previously were present.

4 However, similarly to evangelicals, some of my Orthodox interlocutors did suggest that my interest in religious matters was guided by divine providence.

5 It is worth mentioning that at the same time I did not have similar considerations when aligning my behaviour to local gender roles. While sometimes feeling a little frustrated, I did not perceive it as an ethical issue in the sense that I was somehow not being honest. Rather, conforming to local expectations and norms is part of the method of participant observation in ethnological fieldwork and the challenges that studying religion can pose in this regard again demonstrate its particularity.

6 Vallikivi (2011, 89) offers an account of a Baptist missionary who addresses similar issues in relation to the researcher's worldview reprimanding the concept of 'tolerance'.





# Body



## **Bodily experiences and biopolitics**

Katrin Alekand

In 1934 Marcel Mauss formulated in his famous lecture the concept of the techniques of body (see Mauss 1973). He said that all our bodily behaviour is learned and there is no such thing as natural behaviour. According to Mauss, techniques of body vary by age and gender and are mainly signs of group belonging rather than personal identity. Mauss gave a whole list of techniques illustrated using more or less colourful examples, yet there were two techniques – sex and care of the abnormal – that he mentioned just briefly. And we do not know exactly why. Was it because time ran out or was it because in 1934, even more than today, talking about sex and the abnormal in public was considered if not vulgar then at least very disturbing, even indecent?

Interestingly enough these two techniques have become influential signifiers of personal identity. Signifiers that have a strong role in stigmatisation and in the social struggle to become accepted as a variation of the norm, rather than as strictly deviant. If we expand this we can see that our idea about the ‘proper technique of body’ is very strongly related to our reaction to what is considered outside the norm. It is easy to understand ‘care of the abnormal’ as generally pointing to physical defects that are noticeable and it is typically human to react quite directly and sharply to what is different. It is more complicated with sexuality as sexual preferences are generally something rather hidden, intimate and personal. Our reaction to this is based on our assumptions or what we conjecture, which is often related to fantasy and secondary materials about ‘different sex’. This leads to stereotyping which in turn gives rise far too often to a weird mix of declarative behaviour or wild fantasy about everything outside the norm.

As the saying goes, ‘walk in somebody’s shoes to know how that other life would feel’. But what about walking with one’s own feet if they were artificial? Those artificial feet that are constructed by people living somewhere else, people who have rather different experiences of daily life. There is also the saying, ‘one’s own shirt is always closer to the body’. But what about the skin? What about living in somebody else’s skin if that skin is somewhat wrinkly, un-ironably crinkled although it has to appear smooth and fine and fit well? What would it feel like to live a life that is full of the fear of repression, a life that is constantly ‘a little bit

tight around the hips? When techniques of body include uncertain glances over the shoulder or the taming of new body parts?

“Us and them, and after all we’re only ordinary men” Pink Floyd once sang (1973). All in all it’s just a matter of techniques. To shape, to fit, to be.

## References

Mauss, M. (1973) Techniques of the body, *Economy and Society* 2 (1), 70–88.

Pink Floyd (1973) Us and them, *The Dark Side of the Moon*. Harvest Records [LP].



## Owning the body: patents and transformations of the body in Cambodia

Darcie DeAngelo

**Abstract.** Intellectual property debates raise high stakes for developing countries. The field of biotech, including antibiotics patents, prostheses designs, and hospital equipment, in-corporates the body so that global organisations own things like replacement limbs. This chapter examines what is at stake for people implicated in these biomedical intellectual property debates. It is based on ethnographic fieldwork conducted in Battambang, Cambodia, among people working on amputee rehabilitation in the Norwegian-Cambodian nongovernmental organisation the Trauma Care Foundation. Cambodians, according to the Foundation, cannot afford the Red Cross patents on prostheses or biotech equipment; it is both too expensive and too slow to get. As a result, the Foundation makes new patents, portraying that Cambodians require a body part that is novel, that is, different enough to escape its patent. In Cambodia, bioengineering patents have transformed the body into something beyond the concept of the human. This study examines how global patent laws are translated on the ground in the embodied day-to-day. Such negotiation portrays how we think through the ‘self’.

### Patents and transformations

When I interviewed Chann, a farmer who lost his leg in a former war, he told me: “My prosthesis is from Japan. So my leg is Japanese” (interview with Sam Chann 2010). Once attached to his body, it was his leg, not just a prosthesis, and yet, it was Japanese, not Khmer like the rest of him. He specifically changed the word to present a hybrid Japanese-Khmer body. Chann presented me with a hybridisation of his body; a Khmer Rouge landmine caused negative space that filled up with Japanese material. Chann’s Japanese limb attached to his Cambodian body provokes unsettling questions about how landmines, bioengineering, patents, and global aid re-shape how Cambodians understand their bodies. His

---

Kannike, A., Tasa, M. & Västriik, E.-H. (eds) (2017) *Body, Personhood and Privacy: Perspectives on the Cultural Other and Human Experience*. *Approaches to Culture Theory* 7, 77–98. University of Tartu Press, Tartu.



**Figure 1.** Map of Cambodia. The highlighted area is Battambang province.

designed body integrates bioengineering and international intellectual property rights to the Cambodian local context.

From my work in Cambodia, I discovered that ways of thinking of bodies relate to the landmine crisis, which causes over 43 000 people in Cambodia to live as amputees. Altogether I have spent six months of fieldwork in the city of Battambang and the village of Sampov Loun where I interviewed amputees and their doctors (see Figure 1). I conducted participant observation at a Battambang hospital connected with the non-governmental organization the Trauma Care Foundation (TCF) and its affiliate village workshop where medical practitioners repaired prostheses and used the specially patented external fixator machine, a device used to connect shattered bones. Many of my participants told me about trying to change how villagers conceptualised the body and the clashes between

the Scandinavian and Cambodian staff at the TCF, who taught Cambodians about the patents and bioengineering necessary to maintain the NGO's work. I came to realise that the concept of the body in Cambodia integrated the idea of the patent and also influenced the patent descriptions from the NGO. The Cambodian body became something that was unique to Cambodians and these conceptual peculiarities drove the innovation of design.

It should be noted here that my months of fieldwork have yielded only preliminary results. But I confronted the difference in bodily understandings first-hand when I met Sokheng, a nine-year-old boy who had lost his arms two years before. He had picked up a landmine and it exploded in his hands.

“Shake his hand, Darcie, won't you shake his hand?” Vicheth pushed Sokheng towards me. I hesitated to touch the boy's stumps where there were no hands. Vicheth had accompanied me in the heavily mined village of Sampov Loun during fieldwork. Vicheth pushed the child closer.

“You see?” The phrase punctuated Vicheth's gestures, his grasping of Sokheng's body. He lifted up the faded T-shirt, exposing snowflake-shaped scars on the tiny torso. “You see? Bomb exploded and *blech*, everything came out...” Vicheth mimed intestines leaking from Sokheng's scars. “You see?”

Later, shocked, I said, “Sokheng seemed shy.” Vicheth laughed and said, “Not shy. You're shy. You close your body like this.” He hugged his own body. “You Barangue are shy. Not like Khmer.” (Author's fieldnotes)

According to this story, the Khmer body is held and touched differently than a Barangue, or white person's body. This lack of 'shyness' suggested a more public, shared ownership of Sokheng's body. Touch revealed that Sokheng had a different type of body.

This idea of a 'unique' and somehow more 'shared' Cambodian body conflicted with the biomedical model taught to the doctors and patients alike at the NGO hospital. It conflicted not only because of the biomedical standardisation of the human body, with its universal anatomy and chemistry, but also through the enforcement of patent laws. Patents prevented easy access to bioengineering, which inspired criticism from TCF staff, both Khmer and Scandinavian, not of the patents themselves but rather the holders of the patents and their designs, i.e. the International Red Cross.

I was told by TCF workers and clients that the Red Cross took too long to deliver prostheses for subsistence farmers who must work right away to feed their families. These were reports from patients who used bioengineered products (Interview with Yang Ven Heng 2010; Interview with Marit Gjertsen 2010;



Interview with Vicheth Touch 2010). And they all complained of the plastic on the Red Cross designed prostheses. It was too stiff and it cracked with the high humidity. The feet on Red Cross prostheses had smooth bottoms that stuck to the mud in the rainy season. Red Cross technology was not suited to the Cambodian climate. The TCF, on the other hand, according to my informants, had designed patents that adhered to the local concepts of the Cambodian body: 1) they suited the public, shared roles of Cambodians, and 2) they fit the environment to which the Cambodian body was connected. These are innovations driven by the local concept of the body.

These innovations were the resolution of the conflict between Khmer and Scandinavian concepts of the body in the NGO. The TCF modelled its bioengineering innovations after these two stipulations. Rather, in its patent write-up, it spoke of its 'novel' and 'improved' design in a kind of parallel to the local concepts of the body. To obtain a patent, an organisation must prove to the Cambodian national office that an invention is a novel invention or an improved design on an old invention (PINTAS IP Group). A patent affords an inventor protection over his or her design for twenty years, that is, the inventor is the only allowable distributor of the design. Moreover, the patent affords the inventor an official seal of approval, a certain kind of authenticity. Not all Cambodian bioengineering is patented, but the TCF insisted on obtaining patents as the medical staff saw it as a way to gain trust from their patients, and, more importantly, from their investors who were usually western aid foundations. The medical anthropologist Marilyn Strathern has discussed patents as ways for more powerful actors to disrupt the hybridity of knowledge (1996, 524). For her, patents, used by westerners to exploit profit from art and inventions in places like New Ireland, where she has carried out research, actually impose western conceptual dilemmas onto people who normally have different ways of conceiving the world. Strathern says, in fact, that patents are based upon a division between nature and culture, mind and body, which are inconceivable in much of the non-western world. She writes:

The idea of being able to patent something has a double power. First, the patenting procedure requires a body: the initiating idea has to be manifest or embodied in some artefact or device, a concrete invention which 'contains' the idea, while at the same time what the patent protects is the idea itself, the creative impetus, minimally an 'inventive step' (Strathern 2001, 8).

Patents themselves, as Strathern explains, depend on a division between material and meaning, the 'body' and the 'mind' of the invention. They impose western concepts in contexts that do not make sense. The TCF innovations followed the

two stipulations I mentioned earlier, that a bioengineered leg was ‘novel’ and ‘improved’ based on the shared role of the patient body and environmental suitability. But the very idea of a ‘patented’ body infringes on the concept of the body as a shared or public space. The perpetuation of the unique Cambodian body paradox, a patented but shared and public body, means that the conflict between the biomedical model and the Cambodian model of the body remains. This has ramifications for the implementation of biomedical NGO activities in the villages and in the city of Battambang.

### **Political and biomedical context**

Cambodia has suffered decades of domestic and international conflict. America and Vietnam used it as a battleground during the 1960s and The Khmer Rouge decimated its people from 1975–1979, killing over 40% of the population (Hansen 2007). Until the late 1990s, Thailand and Cambodia fought at their borders. All of these states planted antipersonnel mines, antitank mines, and miscellaneous bombs. Statistics about landmines and other explosive remnants of war (ERWs) from Cambodia are sketchy as the government consolidates these figures from a variety of contradictory sources. What is known is that among its eleven million people, over 40 000 (or 1 in every 256) have lost a limb after stepping on a mine, while at least 40 000 more have died from accidental explosions in the last decade (TCF Report 2011). This makes Cambodia the nation with the highest rate of amputees in the world. UN International NGOs like the Landmine and Cluster Munition Monitor estimate the number of landmines to be as high as 10 million (Landmine and Cluster Munition Monitor 2008) although the Cambodian governmental organisation the Cambodian Mine Action Centre (CMAC) publicises more modest numbers at 4–6 million (Heng 2010). The modesty of these numbers could be motivated by the government’s goal of showing progress or from the fact that they consolidate statistics from various NGOs. Regardless of this contradiction, the mine enumeration is known to exclude the thousands of miscellaneous ERWs that the US military dropped during the Vietnam War. In the final count, between the landmines and other ERWs, there is at least one buried explosive device for each resident of Cambodia.

The landmines are concentrated in border regions, mainly in the northwest, and they contaminate the ground of over 70% of Cambodia’s poorest villages. As a result, 98% of landmine casualties and injuries occur among the rural poor. This is largely because as landless farmers they are more likely than landowners to cultivate the tax-free<sup>1</sup> minefields. In part this is because landlords regularly incentivise poor tenant farmers to do precisely this sort of ‘demining’ activity. The

accidents these farmers have while planting, tending and harvesting their crops are considered the most cost-effective (if unethical) mine clearance strategy by the current political regime (Interview with Marit Gjertsen 2014). Over 70% of landmine incidents of this sort occur in the Battambang province in northwestern Cambodia and, concomitantly, Battambang's Handa Emergency Hospital receives over 70% of Cambodia's landmine victims. Indeed, most of Cambodia's 40 000 amputees are poor male farmers in this area; this constitutes about 10% of the region's male population. Battambang was the first region conquered by the Khmer Rouge, and thus heavily mined at the time, and has one of the most contested borders with Thailand, which means that Thailand and Cambodian militants continue to plant mines there even today. The saturation of mines in this region is why I have selected it for this study. The most common result of ERW explosions in this area is leg amputations although explosions affecting children also often result in arm loss.<sup>2</sup> After losing their limbs, emergency workers, often deminers working near farmers in the minefields, bring the victims to the Handa Emergency Hospital in Battambang City. There the farmers meet doctors who remove their mangled limbs, heal them, and teach them how to use prostheses, after which they return to farming.

In this process, the doctors use prosthesis designs they have created by combining local materials such as tyres and discarded metal and local knowledge about how such materials can be maintained in the extremely humid environment. Prosthesis design is based on a combination of biomedicine and what they consider the patient's needs as related to the environment and their work as farmers. For instance, they design prostheses that can survive the heat and humidity of Cambodia and they use available material to make the feet of the limbs. They also treat phantom limb sensation and teach patients how to move with their new artificial limbs. These doctors are often former soldiers or former deminers. Because of this work with the body, they are constantly confronted with patients and with foreigners who have different ideas about how bodies should or can work. They incorporate biomedical knowledge taught to them by foreign aid workers. Much of the biomedical knowledge and the equipment that makes it usable come from the TCF, funded by Norwegian landmine aid initiatives, and partnered with the Battambang's Handa Emergency hospital.

If the biomedical body concept derives from temporal and spatial contingencies, then to compare it with Cambodian concepts of the body requires an investigation of the historical and contemporary contexts of biomedicine and medicine in Cambodia. The French imported biomedicine to Cambodia first as a colonial project. Sokhieng Au, a historian of medicine, pieced together an understanding that Cambodian concepts of health and sickness and medicine did not neatly tie

into concepts of the body. While western doctors depended on these concepts to determine what was health or illness, Cambodians depended on other knowledge such as karma and the *sorse* (threads or spirit lines) that mapped along the body. When describing the various clashes between the French and the Cambodians during French-enforced vaccinations, the French (unnecessary) killing of livestock to prevent epidemics, the French forced isolation of lepers (which was not a Cambodian practice), Au explains:

[...] it is not productive to examine a specific idea of the body in French culture against a 'comparable' idea of the body in Cambodian culture to understand why conflict occurred. But it is productive to trace the disparate valences of meaning arising from the conflict. A Western medical construct of 'the body' comes in conflict with Cambodian political identities, and Cambodian ritual practices conflict with French civil values (Au 2011, 3).

Au discusses these historical clashes between the Cambodians and the French as "cultural insolubilities". Landmines and medical aid have continued the work of French colonialism to perpetuate a biomedical concept of the body to Cambodia, which does not necessarily apply to traditional knowledge and beliefs surrounding health and the body (Ong 1995; Ovesen & Trankell 2010; Guillou 2013). In part, these conflicts are due to the overabundance of landmines, the wars that caused them to be buried and the imported medical models from colonial powers and western aid.

This is to say that these amputee doctors must treat the body not only as the embodiment of multiple souls and karmic forces, which, in a simplified form, expresses the local Cambodian knowledge of the body, but also as something that entails the negative space of the amputated stump, the potential phantom limb, and the foreign prostheses. This results in enhanced boundaries around the human body; it is a body that integrates the physical, the spiritual, and absence. When the body is enhanced in this way, Cambodians renegotiate and syncretise their own concepts and borrowed concepts. This affects both how they deal with medicine and how they deal with trauma. Thus, for Cambodians part of the landmine problem is confronting medical practices and mine clearance strategies that necessitate the expansion of the boundaries of the human body. This has significance for how Cambodians receive and deliver medical care. These renegotiations result from coping with landmine effects on people and amputee doctors are a central node in Cambodian approaches to random and traumatic violence.

## Theoretical considerations

Unsurprisingly, most anthropological research has focused on trauma and recovery in Cambodia. Psychological anthropologists have studied how refugee camps and the Cambodian concept of karma has affected how Cambodians deal with the after-effects of violence. Lindsay French, working in a refugee camp at the Thai border, explained how concepts of karma influenced the local perception of amputees. Amputees were considered victims of their past lives' sins (French 1994). The Hinton brothers, two psychological anthropologists working with Cambodian patients, focus on how Buddhist ideas have influenced coping processes for Cambodians with posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (Hinton et al 2012; Hinton 2013). The Cambodian psychosocial expert Sotheara Chhim even came up with a Khmer word for PTSD, insisting that the PTSD diagnosis itself does not apply directly to the Cambodian context. A Cambodian person has *baksbat*, 'lost courage', which has similar symptomology to PTSD but describes an overwhelming fear that leads to anxiety when it comes to authorities (Chhim 2013).

Anthropologists have mainly linked Buddhism to how Cambodians live and think. They draw correlations between Cambodia and neighbouring countries, often to the detriment of Cambodia's unique historical events, for example Buddhism being wiped out during the Khmer Rouge (Ebihara 1968). Pol Pot spent a great deal of his resources massacring monks and transforming temples into military posts. In comparison to other Southeast Asian countries, Buddhism's trajectory in Cambodia has always been rocky, even during the pre-colonial times when Khmer kings designed temples with figures that had removable heads, so that temple statues could be either Buddha or the Hindu Shiva, depending on the whims of the rulers (Chandler 2002).

Recently anthropologists have worked beyond Buddhist concepts to integrate Cambodian history, politics, and climate change with the study of the day-to-day lives of Cambodians. While French and the Hintons found that the concept of karma influences stigma and revenge respectively, anthropologists working in the rural villages have discovered that the many hazards of the tropical war-torn environment have influenced the quotidian. Melissa Marschke worked in the coastal villages of Cambodia, following environmental sustainability groups there. Cambodia's once abundant resources have dwindled due to overfishing and industrial development and she navigates the various responses of fishery groups. The State plays a central role in her analysis, often pitted against the shared governance of resources among the fishers (Colm et al 2000; Marschke 2012). Sarinda Singh and Krisna Uk worked at the periphery of the nation in landlocked areas. Singh

actually worked in Laos, but on the Cambodian border, and both attempted to challenge common assumptions about peasant life. She examines how peasants use discourses about the forests symbolically to represent the State of Laos, offering them a way to protest and empower themselves (Singh 2012). Uk, studying peasants who farm in minefields, begins her article by contesting J. C. Scott's assumption that "the subsistence economy of the Southeast Asian peasant is often based on safety-first principles" (Uk 2006, 4). Uk shows that because Cambodian farmers are vulnerable to so many risks, the assumption that all peasants are 'risk-averse' is a western presupposition. These anthropologists' work has laid the groundwork to challenge the assumptions about Cambodia, carving its unique perspective from its Southeast Asian neighbours.

Folklore studies and other anthropological work on animism offers an insight into the local understandings of artefacts and some aspects of material culture (Forest 1992). For example, Uk has also written of how her informants, the Jorai in northeastern Cambodia, live among ERWs and deal with terror as part of their normal day. They incorporate "violence, destruction, and defeat as part of their survival strategies" (Uk 2012, 81). To engage with the terror of ERWs, the Jorai conceptualise ERWs and other military artefacts as spirits (op cit, 81-92). Uk explains that in the Jorai case, they place ERWs in the spirit realm, but she and other anthropologists in Southeast Asia would claim that the Cambodian spirit realm is hardly distant from Cambodians' everyday experiences (Forest 1992; Uk 2012).

Instead of distancing then, to confront terror beyond words, the Jorai transform the affect of awesome war power into a protective power (Uk 2012, 88), using animist beliefs to name weapons as protective spirits. In this sense, the violence is brought closer to their everyday. Alongside a display of animist spirit sculptures, Uk describes war-inspired sculptures like those created in the shapes of planes, assault rifles, swords, and helicopters, which the Jorai place on the top of funerary posts (op cit, 84). These sculptures replace the traditional figure of an ibis (op cit, 86). The villagers associate the plane with the sky and with the dropping of bombs, but in mounting a plane on a funeral post over which the dead are cremated, they also invoke the protection the plane provides from the hungry spirits attracted by the rite. The plane as a spirit serves another purpose: it carries the soul of the dead person to the afterlife.

Uk's informants consider the leftover military devices actual spirits who resemble and have the same names as those spirits who are traditionally associated with the wilderness of Southeast Asia's forests (Uk 2012; Singh 2012). This follows practices in many regions in Southeast Asia where past violence and wars have altered the spirit realm. For example, the anthropologist Heonik Kwon

writes of Vietnamese people's trouble with the legacy of ghosts left over from war. "Thirsty bodies" lay buried in unmarked graves throughout the countryside. They haunt people as apparitions of American soldiers, Vietcong, and victims of what the Vietnamese call "the American War". People must feed these ghosts with regular sacrifices of food (Kwon 2008, 11-45). The spirits, bodies, and material objects all co-constitute the body in a way that differs from the western conceptualisation of mind-body.

I have also drawn considerably from the social sciences, which 'think' with the body in order to attempt to rework western presuppositions like nature-culture or mind-body. Donna Haraway (2008) influences me considerably, especially with her discussions of 'cyborg bodies' and 'companion species'. While she writes about how all life presents examples of how strict dichotomies do not work, her work has also recently been taken up by anthropologists who work with animist interlocutors. For example, Eduardo Kohn (2013) has furthered Haraway's ideas of 'companion species' by engaging with animism semiotically, allowing signs to belong to nonhuman organic life. In order to get away from dichotomies, Haraway (2008) has said that we must critically examine hybridities that exist politically and biologically everywhere.

These authors have allowed me to conceptualise my fieldwork in Cambodia within the necessary historical, political, and cultural context. I draw from Uk's work with minority ethnic groups living with the remnants of war, but specifically working with those who work to clear mines and rehabilitate amputees. My informants were not just settled peasants, but rather, Khmer urban women and men who used to demine and currently work in the hospital at Battambang, along with Scandinavian collaborators. This collaboration spoke to the syncretism of the two cultural concepts of the body, where a global framework for patents became localised. My informants work closely and purposefully with landmines for their careers and livelihoods. Uk's informants did not choose to be near landmines, they used mine-filled land to farm because they had no other choice. Unlike Uk, my informants are people whose jobs depend on the presence of landmines and ERWs within the country. They all work in industries that arise from the ERW problem: doctors who focus on amputees and deminers who detect and survey for landmines. Without ERWs, neither of these industries would exist or be as well-funded (while there may be amputees because of various accidents without landmines, there would not be as much international aid). Similarly to Singh's work on the Laotian peasants' relationship with the forest, I have been paying attention to how the land reflects Cambodians' thoughts on politics and normativity, especially concerning the body. While my work is informed by French's and the Hinton's work on PTSD and stigma, I recognise

that the perceptions of amputees and concepts of trauma may have changed since their studies, which occurred in refugee camps directly after the genocide and famine in the late 1990s and early 2000s.

My research also differs from these scholars in its use of sensory ethnography as a methodology. As aforementioned, my work calls for a haptic ethnography, an anthropology of touch. One of the most startling differences what I discovered in the field from what is normally written of Southeast Asia was the way people touched each other. Most research in Thailand, Laos, and Vietnam, for example, portrays touch as highly taboo. Touch in general, not just sexual touch, can deeply offend. Felicity Aulino in Thailand relates this to the concept of the social body, where touch on the head is forbidden, since it represents the highest ranking people and therefore is the highest ranking place on a human body (Aulino 2012). This extends to the feet, the lowest and most disgusting part of the body, which are considered offensive if the soles are exposed to another person in the room, regulating how a person must sit. During my research, though, I found that touch helped redefine bodies in Cambodia by helping to show how the body is distributed across multiple relations, suggesting how to revise the patent designs made up by the Cambodian-Norwegian NGO.

### **Methodological framework**

To answer the question of how Cambodian conceptions of the body are being changed by landmines and leftover explosive devices, I focused on landmine rehabilitation: medical capacity building for amputees. I conducted participant observation among the doctors who provide medical care to the victims of these devices. I based my methodology on conceptual frameworks of embodiment (Csordas 1993), sensory ethnography (Stoller 1997; MacDougall 2005), and cyborg anthropology (Haraway 2008). I integrated aspects of sensory ethnography and medical anthropology to produce a type of sensory medical ethnography focused on the body as produced through touch. These frameworks allowed for a more complete exploration of how my informants understand their bodies and the bodies of others, especially as so much communication relies on the nonverbal (Herzfeld 1988). Embodiment offers experiential knowledge where sensory information can be directly paralleled by the researcher and the informants. Sensory ethnography attended to the nonverbal focus of my project, as provoked by fieldwork which showed that touch was of surmount importance in how Cambodians expressed their relationship to their bodies and others' bodies. Cyborg anthropology keeps my work grounded to the idea of alternative



modes of thinking, avoiding the projection of universal dichotomies such as the mind-body onto people who do not use them.

I collected data as an independent researcher at the TCF during the months of May–August 2010 and followed up with my interlocutors between June–August 2013. Sam Chann was my main informant along with his family of a wife and three children. Most of the three months in 2010 were spent with Chann at his farm. I also conducted open-ended interviews with 12 doctors and 4 patients in the Battambang Hospital and 10 workers at the Sampov Loun village prosthesis workshop. Chann and his family were patients of the Battambang Hospital but lived in the Sampov Loun village, three hours northwest of the city of Battambang. Stories and interviews were also collected in Phnom Penh and participant observation conducted among mine action NGOs, such as Norwegian People's Aid's branch organisation, Cambodian Mine Action (CMA). CMA allowed me to attend demining operations where I also interviewed deminers who detected and detonated ERWs and landmines in the countryside. These interviews were similar to the interviews addressed to amputees and doctors, but included gender-related questions. Interviews, as important as they are, were often used as a jumping off point to the follow-up data during participant observation. Most of my data comes from ethnographic research during which I ate, conversed, and lived with Cambodians. This must be noted as preliminary data only. I will return to conduct follow-up research for a year on the changing concepts of the body.

The research was conducted primarily in Khmer, the majority language in Cambodia with two separate translators; one from the TCF NGO and one independent of any organisation. In addition to ethnographic research, I have investigated narratives about the body. I have collected these during participant observation, everyday conversations with Cambodians and have also integrated the work of eminent Cambodian scholarship on folklore and legends. For instance, I draw from Alain Forest's (1992) overview of animist belief in Cambodia as well as David Chandler's (2008 [1978]) literary analysis of Sanskrit texts.

The doctors and patients were groups who worked closely with landmines and ERWs and thus were able to best communicate how these leftover military devices re-shape the concept of the body for themselves. They also best represent nodes of changing concepts: the doctors are at the heart of where patients lose their limbs and at the hospital doctors restructure the body according to the biomedical model; while the patients express the sensorial experience of their bodies as amputees and humans using prostheses.

### **The Cambodian body as connected to the land**

In Ratanakiri the soil stains your skin and clothes the colour of blood. The Cambodians who farm there get easy harvests. They boast about the mango, papaya, durian, taro, sweet potato and jackfruit as well as fragrant rice types. Cambodians leave fishing nets up on dry land. After rainfall crabs and fish will fill these nets as if out of nowhere. At dinner with Cambodians, they will inevitably tell a story about the land. These stories were told to me on different occasions but each one that follows was told at least twice by different people. They came when people were eating in a large group and they all contained some humour because Cambodian people think it is better to laugh when they eat.

Stories connect human bodies to the land. There is a story about a princess of the giants whose husband left her. He stole her mother's eyes and out of shame and sorrow, the princess ran for miles until she fell down dead. In Kampong Chnang, where she fell, her body became the mountain range. On that mountain, her body grows herbs for hair that make a delicious addition to a Khmer noodle curry dish, however, the people from Kampong Chnang do not eat them because they are thought to be the pubic hair of the mountain where they live.

David Chandler, one of the most prominent Cambodian historians, documented stories like these in his beautiful essay "Songs at the Edge of the Forest". He recounts several stories similar to the one I mention above and in the following section. I will focus on the first one, the story of a mother who abandons her three daughters in the forest, which describes the origin story of a human-sounding bird in Cambodia. Although a spirit wishes to protect them, the Buddha explains that they are fated to become birds - a fate that Chandler notes is part of the process of them living in the forest. They begin to eat like birds and they become birds. Chandler says this makes the *prey*, that is, what he translates as forest, a liminal place for Cambodians; Chandler says that this is evidence that what makes people human is the setting. His argument divides nature and culture in a way quite familiar to a western audience. He parallels nature-culture to the Cambodian words *prey-srok*. I would prefer to focus on the ease of the girls' transition to birds in order to show that *prey-srok* are not as divided as nature-culture are in the west (cf Chandler 2008 [1978]).

The girls become birds because they have the potential to be birds all along. At the end of the story, when they continue to be birds, the girls say, in Chandler's translation: "We are far more beautiful" (op cit, 34). In this case, the nature-culture dichotomy, especially that which concerns human bodies being separate from animal bodies simply does not work. The birds are both human and animals. They sound like humans, were born of a human mother, but are birds, eat

like birds, and are more beautiful than birds. While Chandler focuses on more political aspects of the story, my focus is on the structural ontology that we have imposed upon it with concepts like nature–culture. Perhaps there is something other than the western dichotomy in Cambodia? Perhaps *prey* (wilderness) and *srok* (village) do not actually correspond to nature and culture and, rather, are untranslatable?

There is another story about a woman who gave birth to a gigantic egg. She buried the egg in a mountain and abandoned it because she was so embarrassed. An old man found it and brought it back to his house where it hatched. From the egg was born a normal boy whom the old man raised like a son. The son fell in love with a princess and eventually became a prince.

The same storyteller told me of a dog that chased after women and men. He snapped at their ankles and bit them as they walked along the road. People would run from him because he took big chunks from people's legs. One day he chased after a man and bit down but his teeth cracked, falling from his jaw. The man's leg was a prosthesis because just the last year he had stepped on a landmine.

The pink dolphin, an endangered fresh water mammal, had, according to legend, once been a woman, spurned by her lover. He had left her when she was pregnant. Her mother sobbed at how much shame he had caused her daughter. The daughter took a pail and put it on her head before drowning herself in the river. But instead of drowning she became a pink dolphin. With a bucket-like head the pink dolphin nurses its young like a human woman.

These stories show how strongly Cambodians connect their body to the land around them. The one that stands out from most of the legends, and yet is told at the same dinner gatherings, is the man whose leg is a prosthesis. With this prosthesis, given to him by a landmine, he had defeated the nuisance of the dog. His body has been shaped by the land as much as the woman who drowned herself. It has taken his leg and replaced it with a prosthesis; in this case the prosthesis parallels the landmine. These stories present bodies intimately connected to the land, shaped by it and shaping it (as seen in the mountain ranges). They do not fit into the easy dichotomy of man versus nature (which is just another dichotomy for culture versus nature). In fact, the artificial leg makes the man a more perfect fit for an environment full of hazards.

And yet a different story exists, one that I was told several times. This one involved the story of a Barangue (white or French) woman who loved to eat Cambodian mangoes. And she would eat and eat and eat the fruit. The teller will say to you: "Only children eat that much fruit. Children and Barangue." One day she ate too much and she felt sick to her stomach. She told her Cambodian driver,

“Please stop! I have to use the toilet.” But the driver just turned and laughed and said, “We can’t stop, you can’t use the toilet here! There are too many landmines!”

This speaks of the Cambodian fit to the Cambodian land – a risky environment full of good fruit that can poison you if you eat too much of it. A Cambodian person learns how to avoid its hazards: she does not eat too much fruit and she does not need to use the toilet in the minefield. This story also speaks about the difference between a Cambodian body and a foreigner’s body. A foreigner’s body is unsuited to the land, which, I will show, parallels the foreigner’s artificial limbs’ unsuitability for a Cambodian body.

### **The shared Cambodian body**

My evidence for the concept of a shared body – in other words a body that is public and touchable – may fly in the face of much ethnography of nudity taboos and touch taboos in Southeast Asia in general and specifically in Buddhism. If a woman touches the robes of a Buddhist monk he must serve penance for this touch. But such a taboo on touch provokes questions about how and when it is used. During my fieldwork the body of a patient was touched and the body of an amputee was touched. Operations at a hospital were regular public affairs, where family, friends, and strangers, would gather outside a window to watch. After one week in the village, I fell ill. As I lay feverish and diarrhetic, a young girl would lie beside me, stroking my hip and my neck. This, plus my encounter with the nine-year old boy that I explained earlier, the double-arm amputee, when being forced to shake his non-existent hands, focused my ethnographic data on touch.

The touching of bodies echoes concepts of the individual versus the community in Cambodia. In both the rural and the urban areas of Cambodia, I encountered the publicity of bodies not, as Foucault (1977) would have it, as a public spectacle and the assertion of state power, but of a shared injury or joy. Every morning, the widely-watched Cambodian news station filmed the daily car accidents and fatalities. The camera would focus unabashedly on the bodies as they twitched, were twisted in incredible shapes, and bled onto the tarmac. My host, a Khmer woman who lived in the city, would shake her head at the news and wish me luck when I left the house: “Good luck on the street!”

Such a confrontation with bodies shocked me when I expected the repressed, taboo-ridden culture I had read about. Women greet each other on the street by linking up under one another’s shoulders. Bodies are on continuous public display. The stumps of a child are meant to be touched. A patient’s operation is meant to be observed. The corpse of a man crushed by a semi-truck trailer is meant to be examined by passers-by, shared on Facebook pages, and shown on

national television. This public nature of the body parallels the interdependence of agricultural systems, where a farmer depends on his wife and his neighbours to harvest rice (Scott 1976; Hughes 2006; Öjendal & Sedara 2006;), but also may have something to do with the country's genocidal past. These findings have inspired me to continue research on an anthropology of the body in Cambodia. More research is needed to come to any real conclusions about it, but what I can speak of is the tension between the local concept of the body and the Scandinavian concept of the biomedical model, as manifested in the TCF staff.

As a foreigner coming to the country of Cambodia, you are taught not to touch someone's head. You are taught to keep the soles of your feet away from other people in a room. Both these things are considered disrespectful. But my friends would tell me to hold on tight when I rode motodops (motorcycle taxis) on the streets of Battambang. My friends would rub my head affectionately. In this country children rarely have names (often they are called One, Two, Three, etc.) and people usually use terms of respect when speaking to each other (older brother, older sister, younger brother, younger sister). The body seems to be more shared than the private, individualised self of those bringing it medical capacity building in the form of NGOs. This means that those who teach the biomedical model of the body have a conflict with those who understand the body as shared. With the biomedical model come intellectual patents on bioengineering designs that piece together the Cambodian body shattered by landmines. When a body is thought of as community property, intellectual property rights contradict its conceptual underpinnings.

### **Conceptual negotiation**

At the hospital both the Scandinavian and Khmer doctors depend on access to bioengineered products, which are limited by expensive patents. In response the doctors and staff work to make their own patents that proclaim their novelty and improvement on already patented design. Through their collaboration with Cambodian doctors and staff, they end up working with local perceptions of the body. Their patents parallel the concepts of the body described to me in interviews, Cambodian legends, and everyday living. This was not a purposeful decision, that is, the Scandinavians and Cambodians did not sit down to patent a unique, Cambodian body. Rather, the patent innovations were driven by the concepts of the body in Cambodia.

The Cambodian body, as described above, is thought of as particularly suited for the environment. The Cambodian environment is full of hazards, from landmines to floods to disease-carrying mosquitoes. Cambodians describe it as such,

too. Logically, then, a Cambodian amputee needs a prosthesis to fit the environment. Unlike the Red Cross patent, it cannot get stuck in mud and it does not crack in the heat and humidity. In response, the TCF uses discarded tires for the feet of their prostheses. They use spare metal for the joints. In their patent and publicity materials, they explain that they use “found” and “local” materials. These two terms speak to the values of being connected to the land and of being particularly Khmer. The materials come from the area and so fit the needs and the body of a Cambodian person.

The TCF patents also indicate the value of the communal role for the body. The patent describes its improvement on the Red Cross design to be an “immediate temporary prosthesis”, and thus, more quickly usable than the Red Cross prostheses. The TCF patent shows the patient as a person at psychological risk because of his or her social needs. The patient, as a rural farmer, needs a prosthesis immediately. His or her needs are based on psychological findings that amputees recover faster emotionally when they feel useful. These needs are cited with medical findings that amputees recover faster physically when they move regularly. And finally, if the amputee is male his needs are based on the needs of his family. His family needs him as a farmer to provide profit, as frequently both parents need to work in these rural, poverty-stricken areas. With neither profit nor harvest, the farmer’s family would suffer (Husum et al 2011 [1995]). Such a reworking of the patient body’s needs come from the Cambodian concepts, resulting in a patent on the Cambodian body.

The unique Cambodian body becomes a body with needs that are beyond the individual and intimately connected to the environment. These are two aspects that the biomedical NGO workers integrate from local understandings and use in their writings of patents. But this intellectual property right is an imposition on the concept of the body. Because landmines necessitate so many bodies to be pieced together with prostheses, the human is both artificial and natural, just as the land is, thus, a patent on a prosthesis is a patent on a body. However, the prosthesis has been restricted by design patents imposed by massive aid corporations such as the International Red Cross. In Cambodia, the International Red Cross holds patents on biomedical engineering products such as prosthesis design and external fixator machines, which hold together shattered bones while the bone heals. Possession of these patents require smaller NGOs like the TCF to create new patents. A patent can be obtained if a product is either novel or an improved design. The TCF counters Red Cross patents by making novel designs on the basis that Cambodians have unique needs. In this case, the novelty is the community needs of the patient, as influenced by his or her role in the family and community. Moreover, the novel design is based on the environment

of the patient. The rainy season and the dry season are both taken into account in the TCF's prosthetic designs. The rationality of the innovations behind the design echo local knowledge of the body: it belongs to the public community and it is part of the land. The engineering innovations take this into account in their designs, resulting in an intertwining of local context and biomedical knowledge to counter intellectual property patents. Such innovations allow the TCF to disseminate affordable prostheses and medical care to rural Cambodians, but leave a paradox by basing a privatised design on something conceptualised as public.

### **Discussion: the conflict remains**

The biomedical model has been shown in the anthropology of medicine to be a specific concept of the body, originating in medical industries and research. The biomedical model of the body is premised on categories such as the body–mind dichotomy and the nature–culture divide (Lock & Farquhar 2007). It is not always applicable to how people in their everyday lives conceive of the body, which may be premised on other presuppositions of the world. It is even questionable that all humans think of the body itself. Cassandra Crawford, for example, has done extensive ethnographic work among US veterans who have lost limbs. Her articles and book anthropologise phantom limb syndrome, showing how the intersubjectivity of pain is not quite captured by the floating signifiers of historical to present-day symptomology (Crawford 2009; 2014). Here she echoes work Allan Young (1997) has done on PTSD in which the disorder itself changes symptomologies over the decades, implying suspicion of its diagnostic ontology. Crawford's work grants us an insight into the patient–provider communication in which symptoms do not always match up to a patient's experience. More than that, she documents that the changes in experiences of phantom pain parallel prosthetic technology changes. In turn, these alter the value of normative concepts of the body in America: a normal, un-amputated body becomes less than ideal for amputees with prostheses that can allow them to run faster than a human with two human-born legs (Crawford 2014). Her work can allow us to think how bioengineering technology and the body in Cambodia might also be challenging each other's conceptual limits.

The TCF works to build medical capacity in rural places in Cambodia where landmines and explosive remnants of war (ERWs) make many Cambodians amputees. Many of these Cambodians are without available health care because most Cambodian health workers are afraid to work in landmine-ridden areas. They teach obstetrics and gynaecology as well as prenatal care in hard-to-reach villages and also physical rehabilitation to amputees. While their biomedical

model often conflicts with the local model of the body, they attempt to teach how and why a prosthesis works, how to give emergency first aid, and basic nutrition.

For example, a 17-year-old woman was burned alive in July 2013. She had just given birth and her body was considered 'cold' by her mother. To warm her up, she fed her a local postnatal care cocktail of urine and fermented fruit and had her lie down over a pit of burning coal. Chandy, a Khmer obstetrics specialist, explained to me: "She couldn't complain because she was a good Khmer girl and she had to do what her mother asked. She died because of these local traditions." Chandy herself used some of the local remedies for postnatal recovery but has become highly critical since obtaining her medical degree. "The old people tell us we are hot until we give birth, which is when we become too cold. The problem is that we have to explain that these traditions are not always correct. My son has eye problems because of the diet restrictions I had when I was pregnant with him."

Medical capacity building entails integrating local medicine and local concepts of the body beyond medicine. NGOs like The Trauma Care Foundation must work with the elders and the patients. The NGO tries to integrate local knowledge to renegotiate local concepts of the body. They talk of the difficulties, but also the advantages it offers when proving the uniqueness of the Cambodian body and thus Cambodian health needs. But intellectual property contradicts the basis of the concept of a shared body. In the TCF field guide textbook on patient care, a section on touching victims explains that warming the victim helps patients heal faster by increasing blood flow. It also calms the patient down when they are stressed (Husum et al 2000). But here the textbook misses the point of touch in the Cambodian context. Touch works to connect bodies to bodies. It means that the patient body is the toucher's body, too. By owning this body, it disconnects it, severing it from the Cambodian local concept.

## Interviews

Interview with Yang Ven Heng at the Trauma Care Foundation, Battambang City, Cambodia, 12 June 2010.

Interview with Sam Chann at Sampov Loun, Cambodia, 8 July 2010.

Interview with Marit Gjertsen at Cafe Sänn, Tromsø, Norway, 13 April 2010.

Interview with Marit Gjertsen by e-mail, 29 August 2014.

Interview with Vicheth Touch at the Trauma Care Foundation, Sampov Loun, Cambodia, 2 July 2010.



## Internet sources

- Landmines and Cluster Munitions Monitor (2008) Cambodia. <http://www.the-monitor.org/index.php/publications/display?url=lm/2008/countries/cambodia.html> [accessed 29 September 2014].
- PINTAS IP Group. <http://www.pintas-ip.com/> [accessed 29 September 2014].
- Uk, K. (2006) Local Perceptions and Responses to Risk. A Study of a Cambodian Village. Doctoral thesis. University of Cambridge. Department of Social Anthropology. <http://www.gichd.org/fileadmin/GICHD-resources/rec-documents/Study-Risk-Cambodia-KrisnaUK-2006.pdf> [accessed 10 October 2014].

## References

- Au, S. (2008) The King with Hansen's disease: tales of the leper in Colonial Cambodia. – Hansen, A. R. & Ledgerwood, J. (eds) *At the Edge of the Forest: Essays on Cambodia, History, and Narrative in Honor of David Chandler*, 121–136. Cornell Southeast Asian Program, Ithaca.
- Au, S. (2011) *Mixed Medicines: Health and Culture in French Colonial Cambodia*. University of Chicago Press, Chicago.
- Aulino, F. (2012) *Senses and Sensibilities: The Practice of Care in Everyday Life in Northern Thailand*. Unpublished manuscript.
- Chandler, D. (2002) *A History of Cambodia*. Westview Press, Boulder.
- Chandler, D. (2008 [1978]) Songs at the edge of the forest: perceptions of order in three Cambodian texts. – Hansen, A. R. & Ledgerwood, J. (eds) *At the Edge of the Forest: Essays on Cambodia, History, and Narrative in Honor of David Chandler*, 31–46. Cornell Southeast Asian Program, Ithaca.
- Chhim, S. (2013) Baksbat (broken courage): a trauma-based cultural syndrome in Cambodia, *Medical Anthropology: Cross-Cultural Studies in Health and Illness* 32 (2), 160–173.
- Colm, S., Marona, S. & Kalyan, H. (2000) *Cultural Resource Study: Impacts of the Hero Taiwan Company Concession on Sites of Religious and Cultural Significance in O Chum District, Ratanakiri*. Report prepared by Ratanakiri Provincial Rural Development Department, Ministry of Environment Ratanakiri Provincial Environment Department, Ratanakiri Provincial Culture Department, CIDSE, UNDP-CARERE, NTFP, ADHOC, and Virachey National Park, Phnom Penh, Cambodia.
- Crawford, C. S. (2009) From pleasure to pain: the role of MPQ in the language of phantom limb pain, *Social Science and Medicine* 69 (5), 655–661.
- Crawford, C. S. (2014) *Phantom Limb: Amputation, Embodiment, and Prosthetic Technology*. New York University Press, New York.
- Csordas, T. (1993) Somatic modes of attention, *Cultural Anthropology* 8 (2), 135–156.
- Ebihara, M. (1968) *Svay, a Khmer village in Cambodia*. Doctoral thesis. Columbia University, Department of Anthropology.
- Forest, A. (1992) *Le culte des genies protecteurs au Cambodge: analyse et traduction d'un corpus de textes sur les neak ta*. Recherches asiatiques. L'Harmattan Press, Paris.

- Foucault, M. (1977) *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Vintage Books, New York.
- French, L. (1994) The political economy of injury and compassion: amputees on the Thai-Cambodia border. – Csordas, T. (ed) *Embodiment and Experience: The Existential Ground of Culture and Self*, 69–99. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Guillou, A. Y. (2013) Western aid workers in Cambodian hospitals: ethical, professional and social divergences, *South East Asia Research* 21 (3), 403–418.
- Hansen, A. R. (2007). *How to Behave: Buddhism and Modernity in Colonial Cambodia, 1860–1930*. University of Hawai'i Press, Honolulu.
- Haraway, D. J. (2008) *When Species Meet*. Posthumanities 3. University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, London.
- Heng, R. (2010) *Cambodian Mine Action Centre Annual Report 2010*. Cambodian Mine Action Centre, Phnom Penh.
- Herzfeld, M. (1988) *The Poetics of Manhood: Contest and Identity in a Cretan Mountain Village*. Princeton University Press, Princeton.
- Hinton, A. L. (ed) (2002) *Annihilating Difference: The Anthropology of Genocide*. University of California Press, Berkeley, Los Angeles.
- Hinton, D. E. (2013) *Cambodians' Use of Buddhist Techniques to Recover from Trauma*. Lecture at the Division of Social and Transcultural Psychiatry, Culture and Community Mental Health Rounds, February 8th 2013, Montreal.
- Hinton, D. E., Hinton, A. L., Eng, K. T. & Choung, S. (2012) PTSD and key somatic complaints and cultural syndromes among rural Cambodians: the results of a needs assessment survey, *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* 26 (3), 383–407.
- Hughes, C. (2006) The Politics of gifts: tradition and regimentation in contemporary Cambodia, *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 37 (3), 469–489.
- Hughes, C. & Öjendal, J. (2006) Reassessing tradition in times of political change: post-war Cambodia reconsidered, *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 37 (3), 415–420.
- Husum, H., Gilbert, M. & Wisborg, T. (2000) *Save Lives, Save Limbs: Life Support for Victims of Mines, Wars, and Accidents*. Third World Network, Penang.
- Husum, H., Ang, S. C. & Fosse, E. (2011 [1995]) *War Surgery: Field Manual*. Third World Network, Penang.
- Kohn, E. (2013) *How Forests Think: Toward an Anthropology Beyond the Human*. University of California Press, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London.
- Kwon, H. (2008) *Ghosts of War in Vietnam*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Lock, M. & Farquhar, J. (eds) (2007) *Beyond the Body Proper: Reading the Anthropology of Material Life*. Duke University Press, Durham, London.
- MacDougall, D. (2005) *The Corporeal Image: Film, Ethnography, and the Senses*. Princeton University Press, Princeton.
- Marschke, M. (2012) *Life, Fish, and Mangroves: Resources Governance in Coastal Cambodia*. University of Ottawa Press, Ottawa, Canada.
- Öjendal, J. & Sedara, K. (2006) *Korob, Kaud, Klach*: in search of agency in rural Cambodia, *Journal for Southeast Asian Studies* 37 (3), 507–526.
- Ong, A. (1995) Making the biopolitical subject: Cambodian immigrants, refugee medicine and cultural citizenship in California, *Social Science & Medicine* 40 (9), 1243–1257.

- Ovesen, J. & Trankell, I.-B. (2003) Cambodia. – Mackerras, C. (ed) *Ethnicity in Asia*. Asia's Transformations, 194–209. Routledge, London.
- Ovesen, J. & Trankell, I.-B. (2010) *Cambodians and Their Doctors: A Medical Anthropology of Colonial and Post-colonial Cambodia*. NIAS Monographs 117. NIAS Press, Copenhagen.
- Scott, J. C. (1976) *The Moral Economy of the Peasant: Rebellion and Subsistence in Southeast Asia*. Yale University Press, New Haven.
- Singh, S. (2012) *Natural Potency and Political Power: Forests and State Authority in Contemporary Laos*. University of Hawai'i Press, Honolulu.
- Stoller, P. (1997) *Sensuous Scholarship*. Contemporary Ethnography. University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia.
- Strathern, M. (1996) Cutting the network, *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 2 (3), 517–535.
- Strathern, M. (2001) The patent and the malanggan, *Theory, Culture & Society* 18 (4), 1–26.
- TCF Report 2011 = Trauma Care Foundation Annual Report (2011) prepared by Yang Ven Heng, MPH for the Trauma Care Foundation.
- Uk, K. (2012) The symbolic appropriation of war-made objects by the Jorais of Northeast Cambodia. – Chua, L., Cook, J., Long, N. & Wilson, L. (eds) *Southeast Asian Perspectives on Power*, 81–92. Routledge, Abingdon.
- Young, A. (1997) *The Harmony of Illusions: Inventing Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder*. Princeton University Press, Princeton.

## Source of illustration

Figure 1 – Cambodia Battambang locator map. [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Cambodia\\_Battambang\\_locator\\_map.svg#mediaviewer/File:Cambodia\\_Battambang\\_locator\\_map.svg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Cambodia_Battambang_locator_map.svg#mediaviewer/File:Cambodia_Battambang_locator_map.svg) [accessed 10 October 2014].

## Notes

1 Taxes are paid to landowners when it comes to land; only foreign companies pay taxes to the government for property.

2 The rainy season makes mud shift so that mines end up along the path of children walking to school or between villages. Both male and female children pick up landmines, mistaking them for toys. The mines go off in their hands. When farmers farm, they step on landmines by accident. As a rule, the farming families send the male farmer out first, before his wife, which results in more accidents for adult men.

# The biopolitical turn in post-ideological times: a trajectory of Russia's transformation

Andrey Makarychev, Alexandra Yatsyk

**Abstract.** This chapter offers a conceptualisation of biopolitical debates from academic and policy perspectives, and addresses the biopolitical turn quite clearly manifested in contemporary Russia. The analysis starts with a theoretical prelude that explicates the validity of biopolitical arguments for characterising post-ideological regimes of power, and deploys them in a wider conceptual debate on different forms of power. The authors then turn to the applicability of the biopolitical framework for studying today's Russian regime of power and hegemony, with particular attention to four specific policy fields – immigration, school education, pastoral (religious) power, and the Chechen version of biopolitics. In conclusion we come back to a more theoretical explanation of Russia's version of biopolitics from the vantage point of its illiberal and totalising effects.

## Introduction

In recent years a plethora of issues related to human bodies, including corporeality, alimentation and sexuality, have become central to Russian political debate. Some of these articulations look far from serious. For example, a Communist MP proposed a law that would require non-ethnic restaurants to have at least 50 percent of their menu based on Russian cuisine (Runkevich & Malai 2015). The chief sanitary inspector referred to holiday travel abroad as detrimental for health, presuming that Russia is the only country in the world with stable sanitary conditions (Novikova 2015). A regional governor called on his countrymen to cease making berry jams as a “futile waste of time” (Gazeta.ru 2015b). The children's ombudsman appointed by President Vladimir Putin in 2016 personifies the most conservative vision of biopolitics – a 34-year-old mother of six and wife of a priest, Anna Kuznetsova is known for supporting the ideas of telegony, an academically highly dubious theory that claims that female bodies retain memories about all sexual partners (Popad'eva 2009). An aide to the

---

Kannike, A., Tasa, M. & Västriik, E.-H. (eds) (2017) *Body, Personhood and Privacy: Perspectives on the Cultural Other and Human Experience*. *Approaches to Culture Theory* 7, 99–115. University of Tartu Press, Tartu.

prime minister and the former chief sanitary inspector Gennadii Onishchenko presumed that the deficit of imported condoms due to Russian counter-sanctions might only increase sexual discipline and responsibility (RIA-Novosti 2015). The NGO *Za bezopasnost* ('For Security') demanded that the State Duma forbid advertisements of female underwear (Grigorian 2015) since it might divert attention of car drivers and cause negative effects on adolescents.

Yet many other narratives definitely deserve more serious attention. For instance, state–society relations are often discussed through the prism of hegemonic masculinity and home violence. Birth centres in Moscow were reported to attach to medical documents advice to strengthen families through female submission (L'vov 2015). As political commentator Sergei Medvedev (2016) puts it:

By accepting the 'natural' right of men over female bodies, we should recognise the 'natural' right of the state over our bodies [...]. The mechanisms reproducing power and hierarchy are identical: [...] those who acknowledge the right of men to physically take women should anticipate the police to do the same with all of us [...]. Russian power is absolutely archaic and physiological: it is grounded neither in mechanisms of rational arrangements nor in faceless practices of Weberian bureaucracy, but in a direct physiological contact and the forceful management of human bodies. [...] It is not incidental that this power is personified by an 'alfa-male', a symbol of masculine domination that legitimised the cult of force.

On a different occasion Medvedev (2013) assumed that "a new Orthodox hygienic policy constructs population as an obedient, family-based reproductive mass that vehemently rejects polygamy, contraception, homosexuality and other sinful temptations".

As a part of this discursive construction, the physical body of the leader acquires political characteristics (Medvedev 2015a). It is in this context that Maria Engström (2016) speaks about "erotic, romantic and sexual patriotism" that "reflects deeply-rooted archaic symbolism of a young sacrifice for the 'common cause'. As for Putin – he definitively solidifies as the 'father' of a young and sexy nation." Yet in the meantime, Western forms of sexuality are lambasted as alien, pervert and detrimental to the sanity of the nation (Arkhipova et al 2016).

Some Russian commentators deem that these discourses aimed at consolidating national identity shape the new ideological frontiers of the regime (Pertsev 2016). However, we would rather characterise these articulations and narratives as post-ideological in Slavoj Žižek's terms. Post-ideology in this sense connotes

diminished trust in ‘grand narratives’ in Eastern Europe after the collapse of the Soviet Union, and their substitution with a variety of more particular(ist) identity discourses, along with the proliferation of technocratic, administrative and managerial approaches to the political sphere (Žižek 1997). The convergence of biological and political life adds to these post-ideological landscapes an emphasis on civilisational and racial categories conducive to the blurring of traditional distinctions between right and left, as well as liberalism and conservatism (Patton 2007).

In this chapter, we conceptualise the debate briefly introduced above as a biopolitical turn quite clearly manifested in contemporary Russia. We start the analysis with a theoretical prelude that explicates the validity of biopolitical arguments and deploys them in a wider conceptual debate on different forms of power; then we turn to the applicability of the biopolitical framework for studying today’s Russian regime of power and hegemony, with particular attention given to four specific policy fields. In conclusion we come back to a more theoretical explanation of Russia’s version of biopolitics.

### **Biopolitics beyond Foucault and Agamben**

Biopolitical practices of “administration, orchestration, production and reproduction of populations and life” (Selby 2007, 333) gradually gain prominence in Russia studies and in research on other regimes of the former USSR. Biopolitical discourse – even if it comes under different, less academic names – offers its own language of post-Soviet nation building, and serves as a post-ideological platform aimed at cementing the fragmented and dispersed national self.

Biopolitics is usually referred to as a relatively soft technology of power and governance that presupposes the production of the disciplinary society, grounded in the government’s concern about fostering life of the population through various institutions and practices (Foucault 2007, 377–378). This envisages the application of a number of regulatory mechanisms aimed at inciting and constraining human bodies through family planning and demographic policies, patterns of consumption (including food security), mobility and travel, medicalisation (from lists of ‘official diseases’ to enforced psychiatry), investment in human capital and workforce, environmental politics, etc. Within biopolitical reasoning human life is part of political calculations and mechanisms of execution of power and providing security to the population.

Obviously, biopolitics is just one possible conceptual approach to study mechanisms of national consolidation and power aggregation, yet it might be instrumental for uncovering certain aspects of nation building that are not visible

from other research perspectives. What biopolitics can tell us is that national identity making necessarily implies disciplinary practices of controlling and regulating human lives as a precondition for aggregating population into a single collective body. The concept of biopolitics might help us to grasp the political as “something that occurs when bodies come together and relate to one another” (Puumala 2013, 952).

The concepts of biopower and biopolitics had been developed in the late works by Michel Foucault (2003), yet his interpretation of the concept, pioneering at the time, was neither exhaustive nor coherent. For him, biopolitics as a technology of power is closely linked to the emergence of the modern nation state and liberal capitalism. Starting from the 18th century, modern Western societies took on board the fundamental biological fact that human beings are a species, and developed a “set of mechanisms through which the basic biological features of the human species became the object of a political strategy, of a general strategy of power” (Foucault 2009, 1). In a nutshell, this means a passage from disciplining the individual body to disciplining the population. According to Foucault, biopolitics implies managing health, hygiene, nutrition, birth, sexuality, etc., but also develops technologies of sovereignty from disciplinary forms to so-called social medicine; life becomes a matter of government, no longer a private affair but an object of policy. From the right to take life, the state assumes the power to administer life (Foucault 2003, 239–264).

Foucault, however, left the correlation of biopolitics and governmentality relatively uncertain and open to interpretation. Neither did he pay any serious attention to the possible (and very likely, as he occasionally admitted) evolution of the so-called ‘liberal’ models of biopolitics into their totalitarian reversals, which is an issue of particular sensitivity for countries in transition such as Russia. On the one hand, following the logic of Foucault, one may assume that biopower (as any type of power) is exercised over free subjects. On the other hand, biopolitics as a set of regulatory mechanisms and tools applies to the whole population, and therefore contains a great deal of totalising effect.

Foucault also remained exposed to critique due to his – rather inconclusive – attempts to draw a conceptual line between biopower and sovereign power. It is this binarisation that was aptly rejected by the Italian political philosopher Giorgio Agamben who juxtaposed biopolitics with Carl Schmitt’s (1985) notion of the “state of exception” (the ability of the sovereign to transcend the rule of law for the sake of public good). In this context he argued that biopolitics is an exceptional form of sovereignty: ruling by exclusion, sovereign power captures and enhances its control over matters that were not previously within its competence, including the biological life of its citizens. In addition, for Agamben (1998, 1), biopolitics is

not only a matter of modernity, as Foucault had suggested, but a perennial quality of politics as such; for example, the ancient Greeks distinguished between the physical animal life (*zoe*), and the ‘correct’ form of life (*bios*) for the individual and the society.

We tend to agree with Agamben on two pivotal points – that relations between biopower and sovereign power are symbiotic rather than dichotomous, and that these relations are not limited to European modernity, thus representing, in fact, a qualitative characteristic of power and politics as such. Yet both arguments deserve further qualification and development, which are our focal points in the following section.

### **Biopower, sovereignty and the national**

Following the logic of Agamben, we agree that there is “the original ‘secret tie’ between sovereignty and biopolitical life [...] [and] the presumed necessity of sovereign action on biopolitical grounds” (Rosenow 2009, 508, 512). Sovereign power can be reconceptualised not only through the prism of fixed territorial borders, but also “through bodies [...] across society and everyday life” (Vaughan-Williams 2009, 740). Consequently, “the ability to define the biopolitical as a matter of governance, and the ability to exclude – in different forms – life from the community, are the signals of politics” (Salter 2012, 741). In a sharper form this reasoning implies that biopolitical belonging “to the national community becomes the state’s guiding political preoccupation. [...] The protection and care of the body of the nation thus becomes the supreme task of politics” (Minca 2007, 88).

Arguably, the best way to relate to each other the concepts of biopower and sovereignty is through discourses on nationalism and nation building. Biopolitics can be understood as a concept denoting a peculiar mode of making collective identities and communities through policies and practices of ‘normalisation’, which is a linchpin for strengthening power hierarchies. In the meantime, we treat biopolitics not only as a particular way of managing and administering the allegedly (pre)existing populations, but primarily as a subjectifying force producing various models of communication grounded in corporeality, sexuality and bodily practices of incitement, protection, control and regulation. This is why, as the Russian case demonstrates, biopolitical regulatory measures are indispensable elements of top-down national consolidation, and in this capacity they are incorporated into hegemonic discourse.



### **Facilitating conditions**

As we have said above, Agamben was right in conceptualising biopolitics as an intrinsic and universal element of power, be it in times of pre-modernity, modernity or post-modernity. In this sense, biopolitics might take various forms depending on specific situations, be more intensive at certain points and less pronounced in other circumstances. Having acknowledged this, we need to identify conditions that make biopolitics particularly well articulated and instrumental under Putin's rule.

Firstly, the salience of biopolitics becomes especially tangible for national communities whose identities are in flux or in a state of transformation, which necessitates some anchoring and fixing in nodal points with greater chances for consensual acceptance in society. The biopolitical frame thus serves to stabilise the dispersed identities by grounding them in bodily discourses aimed at managing lives through nutrition, medicine, reproductive behaviour, demographic policies, food security, and so forth. With all its seemingly ideological neutrality, these issues might easily turn into powerful manipulative tools.

Secondly, the ascendance of biopolitics represents a reaction to the crisis of ideologies and their diminished mobilising power. In the absence of grand narratives, biopolitics appeals to the collective body of the nation as the core of a new 'regime of truth'. Corporeality, along biopolitical lines, represents the most obvious reference point for national identity-building that tends to either skip or transcend divisive debates on ideological grounds, requiring no public debate (if not legitimising the suppression of dissent voices as deviant and perverse). The functionally 'natural', 'evident', 'indisputable' characteristics of the alleged normality of human beings constituting the national self are, of course, illusions due to the socially and culturally constructed nature of all biopolitical concepts.

In this sense biopolitics can be attached to a post-ideological register since it appeals to something allegedly well-grounded and traditional, and establishes itself in opposition to emancipatory attempts to challenge the 'natural' state of affairs. Biopolitics is post-ideological not because it discards ideologies, but because it transcends ideological divides and reconciles them, and may take different pseudo-ideological forms adapting to liberal or conservative expectations.

### **Biopolitics, Russian style**

In Russia biopolitics not only gives an additional set of power tools to the authorities. What is even more important is that it is an intrinsic element of debate on the essence and borders of Russian political community. More specifically, Russian

biopolitics is a set of instruments that define the belongingness to this - 'imagined' - community on the basis of loyalty to official policies, and simultaneously ostracise those who do not fit in with the biopolitical standards imposed from the top. In this paper we argue that biopolitical regulations, implemented through bans and restrictions, become one of the main tools for articulating the rules of shaping the political community of Russia and drawing its political borderlines, i.e. establishing biopolitical distinctions with other communities. With all their restrictive effects, biopolitical prohibitions and taboos unveil mechanisms of 'inclusive exclusion': "if someone is banned from a political community, he or she continues to have a relation with that group: there is still a connection precisely because they are outlawed" (Vaughan-Williams 2009, 734). The practices of political incarceration, ostracising LGBT people and fuelling anti-migrant feelings among the population are pertinent cases in point.

Against this backdrop, the proliferation of biopolitical ideas and practices in Putin's Russia has to be understood as a specific instrument for 'suturing' the hegemonic discourse that since the fall of the Soviet Union lacked due coherence and was intrinsically fragmented. This discourse lacked effectively functioning and widely shared nodal points, and it is this lack that led to its fragmentation into culturally dissimilar and often competing narratives of Russia's collective Self. The idea of biopolitical normalisation, being an epitome of Putin's version of - largely performative - conservatism, is meant to stabilise and consolidate this discourse as the pivotal hegemonic strategy of power.

Biopolitics became so popular among Russian politicians due to its ability to consolidate the dispersed discourse on Russian identity, without resorting to ideologically divisive clichés. The traction of biopolitics is in its ability to play the role of a post-ideological and post-political substitution of politics. Since the fall of the Soviet Union, the concept of politics among Russian elites connoted something manipulative and artificial; in this sense Russia's ruling class is largely post-political. Within this dominant mindset, ideologies were discredited and perceived as constraints rather than as incentive boosters. Yet this post-political way of thinking necessitates some nodal points to anchor the highly fragmented and unfixed set of discourses beyond traditional ideological (left - right, conservative - liberal, democratic - autocratic) dichotomies.

In the following sections we briefly introduce and describe some of the issue areas that are illustrative of the current state of biopolitical debate in Russia.

## Immigration

The negative portrayal of migrants as ‘internal Others’ is one of the core elements of biopolitically securitised hygienic discourse. It would, however, be an oversimplification to assume that it is the state that always takes the lead and promotes biopolitical discourses. In 2005 it was the nationalist Rodina party – led by Dmitrii Rogozin – that launched a political campaign under the slogan “Let’s clean Moscow of the dirt” – with clear allusion to ethnically non-Russian immigrants. Nationalist *pogroms* in many Russian cities (Kondopoga in 2006, Pugachev and Biriuliovo in 2013, etc.) demonstrated how responsive large groups of the population can be to the ideas of biopolitical homogenisation and the purification of the society.

By the same token, this imagery is accompanied by Russia’s resolve to show itself as a successful example of solving refugee issues. Here is what the head of Russia’s Migration Service Konstantin Romadanovski says:

Over 1 million Ukrainians from the southeast have been registered as temporary asylum seekers in the Russian Federation since April 1, 2014. The number of requests for asylum in Russia has grown almost 60 times. And we dealt with this issue successfully. Nobody died, nobody starved, everybody was heard. Russia already has experience in tackling such issues from its recent history – in 2008, after the conflict in the North Caucasus we accommodated 35,000 refugees, and then in 2014 during the Ukrainian crisis we proved our efficiency in dealing with such matters when various government agencies worked together well. [...] In 2014–2015, the Russian government allocated almost 18 billion roubles for accommodation programs for Ukrainian citizens. [...] Numbers speak for themselves – over 600,000 people decided to stay in Russia and filed long-term residence papers (RT 2016).

Many Russian commentators do not shy away from celebrating Russia’s superiority over Europe in this respect: “paradoxically, a more developed in institutional and economic terms European Union with multiculturalism as one of its philosophical pillars lost in the domain of migration policies to a ‘traditionalist’ Russia” (Babkin 2016). Apparently as a key argument substantiating its success in tackling migration issues, Russia widely uses references to refugees from eastern Ukraine who constitute one percent of Russian population, significantly higher than the percentage of Syrian refugees in Europe. To match the Russian level of migrant acceptance, Europe “could have accepted another five millions, yet even with much lower numbers they are in trouble and face problems” (Mamedova 2016).

The lessons that many Russian commentators draw from the EU experience is that, taking into account the inflow of refugees from Ukraine, the Russian state “needs to rationally use new labour resources, including for the development of the Far East and Arctic regions. Well-qualified refugees from eastern Ukraine could have been utilised in large-scale development project as a human resource. [...] This would strengthen the post-Crimea tendency of transforming the multinational peoples of the Russian Federation into a single nation” (Babkin 2016).

Evidently, this narrative presupposes a clear differentiation between ‘good’ (adaptable and culturally close) migrants from eastern Ukraine and ‘bad’ (undesirable, unwelcome, culturally foreign and non-integrated) Oriental migrants. This distinction is biopolitically constructed through ethnic and racial narratives of the prioritisation of refugees with Christian or Slavic background (Polonskii 2015). The reference to Russia’s biopolitical care for refugees from eastern Ukraine in this context is meant, among other functions, to legitimise the Kremlin’s direct support of military insurgency in the so-called *Novorossia*. Gender considerations are also part of the discourse: thus, according to one proposal, Russia should accept only female and child refugees under the condition that men would secure for them funds earned elsewhere (op cit).

As far as Syrian refugees are concerned, Russia remains a relatively closed country for them. According to the head of the NGO Civic Assistance, Svetlana Gannushkina, only a few applicants from Syria obtained refugee status, and 1500 received temporary residence permits (see Terekhova 2016). Most of these people get neither allowances nor housing, since Russia has only three centres of temporary lodging with a total capacity of 600. In addition to this, Russia has rejected petitions from Syrian Circassians to be repatriated to Russia, in spite of the recommendation of the Presidential Council on Civil Society Development and Human Rights.

### School education

The state’s policies toward secondary education also contain strong biopolitical components. President Putin has suggested that no pupil, even with disabilities, may be exempt from physical exercise/training, and that the Soviet-era GTO (Ready for Labour and Defence) norms of physical fitness have to be restored (RBK 2013), which was put into practice. This is certainly part of the Kremlin’s rhetoric of encouraging a healthy lifestyle for the younger generation. In 2013 the Russian Health Ministry produced a test to reveal not only drug consumption among adolescents, but their sexual liaisons as well (“Did you have sexual

intercourses that you regretted next morning?” – reads one of the questions in a worksheet recommended for secondary schools; see Dozhd’ TV 2013a).

Biopolitical regulation extends to school dress codes. The former Chief Sanitary Inspector advocated the introduction of a school uniform for pupils (Dozhd’ TV 2013b), which his critics metaphorically dubbed an imperial idea, having in mind its potential for homogenisation and the top-down imposition of a set of rules (Dozhd’ TV 2013c). This practice may also be extended to a teachers’ dress code, a measure that was explained by the allegedly excessive exposure of sensuality in the workplace (Volkova 2013).

### **Pastoral power**

The concept of pastoral power fleshes out a specific dimension of biopolitics that combines control over and care for a flock of people, and techniques of individual communication and surveillance. For Foucault (2009, 170, 181), the duty of the pastor is the salvation of the flock; the pastor must account for “every act of each of his sheep, for everything that may have happened between them, and everything good and evil they may have done at any time [...] [T]he pastor must take charge of and observe daily life in order to form a never-ending knowledge of the behavior of the members of the flock he supervises”. Yet this individual approach transforms into a collective responsibility and control: the pastor’s concerns also extend to the “spiritual direction” of the thoughts of his flock – a procedure that involves the compulsory extraction of “a truth”. All this makes pastoral power “a kind of exhaustive, total, and permanent relationship of individual obedience”, and an “art of conducting, directing, leading, guiding, taking in hand, and manipulating men [...] collectively and individually throughout their life and at each moment of their existence” (op cit, 165, 183).

Foucault (2003, 229) claimed that the entire edifice of Western modernity is rooted in this type of power, including the model of governmentality, due to “massive, comprehensive transfer of pastoral functions from Church to state”. Accordingly, technologies of pastoralism multiply, overflow their ecclesiastical functions, and begin to intervene in the field of political sovereignty. Many secular concepts have religious background (sovereignty, justice, equality, etc.), sustaining pastoral practices of “conversion, asceticism, (and) self-flagellation” (Golder 2007, 160).

The Russian case by and large illustrates these theoretical premises. Indeed, Russian political discourse develops under the strong influence of religious concepts, and some doctrinal cornerstones of Russian identity, including those projected beyond its borders – such as the ‘Russian World’ – have strong religious

resonance. The conservative vision of biopolitics installed in Russia exceptionalises religion as a special symbolic and semantic terrain under the protection of the state, which materialised in legislation criminalising religious sacrilege. Yet in the meantime this archaic language of religious traditionalism appears to be instrumental in fostering a communication with some of Russia's neighbours (such as Georgia, for example) that largely shares the biopolitically restrictive philosophy of the Russian Orthodox Church when it comes to a plethora of issues related to family values, intolerance of sexual (and very often ethnic) minorities, the spiritual bonds of the nation, etc.

### **Debates on polygamy and Chechen biopolitics**

In this section we dwell upon another example of the subversive potential of biopolitical discourses that on the surface can sustain and even mimic the discourse of sovereignty. The Chechen version of biopolitical power, both supportive of and simultaneously challenging to, Putin's sovereignty, can serve as the best example of this ambiguity.

The biopolitical vision of Russian identity, as constitutive of sovereignty and grounded in the mutually reinforcing ideas of common Russian language and culture, along with traditional Orthodox values, is a challenge to ethnically and religiously non-Russian cultures within the newly constructed 'Russian World' and the Putin regime as its main engine. Putin's policy pushes republics within the Russian Federation that have strong non-Slavic and non-Orthodox cultural identities of their own to build their own 'blood-based' bonds, and on this basis their subsequent integration into the dominating cultural and political frame of 'Russian civilisation'.

In this respect, Chechnya represents an interesting case of both supporting and contesting Russian biopolitical sovereignty. Chechnya professes a seemingly traditional version of Islam, with its head, Ramzan Kadyrov, wearing Islamic beads and caps, and favouring Shariah laws, including polygamy, even if they contravene Russian legislation. Yet paradoxically, Kadyrov vehemently supports ideas of the 'Russian World', and engages with explicitly anti-Western discourses that are almost identical to Russian conservatives' invectives against the liberally emancipatory Europe and its permissiveness toward LGBT communities. Kadyrov (2015) publicly regretted that "sizeable segments of Russian society prefer to match European lifestyles, though most Europeans, by and large, have neither culture nor morals. They welcome all the inhuman and consider same-sex marriages normal. It is horrible even to speak about this. I don't want to be a European." Capitalizing on Russia's deteriorating relations with the West due to

the crisis in Ukraine, Kadyrov took a political stand and played a role of defender of Putin's regime of sovereignty and – paradoxically – of the idea of the 'Russian World' as its biopolitical core.

Through complete political solidarity with the Kremlin in the attacks against Ukraine and the ensuing conflict with the West, Kadyrov was quite successful in promoting the Chechen biopolitical agenda, and even inscribing it into the 'Russian World' concept. Grozny – while verbally supporting the Kremlin – less and less allows it to interfere in local affairs. This also concerns corporeal practices that do not fit into the Russian legal system. Kadyrov's personal blessing of the marriage of the head of local police, already married, with a 17-year-old girl was widely perceived as a gesture of male power and impunity (Allenova 2015). As a follow-up to this incident, a number of high-profile Islamic figures – including the head of administration of Chechnya (see Maetnaia & Evstifeev 2015) and the chief mufti of Moscow – lobbied for the legalisation of polygamy (Baklanov 2015). As did the former children's ombudsman Pavel Astakhov, who justified polygamy, even involving underage girls, by saying that "women in the south get wrinkled" after 30 (Gazeta.ru 2015a). The debate on polygamy thus became accepted as legitimate in the Public Chamber of Russia. It does not come only from the North Caucasus: in October 2014 Valerii Seleznev, PM from the Liberal Democratic Party, proposed a law to financially support men who have multiple children from different women. "Let's face the fact that marriage ceased to be once and forever, and that we do need to support population growth", he said (Dozhd' TV 2014).

From the viewpoint of Russian liberals, this biopolitical controversy attests to what might be called the Chechenisation of Russia as a politics of legalised exceptions justified by ethnic and religious tradition. This case demonstrates that there might be a parallel biopolitical space, normalised by references to traditions, as opposed to laws (Medvedev 2015b).

What is crucial for our analysis is that two mutually related processes – the contestation of Russia's sovereignty and the de-facto strengthening of the sovereignty of Chechnya – take place in the biopolitical domain. Kadyrov, on the one hand, normalises the practices of biopolitical control that can be attractive – at least partly – for federal authorities. On the other hand, he plays the role of Putin's 'internal other', a potential scapegoat who might be accused of deviation from the moral standards dominant in Russia.

## Conclusion

In our analysis, we have shown the logic and the content of the biopolitical (U-)turn in Russia that became particularly pronounced in the third presidential tenure of Vladimir Putin. The shift from the relatively permissive 1990s to a conservative trend that became dominant in recent years is a remarkable phenomenon that is central for understanding the evolution of the Russian political regime and its project of national consolidation. The four cases collected in this essay single out different dimensions of this process. The immigration debate in Russia is aimed at articulating Russian identity in civilisational terms and distinguishing Russian policies from liberal multiculturalism practiced by the EU. In the sphere of schooling the overall trend is towards greater unification of education practices, including a stronger control over children's corporeality. Pastoral power, largely overlapping with sovereign power, serves as a source of attempts to consolidate the national identity on the principles of the dominant Orthodoxy as a substitute to a non-existent (and probably impossible) state ideology. Finally, as the case of Chechnya makes clear, the biopolitical project unleashed by the Kremlin and ardently supported by the most conservative segments of society, might trigger even more archaic forms of biopolitical traditionalism grounded in radical versions of hegemonic masculinity.

The ascendant – and very diverse – trajectories of biopolitical regulation in Putin's Russia add some meaningful insights to the theoretical debate on biopower. Michel Foucault, the founding father of the biopolitical school, was aware of, but largely overlooked, the conceptual standpoint, the probability of the degeneracy of originally liberal practices of enhancing the productive capacity of human bodies to the system of totalising control and surveillance over population. The Russian experience suggests that this trajectory might take practical forms in a very short time span, which in our view attests to the necessity for a conceptual shift in biopolitics research from its current position to the investigation of the mechanisms and models of biopolitical totalisation in situations similar to the Russian one.

By the same token one may need to take a step further and suggest that Foucault's attempt to relate biopolitics basically to modern liberalism faces limitations and challenges, given the post-ideological erasure of lines of demarcation between liberalism and its opponents. The blurred boundaries between traditional ideologies are typical for Russia because many protagonists of the current biopolitical conservatism (from one of the most illiberal Duma deputies Elena Mizulina to Vladimir Putin himself) earlier espoused (moderate) liberal approaches. Yet this trend is much wider and stretches far beyond Russia: from



Viktor Orban's drift from the liberal to the illiberal camp in a matter of several years, to the transformation within American society that made possible Donald Trump's presidency. In all these cases biopolitical reasoning was an important part of the changes; what is more, all of them serve as good illustrations of the (hidden and implicit, rather than overt and explicit) potential for biopolitical totalisation extant within liberal political communities.

### Internet sources

- Allenova, O. (2015) Voprositel'nyi brak, *Kommersant*, 25 June. [Алленова, О. (2015) Вопросительный брак, *Коммерсант*, 25 июня.] <http://kommersant.ru/doc/2728980> [accessed 10 October 2015].
- Arkhipova, A., Volkova, M., Iugai, L. & Kirziuk, A. (2016) Pochemu Mizulina – eto seksi, a nagota – eto strashno? *Colta*, 14 October. [Архипова, А., Волкова, М., Югай, Л. & Кирзюк, А. (2016) Почему Мизулина – это секси, а нагота – это страшно? *Colta*, 14 октября.] <http://www.colta.ru/articles/society/12745> [accessed 13 January 2017].
- Babkin, N. (2016) Migratsiia i vnutrenniaia politika: evropeiskii urok, *Svobodnaia Pressa*, 1 April. [Бабкин, Н. (2016) Миграция и внутренняя политика: европейский урок, *Свободная Пресса*, 1 апреля.] <http://svpressa.ru/politic/article/145711/> [accessed 13 January 2017].
- Baklanov, A. (2015) Muftii Moskvu prizval razreshit' mnogozhentvo dlia musul'man, *Snob*, 25 May. [Бакланов, А. (2015) Муфтий Москвы призвал разрешить многоженство для мусульман, *Сноб*, 25 мая.] <http://snob.ru/selected/entry/92954> [accessed 10 October 2015].
- Dozhd' TV (2013a) = Minzdrav ne otstaeat ot shkol'nikov, proveriat "polovye sviazi, o kotorykh sozhaleli utrom", *Telekanal Dozhd'*, 20 February. [Минздрав не отстает от школьников, проверят "половые связи, о которых сожалели утром", *Телеканал Дождь*, 20 февраля.] [http://tvrain.ru/articles/minzdrav\\_ne\\_otstaeat\\_ot\\_shkolnikov\\_proverjat\\_polovye\\_svjazi\\_o\\_kotoryh\\_sozhaleli\\_utrom-337105/](http://tvrain.ru/articles/minzdrav_ne_otstaeat_ot_shkolnikov_proverjat_polovye_svjazi_o_kotoryh_sozhaleli_utrom-337105/) [accessed 15 January 2017].
- Dozhd' TV (2013b) = Onishchenko: shkol'naia forma pozitivno vliiaet na zdorov'e, *Telekanal Dozhd'*, 2 May. [Онищенко: школьная форма позитивно влияет на здоровье, *Телеканал Дождь*, 2 мая.] [http://tvrain.ru/articles/onischenko\\_shkolnaja\\_forma\\_pozitivno\\_vliiaet\\_na\\_zdorove\\_-342594/](http://tvrain.ru/articles/onischenko_shkolnaja_forma_pozitivno_vliiaet_na_zdorove_-342594/) [accessed 9 March 2014].
- Dozhd' TV (2013c) = Formennoe bezobrazie. Rossiiskikh shkol'nikov odenuv v delovom stile, *Telekanal Dozhd'*, 1 September. [Форменное безобразие. Российских школьников оденут в деловом стиле, *Телеканал Дождь*, 1 сентября.] [http://tvrain.ru/articles/formennoe\\_bezobrazie\\_rossijskih\\_shkolnikov\\_odenuv\\_v\\_delovom\\_stile-351192/](http://tvrain.ru/articles/formennoe_bezobrazie_rossijskih_shkolnikov_odenuv_v_delovom_stile-351192/) [accessed 9 March 2014].
- Dozhd' TV (2014) = Deputat Seleznev predlozhil vvesti "zakon samtsa", *Telekanal Dozhd'*, 22 October. [Депутат Селезнев предложил ввести "закон самца", *Телеканал Дождь*, 22 октября.] [http://tvrain.ru/teleshov/here\\_and\\_now/deputat\\_seleznev\\_predlozhil\\_vvesti\\_zakon\\_samtsa-376950/](http://tvrain.ru/teleshov/here_and_now/deputat_seleznev_predlozhil_vvesti_zakon_samtsa-376950/) [accessed 19 October 2015].

- Engström, M. (2016) Daughterland (*Rodina-Doch'*): erotic patriotism and Russia's future, *Intersections*, 27 September. <http://intersectionproject.eu/article/politics/daughterland-rodina-doch-erotic-patriotism-and-russias-future> [accessed 13 January 2017].
- Gazeta.ru (2015a) = Astakhov schitaet normal'nym vstupať v brak do 18 let, *Gazeta.ru*, 18 May. [Астахов считает нормальным вступить в брак до 18 лет, *Газета.ru*, 18 мая.] [http://www.gazeta.ru/social/news/2015/05/14/n\\_7195521.shtml](http://www.gazeta.ru/social/news/2015/05/14/n_7195521.shtml) [accessed 10 October 2015].
- Gazeta.ru (2015b) = Kaluzhskii gubernator prizval otkazat'sia ot varki vareńia iz-za defitsita sakhara, *Gazeta.ru*, 3 August. [Калужский губернатор призвал отказаться от варки варенья из-за дефицита сахара, *Газета.ru*, 3 августа.] [http://www.gazeta.ru/business/news/2015/08/03/n\\_7431349.shtml](http://www.gazeta.ru/business/news/2015/08/03/n_7431349.shtml) [accessed 9 January 2017].
- Grigorian, A. (2015) Bilbordy s modeliami v nizhnem belge predlagaiut zapretit', *Gazeta.ru*, 15 June. [Григорян, А. (2015) Билборды с моделями в нижнем белье предлагают запретить, *Газета.ru*, 15 июня.] <http://izvestia.ru/news/587607> [accessed 9 January 2017].
- Kadyrov, R. (2015) Ot Aliaski do Monako obsuzhdaiut temu braka! *Lichnyi blog glavy Chechenskoj Respubliki Ramzana Akhmatovicha Kadyrova*, 15 May. [Кадыров, Р. (2015) От Аляски до Монако обсуждают тему брака! *Личный блог главы Чеченской Республики Рамзана Ахматовича Кадырова*, 15 мая.] <http://ya-kadyrov.livejournal.com/54675.html> [accessed 10 October 2015].
- L'vov, Iu. (2015) Mrakobesie iskhodit uzhe iz raionnoi zhenskoj konsul'tatsii, *Kommersant*, 1 September. [Львов, Ю. (2015) Мракобесие исходит уже из районной женской консультации, *Коммерсант*, 1 сентября.] <http://www.kommersant.ru/doc/2800582> [accessed 13 January 2017].
- Maetnaia, E. & Evstifeev, D. (2015) Utseleli formulirovki chinovnikov, *Gazeta.ru*, 19 March. [Маетная, Е. & Евстифеев, Д. (2015) Уцелили формулировки чиновников, *Газета.ru*, 19 марта.] <http://www.gazeta.ru/social/2015/03/19/6605913.shtml> [accessed 5 August 2015].
- Mamedova, L. (2016) Migranty: chemu ES mog by pouchit'sia u Rossii, *Pravda*, 18 February. [Мамедова, Л. (2016) Мигранты: Чему ЕС мог бы поучиться у России, *Правда*, 18 февраля.] <http://www.pravda.ru/economics/prognoses/18-02-2016/1292301-dokuchaeva-o/> [accessed 13 January 2017].
- Medvedev, S. (2013) Karatel'naia gigiena: zdorov'e natsii kak distsiplinarij projekt, *Forbes*, 4 February. [Медведев, С. (2013) Карательная гигиена: здоровье нации как дисциплинарный проект, *Forbes*, 4 февраля.] <http://www.forbes.ru/mneniya-column/tsennosti/233773-karatelnaya-gigena-zdorove-natsii-kak-politicheskii-proekt> [accessed 13 January 2017].
- Medvedev, S. (2015a) Telo korolia: kak zdorov'e Putina stalo glavnoi temoi rossiiskoi politiki, *Forbes*, 25 March. [Медведев, С. (2015a) Тело короля: как здоровье Путина стало главной темой российской политики, *Forbes*, 25 марта.] <http://www.forbes.ru/mneniya-column/tsennosti/283581-telo-korolya-kak-zdorove-putina-stalo-glavnoi-temoi-rossiiskoi-polit> [accessed 13 January 2017].
- Medvedev, S. (2015b) Chechenskaia svad'ba kak udar po rossiiskomu suverenitetu, *Radio Svoboda*, 20 May. [Медведев, С. (2015b) Чеченская свадьба как удар по

- российскому суверенитету, *Радио Свобода*, 20 мая.] <http://www.svoboda.org/content/transcript/27027653.html> [accessed 19 October 2015].
- Medvedev, S. (2016) Biopolitika nasiliia: chto fleshmob zhenshchin rasskazal nam o Rossii, *Forbes*, 13 July. [Медведев, С. (2016) Биополитика насилия: что флешмоб женщин рассказал нам о России, *Forbes*, 13 июля.] <http://www.forbes.ru/mneniya/tsennosti/324823-biopolitika-nasiliya-chto-fleshmob-zhenshchin-rasskazal-nam-o-rossii> [accessed 13 January 2017].
- Novikova, V. (2015) Glavnyi sanitarnyi vrach RF: otdykh za rubezhom vreden dlia zdorov'ia, *SPR*, 6 December. [Новикова, В. (2015) Главный санитарный врач РФ: отдых за рубежом вреден для здоровья, *СПР*, 6 декабря.] <http://www.spr.ru/novosti/2015-12/glavniy-sanitarniy-vrach-rf-otdih-za-rubezhom-vreden-dlya-zdorovya.html> [accessed 9 January 2017].
- Pertsev, A. (2016) 'Tsar' i pop. Pochemu radikal'nye aktivisty poluchaiut vysokie posty, *Moscow Carnegie Center*, 13 September. [Перцев, А. (2016) Царь и поп. Почему радикальные активисты получают высокие посты, *Московский Центр Карнеги*, 13 сентября.] <http://carnegie.ru/commentary/2016/09/13/ru-64551/j5cj> [accessed 13 January 2017].
- Polonskii, I. (2015) Bezhtentsy iz Sirii. Primet li Rossiia pereselentsev s Blizhnego Vostoka? *Cont.ws*, 21 September. [Полонский, И. (2015) Беженцы из Сирии. Примет ли Россия переселенцев с Ближнего Востока? *Cont.ws*, 21 сентября.] <https://cont.ws/post/124143> [accessed 13 January 2017].
- Popad'eva, T. (2009) Abort: evoliutsionnaia katastrofa, *MEDPENZ.RU: meditsinskii portal Penzy*, 31 July. [Попадьева, Т. (2009) Аборт: эволюционная катастрофа, *MEDPENZ.RU: медицинский портал Пензы*, 31 июля.] [http://medpnz.ru/page.php?al=abort\\_evoljucionnaja\\_katastrofa\\_](http://medpnz.ru/page.php?al=abort_evoljucionnaja_katastrofa_) [accessed 9 January 2017].
- RBK (2013) = V. Putin zapretit osvobozhdat' shkol'nikov ot urokov fizkul'tury, *RBK*, 13 March 2013. [В. Путин запретил освобождать школьников от уроков физкультуры, *РБК*, 13 марта 2013.] <http://top.rbc.ru/society/13/03/2013/849053.shtml> [accessed 15 January 2017].
- RIA-Novosti (2015) = Onishchenko: snizhenie zakupok zarubezhnykh prezervativov uluchshit demografiyu (2015), *RIA-Novosti*, 4 July [Онищенко: снижение закупок зарубежных презервативов улучшит демографию, *РИА-Новости*, 4 июля.] <https://ria.ru/society/20150804/1162489041.html> [accessed 19 January 2017].
- RT (2016) = You can't let refugees do nothing. Russia's immigration tsar on EU migrant policy, *Russia Today*, 9 March 2016. <https://www.rt.com/politics/official-word/334949-romdanovsky-migration-europe-ukraine/> [accessed 13 January 2017].
- Runkevich, D. & Malai, E. (2015) V Gosdume predlagaiut vvesti dlia restoranov limit na inostrannye bliuda, *Izvestiia*, 28 July. [Рункевич, Д. & Малай, Е. (2015) В Госдуме предлагают ввести для ресторанов лимит на иностранные блюда, *Известия*, 28 июля.] <http://izvestia.ru/news/589239> [accessed 9 January 2017].
- Terekhova, N. (2016) Siriiskie bezhtentsy v Rossii: spasenie utopaiushchikh – delo ruk samikh utopaiushchikh, *Radio OON*, 25 February. [Терехова, Н. (2016) Сирийские беженцы в России: спасение утопающих – дело рук самих утопающих, *Радио*

- Оон, 25 февраля.] <http://www.unmultimedia.org/radio/russian/archives/211539/#.V7TQCEsxGFI> [accessed 13 January 2017].
- Volkova, O. (2013) Shkol'nykh uchitelei nauchat odevat'sia skromno, *Moskovskii Komсомоlets*, 5 August. [Волкова, О. (2013) Школьных учителей научат одеваться скромно, *Московский Комсомолец*, 5 августа.] <http://www.mk.ru/social/article/2013/08/05/894329-shkolnyih-uchiteley-nauchat-odevatsya-skromno.html> [accessed 15 January 2017].

## References

- Agamben, G. (1998) *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*. Stanford University Press, Stanford.
- Foucault, M. (2003) *Society Must Be Defended. Lectures at the Collège de France, 1975–1976*. Picador, New York.
- Foucault, M. (2009) *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the Collège de France 1977–1978*. Picador, New York.
- Golder, B. (2007) Foucault and the genealogy of pastoral power, *Radical Philosophy Review* 10 (2), 157–176.
- Minca, C. (2007) Agamben's geographies of modernity, *Political Geography* 26 (1), 78–97.
- Patton, P. (2007) Agamben and Foucault on biopower and biopolitics. – Calarco, M. & DeCaroli, S. (eds) *Giorgio Agamben: Sovereignty and Life*, 203–218. Stanford University Press, Stanford.
- Puumala, E. (2013) Political life beyond accommodation and return: rethinking relations between the political, the international and the body, *Review of International Studies* 39, 949–968.
- Rosenow, D. (2009) Decentering global power: the merits of a Foucauldian approach to International Relations, *Global Society* 23 (4), 497–517.
- Salter, M. (2012) Theory of the /: the suture and critical border studies, *Geopolitics* 17 (4), 734–755.
- Schmitt, C. (1985) *Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty*. MIT Press, Cambridge.
- Selby, J. (2007) Engaging Foucault: discourse, liberal governance and the limits of Foucauldian IR, *International Relations* 21 (3), 324–345.
- Vaughan-Williams, N. (2009) The generalised biopolitical border? Re-conceptualising the limits of sovereign power, *Review of International Studies* 35 (4), 729–749.
- Žižek, S. (1997) *The Plague of Fantasies*. Verso, London.

MinajaLydia





**Public-private**

## Dynamics between public and private

Halliki Harro-Loit

Imagine that the well-known fairy tale *Little Red Riding Hood* was written in the form of a deeply personal diary of the Grandmother and her Granddaughter Little Red Riding Hood. The physical sickness of the old lady, her feelings of loneliness and hesitations about the motives of her granddaughter's visit would be described in detail. The contemporary reader would probably not pay too much attention to this kind of interpretation of the old fairy tale – we are already used to the mixed realities of intertextuality as well as public discourse on private matters. But the original fairy tales, although full of violence, did not expand on the details of what was then considered physical or emotional privacy.

Privacy has never been such a big issue as in the 21st century, although stories about intimate life have always been part of all cultures. Indeed, people today are subject to much greater surveillance than ever before. Where one travelled used to be one's own business – until one published a travelogue or diary or friends or relatives published one's letters. Now the GPS embedded into mobile phones reveals the location and route; the tickets we buy when travelling are routinely collected. But this data flow certainly does not produce personal narratives, does not reveal how the individual feels and behaves in space or in situations that are understood as 'private'. Concurrently, the notion of privacy has changed over the centuries, challenging both cultural and legal expectations.

The following articles open up the diachronic dimension of mediated privacy from different approaches: the change in privacy conventions in the news media over the century; seamen's private travelogues, published in Estonian newspapers during the second half of the 19th century; captured emotions and bodily experiences in Finnish hand-written newspapers in the late 19th and early 20th centuries; and Russian life-stories in the changed circumstances that came after the dissolution of the Soviet Union.

The search for knowledge as we try to understand the changing perception of privacy and private experiences is rather like mushroom picking. It is fun to recognise that a small personal story in a newspaper, a few sentences here and there found in archives, can become a part of a large mosaic that enables us to understand cultural change. The following four studies enable us to approach the old diaries, books, travelogues and newspapers, as well as the news and stories

within them, as essential sources for us to understand how the generations before us perceived speaking, thinking and writing about their personal lives. Some publications with a very small readership have survived only in archives; some texts written only for the writer or for a small circle of friends were published much later – although the original context is lost, these texts are valuable sources of people's feelings and outlook on daily life.

Mediated personal experiences can also be approached as an identity-building tool. Whether it is a description of distant Japan through personal lenses or life-stories told in different contexts, these descriptions open a door to a description of the 'self'. Concurrently, when the media starts to publish on issues that once were taboo in public discussion (the body, sexuality, health, etc.), the scale of identities also widens. Therefore, the dynamics between private and public is quite an influential cultural factor that becomes more visible when analysed from the historical perspective.





## Changing media and privacy conventions

Halliki Harro-Loit

**Abstract.** Over time journalistic conventions have influenced and also reflected the changes concerning the notions of public and private. This chapter proposes a framework of factors that have diminished the border between these two domains. European Court cases relating to Article 8 of the European Convention of Human Rights provide a list of elements that have been taken into consideration when calculating the possible invasion into privacy; other sources in which the categories of privacy are elaborated and easily accessible are the journalistic codes of ethics. As these legal and ethical norms are created by reporting practice, the other dimension in which privacy rules are negotiated and represented is journalistic discourse, including several approaches to the reporting of reality, some of which (for example confessional journalism or sex scandals) mainly aim to disclose intimacy. This mediated privacy was created gradually since the 19th century, although it reached breaking point in the 1960s. The final aim of the chapter is to integrate legal, ethical and journalistic factors into one schema and emphasise the actor's role in mediated privacy conventions. In other words, the more diverse are the conventions on what is public or private the more important is the individual's ability to use his or her informational self-determination. This, however, demands substantial understanding of different factors that could constitute the 'right to be left alone'.

### Introduction

Negotiation on privacy has been an on-going cultural debate throughout human history whether the question was the acceptable exposure of one's body, one's independence in making decisions, or problems related to data processing. The data revolution, since the global dissemination of the Internet, has revitalised the debate over privacy issues, adding one layer, that of digital data. Rob Kitchin proposes a taxonomy of privacy that includes four domains: information collection, information processing, information dissemination and invasion (Kitchin 2014, 169). By adding the concept of actor(s) to this taxonomy one can

---

Kannike, A., Tasa, M. & Västriik, E.-H. (eds) (2017) *Body, Personhood and Privacy: Perspectives on the Cultural Other and Human Experience*. Approaches to Culture Theory 7, 121–143. University of Tartu Press, Tartu.

easily imagine the complexity that privacy-related questions raise today: who owns the data, who is collecting, processing and disseminating whose data and for whom, and finally who is involved in deciding these aspects. These questions are constantly discussed, as we now live in a much more open and transparent society than before the data era. As Kitchin (op cit, 170) says: while some authors like Steven Rambam (2010) and Neil J. Rubenking (2013) believe the notion of privacy to be largely dead (if you have nothing to hide what is the problem with data being open?), then for other authors (for example, Cavoukian 2009; Cohen 2013) privacy is a right that has to be protected.

It is important to emphasise that the ethical, legal, social and political concerns that the data era raises for the concept of privacy is one layer on the top of a long diachronic cultural process influenced by various institutions and technology. Institutionally the news media has been on the one hand an indicator and on the other hand a catalyst for cultural change as it relates to the understanding of privacy. And, while archived journalistic discourse preserves texts, debates and critical reflections on various changes to privacy and the responsibility for making decisions on public and private issues, the diachronic change in journalistic conventions deserves a special interest.

The aim of the present study is to analyse how the legal and ethical norms that govern the private and public have been influenced and represented by journalistic conventions, and vice versa, how normative discourses have influenced journalistic representation of privacy. The distinction of public and private has been traditionally constitutive of news organisations and news texts, as well as elaborated in normative discourse. Along with rapid development of information technology, the line between private and public has become increasingly blurred. Therefore, this chapter aims to provide a framework of various factors that have influenced the understanding of privacy in communication culture and the media over the course of the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries.

This chapter will first introduce some aspects of the complexity of the notion of privacy and some landmarks from the history of the press that mark changes in the conventions of privacy in one way or other. In the next part, this chapter aims to bring to the surface different factors from different discourses (for example, court cases and journalistic ethics have contributed to the concept of the actors within this debate; the development of journalistic genres contributed to breaking down barriers between the spheres of the intimate and the public; analysis of information processing phases enables us to focus on issues of responsibility, etc.). Finally, the chapter aims to provide a framework of factors influencing the perception of private and public in the media.

## The complexity of the notion of privacy

Privacy is a very broad and complicated notion. When approaching privacy via different discourses one can distinguish physical intimacy (the private room or intimate sphere); private property; private data; the private individual, etc. In the words of Lorraine Kisselburgh:

*Bodily privacy* concerns privacy about one's body, its functions, its display, and its engagement with others, including the protection of one's body from invasive procedures (such as drug and genetic tests). *Decisional privacy* is concerned with thoughts and judgments, and the decisions one makes, such as political opinions and voting. *Relational privacy* concerns the privacy held in relationships with others, encompassing not only family and intimate relationships, but also privileged relationships between attorneys and clients, doctors and patients.

*Communication privacy* is specific to the dialogue exchanged between and among individuals, and the protection of forms of communication whether verbal (e.g., telephone), written, or electronic (e.g., email). [...] And finally, *locational privacy* concerns the protection of information about our movements and behaviors, whether in the workplace [...] or public space (Kisselburgh 2008, 6).

Locational privacy is in turn linked to the concept of public, quasi-public and private places, a distinction that represents one important feature of the concept of privacy – that there are shades of privacy and hazy areas that are under continuous cultural negotiation. Historically, locational privacy influenced journalistic performance and the legal regulation of public communication for longer than communicational or decisional privacy. In 1980 the Washington Appeal Court provided a very simple definition in order to distinguish public and private places: “private is something which the general public would not be free to view” (Middleton & Chamberline 1988, 187).

An early definition of privacy was framed by the legal thinking on privacy (Gavison 1984 [1980]). Samuel Warren and Louis Brandeis in their famous essay on privacy – published in the 1890 *Harvard Law Review* – established a definition that is still in use today. They developed the idea that our social life requires legal protection for the dignitary as well as the proprietary aspects of personality. “Borrowing from Thomas Cooley’s [1888] description of the law’s extension to the physical body of ‘immunity from attacks and injuries,’ Warren and Brandeis

conceptualize this protection of personality as the right ‘to be let alone’” (Post 1991, 650).

In information society Alan Westin’s (1967) definition of privacy as the ability to determine for one’s self when, how, and to what extent information about us is communicated to others is defined as the right for *informational self-determination*. The concept of informational self-determination today means control over private information – what is collected, disseminated, in what way and by whom, as well as the factual correctness of this information, as well as the right to get access to the information one needs and the right to refuse to get information (for example, advertising, diagnosis). This is close to what Kisselburgh defines as decisional privacy, although informational self-determination also includes the different nature of data.

The information society focuses lot of attention on data: facts, images, narratives are gathered and disseminated about the individual. Technological advances – data mining, large databases and disclosure of such data to other parties (for example for purposes of direct marketing) – form new challenges to privacy laws all over the world as the autonomy of the individual can not be presupposed anymore (see, for example, Selvadurai 2013).

Serving a plethora of values, such as the value of freedom, autonomy, personal wellbeing, informational self-determination (sometimes referred to as informational privacy) is today most often defined either as control over the flow of information or over access to information (Sevignani 2012, 603). The question of control underlines the question of to what extent an individual can decide about disclosure, i.e. making some data from the private sphere publicly accessible, while the question of access deals with the value of transparency, “the extent to which we are known to others, the extent to which others have physical access to us, and the extent to which we are the subject of others’ attention” (Gavison 1984 [1980], 347 in Sevignani 2012, 603).

As is evident from the last explanation, privacy and intimacy are more or less defined by that which is accessible and open for all – events, bodies, words, etc. The public and private are part of a dialectical process for managing social interaction and intimacy (Altman 1976). Jürgen Habermas, in his classical work about the transformation of the public sphere (1962), describes the tendency toward a mutual infiltration of public and private spheres. Habermas points out that in a world fashioned by the mass media, public space “becomes the sphere for the publicizing of private biographies, so that the accidental fate of the so-called man in the street or that of systematically managed stars attain publicity, while publicly relevant developments and decisions are garbed in private dress and

through personalization distorted to the point of unrecognizability” (Habermas 1989 [1962], 171–172).

Hence, one dimension that enables us to define privacy in communication is the question of what information, place or discourse is considered to be private and what is perceived as public in a particular context. “Considered” is culturally and temporally bound but also influenced by the general ideology of freedom of speech (Dawes 2014).

The *actor* dimension within the concept focuses on a subject *who decides* about publishing information or about making a certain space or discourse accessible to the public. The actor is an individual whose image, data, space or body is exposed or hidden. In the context of the present study the actor dimension includes private, quasi-public and public figures who express their ideas in public or whose images, acts or data are communicated through the media, as well as media personnel and lawyers, who all negotiate and design the privacy and disclosure conventions in mediated communication culture.

In 1991 Sandra Petronio published an article entitled “Communication Boundary Management” (Petronio 1991) that was later developed into Communication Privacy Management (CPM) theory (Petronio 2004). The theoretical model of CPM provided an apparatus with which to understand how people are able to regulate the dialectical tension of privacy and disclosure through decision criteria that generates privacy rules (op cit, 198). CPM advocates that culture, gendered criteria, people’s motivation concerning privacy, contextual constraints, and a risk–benefit ratio, are foundational to rule development. Either people negotiate rules guiding privacy decisions with others or they learn the existing rules (Petronio 1994; 2000a; 2000b; 2002). Privacy rules can either become relatively stable or situations can trigger change (Petronio 2000c). As people are not always able to coordinate successfully with others, CPM describes situations that trigger change as turbulence. Turbulence reflects situations in which there are intentional rule violations and privacy dilemmas, and where the boundary lines are fuzzy (Petronio 2004, 204).

In the context created by the Internet and mobile era, the mutual infiltration of public and private spheres in the media has increased as a result of people disclosing private information on blogs and via social networks (for example, Facebook, Twitter, etc.) (Heyman & Pierson 2013; Bechmann 2014; Humphreys et al 2014; Taddicken 2014), mobile telephone conversations in public places and increasing use of private information and public confessions in news journalism. In addition, data footprints and monitoring possibilities (for example what programmes one watches on TV or where one travels), that most people are even not actively thinking about, increase the effect of flux in awareness of

public and private spheres. Hence one can say that communication technology has increased the turbulence. This turbulence is guarded by a set of categories that have been developed by the legal and court system, and by journalistic and publishing conventions and genres.

### **Historical change in the infiltration conventions**

Prior to the development of print and other media, an event became public by being staged in front of numerous people. The development of technology and media created an opportunity to disseminate information, voice, or image to others who are not physically present at the time and place of the event. While the new technologies created new opportunities to get access to data and images that would otherwise be hidden from the public, the development of journalistic conventions enabled society to create and disseminate information processing methods and strategies for presentation that supported a set of social practices that gradually relaxed the rules governing privacy protection.

It is important to note that the diffusion of innovations in journalistic conventions happened in different periods of time in different European countries and the US (Harro 2001). In Anglo-Saxon countries the development of several aspects of journalism (the change from a party-oriented press to a fact-oriented press; the gaining of press freedom; the invention of the interview as a genre) happened faster than in Germany, Austria and Scandinavia (Pöttker 2005). Therefore, conventions and methods that played an important role in diminishing boundaries between public and private were adopted in different countries at different times.

One example of such innovation is the interview, a convention that dragged public persons in front of the public (Ekström 2006, 34). According to Michael Schudson (1995), the interview genre was invented when journalists started to publish questions and answers in the form in which they were recorded. This happened in America in the 1860s. Before this reporters talked with public officials without referring to these conversations in their news stories. Direct quotation is directly linked with the power relations between the institution of the press and other forces in society. Therefore, the interview was once regarded as an impolite and intrusive method. As Mats Ekström points out:

Contemporary comments from Swedish politicians indicate that the interview in 1915 [...] was far from being commonly accepted. The Social Democratic party leader, Hjalmar Branting allegedly described the interview as 'a product of the ruthless methods of the contemporary press'. [...] Branting

was particularly critical to the attempts to force people to answer questions when they had not asked for it (Ekström 2006, 27).

Actually intrusive questioning and the interviews which were held in a more or less intimate conversational tone became conventional in Nordic journalism decades later. A characteristic to the Swedish press in the mid-1920s “was a willingness to provide a forum for spokespersons for other institutions. The courteous questions of journalists and lengthy responses to them filled pages” (Hirdman et al 2005, 115). In the 1950s (at least in Sweden) editorial practices started to support all kinds of dialogue, either textually represented with the journalist or displaying groups of people very often interacting with each other (Ekecrantz 2005, 100). This gradual acceptance of the public interrogation of powerful people – in the format of the interview but also in news stories – reflects both social convention of control over one’s public performance as well as power relations, which radically changed by the second half of the 20th century: today a politician’s reluctance to submit to an interview could itself become news (Ekström 2006, 28).

Concurrently, the investigative style of reporting in which the search for hidden facts was combined with the idea of the press as a ‘watchdog’, became an integral part of US journalism during the first decade of the 20th century; gradually it became not only acceptable but desirable for journalists to publish material that could be damaging to powerful people.

The rise of popular newspapers in 19th-century Europe, and only in the 1920s in the Baltic states, focused attention on the human interest story. More precisely the shift towards the division of public and private life, attention on everyday, ordinary events, started in the US press with the introduction of penny papers in the 1830s (Smith 2008). Penny papers introduced news on family squabbling, printed birth announcements and, for example, in 1848 the *New York Tribune* correspondent sketched in details the luncheon habits of Representative William Sawyer of Ohio (Schudson 1978, 29). In 19th-century newspapers home and family life, as well as the intimate activities of the personal lives of individuals, was usually almost totally absent. During the first half of the 20th century it was the private sphere that was increasingly reported (home, marriage, children), not individuals.

Tabloid newspapers emerged in Great Britain in the first decade of the 20th century, in the third decade in the US, after World War II in parts of Central and Northern Europe, and only after the fall of Communism in some post-Soviet countries (Schudson 1978, 17).



Most scholars have identified the 1960s as the decade in which the traditional definitions of public and private finally collapsed; at the same time the discussion of sex was transformed (Bingham 2009, 12). Adrian Bingham (op cit, 12–13) claims that already in the late 1940s and in the 1950s the most significant changes occurred as the popular press coverage of sex increased markedly. On the one hand the press adopted a more active role in informing and advising readers about sex. On the other hand the press started to investigate people's sexual attitudes and behaviour.

The infiltration of bodily privacy into public is connected with development of the use of photos in newspapers and the need to be visually more appealing in order to compete on the mass market. One landmark in the shift in bodily privacy – regular publication of photographs of naked women in British tabloids – was an innovation of the late 1960s (Sparks 2000, 18). The forerunners of these photos were photos from beauty contests and photos of attractive girls “bathing and dancing on the seashore” – the ‘bathing pictures’ of the 1920s – and the first topless photo in the national press (the *Sunday Pictorial*) in 1938. “This nude shot was a relatively tasteful picture of a ‘spring nymph’ reaching up to the blossom of an apple tree, but the model's exposed nipples were visible” (Bingham 2009, 206–208). A notably greater acceptance of female sexuality was also characteristic of the Swedish press in the 1920s (Hirdman et al 2005, 115).

In the 1970s a growing element in the media landscape was the spread of human interest stories in magazines and on prime-time TV shows in the 1990s (Barnhurst 2005, 249). “By the 1990s, a growth area for U.S. television networks was the news magazine, a genre oriented to people stories” (op cit). ‘Reality’ programming has been steadily rising since the 1980s until practically exploding in 2000. Reality television can be particularly regarded as a catalyst in diminishing the borders between the family privacy and public performance of so-called ordinary people – people of no public interest as defined by the legal discourse, media ethics or journalism culture – which had been mainly legitimized by reporting issues of public importance.

In sum, the diachronic changes in conventions surrounding privacy are directly influenced by the changes in journalistic formats, genres, information gathering methods and normative discourse on media performance, as well as the diminishing border between professional and public journalism (user-generated news content). Most of the changes were universal, happening in different countries at different times.

### **Legal discourse and media ethics: public interest, the status of the individual and the 'right to be left alone'**

Legal discourse on privacy in public communication has been developing through conflicting values of transparency and public interest versus the individual's 'right to be left alone' and his/her right to control his/her private data. This tension has produced a framework of categories that actually helps people to deconstruct and understand the concept of privacy in public communication.

Generally, in a normative approach to journalism culture respect for a person's private life should be balanced against freedom of expression. In other words the public interest (what the public needs to know) and the person's 'right to be left alone' are in tension. Following a common argument: since the legal protection of privacy attempts only to stop the publication of private facts, and not to restrict public debate about matters of social importance, the protection of privacy poses little threat to free public debate. Commercial journalism quite often provides trivial stories about celebrities and satisfies public curiosity, rather than the public need to be informed. However, when an individual has deliberately held him/herself out as standing for certain values (for example the rights of homosexuals), or her/his decisions affect the public, it becomes apparent that this person should also face the consequences of his/her disclosure.

Hence, privacy issues are often linked to the status of the person who is reported about. Some people are influential and therefore their decisions as well as their lives are more newsworthy than those of others – they are labelled public figures. Other people come under public scrutiny in the context of certain events (for example, tragedy, extraordinary acts, etc.) or inject themselves into a public debate with the purpose of affecting the outcome. These are categorised as limited or vortex public figures (Middleton & Chamberline 1988, 113). This categorisation was originally created by US case law, starting from the landmark case, *New York Times vs Sullivan* (1964) and developed in *Gertz vs Welch* (1974) (op cit, 110). Public figures voluntarily expose themselves to an increased risk of public scrutiny. Because their access to the media in order to contradict the lie and correct the error is greater, they need less protection in comparison to private people (op cit).

The European Court of Human Rights has been developing privacy protection criteria via several court cases. The case of *von Hannover vs Germany* (No. 2) 7 February 2012 (applications Nos. 40660/08 and 60641/08) summarises most of the previous principles and provides an overview of five substantial factors that should be taken into consideration when balancing arguments between public

interest and privacy rights, especially as concerns the status of the individual involved:

(1) Contribution to a debate of general interest.

(2) How well known is the person concerned and what is the subject of the report? The role or function of the person concerned and the nature of the activities that are the subject of the report must be considered. A distinction has to be made between private individuals and people acting in a public context, such as political or public figures. Accordingly, while a private individual unknown to the public may claim particular protection of his or her right to a private life, the same is not true of public figures (see *Minelli vs Switzerland*, No. 14991/02, 14 June 2005, and *Petrenco vs Moldova*, No. 20928/05, 30 March 2010, § 55). A fundamental distinction needs to be made between reporting facts capable of contributing to a debate in a democratic society, relating to politicians in the exercise of their official functions for example, and reporting details of the private life of an individual who does not exercise such functions (see *von Hannover vs Germany*, cited above, § 63, and *Standard Verlags GmbH vs Austria*, No. 21277/05, 4 June 2009, § 47).

(3) The prior conduct of the person concerned or the fact that the photo and the related information have already appeared in an earlier publication are also factors to be taken into consideration.

(4) The content, form and consequences of the publication.

(5) The circumstances in which the photos were taken must be considered: whether the person photographed gave their consent to the photos being taken and published, or whether this was done without the person's knowledge or by subterfuge or other illicit means.

The decision of The European Court of Human Rights in *Peck vs United Kingdom* (application No. 44647/98, 28 January 2003) stated that even if the person is in public space (for example on the street) the mass dissemination of a person's image if s/he did not have the possibility to decide upon it, is the breach of Article 8. In other words the media cannot disseminate private information just by using the clause that this was collected in a public space. In addition, the Court emphasised the framing power of television. According to the Court the applicant's actions were "viewed to an extent which far exceeded any exposure to a passer-by or to security observation [...] and to a degree surpassing that which the applicant could possibly have foreseen" (op cit, § 62).

Analysis of the diachronic change in the concept of privacy shows that the concept has moved from trespass and the 'right to be left alone' towards private

data protection and informational self-determination. Factors such as public space, public figures (since 1960s in the US and since 1990s most intensively in European Union) and most recently the difference between public and private roles (since the beginning of the 21st century) have developed in the course of court practice in the US and Europe.

In journalism the legal discourse on privacy also distinguishes data gathering and data dissemination: in the case of *Peck vs United Kingdom* the data gathering via security camera alone was acceptable, while the invasion of privacy was conducted via mass dissemination of this material without the consent of the man who was recorded. In contrast, in the *News International* phone-hacking scandal (2011) the employees of the *News of the World* newspaper were accused of engaging in phone hacking, police bribery, and exercising improper influence in the pursuit of publishing stories.

Regulations on sexually explicit expression are traditionally linked with obscenity and protection of public decency. Today it is unrealistic to restrain the availability of even violent pornography via the Internet. Therefore this aspect of journalism is important historically. A legal landmark concerning sexual privacy was the 1959 Obscene Publications Act passed by the UK Parliament, which aimed to distinguish real pornography from serious work (Cocks 2012, 276). One aspect that might become reality in the context of a specific case is to what extent sexually explicit speech deserves the protection of freedom of expression.

Strasbourg takes a sharply differentiated stance towards different types of expression: political or public interest speech in the media is afforded the strongest protection; artistic speech, particularly where it raises issues regarding the protection of morality, is treated differently. [...] Strasbourg regards the aim of protecting morals both as one that is difficult to define with any objectivity and one in which considerable cultural diversity across Europe is apparent (Fenwick & Phillipson 2006, 410–411).

In sum, international case law has enabled the creation of a group of configurations of various factors: private and public persons in private and public roles acting in private, semi-public or public space; public interest or the need to be informed on certain persons' lives and/or their actions; informed consent and dissemination practices.

In addition to the legal discourse the media-ethical discourse produces practical criteria for negotiating privacy norms. In most of the current codes of journalism ethics the same criteria as in legal discourse – status of people, values like public interest and privacy – are used. Close reading of these codes reveals that

the rules regulate very specific aspects of particular journalistic practice and quite often the need to balance values is embedded in the text. The following examples from the Code of Ethics of the Estonian Press illustrate the way in which privacy concept is interpreted into the principles of concrete conduct:

1.6. *Individuals in possession of political and economic power [...] shall be considered as public figures; and their activities shall be subject to closer scrutiny and criticism. The media shall also consider as public figures individuals who earn their living through publicly promoting their persona or their work* (CEEP, emphasis added).

Close reading of this quote shows that in the first instance public interest means the possibility to publish information about the *activities* of people who possess any type of power or who directly sell their persona to the public. It is not said that the individual data of these people are subject to close scrutiny.

Among the people who are given a different status, children are controversial: on the one hand regulations usually especially protect the privacy of children while on the other hand, as Seth M. Blazer (2006, 390–391) notes, public announcements raising public awareness of child abuse for example (in order to protect children) bring us to the conclusion that the line between personal privacy and social responsibility is very fine. In other words: a journalist, while reporting about any offence against children, faces a complicated task balancing public need to be aware of what really happens in society with the need to protect children's privacy.

The following extracts demonstrate that there are certain areas or spheres (in conjunction with actors) in media ethics that are considered to be more private: identity-bound issues, the privacy of suicide, the privacy of family matters in conjunction with matters concerning children, health issues and crime.

4.3. It is not recommended to emphasize *nationality, race, religious or political persuasion and gender*, unless it has news value.

4.5. The news value of a *suicide or attempted suicide* is to be questioned rigorously.

4.6. Information and speculation about an *individual's mental or physical health* shall not be disseminated unless the individual is willing or the information is in the public interest.

4.7. As a rule, *child custody battles* should not be covered.

4.8. When covering *crime, court cases and accidents*, the journalist shall consider whether the *identification of the parties involved* is necessary and

what suffering it may cause to them. *Victims and juvenile offenders* shall not be identified as a general rule (CEEP, emphasis added).

Finally, the code of ethics declares the need to carry out value clarification in cases where privacy is in conflict with the public interest (transparency of the performance of power). In comparison with the codes of ethics in medicine or codes of conduct for medical doctors, who have one clear aim of protecting the confidentiality (privacy) of their patients' information, journalists should also think about the tension between public and private. Note that in the following quote a distinction is made between information gathering and processing before publishing and dissemination. One cannot find a clause that obliges journalists to avoid trespass or privacy intrusion while gathering data: "4.9. Materials violating the privacy of an individual can only be *disseminated* if public interest outweighs the right to privacy" (op cit, emphases added).

The codes of ethics are interpreted by the media and press councils; like case law these decisions gradually establish part of the normative culture concerning the moral reasoning over the protection of privacy and acceptable disclosure. The cases of press and media councils also enable us to see where the tension between journalistic practice and expected privacy conventions is greatest in a certain country and at a certain time.

By analysing the British Press Complaints Commission's (PCC) cases of intrusion of privacy Chris Frost highlights that "the PCC has been working more quietly although just as importantly, defining new levels of privacy with a series of cases that will set the standard for photographs and reports concerning suicide, as well as privacy over health issues" (Frost 2010, 383). He adds: "Exposure of identity is at the heart of many complaints. What limitations should there be on identifying people, their homes or relatives in stories about them or about those close to them?" (op cit, 388).

Legal discourse as well as ethics and accountability systems influence journalistic conduct as it relates to borders between acceptable, and intrusive, access to privacy. Concurrently, journalistic information processing methods provide another dimension of that influence that formats privacy culture in the public communication and media.

### **Journalistic forms as a catalyst for privacy–public infiltration mechanisms**

A man from the street would probably say that the books, films and yellow press have been the leading factor in mixing intimate and public. According to Adrian

Bingham (2009, 11) the catalyst factors for the destabilisation of boundaries between public and private were aiming to entertain an ordinary family reader with gossip and connect readers by providing advice and information on their everyday experience (for example, features about cookery, fashion and housewifery) (Brown 1985 in Bingham 2009). This notion leads us to the question of what the specific elements are in journalistic discourse that initiate infiltration practices.

When Colin Sparks (2000, 12) schematised the tabloidisation of journalism he proposed two axes upon which news media can be organised. One of these was a continuum from a concentration on the doings of the private life to a concentration on public life. The other runs from a concentration on politics, economics and society (in news terminology usually labelled 'hard news') to a concentration on scandal, sport and entertainment (in news terminology usually labelled 'soft news'). Tabloid journalism scores high on the 'private' axis and high on the 'scandal, sports and entertainment' axis. In real life there are very few media that occupy only the serious, or the entirely tabloid, quadrat (op cit, 16). Here the important aspect is that tabloidisation, which is a strong factor that has shifted public toward the private in the news agenda, is an umbrella concept that covers both the news value – what is reported (for example more value is given to a story about a princess's marriage than passing a new law) – and how it is reported (the angle or focus of the story, for example the personal angle or personalisation).

Personalisation in the media has been described by academic researchers as a way of telling news from an individual angle and sometimes as the presentation of public figures as private people (for example in political talk shows). Nael Jebril, Erik Albæk and Claes H. de Vreese (2013, 107) propose a definition of personalisation as a shift in journalism towards a new form in which public issues are discussed, while privileging the viewpoint of the ordinary citizen. In this definition human interest is included and the news is emotionalised. When news focuses on public people as private individuals, distinct from their public roles, this would be labelled as privatisation. As the aim of this chapter is to grasp the normative and conventional changes in journalistic discourse that influence cultural changes relating to privacy, I use the term personalization here in broad terms that cover any news reporting where the following technique is used. Originally proposed by Olivier Driessens et al (2010, 316) concerning political communication, it is here adapted to general news reporting:

- (1) institutional changes that prioritize individuals,
- (2) people gain media attention at the expense of parties, organisations or events,
- (3) the leader of a party or organisation is pushed forward as the figurehead,
- (4) individual (instead of professional) qualities are increasingly scrutinised by the media,
- (5) personal narratives: the personal background and emotions of individuals are brought into the limelight by the media,
- (6) the private lives of politicians, experts and journalists are at the forefront in the media.

Incorporation of personal experience into news reporting about public affairs increases the interweaving of public and private but concurrently this enables an increase in the interconnectedness of human agency and wider social and political processes. For example, in talk shows the (leading) politicians' personal narratives are interactively initiated, elaborated and accomplished by the participants in these programmes. The thrill of these narratives is that they can reveal something of the guest's more personal or private life that was not publicly known before (Eriksson 2010, 532). As Göran Eriksson points out, an appearance on a talk show is not simply a question of giving the politician the space for favourable self-presentation. Rather the narrativisation of personal experiences is to a large extent elicited, elaborated and accomplished in cooperation with the host.

Myra Macdonald (2000, 264) notes that “[i]n an age when the ‘cult of the personality’ is visible in manifold forms [...] personalization in journalism is likely to be an ineluctable trend”. Notwithstanding this, “personal case studies and personal testimony can [...] open up hackneyed issues to fresh debate, to establish uncomfortable connections between the personal and the political” (op cit). That is, when journalists do not use personalisation as a cheap and easy substitute for thorough, open, and scrupulous investigation. Therefore it might just be that this journalistic method, paradoxically, enforces the public sphere.

In addition to tabloid-type journalism, so-called confessional journalism has shifted the borders of the private and public towards extreme intimacy. In confessional reporting the author voluntarily exposes his or her private domestic life. As Rosalind Coward (2010) notes, writers also publish intimate details of the lives of their family members:



Characters in confessional autobiographical columns are not (at least ostensibly) fictional. [...] [S]ome of those subjects – mothers, lovers, children – have not given their consent, or have given consent that they do not fully understand. [...] Sometimes they are people in direct conflict with the writers and their version of events (Coward 2010, 226).

She also notes that:

This autobiographical writing, exposing intimate personal details, is part of rapidly growing cultural trend towards the inclusion of “real-life stories” in the media, and linked to exposure of ever more intimate personal details. Confessional journalism comes in many and varied forms: cancer diaries [...]; divorce diaries [...] and regular weekend personal columns [...]. Most newspapers now carry “domestic columns” where the main substance is the individual’s daily life (op cit).

As most of the legal and ethical regulations deal with the intrusion into someone’s privacy by journalists, the problems and consequences when the media industry uses the self-exposure of a person’s intimate and family life have been left in shadow, partly because of the diversity of the styles and types of news media. Meryl Aldridge claims:

There is no doubt that there have been major changes in the style of UK news presentation and increased time/space given to soft news topics. Does this reflect society-wide realignment of the conventional, profoundly gendered distinction between matters of public concern and the personal realm? Apparently not: whatever their market niche, UK national weekday papers continue to privilege conventional hard news as does the BBC in its most important bulletin. Meanwhile, the *Daily Mail*, one of the most consistently successful national newspapers, actively promotes this boundary (Aldridge 2001, 102).

In addition to confessional journalism, which is mostly presented in newspapers and magazines, the so-called reality television format has created programmes like *Wife Swap*, *Super Nanny*, *Bachelor*, etc. in which real people and families are transported into experimental situations. These programmes show what could be called an emotional striptease as the main target of producers.

For example, in *Wife Swap*, in addition to wives and husbands, the children’s lives also take place in front of the camera, and therefore these children may be vulnerable to criticism and ridicule for years as the children participate at the

will of their parents. This kind of entertainment is actually no longer journalism (there is neither newsworthiness nor public need in these programmes; the contrivance element is very high and people are paid to participate), but as it presents real people, and the stories and profiles are constructed in these people's real homes, it is framed as a television programme. The audience gets the same type of access to other peoples' private lives as television journalism usually provides.

Finally, one journalistic phenomenon should be also mentioned: mediated scandals. In the context of the present study it is important to mention that "A media scandal occurs when private acts that disgrace or offend the idealized, dominant morality of a social community are made public and narrativized by the media, producing a range of effects from ideological and cultural retrenchment to disruption and change" (Lull & Hinerman 1997, 3). The typology provided by James Lull and Stephen Hinerman (1997) partitions scandals as institutional, star or psychodrama in type. John B. Thompson (2000, 123), writing about political media scandals, also distinguishes sex scandals that might occur among media personalities, churches, schools, in the political field, etc. The disclosure of sexual transgressions (for example, homosexuality, extramarital affairs or visits to prostitutes) might give rise to a mediated scandal in contexts where the norms and codes in question have a relatively high degree of moral obligation (op cit, 124). In the case of these mediated scandals, private facts as evidence are made public and reproduced on numerous occasions as material disclosed by one media organisation is likely to be reported by others (op cit, 70). Thompson also points out that the development of new technologies – high powered photographic lenses, concealed cameras, miniature microphones, wire-tapping devices, scanning equipment, etc. – provides an ever more sophisticated array of devices that can be used to recode images or conversations, and this in turn might provide substantive evidence that could form the basis of a scandal (op cit). While some sex scandals or psychodramas do not have any connection to legitimate public interest, there are also cases in which public scrutiny is grounded with the need for a valuable contribution to public debate about the moral accountability of people in certain positions.

### **Conclusions: a frame of categories influencing the perception of private and public in the media**

By taking into consideration the main argument of the above-mentioned Communication Privacy Management theory, specifically that culture, gendered criteria, people's motivation concerning privacy, contextual constraints, and risk-benefit ratio are foundational to rule development, it becomes clear that the changes

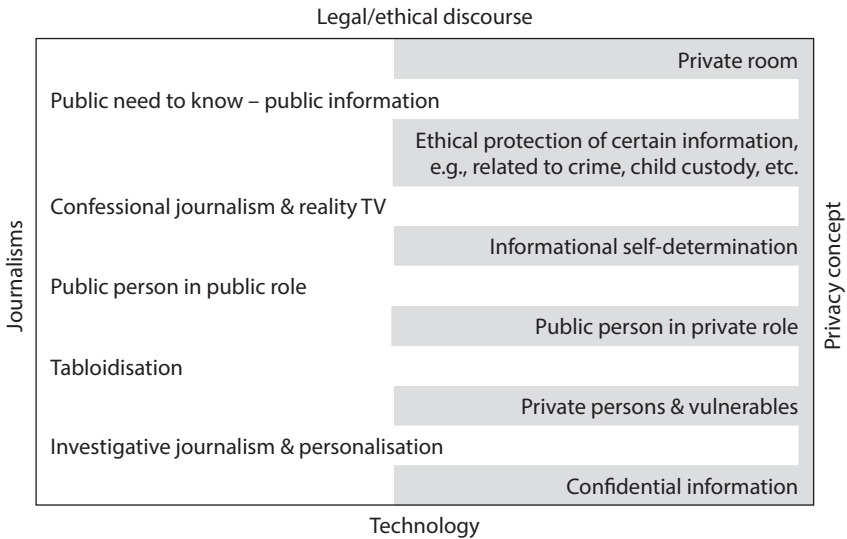
in journalism culture provide a key to release the configuration of factors that determine this kind of privacy–publicity conventions that are negotiated via public communication and the media. On the one hand, normative discourse (ethics, laws and court cases) is in constant struggle with the commercial interests of the media, the attention economy, which triggers individuals to open up their private lives, and public curiosity. On the other hand the social changes (for example, the increase in political accountability, the sexual and data revolutions) are reflected in daily mediated content.

By asking now what the factor is that could be labelled as a constant in this on-going and very dynamic cultural change relating to the diminishing borders between private and public, the answer would be simply, the actor.

Historically the question of *who decides* (the *actor* dimension in privacy concept) about publishing information or making certain data or discourse accessible to the public has predominated over the space category (private space versus public space). The actor category includes three types of actor: people who are spoken about, people who speak about others (mainly journalists, but also any common man) and people who make public confessions about their own lives (and families).

In comparison to the Communication Privacy Management theory and the concept of informational self-determination the conventions in media and journalism hand some of the power and responsibility for decisions about privacy over to journalists and the same concerns the norms that regulate media performance. This has happened gradually and in accordance with the establishment of modern journalistic discourse. Norms have been developed by the configuration of legal and journalistic discourse in accordance with the discourse on journalism ethics. At the heart of these rules, which help to negotiate the borders of the private and the public, is the category of status and role. People with different statuses and different roles, which they fulfil in certain situations, acquire different rights to be 'left alone'. The more one has power in society or influence on the lives of other people the more one should accept public scrutiny. This ideology has been developed mainly since the 1960s in the US, has spread in Europe and is now well presented in various normative texts on journalism.

The informational self-determination concept is in response to confessional journalism, reality television and all other formats that encourage the disclosure of spheres that have traditionally been closed and private. It should be kept in mind that the catalysts of such journalistic formats are both social concern (for example, abused children, violence against women, the treatment of sick people, etc.) and commercial interest.



**Figure 1.** The symbiotic nature of the conventions of mediated privacy.

Yet, after some time the audience becomes accustomed to publications that were once perceived as intrusive and embarrassing. Can we therefore say that it is still the job of those people whose stories, data or biographies are published, to negotiate and set the rules?

Journalistic discourse enables the emphasis of one more aspect of the concept of privacy: the difference between data gathering, publication, dissemination and preservation. In journalism ethics and legal suits that include journalism, these four stages are present but usually not explicitly formulated. Generally one can say that all four stages can be called information processing. While in the first stage the individual's control over his/her data is quite considerable, this control decreases when the data or narrative is already published and stored.

The data or narratives once made available in the media can be reproduced in numerous ways in spatial as well as in temporal terms. Therefore information and narratives about individuals are made visible, restored and become accessible to those who were either present at the time and place when this information was gathered, published and disseminated or know any more of the context.

The restored data raises the question of post-mortem privacy issues, although here problems related to the digital assets including social network profiles, electronic mails, and internet databases are more actual (Edwards & Harbinja 2013)

than the problems in journalism where editing practices introduce the possibility that someone takes care of the privacy of dead people. This example highlights the fact that in some instances the professional normative journalism culture might be a force that shapes the privacy culture, which would otherwise blur into any rules.

In sum, conventions of mediated privacy currently change within a very complex framework of factors that are embedded in journalistic discourse, are influenced by the development of technology and also legal and ethical practices (Figure 1). As the media has the power to disseminate certain formats and conventions spatially, these conventions spread across countries and cultures. The temporal dimension on the one hand enables to see the change of these conventions over time, while on the other hand the media archives diminish the individual's control over his or her privacy.

### Internet sources

- Cavoukian, A. (2009) Privacy by design: a primer. <https://www.ipc.on.ca/images/Resources/pbd-primer.pdf> [accessed 10 December 2014].
- CEEP = Code of Ethics of the Estonian Press. [http://www.asn.org.ee/english/code\\_of\\_ethics.html](http://www.asn.org.ee/english/code_of_ethics.html) [accessed 10 December 2014].
- Kisselburgh, L. (2008) *Reconceptualizing Privacy in Technological Realms: Theoretical Frameworks for Communication*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the International Communication Association, TBA, Montreal, Quebec, Canada, May, 2008. [http://citation.allacademic.com/meta/p\\_mla\\_apa\\_research\\_citation/2/3/3/o/o/pages233000/p233000-1.php](http://citation.allacademic.com/meta/p_mla_apa_research_citation/2/3/3/o/o/pages233000/p233000-1.php) [accessed 1 July 2014].
- Minelli vs Switzerland. Application No. 14991/02. 14 June 2005. European Court of Human Rights. <http://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng?i=001-69691> [accessed 10 December 2014].
- Peck vs United Kingdom. Application No. 44647/98. 28 January 2003. European Court of Human Rights. <http://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng?i=001-60898> [accessed 10 December 2014].
- Petrenco vs Moldova. Application No. 20928/05. 30 March 2010. European Court of Human Rights. <http://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng?i=001-97991> [accessed 10 December 2014].
- Rubenking, N. J. (2013) Privacy is dead. The NSA killed it. Now what?, *PC Mag*, 10 September. <http://www.pcmag.com/article2/0,2817,2424193,00.asp> [accessed 10 December 2014].
- Standard Verlags GmbH vs Austria. Application No. 21277/05. 4 June 2009. European Court of Human Rights. <http://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng?i=001-92865> [accessed 10 December 2014].
- Von Hannover vs Germany. Applications Nos. 40660/08 and 60641/08. 7 February 2012. European Court of Human Rights. <http://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng?i=001-109029> [accessed 10 December 2014].

## References

- Aldridge, M. (2001) Confessional culture, masculinity and emotional work, *Journalism* 2 (1), 91–108.
- Altman, I. (1976) Privacy: a conceptual analysis, *Environment and Behavior* 8 (1), 7–29.
- Barnhurst, K. G. (2005) News ideology in the twentieth century. – Høyer, S. & Pöttker, H. (eds) *Diffusion of the News Paradigm 1850–2000*, 239–265. NORDICOM, Göteborg.
- Bechmann, A. (2014) Non-informed consent cultures: privacy policies and app contracts on Facebook, *Journal of Media Business Studies* 11 (1), 21–38.
- Bingham, A. (2009) *Family Newspapers? Sex, Private Life and the British Popular Press 1918–1978*. Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- Blazer, S. M. (2006) Rear window ethics: domestic privacy versus public responsibility in the evolution of voyeurism, *The Midwest Quarterly* 47 (4), 379–392.
- Brown, L. (1985) *Victorian News and Newspapers*. Clarendon Press, Oxford.
- Cocks, H. G. (2012) Reading obscene texts and their histories, *Media History* 18 (3–4), 275–288.
- Cohen, J. E. (2013) What privacy is for, *Harvard Law Review* 129, 1904–1933.
- Coward, R. (2010) Practice review: journalism ethics and confessional journalism, *Journalism Practice* 4 (2), 224–233.
- Dawes, S. (2014) Press freedom, privacy and the public sphere, *Journalism Studies* 15 (1), 17–32.
- Driessens, O., Raeymaeckers, K., Verstraeten, H. & Vandenbussche, S. (2010) Personalization according to politicians: a practice theoretical analysis of mediatization, *Communications: The European Journal of Communication Research* 35 (3), 309–326.
- Edwards, L. & Harbinja, E. (2013) Protecting post-mortem privacy: reconsidering the privacy interests of the deceased in a digital world, *Cardozo Arts & Entertainment Law Journal* 32 (1), 101–147.
- Ekecrantz, J. (2005) News paradigms, political power and cultural contexts in 20th century Sweden. – Høyer S., & Pöttker H. (eds) *Diffusion of the News Paradigm 1850–2000*, 93–104. NORDICOM, Göteborg.
- Ekström, M. (2006) Interviewing, quoting and the development of modern news journalism. A study of the Swedish press 1915–1955. – Ekström, M., Kroon, A. & Nylund, M. (eds) *News from the Interview Society*, 21–48. NORDICOM, Göteborg.
- Eriksson, G. (2010) Politicians in celebrity talk show interviews: the narrativization of personal experiences, *Text & Talk* 30 (5), 529–551
- Fenwick, H., & Phillipson, G. (2006) *Media Freedom under the Human Rights Act*. Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- Frost, C. (2010) The development of privacy adjudications by the UK Press Complaint Commission and their effects on the future of journalism, *Journalism Practice* 4 (3), 383–393.
- Gavison, R. (1984 [1980]) Privacy and the limits of law. – Schoeman, F. (ed) *Philosophical Dimensions of Privacy: An Anthology*, 346–402. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

- Habermas, J. (1989 [1962]) *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*. Polity Press, Cambridge.
- Harro, H. (2001) *Changing Journalistic Conventions in the Press. Empirical Studies on Daily Newspapers under Different Political Conditions in 20th Century Estonia*. Doctoral thesis. Universitetet i Oslo, Oslo.
- Heyman, R. & Pierson, J. (2013) Blending mass self-communication with advertising in Facebook and LinkedIn: challenges for social media and user empowerment, *International Journal of Media & Cultural Politics* 9 (3), 229–245.
- Hirdman, A., Kleberg, M. & Wistedt, K. (2005) The intimization of journalism. Transformations of medialized public spheres from the 1880s to current times, *NORDICOM Review* 26 (2), 109–117.
- Humphreys, L., Gill, P. & Krishnamurthy, B. (2014) Twitter: a content analysis of personal information, *Information, Communication & Society* 17 (7), 843–857.
- Jebriil, N., Albæk, E. & de Vreese, C. H. (2013) Infotainment, cynicism and democracy: the effects of privatization vs personalization in the news, *European Journal of Communication* 28 (2), 105–121.
- Kitchin, R. (2014) *The Data Revolution: Big Data, Open Data, Data Infrastructures & Their Consequences*. Sage, London.
- Lull, J. & Hinerman, S. (1997) The search for scandal. – Lull, J. & Hinerman, S. (eds) *Media Scandals. Morality and Desire in the Popular Culture Marketplace*, 1–33. Polity Press, New York.
- Macdonald, M. (2000) Rethinking personalization in current affairs journalism. – Sparks, C. & Tulloch, J. (eds) *Tabloid Tales: Global Debates Over Media Standards*, 251–266. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Lanham, Oxford.
- Middleton, K. R. & Chamberline, B. F. (1988) *The Law of Public Communication*. Longman, New York.
- Petronio, S. (1991) Communication boundary management: a theoretical model of managing disclosure of private information between marital couples, *Communication Theory* 1 (4), 311–335.
- Petronio, S. (1994) Privacy binds in family interactions: the case of parental privacy invasion. – Cupach, W. R. & Spitzberg, B. H. (eds) *The Dark Side of Interpersonal Communication*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Hillsdale.
- Petronio, S. (2000a) The boundaries of privacy: praxis of everyday life. – Petronio, S. (ed) *Balancing the Secrets of Private Disclosures*, 37–50. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Mahwah.
- Petronio, S. (2000b) The ramifications of a reluctant confidant. – Richards, A. C. & Schumm, T. (eds) *Invitations to Dialogue: The Legacy of Sidney Jourard*, 113–132. Kendall/Hunt, Dubuque.
- Petronio, S. (2000c) The embarrassment of private disclosures: a case study of newly married couples. – Braithwaite, D. O. & Wood, J. T. (eds) *Case Studies in Interpersonal Communication: Processes and Problems*, 131–137. Wadsworth/Thomson Learning, Belmont.
- Petronio, S. (2002) *The Boundaries of Privacy: Dialectics of Disclosure*. State University of New York Press, New York.

- Petronio, S. (2004) Road to developing communication privacy management theory: narrative in progress, please stand by, *The Journal of Family Communication* 4 (3–4), 193–207.
- Post, R. C. (1991) Rereading Warren and Brandeis: privacy, property, and appropriation, *Case Western Reserve Law Review* 41, 647–680.
- Pöttker, H. (2005) Comments on the German tradition of news journalism. – Høyer, S. & Pöttker, H. (eds) *Diffusion of the News Paradigm 1850–2000*, 139–145. NORDICOM, Göteborg.
- Schudson, M. (1978) *Discovering the News. A Social History of American Newspapers*. Basic Books, New York.
- Schudson, M. (1994) Question authority: a history of the news interview in American journalism, 1860s–1930s, *Media, Culture & Society* 16, 565–587.
- Schudson, M. (1995) *The Power of News*. Harvard University Press, Cambridge.
- Selvadurai, N. (2013) Protecting online information privacy in a converged digital environment – the merits of the new Australian privacy principles, *Information & Communications Technology Law* 22 (3), 299–314.
- Sevignani, S. (2012) The problem of privacy in capitalism and the alternative social networking site diaspora, *tripleC* 10 (2), 600–617.
- Smith, J. (2008) Moral guardians and the origins of the right to privacy, *Journalism & Communication Monographs* 10 (1), 63–110.
- Sparks, C. (2000) Introduction: The panic over tabloid news. – Sparks, C. & Tulloch, J. (eds) *Tabloid Tales. Global Debates Over Media Standards*, 1–40. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Lanham, Oxford.
- Taddicken, M. (2014) The ‘privacy paradox’ in the social web: the impact of privacy concerns, individual characteristics, and the perceived social relevance on different forms of self-disclosure, *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication* 19 (2), 248–273.
- Thompson, J. B. (2000) *Political Scandal. Power and Visibility in the Media Age*. Polity Press, Cambridge.
- Westin, A. F. (1967) *Privacy and Freedom*. Atheneum, New York.

## Videoclips

- Rambam, S. (2010) *Privacy is Dead, Get Over It*. Presentation at the Next HOPE Conference, New York. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DaYn\\_PkrfvQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DaYn_PkrfvQ) [accessed 10 December 2014].

## Source of illustration

Figure 1 – Author’s own creation.





## **The construction of the 'other' through private stories: Japan in the travelogues of Estonian seamen, as published in Estonian newspapers during the second half of the 19th century**

Anu Masso, Ene Selart

**Abstract.** The chapter concentrates on analysing representations of Japan in the travelogues published in Estonian newspapers, as seen by Estonian seamen during the second half of the 19th century. In Estonia, the private experiences mediated in travelogues were the sole source of access to geographically distant regions (education system sources were marginal). Analysing travelogues enables us to study the ways in which the media reflects the tensions between the globalising scope of seafaring and the media, which frames the national prism. The chapter aims to answer the research questions: What are the thematic emphases when constructing Japan in Estonian newspapers? What (im)mediated national or other cultural references are used to 'translate' travelling experience in the private stories of Estonian seamen for Estonian readers? What linguistic-textual techniques are used when trying to make private travel experiences understandable for Estonian readers? Methodologically, the elements of narrative analysis are used in this chapter. The results of the analysis indicate that when presenting geographically distant Japan, cultural emphasis was the preferred theme in private stories (for example, religion, customs, everyday life). The analysed travelogues use linguistically diverse techniques when 'culturally translating' Japan for Estonian readers (for example some phrases in Japanese are given without translation). Several Estonian national references are used to explain events that happened during the journey (for example mentioning the Estonian national epic). In sum, travelogues from Japan published in Estonian newspapers are inherently modern; the domination of private spatial practices over representations indicates on-going time-space compression and the singularity of the journalistic genres during the second half of the 19th century.

---

Kannike, A., Tasa, M. & Västriik, E.-H. (eds) (2017) *Body, Personhood and Privacy: Perspectives on the Cultural Other and Human Experience*. *Approaches to Culture Theory* 7, 145–162. University of Tartu Press, Tartu.

## Introduction

This chapter originates from the cultural-geographic perspective (for example Tavares & Le Bel 2008), according to which representations of places in the media do not only convey the socio-cultural reality of a specific era, but also use certain semantic practices that contribute to the creation of the discourses represented. We assume that the initial place representations were foremost constructed via the private perspectives of mobile individuals.

The chapter studies media representations and the development of cultural-geographic relations in the second half of the 19th century using the example of Estonia and Japan. The empirical basis of the chapter is travelogues about Japan written by Estonian seamen and published in the Estonian media. On the one hand, the period analysed is marked by the Estonian national cultural revival (including the publication of Fr. R. Kreutzwald's national epic *Kalevipoeg*) and the emergence of Estonian nationalism. On the other hand, it is also characterised by Japan's opening up to the West during the Meiji period (1868-1912), during which Japanese society made the transition from the isolated feudalism to its modern form. Such an empirical emphasis enables us to focus on the construction of Japan as the 'other', asking for example how private experiences became externalised and made public. We assume that analysing the private stories of Estonian seamen mediated in Estonian newspapers enables us to look for some characteristics of emerging Estonian national identity. One of the sources of and motivations for constructing spatial meanings like territorially bound national identity, was the emerging mobility experience, inherent to modernity (Harvey 2006 [1990]). Print technology was a major component that helped to share and mediate personal mobility experiences and create the imagined community, which in its basic morphology set the stage for the modern nation (Anderson 2006). In both cases, mobility experiences shared privately or publicly in the print media helped form the national identity through shared cultural constructions (Fish 1982) or through national narratives that relied on the language of metaphors to help transfer the cultural symbols of various communities (Bhabha 2000).

The representation of Japan and its image in the West has been studied by several authors from different perspectives. Jean-Pierre Lehmann (1978), who has studied the period from 1860 to 1905, shows that the image of Japan was anything but homogeneous in the articles that appeared in several publications in Great Britain. However, many international studies indicate that historical travelogues assert contemporary power relations and the individual level of civilisation of the author's country of origin (George 2009). Studies of Japan's

image<sup>1</sup> as seen from the Western perspective have revealed the stereotypical nature of the representations, which are temporally relatively stable (Lehmann 1978; Wilkinson 1990; Littlewood 1996). For example, Ian Littlewood (1996), drawing on material ranging from 16th century travelogues to recent advertising campaigns, points out that many images are actually recycled versions of existing stereotypes. Endymion Wilkinson (1990), who has conducted a comprehensive review of the historiography of image building as it relates to Japan since the first contacts with the Occident, shows in his observations that the mutual images have remained largely unchanged during this period. According to Thomas Pekar (2003), one of the ever-present discourses presented in the travelogues is the image of the Japanese woman being a mysterious doll-like creature (the imagined *geisha*).

Unlike international studies, previous Estonian historical studies of media representations have concentrated on shorter time periods and focused on general analysis of the geographic dimension (for example, Kann 1966; Maaring 1968; Malkov 1968; Pohla 1969; Ummelas 1977), dealing with specific, narrowly defined regions (Hiinema 2006) or on the development of travelogues as a journalistic genre (Mallene 1957). However, the cultural dimension dominating in these international studies, as well as the nature of the representations and the role of the individuals and private stories in constructing the place representations – both other cultures and own national belonging – has not previously been analysed in Estonia. In this chapter we concentrate on analysing the textual and linguistic means of representing the ‘own’ and ‘other’ national groups. In addition, the analysis enables us to study the characteristics of used journalistic genres and the personal resources of information of the authors, by which their cultural and geographic experiences were affected, that were used to make the ‘other’ culturally understandable for the Estonian readers in the context where geographic knowledge was relatively limited.

The empirical basis of this chapter are two travelogues written by Estonian seamen in the 19th century: naval officer Jüri Jürison’s travel story (published in *Eesti Postimees* 1868–1869) and captain M. Michelson’s travel story (published in *Olevik* in 1896 and 1900). On the basis of these travelogues we aim to answer the research questions: What kind of thematic emphases are used to construct Japan in the travelogues of Estonian seamen at the end of the 19th century? What kinds of national and cultural reference are used in the private stories of Estonian seamen to make their travel experience understandable to Estonian readers? And what kind of linguistic and textual devices are used to ‘translate’ these private stories for the audience? A more detailed explanation of the analysed texts is given in the next sections, as well as an overview of spatial contacts in the 19th

century. The main body of the chapter consists of an original empirical analysis of the travelogues. The chapter ends with a discussion that provides answers to the abovementioned questions and interprets the empirical results.

### **Spatial contacts in the 19th century**

Estonians' spatial contacts with various world regions in the second half of the 19th century were limited and mediated. In this period contacts were with regions geographically closer to Estonia that were more accessible, although country people were generally characterised by relatively low mobility.<sup>2</sup> Prior to this, in the 16th and 17th centuries, religious literature was the primary source of knowledge about Asia and Africa (Klaassen 1995). The first geographical reviews were only published in the late 17th century and the subject of geography was introduced to schools in the early 18th century (Paatsi 1993). Although the 1739 Bible had previously been hailed as a masterpiece of Estonian Afro-Asiatic studies – since it included Middle Eastern place names as well as the names of local fauna and flora and historical figures – it turns out that its role as a mediator of knowledge of Asia was quite modest: its records are fragmented, its facts confused with mythology and its translations distorted in places (Klaassen 1995; 1988). By the turn of the 19th century foreign lands became more accessible to Estonians as educational writing, maps and calendars began to be published.

However, it was the print media that adopted the role of primary source of information on various geographical regions. Great importance has been attached to newspapers as providing cultural enlightenment in the 19th century (Peegel 1969) and are compared to books in their function and significance (for example using journalistic materials as a source of factual information in compiling textbooks).<sup>3</sup> In addition, the textual structure of early geography textbooks and the geographical narratives published in newspapers resembled each other to some extent, both being presented in the form of descriptions of facts. The first newspaper to be published, *Marahwa Näddala-Leht* (1821–1825), exhibited a relatively broad scope of geographical news items in its first few years of publication, although domestic news was covered in a more systematic and thorough manner (Maaring 1968). Articles were dominated by local news from Estonia (34%),<sup>4</sup> Europe (33%) and Russia (24%); Asia (5%), Africa (1%) and the Americas (1%) were represented in references and short descriptions.

The geographical scope of the later *Missioni-Leht* (1858–1862) was even broader due to the newspaper's special focus on the personal experiences of missionaries (Pohla 1969): events from Estonia (24%), Europe (27%) and Asia (21%, mainly India) were covered in a comparable amount; less attention was paid

to news from Africa (9%), the Americas (6%), Australia (1%), foreign islands, etc. (8%), and foreign place names and names of natural objects (for example rivers, a total of 4%). Newspaper coverage of geographically remote areas was sporadic, with the focus tending to be on individual islands seen during voyages than on entire countries, or was related to the newspaper's thematic sphere of interest (for example Japan was mentioned once, while in other parts of Asia missionary work and descriptions of missionary work were given, as with the example of India).

Similarly to the previously analysed newspapers, the geographical scope of the somewhat later *Tallorahwa Postimees* (1857–1859) (Malkov 1968) was dominated by local news items from Estonia, Livonia and Courland (around 37% over a three-year period) and about as much again from Europe (39%); there were fewer references to Russia (11%), but more references to Asian countries (7%; various years saw Japan mentioned 1 or 2 times; Africa, the Americas and Australia each received less than 2% coverage). As before, these were mainly messages or short descriptions; longer overviews of foreign lands or peoples normally appeared in publications covering missionary activities.

However, the geographical descriptions published in newspapers (for example *Missioni-Leht*) were more attractive to readers, being based on eyewitness accounts, and more persuasive to readers than those in geography textbooks. It was these accounts in newspapers – first in the form of short descriptions; later as travelogues with clear genre characteristics (Peegel 1955) – that served as the primary source of geographic knowledge for Estonians in the second half of the 19th century. For these reasons this chapter concentrates on private stories from the Estonian seamen who for the first time mediated the 'other' through cultural references and in this way enabled culturally and geographically distant regions to be brought closer to Estonian readers, who could, through cultural comparison, participate in the public construction of Estonians' own national affiliation.

## The travelogues of Estonian seamen

This chapter analyses the construction of the image of Japan in the Estonian print media, based on the travelogues of Estonian seamen. The source data is the travelogues of two Estonian seafarers, Jüri Jürison and M. Michelson, whose letters were published respectively in 1868 and 1869 in the *Eesti Postimees* newspaper and in 1896 and 1900 in the *Olevik* newspaper. This chapter analyses, first and foremost, the individual stories in the travelogues that touch upon Japan (n=31).

The travelogues under analysis were written during a period of editor-centric journalism (Aru 2010). In addition to the early geographical descriptions written or translated by editors in the first half of the 19th century, the second half of the century saw the first tentative attempts at travel writing. Although the first longer travelogues were published in newspapers during the same period,<sup>5</sup> it is Jürison's travelogue from *Eesti Postimees* that is generally considered to be the first example of the travel writing genre in Estonia. Unlike the other earlier writings (missionary stories), the analysed texts are not as heavily influenced by Lutheran ideology<sup>6</sup> and have a more personal touch to them. Apart from later travelogues,<sup>7</sup> the authors are not well-known public figures. Rather they are educated seamen who speak a number of foreign languages and are interested in subjects like literature and language. While there is ample information on Jürison's background – he was an educated navy officer who spoke Russian and German and had previously translated Russian poetry – information on Michelson is scant and we can only make assumptions as to the scope of his spatial experiences and his level of education. However, Michelson's travelogues on the Far East, published at the turn of the century, no longer stood out, since several travelogues about Asia had been penned by Estonians by this point (for example Andres Saal's account of Indonesia (1899) and Eduard Bornhöhe's of Palestine (1899)). On the one hand, Michelson's style is much more neutral and his judgements more reserved than those of Jürison 30 years previously. On the other hand, it can be concluded that Michelson took more interest in Japanese books and legends: for example he describes keenly viewing a religious book displayed in a Buddhist temple. He also purchased a Russo-Japanese dictionary in order to find similarities between the Estonian and Japanese languages, which he believed to be kindred languages. While Jürison visited major Japanese ports like Nagasaki, Yokohama and Hakodate, Michelson also stopped, in addition to Nagasaki, Kobe and Hakodate, at smaller hot spring resorts, such as Mogi, Unzen, Ōmura and Obama during his holiday. This chapter is therefore based on the assumption that due to prior contact with the common people, varied cultural contacts and an interest in cultural and linguistic matters, these travelogues serve as a means with which to analyse the mediation of first-hand personal experience of a place to newspaper readers. Analysing the travelogues by Jürison and Michelson enables us to study genre-specific devices used in the Estonian print media, the thematic construction of the 'self' and the 'other' and the process of mediating personal experiences of a place in the second half of the 19th century.

In studying the travelogues, some elements of the sociological narrative method (van Peer & Chatman 2001) were applied, in which the focus was on analysing the activities, events, factors and evaluations presented in the narratives.

The analysis builds on the interactivity of travel writing as a story (Gubrium & Holstein 2009), i.e. the chapter examines private interpretations present in the travelogues in the context of the authors' personal travel experiences, Estonian society and the expectations of the target audience. As might be expected of travelogues, the focus is also on the authors' function as agents – their personal experiences of a place and the individual devices used to 'interpret' cultures when creating thematic representations. The results of the analysis are presented in three sections. Short excerpts from the respective travelogues are quoted to substantiate the conclusions that are drawn.

## **Analysis results**

Hereby the main analysis of the results is presented in three sections: thematic emphasis, (im)mediated spatial references and linguistic textual techniques used when 'translating' Japanese cultural experience for Estonian newspaper readers. The generalisations made by the authors are illustrated with examples from the travelogues. The quotations from the travelogues are differentiated from the rest of the text with quotation marks. References to the particular newspaper sources referred to in the analysis are included in the brackets.

### **Thematic emphasis**

Analysis of the results indicates that for thematic emphases, cultural themes dominate in Jürison's and Michelson's travelogues. For example, there are detailed descriptions of traditions: Japanese gift-giving (*Eesti Postimees* 1868, 20 November, 370) and a funeral ceremony in a temple (*Olevik* 1896, 7 May, 448). Neutral descriptions of everyday activities as well as judgements about them are also used, for example: "Before anyone whom they happened to meet, they bent over at the loins, rubbed their knees with their hands and greeted them, inhaling through clenched teeth. [...] This is the refined way of the Japanese" (*Eesti Postimees* 1868, 2 October, 314). Judgements are first and foremost based on the authors' own cultural experiences and cultural comparisons, and on confrontations related to these, as Jürison mentions: "One should know that here white clothes are a sign of mourning – quite contrary to us" (*Eesti Postimees* 1868, 9 October, 322). Comparison of the style of Jürison's and Michelson's travelogues reveals that the latter author is much more reserved and neutral in his judgements. A good example is Michelson's reference to hot springs near Nagasaki: in several letters he uses a neutral, descriptive style and does not give either directly approving or disapproving judgements (*Olevik* 1900, 25 January, 84 and 14 March, 239).



In addition to cultural emphasis, another thematic focus used in the travelogues is describing nature and the climate. Unlike descriptions of culture, nature, as a rule, is depicted in a neutral tone. As for the textual devices used, descriptions of nature are dominated by accurate accounts of measurement units and seafaring coordinates as these have an important role in a seaman's life; the aim of such devices was to make the size of natural objects and geographical distances comprehensible to the reader. Another technique employed is detailed geographical descriptions, successfully used to convey the author's mental pictures to the reader.

A key theme in translating travel experiences was religion. Religious references are used in comparisons and descriptions on a variety of subjects, cultural as well as natural, for example: "The mountains look very disorderly, as if the Almighty has forgotten to even them out with a stroke of his hand [...] here Buddha might have left off, neglecting to divvy up and burn-beat the land" (*Olevik* 1896, 20 February, 193).

The sources of the information used in travelogues are mostly undefined, impersonal or based on personal contacts. As can be presumed from the travelogues, it was unexpectedly easy to establish personal contacts, for example: "All of a sudden we had become friends. At once, they were examining the woollen cloth of our jackets and stroking our boots" (*Eesti Postimees* 1868, 23 October, 337). The fact that seamen had the courage to initiate an acquaintance with locals served as an advantage when crossing cultural boundaries as Jürison writes: "I, too, proceeded to the grave in the funeral throng, although I did not notice any other Europeans in the vicinity. To this end, I made friends with a Japanese man and did not let go of him after that; a friend found on the road" (*Eesti Postimees* 1869, 5 November, 166). Other travelogues and orally conveyed experiences were also used as source material. Unlike Jürison's travelogues, Michelson's texts include pictures of Japan for descriptive and illustrative purposes ("A Japanese woman with a child", *Olevik* 1896, 1 October, 915).

### **(Im)mediated references**

In this subsection we analyse the spatial references used when 'translating' Japanese cultural experience for Estonian newspaper readers. Both mediated and immediate references are analysed here, firstly including the information acquired from secondary sources (mostly heard from other seamen), secondly picked up from the personal face-to-face contacts.

The results of the analyses indicate that to explain events occurring on the narrator's travels, discursive techniques related to Estonia as well as other cultural

references from earlier travels are used. The variety of national and spatial references used point to a phenomenon characteristic of modernism (Harvey 2006 [1990]), that is, in the midst of crumbling previous spatial dimensions and resulting uncertainty, different places are constructed by means of comparisons and qualitative-aesthetic emphasis.

On the one hand, the texts draw comparisons with various national groups (for example Jews (*Eesti Postimees* 1869, 19 November, 173), and Russians (*Olevik* 1900, 25 January, 84)), with whom the seamen, and probably also the newspaper readers, could have had contact. Abundant references to a number of nations and countries prove the extensive cultural experiences of both authors, for example: “the Japanese drink their tea, like the Turkish drink their coffee, from thimble-size cups” (*Olevik* 1896, 5 March, 240). Moreover, their earlier descriptions help to explain the Japanese experience to the reader when used as a basis for comparison with other countries and peoples, for example: “Here, the mountains are not as wonderful and marvellously shaped as around the bay of Rio de Janeiro” (*Eesti Postimees* 1868, 2 October, 314).

In addition to general cultural comparisons, clear definitions of ‘self’ and ‘other’ can be identified. Defining the Japanese as the ‘other’ is also based on descriptions of Japan as a country or a region (for example when calling the region an “Asian land”). When presenting Japan as the ‘other’, cultural hierarchy is often used (see, for example, Hofstede 2001). For example, a detailed overview is given of the characteristics of the country’s social hierarchy by describing wealthier groups or those with higher professional standing as well as representatives of groups with a lower professional status. Although the descriptions of the strictly hierarchical Japanese society were often accompanied by certain disparaging comments (explicit or implicit), at other times pure admiration for their culture was expressed with no signs of clear hierarchical positioning, as Michelson exclaims: “Japan with its ancient culture is a wonderland” (*Olevik* 1896, 5 March, 240). Earlier studies of travelogues have indicated the presence of a similar hierarchical positioning in cultural descriptions (Weisenfeld 2000), with the aim of emphasising the author’s own identity by downgrading the ‘other’.

When describing their ‘own’ national group, a variety of textual devices were used in the travelogues analysed. References to *national identity* are made, on the one hand, through the use of metaphoric comparisons, and on the other hand by direct positioning. A recurring theme in the use of metaphoric comparisons is the Estonian national epic *Kalevipoeg*, for example: “These are not just Kalevipoeg’s ploughing furrows” (*Olevik* 1896, 20 February, 193). In addition, when referring to certain groups within Estonian society, the first person plural (‘we’), creating an emotional link, is used (for example when writing about peasants or artisans).

The travelogues also emphasise that Estonian seamen are “not less witty and could do in shipping quite what the Japanese are doing” (*Olevik* 1896, 4 June, 542). Self-awareness and national pride are also reflected in the statement that Estonians could be equally good workmen if only Estonians would have the same education and guidance, which “is why among our little nation there are so many tramps and criminals” (*Olevik* 1896, 11 June, 560). The pre-eminent example of the Estonian seamen’s direct positioning of their national identity is made by the authors’ explanations for whom and why they are writing their travelogues. Jürison has defined the aim of his writings as: “stories gathered from the wide world by the Estonian hand for the pleasure of fellow countrymen” (*Eesti Postimees* 1869, 31 December, 198). In the same way, Michelson hopes that perhaps his travel stories inspire a more capable man in literary work to write his stories and discover these lands (*Olevik* 1896, 30 July, 715).

However, Japan was presented to the Estonian reader not only through the Estonian prism but also through the Russian and European prism, in terms of both culture and language. For example, in several places the texts provide indirect evidence that the authors also identify themselves as Russian due to the usage of Russian as a common language among fellow seamen and locals (for example using the first person plural when referring to Russians and a positive judgement of a group of Russian seamen). Notwithstanding this, in explicit statements about Russians an exclusive categorisation is preferred (cf Russians as the ‘other’). In addition to Russians, the authors repeatedly identify themselves with Europeans. For example, Jürison’s texts give an indication of the Japanese as being cautious toward foreigners, as a result of Japan’s earlier isolated status, writing: “It was not that long ago when Europeans were driven off from the Japanese coast like wolves” (*Eesti Postimees* 1868, 2 October, 315). Moreover, the texts make use of comparisons based on confronting the cultures of Japan and Europe as cultures of the ‘other’ and the ‘self’. For example, Michelson writes that in the course of modernisation the Japanese did not replace their culture with a European one, but refined their own traditional culture through European education (*Olevik* 1896, 20 February, 240).

In addition to national references used to mediate the Japanese travel experience to the Estonian reader, several institutional references were made, for example to international practices in marine navigation (the cannon salute regulation; *Eesti Postimees* 1868, 20 November, 370). As for institutional references, these were also used in descriptions based on the authors’ positions as seamen. That is, despite several national and cultural references, the authors more than once explicitly identified themselves as professional seamen, for example, “The rattling of the anchor chain is the dearest music to a seaman’s heart” (*Eesti*

*Postimees* 1868, 2 October, 314). When defining themselves as seamen, they use a certain hierarchical strategy, referring to various positions of power in a similar way to the device employed in culture-based comparisons. Seamen, and especially naval officers, had a high social standing and this status conferred certain privileges on them, as Jürison remarks: “We had the right to enter at any time for an audience, with our boots on, and enter the temple as well, and to do whatever we wanted” (*Eesti Postimees* 1868, 30 October, 346).

### Linguistic textual techniques

A wide variety of linguistic and textual devices were used to culturally ‘interpret’ the remote country for Estonian readers. The linguistic devices used are related to Estonian, Japanese, Russian and other languages. While Jürison uses just a few Japanese phrases and words in his travelogue, Michelson gives an in-depth overview of the language and tries to establish similarities between Japanese and Estonian, as he tells the reader: “Since the Estonians and the Finns are counted among the Mongolic peoples, together with the Chinese and the Japanese, I was expecting to come across a lot of words similar to those in my mother tongue; but so far these have been few and far between” (*Olevik* 1896, 18 June, 584). In some parts of his travelogue, Jürison gives translations of the Japanese words he uses, for example: “*Fune* – this is the word for a boat” (*Eesti Postimees* 1868, 9 October, 321). In others, he does not give any explanation as to their meaning and uses distorted Japanese words, like “*Osiljan! Osiljan!*” (*Eesti Postimees* 1868, 13 November, 362), perhaps also not knowing the translation or seeking to add an exotic touch to his texts. At the same time Jürison practices the usage of Japanese words by naturally incorporating them into his Estonian text, as he writes: “In the other room three or four men are sitting with a *musume* [‘young woman’, ‘daughter’], in front of them *tabero* [‘food’] with saké and a charcoal box in between” (*Eesti Postimees* 1868, 23 October, 338).

In addition to Japanese, the texts refer to Russian as a means of cultural interpretation. The ability to speak Russian enabled seamen to communicate with locals, to an extent. For example, Michelson writes that thanks to his knowledge of the language he was able to communicate with the ship’s cook and his helpers, who were Chinese (*Olevik* 1896, 11 May, 472). Moreover, an understanding of Russian served as an advantage when interpreting cultural codes and, as such, granted a certain edge over others (the Japanese often lacked this advantage due to their superficial knowledge of Russian, for example Jürison mentions that the Japanese were speaking “in their broken Russian” (*Eesti Postimees* 1868, 2 October, 314). Russian as a language known to Estonians

was also used to make the Japanese travel experience comprehensible to the reader (for example using Russian phrases in texts). Apart from quotations in Japanese and Russian, the texts include references to other languages as well, for example to educate the reader on how to pronounce foreign words, as when Jürison teaches the reader: “for gentleman, read: tshentlman” (*Eesti Postimees* 1869, 5 November, 165).

Another principal textual device for rendering the travel experience understandable to the reader, apart from the use of different languages, is the technique of metaphors. As earlier approaches indicate (Harvey 2006 [1990]), references to metaphors are a popular way of communicating complex meanings. The technique of metaphor is primarily used to render certain events comprehensible and explain the immediate experiences of seamen, rather than to make generalisations based on mediated experiences. The metaphorical images presented are therefore not separated from the practices they describe, which is common in late modernism according to previous studies (op cit): this may lead to the transmission of a cultural experience and thereby to stereotypical cultural notions. Similar to earlier studies of historical media texts (see, for example, Tuvikene 2008), this chapter analyses metaphors relating to nature – the type of metaphor mostly used in the travelogues. Metaphors are used to describe activities, for example: “everybody climbed like ants out of the ship to see the new place” (*Eesti Postimees* 1868, 2 October, 313), as well as to explain Japanese traditions, for example: “a hairdo resembling a horn whose tip has been cut off” (op cit, 314). Metaphors related to nature or animals are mainly used to describe people or cultural traditions or customs, such as Jürison’s description of the Japanese speaking about their weapons: “stuttering and belching, some praised their swords, saying they were as much as 500 years old and could cut off two or three heads with one stroke” (op cit, 315). Earlier studies also point to the success of ‘interpreting’ culturally foreign traditions by means of natural metaphors (Masso & Tender 2008).

In addition to linguistic techniques, various textual devices were employed to interpret cultural experiences for the reader’s benefit. In terms of structure, Jürison’s travelogue moves on from initial cultural traditions and geographical descriptions to more elaborate explanations of customs and morals. As well as narratives with a clear introduction, thematic development and conclusion, his texts include isolated, loosely connected digressions. Therefore, his texts cannot be described as systematic feature articles in a certain style because he alternates between the first person singular and plural forms, descriptions and dialogues. With some exceptions, the present tense is used. The text structure of Michelson’s travelogues is of a similar nature: it seems as if the narrator

continuously adds to the text whichever stories come to his mind and whatever scenes capture his attention. At the same time, this does not keep the narrator from concentrating on the material or from trying to draw attention to details or local peculiarities that may be exciting to the reader. In addition, Michelson wants to give advice to Estonian readers back at home or to write about topics that could be educative, for example how production and trade could be organised better by following the Japanese example (*Olevik* 1896, 11 June, 560).

A device that simplifies the reading process is the constant (mental) *interaction between the author and the reader*. For example, Jürison addresses the reader in his texts: “Now, let’s go to see the town” (*Eesti Postimees* 1868, 9 October, 321). Michelson, too, employs such a device, for example when comparing how ships are built in Japan and in Estonia, and tries to give advice to Estonians, setting Japanese practice as a good example (*Olevik* 1896, 24 September, 896). Michelson addresses the reader directly much less than Jürison; however, he turns to the reader on one occasion with the sentence: “Let’s continue on the road, later on paths and, in the end, through the forest” (*Olevik* 1896, 30 April, 423). Another form of interaction between the narrator and the reader used by Jürison is his moralising tone: he may have picked this up earlier when reading *Eesti Postimees*, edited by Johann Voldemar Jannsen,<sup>8</sup> or it could be attributed to his conscious or subconscious desire to imitate Jannsen’s style. In addition to the device of mental interaction, real dialogue between the author and the reader – something quite exceptional for this era – was published in one of the travelogue texts. Specifically, Michelson answers a letter from one of the readers in his travelogue. In his letter, the reader, a Lutheran missionary, demands an explanation for Michelson’s claim that many missionaries come to Japan just to open up new markets for trade. Michelson excuses himself by explaining that he meant only missionaries from the Catholic Church: “May you not look down on blissful and difficult missionary work just because some amongst them have strayed” (*Olevik* 1896, 1 October, 919).

## Summary

The objective of this analysis was to study the development of cultural-geographic relations, concentrating on representations of places in the private stories of Estonian seamen. The analysis enabled us to focus on points of emphasis in constructing Japan, on national and cultural references in mediating travel experiences through personal viewpoints and on the use of linguistic and textual devices in ‘translating’ personal travel experiences.

According to the analysis, early travelogues, unlike the first journalistic geographic descriptions, relied primarily on cultural emphases (for example

mentality and customs). No dominant thematic focus could be found in the travelogues analysed, unlike previous studies (Pekar 2003), which revealed prevalent attention to the female gender role. In addition to providing a formal overview of local everyday life, the judgements given on such matters were quite bold, being based on the authors' personal experiences and cultural comparisons. No reassessment of the cultural stereotypes found in previous analytical studies (Lehmann 1978; Wilkinson 1990; Littlewood 1996) could be traced in the analysed travelogues, probably due to the lack, and inaccessibility, of prior written information sources (for example information sources in various languages were linguistically or practically not available, and single articles about Japan were not published in the Estonian media in such a way as to form constant images to be passed on) and personal cultural contacts. Drawing on comparisons of earlier studies (Masso & Tender 2008), we can state that it is due to the cultural focus on daily life, the dominance of unmediated contact and descriptions of place through social activity (Harvey 2006 [1990]) that these cultural-geographic texts are relevant and understandable in a timeless way.

A variety of linguistic and textual techniques that refer to the Estonian nation are employed to explain events that occur on the narrators' travels (for example references to the national epic, to racial groups with whom Estonians have come into contact and to a similar hierarchical status to those subjugated). The perspective on Japan that was offered to the readers was more descriptive and pragmatically analytical than critical or judgmental. The analysis enables us to conclude that sharing personal cultural experiences mediated by newspapers helped to consolidate the foundation for a national identity and for national unity. As Benedict Anderson (2006) has stated, through the spread of the media and literacy different nations shared information and identified themselves with other people with whom they shared a field of information provided by the media. For example, 'otherness' is used in the texts analysed here as a tool to help with the formation of national identity, in which scenario the Japanese are set up as a good example to Estonians in the way they work and study. When constructing Japan as geographically far-flung 'other', cultural distancing is avoided. This, in turn, creates an excellent framework for the construction of a culturally open-minded nationalism instead of an ethnically centred, exclusive nationalism. By drawing parallels with Yokoyama's research we can claim that 'Japan' became a tool with which journalism could express unrestricted opinions on the journalists' own national identity and country; thus the image of Japan could have been "a precursor of intense nationalism, the components of which were increasingly simple and symbolic images of the country in relation to the outside world" (Yokoyama 1987, 175).

Taking into account the characteristics of the structure of feature articles and the linguistic devices employed by the authors (for example, translation, non-translation and the coining of new words), these travelogues also served as an example for later travelogues and feature articles. The private experiences of Estonian seamen that were made public to Estonian readers constructed a new dimension in the public-private divide within the Estonian media. Through the seamen's travelogues about Japan, the private experience became public when published in Estonian newspapers: description of the 'other' opened a door to description of the 'self'. The direct way in which the writers of these travelogues turn to their audience indicates an awareness of the possible spread and influence of the written personal travel experience.

In conclusion, it can be stated that the travelogues on Japan published in Estonian newspapers were inherently modern, for example originating from a national perspective and based on diverse private cultural experiences. The dominance of spatial practices over representations and moderate use of cultural stereotypes in these private stories, inherent to spatial mediation, points to the transition from a pre-modern period to the modern era (see, for example, Warf 2008) that was taking place in the second half of the 19th century (for example using nation-specific references). At the same time these texts feature certain late-modern elements (for example the dominant dimension being spatial rather than temporal) and therefore pave the way for social change (for example the national movement) and the development of place-related identity (for example Estonian identity). The travelogues analysed confirm the construction of a time-space compression inherent to modernity (Harvey 2006 [1990]), which in Estonia was expressed not so much in an increase in direct contact through technological advance (for example, rail and maritime travel, and later the telegraph) but more in the mediation of private cultural-geographic experiences through the media. We can suppose for future research that the construction of Japan as a faraway positive 'model country' could have helped to spread the new ideas and to speed up modernisation in Estonia.

## Newspapers

*Eesti Postimees* 1868 = Jürison, J. (1868) Eestimehhe teekond ümber mailma "Askoldi" laewa peal, *Eesti Postimees*, 2, 9, 23, 30 October; 6, 13, 20 November.

*Eesti Postimees* 1869 = Jürison, J. (1869) Eestimehhe teekond ümber mailma "Askoldi" laewa peal, *Eesti Postimees*, 12 February; 24 September; 22 October; 5, 19 November; 17, 31 December.



- Olevik* 1896 = Michelson, M. (1896) Kirjad Jaapanist, *Olevik*, 20, 27 February; 5, 12, 19, 23 March; 2, 9, 16, 23, 30 April; 7, 11, 21, 28 May; 4, 11, 18 June; 30 July; 10, 17, 24 September; 1, 8 October; 3 December.
- Olevik* 1900 = Michelson, M. (1900) Kiri Japanist, *Olevik*, 25 January; 7, 14 March.

## References

- Anderson, B. (2006) *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Verso, London, New York.
- Aru, K. (2010) *Eesti toimetajakeskne ajakirjandus kodanikuühiskonna kujundaja ja omakultuuri kandjana ajalehe Postimees (1886–1935) näitel*. Humanitaarteaduste dissertatsioonid. Dissertations on Humanities 37. Tallinna Ülikool, Tallinn. [http://e-ait.tlulib.ee/120/1/aru\\_krista1.pdf](http://e-ait.tlulib.ee/120/1/aru_krista1.pdf) [accessed 10 October 2014].
- Bhabha, H. (2000) *The Location of Culture*. Routledge, London, New York.
- Bornhöhe, E. (1899) *Usurändajate radadel*. Eesti Postimees, Tallinn.
- Fish, S. E. (1982) *Is There a Text in this Class? The Authority of Interpretive Communities*. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, London.
- George, D. F. (2009) Colonization by documentation: British representations of Ireland in maps, archives, and travelogues, *Radical History Review* 104 (spring), 153–158.
- Gubrium, J. F. & Holstein, J. A. (2009) *Analyzing Narrative Reality*. Sage Publications, Los Angeles.
- Harvey, D. (2006 [1990]) *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change*. Blackwell, Cambridge, Oxford.
- Hiiemaa, K. (2006) *Aafrika retseptisioon eestikeelses trükisõnas (kuni 1917)*. Tartu Ülikooli Kirjastus, Tartu.
- Hofstede, G. (2001) *Culture's Consequences: Comparing Values, Behaviors, Institutions, and Organizations Across Nations*. Sage Publications, London.
- Kann, V. (1966) *Jannseni "Perno Postimehhe" geograafiline horisont aastail 1857–1860*. Diploma thesis. Tartu Ülikool.
- Klaassen, O.-M. (1988) *Loenguid Eesti afroaasiaatika kujunemisloost*. Tartu Riiklik Ülikool, Üldaajaloo kateeder, Tartu.
- Klaassen, O.-M. (1995) Esimesed eestikeelsed geograafiaõpikud teadmiste allikana Aasiast ja Aafrikast. – Kaavere, V., Kongo, L. & Tammiksaar, E. (eds) *Teaduse ajaloo lehekülgi Eestist. XI kogumik. Geograafia ajaloost Eestis*, 110–128. Teaduste Akadeemia Kirjastus, Tallinn.
- Lehmann, J.-P. (1978) *The Image of Japan: From Feudal Isolation to World Power, 1850–1905*. Allen & Unwin, London, Boston.
- Littlewood, I. (1996) *The Idea of Japan: Western Images, Western Myths*. Secker & Warburg, London.
- Maaring, K. (1968) *Masingu "Maarahva Näddala-Lehhe" geograafiline horisont 1821–1822*. Diploma thesis. Tartu Ülikool.
- Malkov, E. (1968) *"Tallorahva postimehhe" geograafiline horisont*. Diploma thesis. Tartu Ülikool.

- Mallene, E. (1957) *Reisikirjelduse kujunemine ja areng eesti ajakirjanduses (kuni aastani 1878)*. Diploma thesis. Tartu Ülikool.
- Masso, A. & Tender, T. (2008) About the linguistic constitution of social space: the case of Estonia, *Trames: Journal of the Humanities and Social Sciences* 12 (2), 151–182.
- Paatsi, V. (1993) *Eestlase geograafiline silmaring ja geograafiaõpetuse algus (kuni 1850. aastani)*. Master's thesis. Tartu Ülikool, Kultuurikeskus.
- Peegel, J. (1955) Esimesest eesti algupärasest matkakirjeldusest ja selle autorist, *Looming* 6, 755–761.
- Peegel, J. (1969) Suur maailm tuli üle tarekännise, *Looming* 5, 749–753.
- van Peer, W. & Chatman, S. (2001) *New Perspectives on Narrative Perspective*. State University of New York Press, Albany.
- Pekar, T. (2003) *Der Japan-Diskurs im westlichen Kulturkontext (1860–1920)*. Iudicium, München.
- Pohla, T. (1969) *Ajalehe "Missioni-Leht" geograafiline horisont 1858–1862*. Diploma thesis. Tartu Riiklik Ülikool, Eesti keele kateeder.
- Saal, A. (1899) Aeg ja elu, *Olevik*, 12 October, 945–946.
- Tavares, D. & Le Bel, P.-M. (2008) Forcing the boundaries of genre: the imaginative geography of South America in Luis Sepulveda's *Patagonia Express*, *Area* 40 (1), 45–54.
- Tuvikene, Ü. (2008) *Metaforer i tidningstexter beträffande estniska flyktingar under andra världskrigets slutskede i dagstidningar "Dagens Nyheter" och "Svenska Dagbladet"*. Master's thesis. University of Tartu.
- Ummelas, M. (1977) *Ajalehe "Marahva näddala-leht" geograafiline haare 1821–23, 1825*. Diploma thesis. Tartu Riiklik Ülikool, Eesti keele kateeder.
- Warf, B. (2008) *Time-Space Compression: Historical Geographies*. Routledge Studies in Human Geography 23. Routledge, London, New York.
- Weisenfeld, G. S. (2000) Touring "Japan-as-Museum": NIPPON and other Japanese imperialist travelogues, *Positions: East Asia Cultures Critique* 8 (3), 747–793.
- Wilkinson, E. (1990) *Japan Versus the West: Images and Reality*. Penguin Books, London.
- Yokoyama, T. (1987) *Japan in the Victorian Mind: A Study of Stereotyped Images of a Nation, 1850–80*. Macmillan, London.

## Notes

This chapter was supported by the Estonian Research Council (grants ETF9308 and IUT20-38) and the European Union through the European Regional Development Fund (Centre of Excellence in Cultural Theory).

1 Such a stereotypical nature is inherent not only to representations of Japan, but also to images of other countries presented in the media (see, for example, Tuvikene 2008, where the representations of Estonians in the Swedish media are analysed).

2 A somewhat higher degree of mobility can be observed among certain (professional) groups (soldiers, deportees, re-settlers, missionaries and seamen) and racial groups, which in turn created selective cultural openness among the people of the destination country. Although mobility was present in these groups, the experiences they mediated may not

have been accessible to a large number of people (those who were mobile were not necessarily literate), i.e. experiences were, at first, mediated orally.

3 See, for example, Klaassen 1995.

4 Here the percentages are calculated by the authors on the basis of absolute values presented in Maaring 1968, Pohla 1969, and Malkov 1968.

5 Letters written by Some Kaarli (Carl Gustav Greenwaldt) from Finland and St Petersburg and published in *Perno Postimees* in 1859.

6 For example, compare this to the *Missioni-Leht* newspaper, published from 1858 to 1862: *Missioni-Leht's* geographical scope was quite broad, although descriptions were presented from the perspective of missionary work. Similarly, the very first newspaper, *Marahwa Näddala-Leht*, published from 1821 to 1825, presented not only local news, but also educational items on various geographical regions. In terms of focus, however, these resembled geographical descriptions. See, for example, Pohla 1969 and Ummelas 1977.

7 See, for example, travel notes written by Lydia Koidula in 1876–1879 and by Karl August Hermann in 1876 (Mallene 1957).

8 Johann Voldemar Jannsen (1819–1890), an Estonian journalist and poet, published the first Estonian regular newspaper *Perno Postimees* in 1857.

## **Small stories, trivial events – and strong emotions. Local event narratives in hand-written newspapers as negotiation of individual and collective experiences**

Kirsti Salmi-Niklander

**Abstract.** How can one capture emotions and embodied experiences in historical archival material? I will approach this methodological challenge from the perspectives of folklore studies, narrative and historical research. The sources for reaching these experiences and emotions are hand-written newspapers, which were a popular tradition in Finnish student organisations and popular movements in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. My special interest lies in local event narratives that depict recent events in local communities: meetings, trips, social evenings and informal gatherings. According to my observations, local event narratives can express hidden tensions and slow historical processes, which are rather acted out in apparently trivial events of everyday life than formulated in ideological statements.

In the analysis of local event narratives I have been inspired by the narrative methodology oriented towards “small stories” developed by Michael Bamberg and Alexandra Georgakopoulou (Georgakopoulou 2007; Bamberg & Georgakopoulou 2008). The focus of the research on small stories is on how people use stories in everyday situations “to create a sense of who they are”. Small stories can also be called “narratives-in-interaction”, which Bamberg and Georgakopoulou define as “the sites of engagement where identities are continuously practised and tested out” (2008, 378–379). Modified for historical archive materials the small stories methodology provides possibilities for innovative new readings. In this article I will examine the possibility of developing a more fine-grained analytical model, including analysis of narrative interaction by applying Erving Goffman’s (1981) terminology.

I will present my methodological observations with examples of my research materials: the temperance society, known as Tähti (“The Star”) in Helsinki in the 1890s; and the agrarian youth society of Hiirola in eastern Finland during the first decade of the 20th century. I compare my research

---

Kannike, A., Tasa, M. & Västrik, E.-H. (eds) (2017) *Body, Personhood and Privacy: Perspectives on the Cultural Other and Human Experience*. *Approaches to Culture Theory* 7, 163–178. University of Tartu Press, Tartu.

findings with two studies on narrative strategies in letters and diaries from the same period, written by Martyn Lyons (2013) and Andrew Hassam (1994).

How can one capture emotions and embodied experiences in historical archive materials? This methodological challenge has been approached by researchers working on historical archival materials called “ego-documents” or “life writing”, including autobiographies, correspondence and private diaries. Martyn Lyons emphasises the role of ego-documents in identity formation: autobiographies of 19th-century workers “forged an identity that was both individual and class based” (2013, 17). However, Lyons points out that writing in the 19th century was “rarely private”, but rather was very often shared with other people, read aloud or circulated within the family or community.

The focus of this article is on narrating collective experiences of everyday life in the past. Sources for reaching these experiences are hand-written newspapers, which were a popular tradition in Finnish schools, families, student organisations, and popular movements in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. They were most often produced as one single manuscript copy, and published by being read out aloud at meetings and get-togethers. The collective editorial process meant that many people participated in the creation of individual texts. Hand-written newspapers provide excellent material for studying everyday negotiations on identity and power in historical contexts (Salmi-Niklander 2004; 2005; 2006; 2009; 2011; 2013a; 2013b; 2014).

The term ego-document is hardly apt to hand-written newspapers because writers only rarely depicted their individual experiences and emotions, and the identity of individual writers was in most cases hidden behind pseudonyms. However, hand-written newspapers fit into the category of “ordinary writings”, coined by Lyons (2013, 13–14) and based on the term *écritures ordinaires* by Daniel Fabre (1993). Ordinary writings cover various genres of texts written by people from the rural population and the working classes with little or no formal education.

Lyons points out that ordinary writings reveal the emotions and experience of their writers to only a limited extent: “Proletarian writings were characteristically laconic, pragmatic, concerned more with the price of essential goods than with personal feelings” (2013, 17).

Different observations have been made by other researchers of ordinary writings. The Finnish historian Kaisa Kauranen (2009, 11–14) has observed emotional expressions in diaries written by lower-class men (peasant freeholders, crofters and landless farm workers) in 19th-century rural Finland. In Sweden, most of the peasant journals were matter-of-fact reports of farm work and the weather,

whereas in Finland many writers openly discussed emotions surrounding unhappy love or the death of a child.

Writers of hand-written newspapers utilised a great variety of genres and motifs adopted from printed literature as well as the press and oral tradition. My interest focuses on local event narratives, which along with parodic news and advertisements are genres typical to hand-written newspapers. They depict recent events in local communities: meetings, trips, social evenings and informal gatherings. According to my observations, local event narratives can express hidden tensions and slow historical processes, which are acted out in the apparently trivial events of everyday life rather than formulated in ideological statements. Common narrative strategies can be outlined in local event narratives in spite of their different historical and social contexts.

The narrative methodology oriented towards “small stories” developed by Michael Bamberg and Alexandra Georgakopoulou (Georgakopoulou 2007; Bamberg & Georgakopoulou 2008) has provided new insight into the analysis of local event narratives in hand-written newspapers. I will explore the benefits of applying small-stories methodology to narratives in hand-written newspapers. How does this methodology promote deeper understanding of everyday narrative interaction?

### **Small stories methodology in the analysis of local event narratives**

In folklore studies, the “personal experience narrative” has been defined as a genre of oral narration that does not fit into the traditional folkloristic genres. Sandra K. Dolby (2008 [1989], 15–16) defines personal experience narrative as a prose narrative referring to a personal experience, told in the first person and with untraditional content. Moreover, she argues that personal experience narratives have a dramatic narrative structure, the truth of the narrative is consistently implied and the teller of the story is identical with the narrator (op cit, 18–19).

The local event narratives that I have observed in hand-written newspapers, are in many ways different from personal experience narratives as depicted by Stahl: their plots are usually simple and undramatic, and it is difficult to apply William Labov’s narrative approach in their analysis: complicating action, which according to Labov is an essential story component, is often lacking in these stories (Labov 1972; Patterson 2008, 26). Instead of individual experiences these narratives focus on collective action.

Although local event narratives follow the literary models of parallel genres in printed newspapers, they take a parodic distance to these models. The literary style in local event narratives varies from matter-to-fact reports to a collective

stream of consciousness, in which even the narrator seems to be unaware of what is going to happen next. First person plural (the narrative we) is much more common in local event narratives than first person singular (the narrative I). An omniscient narrator appears in many local event narratives, in which the narrator predicts events or describes emotions, even the dreams of the characters – even though these characters would be real people living in the same community with the writer. I have also observed the use of the unreliable narrator in some local event narratives, which I have called “pseudo-personal-experience-narratives”: the unreliability of the narrator is pointed out by his/her ignorance or dubious morals (Salmi-Niklander 2004, 165–166, 174; 2007, 204–205).

The narrative methodology oriented towards small stories has challenged Labovian narrative theory. Instead of studying narratives as representations of worlds and identities, the focus of small stories research is on how people use stories in everyday situations “to create a sense of who they are” (Bamberg & Georgakopoulou 2008, 382). Small stories can also be outlined as “narratives-in-interaction”, which Bamberg and Georgakopoulou define “as the sites of engagement where identities are continuously practised and tested out” (op cit, 378–379).

Small stories methodology comes close to my own observations on local event narratives, even though Bamberg and Georgakopoulou (2008, 385) base their methodological observations on contemporary interview materials. Small stories can be about very recent or still unfolding events, events that may or may not have actually happened, and they can even be “stories about nothing” (op cit, 381–382; Georgakopoulou 2007, viii). I recognise parallel features in the local event narratives in historical archive materials: meta-narratives in which the narrators attempt to tell a coherent story or to find a suitable subject for a story, but do not succeed. And this is not because of their lacking literary skills, since often these “pseudo-personal-experience-narratives” are told in quite coherent and elaborate language.

Bamberg and Georgakopoulou (2008, 379) have framed the micro-analysis of small stories as “a window into the micro-genetic processes of identities as ‘in-the-making’ or ‘coming-into-being’”. Applying the small stories methodology to local event narratives in hand-written newspapers, one of my main questions is: Is it possible to reach the narrative interaction and everyday practices of identity work, if I only have fragmentary literary documents available and cannot interview the people who have created them? In many cases I don’t even know who they are and if the clues they have given me about their identity and the events would be misleading. However, studying these small clues can provide access to narrative interaction.

One of the key terms in Bamberg and Georgakopoulou's analysis is positioning, which takes place on three different levels. The first level of positioning is related to the story: How characters in the story are positioned in relation to each other, space and time? The second level of positioning is divided into three sublevels, focusing on (1) the interactional accomplishment of narrating, (2) interaction in an interview situation and (3) joint interactional engagement. The third level of positioning is related to participants' construction of each other in terms of teller roles (op cit, 385).

Based on the methodological observations of Bamberg and Georgakopoulou, I have outlined a three-phase model of analysis for local event narratives. I focus on (1) the content of the narrative (characters, events, time and place, means of narration), (2) on the processes of text production, interaction publishing and authorship and (3) on the relations of the narrative with historical events, ideologies and master narratives (Salmi-Niklander 2009).

To approach the narrative interaction in small stories, Bamberg and Georgakopoulou adopted Erving Goffman's (1981) terminology of narrative interaction, which outlines the roles of "the author", "the animator" and "the principal". The author selects the sentiments that are being expressed (op cit, 144), the animator is "the talking machine, the thing that sounds come out of" (op cit, 167), and the principal "believes personally in what is being said" (op cit, 167).

In this article I will examine the possibilities of developing a more fine-grained analytical model of local event narratives, including the analysis of narrative interaction with Goffman's terms. This analysis provides great challenges in the study of archival materials, since I cannot observe the narrative interaction that has taken place in the creation of individual texts. However, some traces of this interaction can be observed in the texts and other archival sources.

In hand-written newspapers, several people participated in the creation of a single text: it was first submitted by the original author, then revised by the editor, and finally published by being read aloud by the reader. Collective negotiation took place in this process, which was only documented on some special occasions when disagreements arose about special texts. For example, the editor could refuse to read a text out if he or she could not accept its content (Salmi-Niklander 2011, 32–33).

Relating the writing process of hand-written newspapers with Goffman's terms, the original writer of the text is the author, and the person who reads the text aloud to the audience could be called the animator. The principal is a more complex term: in some cases the principal comes close to the editor and the author, but sometimes the principal is a fictional construct, and the narrator is unreliable.



## Urban and rural conversation communities

Hand-written newspapers originated among the educated elite. During the 17th and the 18th centuries, they served as an important alternative medium in many European countries, distributing revolutionary ideas (Love 1993; Darn-ton 2000). In Finland, they were revitalised by Finnish students in the early 1850s, when student activities were under the strong control of Czar Nicholas the First and his officialdom, after the revolutionary year of 1848 (Klinge 1967, 11, 135–137). During the last decades of the 19th century, hand-written newspapers were adopted by temperance movement and the agrarian youth movement (Karpio 1938, 449–450; Numminen 1961, 459–471). The heyday of this tradition was the first decades of the 20th century, when it served as a political medium during the periods of russification and in the rising labour movement.

I will analyse local event narratives written by young men and women in two conversational communities in the late 19th and early 20th century. These two case studies provide insight into discussions and tensions among urban and rural young people. The first example is the conversational club of the temperance society known as Tähti ('The Star') in Helsinki. It was a meeting place for men and women as well as for members of different social classes. The society belonged to a nation-wide organisation, Raittiuden Ystävät ('The Friends of Temperance'), which was established in 1883. The number of members varied between 100 and 200 during the 1890s. The society produced a hand-written newspaper, *Kehitys*, with ca 500 pages written during the years 1891–1893 that has been preserved at the National Library (Salmi-Niklander 2005; 2006).

*Kehitys* was edited by young male students and artisans who discussed the temperance ideology as well as philosophical and scientific matters. The Finnish historian Irma Sulkunen (1986) has outlined the temperance ideology in late 19th-century Finland as a new "religion of citizenship" that looked for alternatives to the Christian worldview. The writers of *Kehitys* wanted to create a synthesis of Christianity, ideals for self-education and new achievements within the natural sciences.

It is difficult to identify the individual writers of *Kehitys* since the minutes have not been preserved and most texts were written anonymously or under pseudonyms, which was a common practice in the publication of hand-written newspapers. Many established pen names can be observed in *Kehitys*, including Draba Verna and Voima ('Force'). Many writers used their initials as pen names, a common practice in nineteenth-century printed newspapers.

My other case study is *Virittäjä*, the hand-written newspaper of the Hiirola agrarian youth society. Hiirola was a small village in eastern Finland, close to the

city of Mikkeli. Farms were scattered around a small railway station; a limestone quarry and some small limestone factories provided employment (Laitinen 1992, 477). The birth of the agrarian youth society was closely connected with the period of russification at the turn of the 20th century. The members included farm workers and the offspring of land-owning families and crofters. The house of Mikko Savander, a farmer and a lay assessor, became a second home for young members of the society, and her daughter Elin was one of the most active members. The first members (10 men and 6 women) remained active in the society for more than twenty years. During the years 1906–1908 the number of members increased to 55. New members were recruited among young people from crofter families and farm servants (Salmi-Niklander 2013a, 83).

The hand-written newspaper *Virittäjä* was produced collectively, and all the texts are anonymous or pseudonymous. Each issue was edited by a team of four to six young men and women, but nobody was named editor-in-chief. Some members of the editorial team were changed in each issue, and their names were in most cases mentioned on the front page. The editorial process is quite different from *Kehitys*, in which some active writers dominated the paper, even though they most often hid their identity behind pseudonyms.

I will compare my research findings with two studies on narrative strategies in letters and diaries from the same time period, late 19th and early 20th century. Martyn Lyons (2013) has analysed letters and diaries written by French, Italian and Spanish soldiers from the front during World War I. Letters depict experiences, which are loaded with strong emotions and physical experiences related with death, pain, fatigue, hunger and thirst. However, both the wartime censorship, literary conventions and limited writing competence of the authors set limits on the expression of these emotions. Lyons points out that correspondence was “a highly ritualized and codified form of communication” (2013, 77); both emigrant and soldier letters rather resembled general newsletters than private correspondence. Humour and trench slang were important means of expressing wartime experience in soldiers’ letters. Quite a few soldiers kept diaries at the front: many of them had short entries recording immediate experiences and soldiers’ repetitive tasks (op cit, 59–61).

Another example of the research of narrative strategies in historical materials is Andrew Hassam’s *Sailing to Australia: Shipboard Diaries by Nineteenth-Century British Emigrants* (1994). Hassam observes narrative strategies in shipboard diaries: how did emigrant diarists create personas for themselves, and how did they fill their diaries “when there was nothing to write about”? The diary was an attempt to construct the voyage experience (Hassam 1994, 4). The voyage to Australia set a frame for the narrative, with a beginning, a middle and an end.

The voyage was a great experience demarcating a turning point in writers' life stories. However, on board days could be quite undramatic and uneventful. This promoted detailed observations of fellow passengers and the spatial exclusions between different classes of passengers (op cit, 120–123), although many diaries are quite monotonous and formulaic (op cit, 75–76). The basic entry in an emigrant diary is “a nautical entry”, recording the wind and the weather (op cit, 98–99).

Hassam (op cit, 41) points out that there were two types of emigrant diaries: some of them were copied and sent back home to relatives, while some writers kept diaries only for themselves. The act of promising to keep a diary was an important part of emigrant culture; most often the mother was the addressee of the diary. Sometimes the diary would already be copied on the boat, but more typically after landing (op cit, 30–33). However, it is difficult to read the purpose of the diary in the text: even though many diaries are not openly addressed to other people, this does not indicate that they would have been private diaries. Hassam analyses self-consciousness in shipboard diaries: occasions on which “a diarist becomes aware of her or himself as a narrator” (op cit, 154), when he or she is “faced by the repetition” (op cit, 154) during the uneventful days on shipboard. This process opens a gap between the diarist as a narrator and his/her public persona. In diaries, self-consciousness is expressed as references to the writing process: the time and place and difficulties of writing (op cit, 154–157).

### **Urban stories: meetings and gymnastics**

I will present two examples of local event narratives from both *Kehitys* and *Virtitäjä*, which highlight the tensions between individual and collective perspectives in these communities of young people. The first text was published in *Kehitys* in January 1893, entitled “Features on young people's lives” as the first part of a series of similar stories. I have not been able to identify the writer, who uses the initials F. W. and was obviously a young man. In this case, the author is quite clearly individual, and probably his identity has been recognised by readers and listeners to this story and other members of the community.

However, in the story the narrator never uses the word “I” nor refers to his/her own emotions and experiences. The story provides quite a typical example of a merging we-narrator: the narrator merges into a group of young people, men and women by using the first person plural or the passive tense.

It was a beautiful winter evening. The earth was covered with a few inches of new snow, and the weather was not very cold. We were a large group of

young people sitting in a meeting. The spirits were quite low, since here and there somebody opened their mouths wider than usual and the others looked frequently at their watches. The meeting seemed to last longer than usually, but finally it was over, and it was over 10.30. p.m. A little before the meeting was ended, the young people rushed out making a lot of noise. Little by little we gather on the pavement, where we have a little meeting without paying attention to the pedestrians, who have to creep in the sewer to get by. This time when the ardour was at its height, a voice was heard above others saying: "Wouldn't you all agree with my suggestion?" (*Kehitys*, January 1893).

The variation of past and present tenses is typical to local event narratives: the reader (or the listener) gets the impression of immediate events, as if even the narrator would not know what would happen next. The lively group of young people occupies the street and the other pedestrians have to "creep in the sewer" to get by. One of them (probably a young man) whose words are cited suggests that they all would accompany home miss Ida X, who lives a few kilometres outside the city border. The spontaneous walking tour is described in such detail that I have been able to estimate that Miss Ida X, the only named and individualised person in the story, lived near Annala manor in eastern Helsinki.

The tour proceeds quite slowly, since as soon as they get outside the town gates they start a popular party game in the snow (*leskisillä*), because "nobody wanted to walk without a companion". They meet a group of Salvation Army soldiers and a policeman. The narrator merges to the collective emotions of the group: "Now we forgot all the troubles and the reprimand we would get at home for a late arrival, it was most important that we had fun now" (op cit). Then it turns out that the group is not quite unanimous: the young men would like to go on with the party games but the women start to be tired. Only at the end of the story does the narrator reveal that he is a man, but this only in relation to the collective of "male human beings" who decide to accompany all the women home together. It is obvious that the collective male subject makes the decisions and initiatives. However, the comment on the reprimand to be received at home rather relates to the young women.

How can the narrative interaction in the creation of this small story be analysed? Could the terms animator, author and principal be applied in the analysis? The animator is the person who has read this story at the original meeting. Unfortunately, there are no sources available on this event. The initials F. W. indicate that a single author wrote the story. However, the narration proceeds in strictly collective perspective from the beginning to the end. In Goffman's terms, this

story has an individual author but a collective principal. This form of narrative interaction appears in many local event narratives in hand-written newspapers.

On the third level of analysis, the story relates to historical events, ideologies and master narratives. The story is a counter-narrative to the ideological goals of the temperance movement, since it depicts the meeting only as a boring and low-spirited preparation for the spontaneous and joyful walking tour. However, this joy and spontaneity is, apparently, gained without a drop of alcohol.

The other example, entitled “The Gymnastics Evening” was signed by the pen-name Kaiho, which was one of the two female contributors to *Kehitys*. This is a simple story on the first training of the short-lived women’s gymnastics club organised by the society. However, close reading reveals a complex and symmetrical narrative structure: Active I-narrator – Merging we-narrator – Active I-narrator. The first-person singular narrator frames the story, which changes into the first person plural when the gymnastics training starts. At first, the ‘we’ refers to the narrator and her best friend, who arrive excited at the first training of women’s gymnastics. The narrator depicts the enjoyment and good mood of the training, continuing in first person plural, which now includes the whole group of women. The young women are laughing at themselves and their clumsiness: “It was fun, so incredibly fun to be able to do the gymnastics” (*Kehitys*, 16 March 1893). In the middle there is a sequence in which the narrator goes back into her memories, which are depicted as collective memories with “zero person” (Hakulinen et al 2004, 1284):

One felt that one was still a schoolchild, the present time vanished for a moment, moments from dear childhood came into one’s mind, when just like now our teacher taught us the first movements in the spacious school hall. How much less one knew of the world then; how many castles in the air, which one had built thereafter on the future, had the wind taken far away, only leaving disappointed hopes. Thousands, maybe hundreds of thousands (*Kehitys*, 16 March 1893).

After training, the young women come outside and see “a black group” of young men. The narrator is still in her school memories and thinks they are a bunch of schoolboys about to throw snowballs at the girls. However, this group turns out to be the young men of the society who have come to see that the girls get home safely (Salmi-Niklander 2006, 210–211).

Kaiho’s story resembles the previous example, since it has an individual author but a collective principal. This tension is related with the ideological context of the story. Memories of school gymnastics are depicted as collective memories

that create a temporary *communitas*, an intensive feeling of unity, in the group of young women. Actually, these memories divided the group of young women: only those who had attended girls' or co-ed secondary school would have memories of spacious halls for gymnastics. Those who had attended primary school would probably have done some simple movements in classrooms or in the schoolyard. Women's gymnastics was one form of the new activities which expressed the changing position of women in late-19th-century Finnish society (Laine 1984, 247–254). The university opened up to female students during the 1880s and the 1890s, and new professions became available for women. The vision of the young men waiting outside the gymnastics hall suggests that these processes caused suspicion and caution among the men.

### **Rural stories: picnics and fairs**

The young people in the agrarian youth society in Hirola had received more limited schooling than members of the temperance society *Kehitys*. The literary competence of the writers varied: some could produce crafted, though conventional, stories or essays using nationalistic discourse with its allegorical observations of nature (Salmi-Niklander 2013a, 84).

On the other hand, there are many local event narratives in *Virittäjä* that are comparable to the one I discussed in the previous section. One of them was a short and simple story, entitled “A summer retreat”, published in September 1907 (Salmi-Niklander 2013b). It has no authorial name and the issue was edited by a group of two women and three men. In Goffman's terms, the story has both a collective author and a collective principal. The narration proceeds in the first person plural from the beginning to the end, depicting the very simple events of the summer retreat: a group of young people gather on a beautiful morning in July and walk about 5 kilometres to visit a crofters' cottage. They manage to cook tea on a stove, and have their meeting in a barn because of a sudden rain. This meeting includes reading out the hand-written newspaper. When the rain stops they have a running contest. A man appears with some musical machine (an accordion or a barrel organ) and suggests that they could dance, but instead they decide to start heading back home.

Nothing happens in this story in the Labovian sense, but a closer analysis of narrative positions reveals some interesting complexities. The group of young people remains a unified group from beginning to end, whether cooking tea or chopping firewood. As a contrast, the two other actors in the story, the lady from the crofter's cottage and the man with the music machine, are gendered individuals. This simple story can be interpreted as a counter-narrative to

the gender-segregated practices typical to Finnish agrarian life in which both men and women had different tasks. The popular movement provided possibilities to question these traditional segregations.

A story with a more individual perspective was published in the third issue of *Virittäjä* (March 1906), edited by five young men (Salmi-Niklander 2013, 84–85). However, the individual perspective is a complex issue. This story was signed with the gender-neutral pseudonym Punkaharju (referring to a scenic place in eastern Finland) and depicts the I-narrator's trip to a fair at Mikkeli. The story is narrated in the first person, but only at the very end does it become apparent that the narrator is a man. The end is anti-climactic: the narrator looks forward to the amusements of the fair, he is impressed by the merry-go-round and pretty girls, but does not dare to fulfil his dreams:

As evening was approaching the pretzels were selling well; the boys bought girls pretzels as large as roots in the swamp, and the girls had their hands full when they left the stalls. I didn't have the courage to say to anyone: will you have a pretzel if I buy you one? I thought that tomorrow I'd be a brave fellow like the others, but when tomorrow came I walked about, nothing came out of it, the day passed in vain like yesterday and that's all (*Virittäjä*, March 1906).

This story, like many others in *Virittäjä*, was obviously written by a person with little experience of writing. What is the position of the narrative: an active I-narrator depicting his own experiences or an unreliable narrator (Rimmon-Kenan 1983, 101)? Is the awkwardness of the story a conscious parodic element, or an indicator of the author's limited literary skills?

Interpreted with Goffman's terminology, this text provides a complex case: the pseudonym indicates an individual author, but the paper was edited by a collective team of five young men. And is the narrator the principal of the story? In this case I would call the I-narrator a "fictional principal" – or, applying Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan's term (1983), "an unreliable principal". Although the story is presented as a personal experience narrative, the naivety of the narrator rather makes him a fictional character.

I have found some background information for the young men in the editorial team: three of them were founding members of the society, but two of them, Ferdinand and Juhani Wesalainen, had joined the society in 1906, vanishing from the membership records after two years. It is quite probable that they have been young farm workers who were actively recruited into the society. The founding members, sons and daughters of land-owning families, patronised the new members, which was expressed in *Virittäjä*. The first issues included a

few apparently parodic texts, fictional letters from simple country men to their sweethearts, where the parody is created through a contrast of ornate metaphoric language and the simple events of country life. I have interpreted the story of the fair as a counter-narrative, both to these parodic texts and to stories in which simple events such as skiing trips are interpreted through nationalistic ideology (Salmi-Niklander 2009, 17–19).

### **Individual and collective perspectives**

Local event narratives can be interpreted as “thick descriptions” in the terms developed by Clifford Geertz (1973): they provide the means for the ‘diagnosis’ of communicative and interactive events. Narrators of local event narratives have double roles as actors and observers. *Virittäjä* and *Kehitys* both provide excellent examples of dialogic and collective writing that express hidden tensions in the community. In *Kehitys*, individual writers created different authorial identities and styles with pen names and narrative positions. In *Virittäjä*, the editing process was collective and no individual writers stood out from the crowd. Individual voices can be observed in *Virittäjä*, too, although they are fictionalised with pseudonyms and narrative strategies: stories of fairs and skiing trips are probably based on personal experiences, although these experiences are distanced using metaphor, irony and parody.

The stories I have analysed discuss embodied experiences: heat and cold, sounds and visions, eating and drinking, physical movement. These experiences were depicted very soon after the events, which gives them a tone of immediacy. Although the events in these stories are simple and apparently trivial, strong emotions of joy, hope and disappointment are embedded in them. Emotions and embodied experiences can be studied in letters and diaries, but the collective writing process of hand-written newspapers gives them special value: these stories are created in interaction, and these emotions and experiences are shared in a community. However, some experiences divide communities: stories of girls’ gymnastics training and a young man’s visit to a fair provide good examples of this.

How does the narrative methodology of small stories promote the analysis of local event narratives in archival materials? Analysing the roles of the author, the principal and the animator in historical materials is challenging, but these terms can be helpful in the process of analysing individual and collective emotions and experiences. They provide tools for the comparison of stories from different time periods and communities.



The comparison with the shipboard diaries studied by Andrew Hassam and soldiers' writing studied by Martyn Lyons shows some similarities and differences. The self-referential writing that Hassam observes in shipboard diaries comes out now and then in hand-written newspapers. However, very seldom do the writers of hand-written newspapers refer to their individual writing processes: the self-referential expressions are rather metanarrative comments on the 'tellability' of the story: Is this story worth telling? How is it possible to find a suitable topic for a story? Lyons comments that soldiers' diaries and letters often "do not distinguish the trivial from the significant" (2013, 60). But is the difference between the trivial and the significant a researcher's evaluation? I have observed that writers of hand-written newspapers depict apparently trivial events during periods of dramatic historical change. But are these events trivial after all?

Even though the experiences depicted in my case studies are not related to traumatic experiences or great turning points in life histories, they have been written during periods of change in these communities of young people: the temperance society Tähti and the agrarian youth society in Hiirola. In both communities, the initiative for the hand-written newspaper in community coincided with the arrival of new social and political tensions. In Helsinki, these tensions were generated by the relationships of students, artisans and working-class members; in Hiirola, they were formed by the relationships of farm-owning and landless families, fuelled by the political struggles in early 20th-century Finland. The changing position of women was one of the big issues in both communities. These processes were acted out in small everyday events and negotiations, and hand-written newspapers provided a medium for processing these tensions.

### Archival sources

Provincial Archives of Mikkeli: Archives of the Agrarian Youth Society of Hiirola, hand-written newspaper *Virittäjä*, 1906–1907.

The National Library of Finland, Manuscript department: Temperance Society Tähti, hand-written newspaper *Kehitys*, 1891–1893.

### References

- Bamberg, M. & Georgakopoulou, A. (2008) Small stories as a new perspective in narrative and identity analysis, *Text & Talk* 28 (3), 377–396.
- Darnton, R. (2000) An early information society. News and the media in eighteenth-century Paris, *The American Historical Review* 105 (1), 1–35.
- Dolby, S. K. (2008 [1989]) *Literary Folkloristics and the Personal Narrative*. Trickster Press, Bloomington.

- Fabre, D. (ed) (1993) *Écritures ordinaires*. P.O.L./Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris.
- Geertz, C. (1973) *The Interpretation of Cultures. Selected Essays*. Basic Books, New York.
- Georgakopoulou, A. (2007) *Small Stories, Interaction and Identities*. Studies in Narrative 8. John Benjamins Publishing Company, Amsterdam, Philadelphia.
- Goffman, E. (1981) *Forms of Talk*. University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia.
- Hakulinen, A., Vilkuna, M., Korhonen, R., Koivisto, V., Heinonen, T. R. & Alho, I. (2004) *Iso suomen kielioppi*. Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura, Helsinki.
- Hassam, A. (1994) *Sailing to Australia. Shipboard Diaries of Nineteenth-Century British Emigrants*. Manchester University Press, Manchester, New York.
- Karpio, V. (1938) *Raittiuden Ystävät 1883–1933*. K. J. Gummerus, Jyväskylä, Helsinki.
- Kauranen, K. (2009) Menneisyyden muistiinpanojen kirjo. – Kauranen, K. (ed) *Työtä ja rakkautta. Kansanmiesten päiväkirjoja 1834–1937*. Kansanelämän kuvauksia 75, 6–21. Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura, Helsinki.
- Klinge, M. (1967) *Ylioppilaskunnan historia. Toinen osa 1853–1871: Kansalaismielen synty*. WSOY, Porvoo, Helsinki.
- Labov, W. (1972) *Language in the Inner City. Studies in the Black English Vernacular*. Basil Blackwell, Oxford.
- Laine, L. (1984) *Vapaaehtoisten järjestöjen kehitys ruumiinkulttuurin alueella Suomessa 1854–1917*. Liikuntatieteellisen Seuran julkaisuja 93 A. Liikuntatieteellinen Seura, Helsinki.
- Laitinen, M. (1992) Mikkelin yhdistyselämän historia. – Vihola, T. (ed) *Mikkelin maalaiskunnan kirja*, 471–548. Mikkelin maalaiskunta, Mikkeli.
- Love, H. (1993) *Scribal Publication in Seventeenth-Century England*. Clarendon Press, Oxford.
- Lyons, M. (2013) *The Writing Culture of Ordinary People in Europe, c. 1860–1920*. Cambridge University Press, New York.
- Numminen, J. (1961) *Suomen nuorisoseuraliikkeen historia I. Vuodet 1881–1905*. Otava, Helsinki.
- Patterson, W. (2008) Narratives of events: Labovian narrative analysis and its limitations. – Andrews, M., Squire, C. & Tamboukou, M. (eds) *Doing Narrative Research*, 22–40. Sage, Los Angeles, London, New Delhi, Singapore.
- Rimmon-Kenan, S. (1983) *Narrative Fiction. Contemporary Poetics*. Methuen, London.
- Salmi-Niklander, K. (2004) *Itsekasvatusta ja kapinaa. Tutkimus Karkkilan työläisnuorten kirjoittavasta keskusteluyhteisöstä 1910- ja 1920-luvuilla*. Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura, Helsinki.
- Salmi-Niklander, K. (2005) Käsin kirjoitettua. 1800-luvun lopun nuoret naiset historian opiskelijoina ja tulkitsijoina. – Katainen, E., Kinnunen, T., Packalén, E. & Tuomaala, S. (eds) *Oma pöytä. Naiset historiankirjoittajina Suomessa 1800- ja 1900-luvulla*, 75–97. Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura, Helsinki.
- Salmi-Niklander, K. (2006) Tapahtuma, kokemus ja kerronta. – Fingerroos, O., Haanpää, R., Heimo, A. & Peltonen U.-M. (eds) *Muistitietotutkimus – Metodologisia kysymyksiä*. Tietolipas 214, 197–220. Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura, Helsinki.
- Salmi-Niklander, K. (2007) Bitter memories and burst soap bubbles. Irony, parody and satire in the oral-literary tradition of Finnish working-class youth at the beginning

- of the twentieth century, *Humour and Social Protest. International Review of Social History* 52 (11), 189–207.
- Salmi-Niklander, K. (2009) Pienet kertomukset, suuret merkitykset. Kerronta, identiteetti ja vuorovaikutus käsinkirjoitetuissa lehdissä, *Kasvatus & Aika* 3, 7–23.
- Salmi-Niklander, K. (2011) Sanelman sisaret. Sosiaalisen tekijyyden strategioita nuorten työläisnaisten suullis-kirjallisissa verkostoissa 1910–1920-luvuilla. – Kemppainen, I., Salmi-Niklander, K. & Tuomaala, S. (eds) *Kirjoitettu nuoruus. Aikalaistulkintoja 1900-luvun alkupuolen nuoruudesta*, 20–46. Nuorisotutkimusseura, Helsinki.
- Salmi-Niklander, K. (2013a) Monologic, dialogic, collective. Modes of writing in hand-written newspapers. – Kuismin, A. & Driscoll, M. (eds) *White Field, Black Seeds. Nordic Literacy Practices in the Long Nineteenth Century*, 76–88. Finnish Literature Society, Helsinki.
- Salmi-Niklander, K. (2013b) Käsinkirjoitetut lehdet. Yhteisöllisen kirjoittamisen ensiaskeleita. – Laitinen, L. & Mikkola, K. (eds) *Kynällä kyntäjät. Kansan kirjallistuminen 1800-luvun Suomessa*, 384–412. Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura, Helsinki.
- Salmi-Niklander, K. (2014) Adventurers, flâneurs, and agitators. Travel stories as means for marking and transgressing boundaries in nineteenth and early twentieth-century Finland, *Culture Unbound: Journal of Current Cultural Research* 6 (2), 1145–1164.
- Sulkunen, I. (1986) *Raittius kansalaisuskontona. Raittiusliike ja järjestäytyminen 1870-luvulta suurlakon jälkeisiin vuosiin*. Historiallisia tutkimuksia 134. Suomen Historiallinen Seura, Helsinki.

## Acknowledgements

The writing of this article was funded by a fellowship at the Academy of Finland (2011–2016) *Between voice and paper: authorial and narrative strategies in oral-literary traditions* (WPS1251289).

## Meaning-making and ethnicity in different contexts: Russians in Estonia, Russia and Kazakhstan

Triin Vihalemm, Cynthia S. Kaplan

**Abstract.** This chapter analyses how Russians living in different political, economic, and cultural contexts have made meaning of their biographical challenges and how they tell their private stories in the changed circumstances after the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the new nation-building projects. It looks at how they adopt, reject or re-work the publicly circulating identification meanings. The analysis is based on unique qualitative evidence from interviews conducted in Estonia, Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation: from the capital city of Moscow and the Republic of Tatarstan, a federal subject in Russia. These countries offer increasingly differing contexts for development of Russian identity in terms of national policies, relationships with titular groups and publicly circulating identification narratives. The (non)variation of ethnic identity interpretation in different contexts and the impact of contextual factors in the private meaning-making tales are the focal point of the analysis and discussion. Russians' understanding of identity diverges in the three cases under study, with Russians in Estonia giving prominence to the Russian language, Russians in Tatarstan evidencing a more Soviet understanding distinguished from that of Russians in Moscow, and Russians in Kazakhstan adopting a hybrid approach embracing local, ethnic and civic dimensions.

### Introduction

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the question of whether Russians outside the Russian Federation would develop distinctive Russian identities was one of both scholarly and political concern. A number of prominent scholars, such as Pal Kølsto (1996, 613) and David Laitin (1998), theorised that Russians living outside the Russian Federation might create new group identities the nature of which would reflect the contexts in which they lived. Prominent among the factors defining this process would be the nature of the non-Russian dominant group

---

Kannike, A., Tasa, M. & Västriik, E.-H. (eds) (2017) *Body, Personhood and Privacy: Perspectives on the Cultural Other and Human Experience*. *Approaches to Culture Theory* 7, 179–211. University of Tartu Press, Tartu.

in the independent state and the type of state it wished to construct. A number of different group identities were suggested: a Russian identity which acculturated, or even assimilated the new majority culture; a diasporic Russian identity connected with the Russian homeland; a civic identity associated with the person's state of residence, and a new Russian identity self-defined by those living outside the homeland (Berg & van Meurs 2002; Laitin 2003; Brubaker 2011). In addition, the new, transformed, Soviet political identity on the basis of nostalgic feelings that characterise the transition culture (Kennedy 2002) is a possible option. Most of these hypotheses were built on the basis of theory and early empirical evidence collected mainly in the 1990s. This analysis is based on the empirical evidence collected at the end of the second decade of post-Soviet nation-building in the successor states and in the Russian Federation when the new national and international configurations of power were somewhat stabilised, and before the rise of the new political tensions and strong ideological activation of Russia. The authors regard this period to be an important 'layover' in order to explore the possible contextual influences on the identity building processes of the emigrant population and its offspring.

One way of evaluating the evolution of identity among Russians living in the post-Soviet world is based on their relations with the titular population and its central nation-building attributes. Does the Russian population know the new state language? Do Russians socialise with the former 'titulars' and live integrated lives in which cultural habits and values are increasingly shared? Do some formerly defining characteristics of Russians, such as Russian Orthodoxy,<sup>1</sup> change in their importance in relation to identity?

Such characteristics tell only part of the story of identity change. Diasporas may adapt to the culture of the dominant group. State policies and economic conditions can provide incentives influencing the acquisition of habits and skills like language, which may contribute over time to a new self-understanding. We pose the question of how Russians living in Estonia, Kazakhstan and Tatarstan understand what defines their identities. How do they imagine what makes them Russian? We investigate this through a qualitative textual analysis of interviews conducted among self-identified Russians in Estonia, Tatarstan, Kazakhstan, and in the city of Moscow.<sup>2</sup>

One thing agreed upon by most scholars is that context affects identity. In part this reflects structural characteristics, such as demography, linguistic and cultural differences, and religion. These factors help define borders between groups, which may be hard boundaries such as in Kazakhstan, or softer cultural boundaries as in Estonia (Brubaker 2011, 1788–1789). Another factor affecting identity is the nation-building strategies adopted after the collapse of the Soviet

Union and the identifying attributes and narratives accompanying them and put into circulation in public spaces. These factors may 'activate' particular identity attributes, increasing their salience (Chandra 2012, 11–22) and thereby also initiating re-telling of private (family) stories and people's re-position of themselves in relation to the surrounding groups and their public meaning-making activities.

As Estonia adheres to the ethnolinguistic model of state-building, Russian immigrants and their descendants living in Estonia have experienced drastic changes in their social positions and future possibilities. Although Kazakhstan officially follows a more civic concept of nation-building, the power elites also use, in parallel, the policy of 'Kazakhisation', which is reflected, among other things, in the language and re-migration policies. Russians living in Tatarstan have also experienced the ethnic mobilisation of Volga Tatars, paired with governments' attempts to gain greater independence from Moscow during the Yeltsin era of the 1990s and during Putin's re-centralisation policies.

We first briefly review the genesis and rationale of the nation-building policies of Estonia, Kazakhstan and Tatarstan, paying particular attention to the practices of institutional agents as they relate to language policy implementation. Against this background, we look comparatively at the peoples' ideological rationalisations and explanations of their ethnic descent, diverging features and (changed) power positions vis-à-vis the titular ethnic groups (Estonians, Kazakhs and Tatars).

### **The context of change: structural factors**

The structural characteristics of the cases examined result from naturally occurring differences as well as from Tsarist and Soviet policies. Estonia before World War II had only a small ethnic Russian population, 8.23% according to the 1934 census (Poleshchuk 2009, 11), but by 1989 Russians constituted 30.3% of the population. In Kazakhstan as recently as 1959 the majority of the population was non-Kazakh with only 30% ethnic Kazakhs (Census 1959; Itogi 1959). This was a product not only of non-Kazakh migration to Kazakhstan, but also the tremendous loss of ethnic Kazakhs caused by forced sedentarisation during the 1930s (Fierman 2005, 403). In Tatarstan, the Russian population began arriving after the fall of the Kazan Khanate in 1552. A large portion of ethnic Russians living in Estonia and Kazakhstan and the overwhelming number in Tatarstan were born, or have lived most of their lives, in these countries (Estonian Citizen Survey 1991; 1992; Rybakovskii 1995; Peyrouse 2008).

In most post-Soviet successor states, the Russian communities were formed in the course of immigration waves that were very different in nature, including

forced, semi-voluntary and voluntary migration. In addition to migration, in Kazakhstan, borders shifted. The Russian community's historical memories of immigration are a potential factor influencing subjective identity, especially in how individuals understand the meaning of 'homeland'.

Estonia, Kazakhstan, and Tatarstan are characterised by significant proportions of Russians in the population: 24.8% in Estonia (Population and Housing Census 2011), 23.7% in Kazakhstan (Census 2009), and 39.7% in Tatarstan (Census 2010), according to the latest census data. All have attempted to change their asymmetric bilingualism from the Soviet era, that is, the minimal use of titular languages among Russians and the increased use of Russian among titular populations, by restoring the status and functionality of the autochthonous languages (Zardykhan 2004; Hogan-Brun et al 2009; Makarova 2009b). The language requirements in Estonia and Kazakhstan have hindered applications for jobs in public administration from the Russian-speaking population. The share of Russians in public administration is proportionally lower than that of the eponymous populations (Sarsembayev 1999; Zardykhan 2004; Lindemann 2011). Thus, although all three cases examined reflect a response to the Russification of the Soviet era, new policies favouring titular languages and their legitimising public discourses vary significantly.

The population trends in Estonia and Kazakhstan show substantial declines in the proportion of Russians, due to emigration (Meshimbaeva 2008, 672; Zabi-rova 2008, 176–188; Smailova 2011). The proportion of ethnic Russians in Estonia declined from 30.3% to 24.8% between 1989 and 2011 due to migration and a decline in the birthrate (Eesti rahvastik 1996, 56; Population and Housing Census 2011). In Kazakhstan the situation is a product of both emigration by Russians and immigration by ethnic Kazakhs, Oralmans (Suleimenova 2010). Between 1999 and 2009 the ethnic Kazakh population grew by 26% while the Russian population declined by 15.3% (Suleimenova 2010, 103; Smailova 2011). And this is after a decline of 26.1% among Russians between 1989 and 1999 (Zabi-rova 2008, 181). Kazakh rural migration compounded the effect of Russian emigration. The urban Kazakh population increased between 1989 and 1999 with a resulting increase in those who used Kazakh as their primary language (Fierman 2012, 1089). The demographic structure of Kazakhstan also reflects the emigration of ethnic Germans and a high Kazakh birthrate. The ethnic balance has shifted in Almaty and Astana (Suleimenova 2010, 104). The demographic structure of Tatarstan differs from Kazakhstan and Estonia due to the immigration of Tatars and other Muslims from Central Asia, not Russian emigration (Gabbrakhmanova 2010; Drobizheva 2013, 122).

**Figure 1a. Structural characterisation of the Russian populations in Estonia, Kazakhstan and Tatarstan**

	Share of...		Share of ethnic Russians who know the titular language
	... ethnic Russians	... titular groups	
<b>Estonia</b>		<b>Estonians</b>	
1989	30.3	61.4	27.0
2011	24.8	69.7	36.0
<b>Tatarstan</b>		<b>Tatars</b>	
1989	43.3	48.5	1.2 (Urban)
2010	39.7	53.2	3.6 (2.5 Urban; 7.0 Rural)
<b>Kazakhstan</b>		<b>Kazakhs</b>	
1989	37.8	29.7	0.9
1999	30.0	53.3	15.0
2009/2010	23.7	63.1	25.3 Understand: 1.6 – Fluent 6.0 – Read & Write 10.8 – Everyday speech

**Figure 1b. Religious affiliation of the Russian populations in Estonia, Kazakhstan and Tatarstan**

Share of religions among ethnic Russians &amp; Titulars

	1989	1990	1992	2002	2009	2011
<b>Estonia</b>						
Orthodox Russians	30		62			80
Lutheran Estonians			39			40
<b>Tatarstan</b>						
Orthodox Russians (Urban)		28				84
Muslim Tatars (Urban)		34				84
<b>Kazakhstan</b>						
Orthodox Russians				62	92*	
Muslim Kazakhs				82	98	

\* Christian Russians

**Sources:** Life in Estonia 1989; Krivko et al 1999, 11; Telebaev 2003, 103; Dave 2007, 61; Meshimbaeva 2008; Zabirova 2008, 239; Makarova 2010, 146–147; IM 2011; Smailova 2011; Population and Housing Census 2011; Drobizheva 2013, 111; Tõnurist 2013; Tatstat

Knowledge of the titular languages is emblematic of group status. Shifts in language knowledge may occur for various reasons, such as the population changes noted above, or state policies in education, or employment opportunities.



Ethnic Russians in Estonia who were able to understand, speak and write Estonian increased from 27% in 1989 to 36% in 2011 (see Figure 1a). Younger cohorts evidence an even higher percentage of people with knowledge of Estonian (IM 2011). In Kazakhstan, ethnic Russian knowledge of Kazakh increased from 15% in 1999 to as high as 25.3% who said that they understood spoken Kazakh, although only 8.8% were able to read and 6.3% write (Sultanov et al 2010, 41; Smailova 2011, 22). In Tatarstan, there was relatively little change among urban Russian knowledge of Tatar. In 1989 1.2% of urban Russians claimed to know Tatar. By 2010 this had increased to only 2.5% of urban Russians (see Figure 1a). The data show that titular language knowledge increased in Estonia and Kazakhstan, but evidence little change in Tatarstan.

Finally, religion can affect how groups understand their identities. During the Soviet era, religion primarily served as a cultural marker and religious practice was discouraged. Religious traditions differ in the cases examined. Estonia at the time of the Soviet collapse was secular with religion exerting little influence on identity. Ethnic Estonians, primarily Lutherans, have very low levels of formal religious affiliation (Population and Housing Census 2011; Ringvee 2014, 509). Religion is more important among Russians with 47% identifying themselves with Russian Orthodoxy (Paert 2013, 62; Ringvee 2014). According to the survey *Mina. Maailm. Meedia* (Me. The World. The Media 2011) 18% of self-identified Russians noted that they had become more religious in recent years, 32% said that they are religious, although they do not attend church or follow rituals, and 27% stated that they were observant. An additional 20% of Russians, who do not consider themselves religious, still followed some religious rituals and attended church (op cit). This is a big change from 1989 when only 30% of Russians indicated a religious affiliation (Life in Estonia 1989). Thus, for Estonian Russians religion has an important role to play in identity – 86% of ethnic Russians regard religion to be an important part of ethnic culture, history and tradition and a link with the ancestors (Me. The World. The Media 2011; see Figure 1b).

The situation in Tatarstan and Kazakhstan where titular nationalities are traditionally Muslim differs from that of Estonia. In Kazakhstan, religion serves primarily as an ethno-cultural marker. By the early 2000s, although identification with religious traditions increased among both Russians and Kazakhs, approximately 42% of Russians said that they were not observant (Telebaev 2003, 103). Sabit Zhusupov (2008, 468) noted that the growth of religion in the 1990s was extensive, not intensive. While religious identification has grown in Kazakhstan, it remains primarily an ethnic marker with a much lower increase in religious observance.

In Tatarstan religious identification and religiosity has grown. Religious observance grew among Tatars during the 1990s and among Russians during the 2000s (Musina 2007, 181; Drobizheva 2013, 143). Among Tatars in the 2011–2012 period 84% identified themselves as believers with half being observant. 92.1% of Russians in Tatarstan considered themselves Orthodox, but only 46.7% considered themselves believers who attempt to observe traditions and practices. 45% were believers who did not observe traditions and practices (Drobizheva 2013, 149–150). Among Russians, religious identification began to play a bigger role in ethnic identity during the 2000s (op cit, 144).

### **Identity building: ethnic or civic?**

Soviet civic identity was politically constructed according to the principle of the state determining the nation (Castells 1997; Pilkington 1998; Kølsto 1999; 2000). No clear ethnic descent or territorial boundaries distinguished Russian ethnicity from political allegiance. The dissolution of the Soviet Union and the often exclusionary nation-building process of its successor states opened multiple paths for further identity development based on different configurations between civic and ethno-cultural (dis)engagements (for example, Linz & Stepan 1994; Melvin 1995; Laitin 1998; Pilkington 1998; Smith et al 1998; Kølsto 2000; Kosmarskaia 2006).

Estonia, Kazakhstan, and Tatarstan present different approaches to statehood and relevant identifying ideologies. Estonia adheres to the ethnolinguistic model of state-building. Kazakhstan until recently has followed a more civic concept of nation-building stressing the 'polyethnic' nature of society. In Tatarstan, as a Republic within Russia state-building reflected its degree of sovereignty. During the 1990s Tatarstan increased its sovereignty at the expense of the central government, although since 2000 its sovereign rights have decreased. And, of course, the Russian state itself has changed. The trauma of Soviet collapse reintroduced the question of ethnic identity and its relationship to the state and to Russian Orthodoxy. Russian state policy under Putin has – already by the time of the study – increasingly stressed Russian nationalism. We begin by reviewing nation-building policies with particular attention to language and religious issues.

**Estonia.** In the 1990s Estonia returned to the nation-building process that had been interrupted by World War II and the Soviet occupation with the main aim of re-establishing the Estonian language as a fully functioning national language. Citizenship legislation rests de facto mainly on the premise of language with access to education and the labour market strongly shaped by language knowledge (EHDR 2010/2011; IM 2011; Lindemann 2011; Toomet 2011). If in the first

decade the Citizenship law (1995) and the Aliens' Act (1993) promoted an ethnic democracy, over time multicultural democracy based on individual choice and later cultural pluralism was adopted as a policy of integration (State Integration Plan 2008–2013).

Estonian minorities' assessment of their socio-economic status reflects their state language competence (EHRD 2010/2011). This means that opportunities for higher social status and better pay and careers for Russian-speakers is correlated with good or poor command of Estonian. Russians report a significant shift towards the use of Estonian at the expense of Russian (op cit, 42). Such a trend can be explained by professional requirements, poor knowledge of Russian by younger Estonians resulting in the need to use Estonian in order to communicate and by the higher status of Estonian in the public sphere.

The use of language in public communication is tightly regulated in Estonia. According to the Estonian Language Act (revised in 2011), information provided in public places by public and private actors should be only in Estonian, or with a translation into Estonian. At an everyday level, however, Russian-language subspaces exist and the Russian-speaking population follows television broadcasts from Russia (Vihalemm & Hogan-Brun 2013). Thus, Russian practices in the public and private spheres may differ.

Estonian language competence being so central turns peoples' attention to their mother tongue. The pattern of identity construction utilised among ethnic Estonians is centred on language and culture (Castells 1997, 356). It is hypothesised that some Russian-speakers may 'take over' this identity construction pattern from Estonians, making Russian a central attribute of positive self-esteem (Vihalemm & Masso 2007).

State policy towards religion can create borders between ethnic groups. Estonian policy towards religion has been described as a "liberal marketplace" (Ringvee 2008) observing separation of state and church. Religious organisations are registered (Churches and Congregations Act 2002; Ringvee 2008, 186), but there is no special status given to Lutheranism (op cit, 191). Religious education in public schools is non-denominational.

**Kazakhstan.** In Kazakhstan, the official policy proclaims 'multi-ethnic' Kazakhstani identity, and uses it as a civic focus for nation-building (Fierman 2012, 1091). The basis upon which this 'civic identity' is constructed has changed since independence as reflected in official state language policies and their implementation. Over time the Kazakh nation, its language, and culture have served increasingly as the basis for new Kazakhstanis (Dave 2007).

The status of the Kazakh language was first upgraded in 1989 (Karin & Chebotarev 2002; Suleimenova & Smagulova 2005). One of the Language Act's aims is to switch to Kazakh in all state affairs, a goal which has been deferred multiple times (Kulzhanova 2012). While Kazakh is the official State language, Russian at first retained its status as a language of inter-ethnic communication. Its status is also ensured through the right of local self-governments to use Russian and the right of each citizen to use their native language (Suleimenova & Smagulova 2005, 78; Fierman 2012, 1083). The 1997 version of the Language Act was much more pro-Kazakh in its declarations; however, the initial plan to establish language requirements for non-state professions was dropped (Suleimenova & Smagulova 2005, 68; Aminov et al 2010; Fierman 2012, 1082; Kulzhanova 2012). Lack of knowledge of Kazakh among both Russians and many educated Kazakhs along with close economic ties with Russia initially made a civic Kazakhstani nation a more palatable option than an ethnicity based nation-state. Thus, many of the more restrictive aspects of language policy requiring the use of Kazakh have either not become law, or are not enforced.

Nevertheless, the sphere in which Kazakh is used has widened leading to a de-facto policy of 'Kazakhisation' (Suleimenova & Smagulova 2005, 88–89). The privileging of Kazakh is found in the growth of Kazakh language education (Fierman 2006, 113; 2012, 1084). The Kazakh language is a compulsory subject in Kazakhstan schools (Fierman 1998, 182), but until recently, unlike Estonia, there has been relatively little economic pressure to learn Kazakh. The usage of Kazakh in the public sphere has increased and some symbolic changes have occurred in public space (i.e. changes in place names). Russian domination in the mass media has begun to decline (Suleimenova & Smagulova 2005, 88–89; Fierman 2012). The impact of language policies on work and leisure possibilities of Russians is smaller than in Estonia, but the promotion of the Kazakh language has intensified.

Russia's influence on Kazakhstan encourages a civic approach. President Nazarbayev has called for a balanced and gradual implementation of the language law. He has declared unacceptable proposals to substantially reduce Russian-language teaching in the school system (Zardykhan 2004). The government's discourse promotes a civic concept of the nation and Eurasian identity. Nevertheless, state policies reflect a growing role for Kazakh language and culture.

The role of religion as a cultural marker has increased since independence. Islam among Kazakhs and Russian Orthodoxy among Russians foster a symbolic cultural border in Kazakhstan. The Kazakhstan religious strategy rooted in the 1992 law On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Associations and the Kazakhstan Constitution (1995) has followed a policy of separation of state and

religion (Erpay et al 2014, 109). Religious congregations initially increased within Kazakhstan (Zabirova 2008, 196–198; Erpay et al 2014). More recently, a new law, *On Religious Activity and Religious Associations* (2011), continues to recognise freedom of conscience and the two dominant religions' historic roles in Kazakhstan, but now requires registration of religious organisations leading to a decline in their numbers (Erpay et al 2014, 110–111). Overall, religious identification and the symbolic role of Islam and Russian Orthodoxy have increased in Kazakhstan.

**Tatarstan.** Although a republic within the Russian Federation, Tatarstan pursued greater sovereignty rights beginning in the 1980s and 1990s (Makarova 2009a, 83, 113–116). The strength of Tatar linguistic and cultural movements distinguishes it from Kazakhstan. Despite the Federation Treaty that was signed in 1994 Tatarstan's sovereignty was shaped through bi-lateral negotiations during the Yeltsin era (Kaplan 1997) and has decreased under President Putin (Makarova 2009a). Sovereignty is key to Tatarstan's nation-building project.

While Tatarstan policies in the 1990s attempted to redress the Russification of the Soviet era, nation-building, known as the Tatarstani Model, was rooted in the idea of a civic nation inclusive of the ethnic Russian population. Russian cultural, linguistic, and religious rights were observed, even if ethnic Tatar traditions received special support consistent with a rise in ethnic status.

The Tatar language, like Kazakh, lost many of its functions during the Soviet era with only 65% of the Tatar urban population in 1989–1990 fluent in Tatar (Iskhakova 1999, 296). The Tatarstan constitution (1995) declares Tatar and Russian as the official languages of the republic (Makarova 2009a, 126). Mass media remained dominated by Russian (op cit, 140). In the 1990s the number of Tatar language and especially mixed Tatar-Russian schools grew and entrance exams in higher education were available in both Russian and Tatar (op cit, 137).

By the start of the 2000s President Putin's policies of recentralisation considerably limited Tatarstan's sovereignty (Makarova 2009a, 160, 192–204) and thereby also its identity building prospects. Moscow rejected Tatarstan's attempt to switch to the Latin alphabet and in 2005 Russian was proclaimed by federal law as the state language (op cit, 161, 163, 200). Support for the Tatar language declined as Moscow adopted a single federal education standard in 2007 controlling content in the Russian and Tatar languages (op cit, 163–164, 212–213). Federal policy evidenced a shift from emphasising the multi-national nature of the Russian Federation's population to one of national consolidation with a growing emphasis on Russian culture (op cit, 172). In response to this shift, Tatarstan adopted laws supporting Russian language and culture (op cit, 201), while maintaining support for Tatar ethnic culture. This strategy failed. Tatar

national components in education had declined by 2008 (op cit, 213). Current efforts to support Tatar national culture now take the form of multi-culturalism.

Tatarstan's religious policy maintained individual religious freedom for all citizens (Makarova 2009a, 135). During the 1990s a religious renaissance took place in Tatarstan with the rapid growth of Mosques and Russian Orthodox churches (Drobizheva 2013, 110). Ethnic Tatar religious observance grew, especially in the 1990s, while in the 2000s a somewhat more moderate growth occurred among ethnic Russians.

In 1997 Russian federal law established its right to control religious life (Drobizheva 2013, 135). While Russia recognises four traditional religions, Islam, Russian Orthodoxy, Judaism, and Buddhism, the new law highlights the special role that Russian Orthodoxy has played in Russia (op cit). This focus on Orthodoxy is reflected in an attempt by the federal government to introduce religion in the classroom (Musina 2007). Thus, while Tatarstan's policy has supported the development of Islam, the Federal government has stressed Russian Orthodoxy's special association with Russia.

To sum up, Estonia, Kazakhstan and Tatarstan share some aspects of their nation-building approaches, but policies favouring titular languages have the strongest impact on ethnic Russians in Estonia and weakest in Tatarstan. This partly reflects political preferences, but is also tied to relations with the Russian Federation, which range from opposition (Estonia) to economic cooperation (Kazakhstan) to subordination (Tatarstan). Russian Federal religious policies have shown the most favouritism toward Orthodoxy, but Russian Orthodoxy has grown among Russians in all three countries.

Having presented the structural and policy context of each case, we now look comparatively at Russians' own rationalisations and explanations of their ethnic descent, diverging characteristics and changed power position vis-à-vis the respective titular ethnic groups (Estonians, Kazakhs, and Tatars). Before presenting the empirical results, we briefly explain our methodology.

## **Methodology and evidence**

The object of this study is a reflection of the transformative process of identity in peoples' spontaneous talk, not the process itself, which requires other methods. Our interpretation of interview evidence is inspired by Anthony Giddens' (1984) concept of discursive and practical consciousness as two different representational systems at the actor-subject level. We ask how people rationalise and explain their ethnically divergent features and changed power position vis-à-vis

the titular ethnic groups. While there are plenty of comparative quantitative studies of the identity of Russians living in different post-Soviet republics (for example, Poppe & Hagendoorn 2001; Galbreath 2006; Peyrouse 2008; Commercio 2009) qualitative studies that provide interview evidence collected at the same time and using similar techniques in different locations are rare. Our analysis is based on a unique body of material comprised of in-depth interviews and focus groups conducted in different social, political and cultural contexts. Material collected from Russians living in Estonia and Kazakhstan is juxtaposed with similar evidence gathered from Russians living in the very heart of the Russian Federation, Moscow, and Kazan, the capital city of the Republic of Tatarstan, a federal subject of Russia.

We analyse semi-structured interviews of individuals and focus groups conducted during 2008 and 2009 yielding a total of 130 in-depth interviews and 8 focus groups (two in Tatarstan and six in Kazakhstan). Thematic coding<sup>3</sup> of interview scripts formed the empirical basis of analysis.

Respondents' comments were coded and analysed comparatively using a cross case method, that is, using thematic and pattern codes based on the interviews (Miles & Huberman 1994). For each answer, we identify a mixture of textual relations. Both in the thematic and pattern coding multiple units of analysis were used, i.e. sentences and phrases in the form of statements, configurations of terms, explicit and implicit assumptions expressed in particular stylistic and grammatical constructions, metaphors and vivid images.

In thematic coding the text units were divided into thematic categories like personal definitions of what it means to be Russian, homeland – *rodina* (Ru.), relations with Russians outside the republic of residence, language, and religion. Not only the answers to particular questions, but all statements including the topical terms (synonyms) of a particular category were included in the analysis. Under thematic categories interpretative coding was undertaken in order to distinguish variations in personal interpretations within the same category. The location of interviews was used as an external frame, that is, the thematic coding was done in the same way for texts from each case. Exploratory analysis was done within the matrix where the country cases formed one dimension and the main categories (*rodina*, etc.) with interpretative sub-codes the other dimension. This enabled us to bring out variation and concurrence in the structure of categories and their interpretations across various contexts. The pattern codes were developed after interpretative thematic analysis. The pattern codes were developed along the axes of (a) uniqueness/individuality versus depersonalisation (Hogg & Reid 2006), (b) similarity versus dissimilarity, and (c) cultural continuity versus cultural rupture dimension.

The key question asked on the first axis was about the point of departure of the statements – a single individual (i.e. biographical choices, family narratives, unique personal experiences) or collectively shared attributes, problems and resources (i.e. having or not having certain language skills, cultural artefacts, symbols from collective memory). The question illustrating the second axis is: What similarities are brought out between group members that constitute symbolic borders vis-à-vis other ethnicities of the same location and beyond? What spheres are referred to in border-building: economic, political, or cultural (including the education system)? How wide a geo-political and cultural scope is evoked in border-building: national, regional, local? Finally, how is historical/cultural time represented: as interrupted or continuous from the groups' perspective?

The first step in the analysis is an examination of the variety of answers within the country (city) dimension. The second step is an examination of the variation and concordance of representations across countries and cities. In the analysis, we focus mainly on the similarities and variances of the answers given by Russians in Estonia, Kazakhstan and Tatarstan, leaving the interviews conducted in Moscow as a point of reference. We distinguish between four cases: Estonia (Tallinn, Narva, Kohtla-Järve and Tartu), Moscow, Tatarstan (Kazan) and Kazakhstan (Astana, Shymkent and a rural area in the north). Under the quotations presented, we provide the city, gender and age group of the respondent.

## Results

### What is *rodina*?

The feeling of *rodina* – homeland, place of birth – is one of the most powerful senses anchoring an individual's place in the broader world.<sup>4</sup> The subjective meaning of *rodina* is sensitive to context reflecting the fact that most of the Russians living in Estonia and Kazakhstan are descendants of immigrants, while those in Tatarstan arrived centuries ago. Those interviewed consisted of first, second, third and even fourth generation residents, thus engendering a wide variety of perspectives. Among those interviewed in Moscow *rodina* constitutes a key element in the creation of a civic repertoire defining 'Russianness'. The terms *rodina*, *Rossia*, and Russian are used as synonyms in their interviews carrying the same meaning. The borders between *rodina*, *natsiia* (nation) and *natsional'nost'* (nationality) are blurred. In-group relations are represented as organised around love of *rodina* as the common value that needs to be generationally transmitted and protected from misuse. Example from the interview:<sup>5</sup>



[...] to love homeland, [that is,] Russia, and to try to give the children these good characteristics of a Russian person and Russian nation (F, middle age group, Moscow).

The acknowledgement and observance of collective norms are prioritised as contrasted to individual, unique feelings and knowledge. For example, in the following extract the terms *uvazhenie* (respect) and *adekvatno vosprinimat* (adequately interpret, perceive) are used in order to describe the expected attitude and behaviour of group members.

Most important is to respect this culture, to adequately perceive its achievements, shortcomings of the given nation and nationality (M, middle age group, Moscow).

The ideas of patriotism and collective mobilisation were also linked to military mission and bitterness about the loss of territories.

A Russian needs war. Well, look at it: 1812 – Russians were united, Civil War – united, the Patriotic War [World War II] – united, also BAM [Baikal Amur Railroad] – [we] did not go there for the rouble, also the Virgin Lands – people were going due to patriotism, now somehow there is no pride... since the country came apart (M, older age group, Moscow).

The establishment of group values associated with territory and culture also shows itself in the following narrative, which reflects the socialisation practices of a bi-ethnic family:

When I received my passport at the age of 16, during the Soviet period, I thought which nationality to select – my father's side, Ukrainian, or my mother's side, Russian? And basically my father simply said: Kostia, you live in Moscow, you are Russian, a person of Russian culture (M, middle age group, Moscow).

Different narratives explain the meaning of *rodina* among Russians in Tatarstan, Estonia and especially in Kazakhstan, which was the destination for both voluntarily and forcefully resettled Russian families. Two types of identity creation were found: one based on familial and titular relations and the other based on temporal symbols.

Birthplace and relationship with one's parents' and one's own childhood home are the most powerful symbols associated with *rodina*.<sup>6</sup> The following narrative provides a good illustration of this type of explanation:

First and foremost, homeland is your home, your family. Homeland is where your parents are, where your ancestors are buried (M, middle age group, Kazakhstan).

The family narratives that were used to explain the meaning of *rodina* refer both to continuity and rupture depending on the re-socialisation of (grand)parents in new circumstances. For example, biographical narratives of Kazakh Russians that concerned deportations and rupture of family ties were, however, built in harmony with public norms of the Russian Federation.<sup>7</sup> The Soviet power elite as repressor was never mentioned in the narratives, instead, the impersonal voice was used: "my (grand)parents *were* repressed", "*sent* out of the country" (emphasis added), but emotional contrasts are brought out:

So, I was born here, for me this is my homeland. My mum was deported from Ukraine, she showed me her native places. I really liked it there. Yes, Kazakhstan is my homeland but I regret that my parents were deported and that we were not born and weren't brought up and don't live there, because the climate there is like paradise. When mum was repressed in 1936 and she told us, that she got so sick from the climate that she almost died (F, middle age group, rural north Kazakhstan).

The biographical narratives also stress the importance of good relations, interdependence with members of the titular nation.

My grandma and grandpa were repressed. They were brought here in a cargo train carriage in the winter and put out on the steppe and without the help of the Kazakh families, well it is unlikely that my ancestors would have survived. They warmed them up, gave them food, gave them shelter for the night. My grandmother raised me in that way, that, well, in gratitude to the nation of Kazakhstan (F, younger age group, Kazakhstan).

Thus, relational structures (within the family or with other ethnic groups) are given priority over territory in the narratives that help to define *rodina* among Russians living in the former Soviet Union and in autonomous republics.

Another type of identity creation was done with the help of temporal references – the informants defined the Soviet Union as their ‘real’ *rodina*. Here not biographical narratives, but membership in the Soviet youth organisations are referred to as structures organising relationships between people. In addition, parts of public narratives from the Soviet period, poetry from Mayakovski and popular songs (“my address is not my house and it is not my street, my address is the Soviet Union”) were quoted to explain the meaning of *rodina*.

In general, the main divide between the narratives of homeland runs between Russians in Moscow and everyone else. While among respondents from Moscow *rodina* was used as a tool of depersonalisation organising relations of the members of the nation, in Kazakhstan, Estonia and less markedly in Tatarstan the meaning of *rodina* was created with the help of biographical narratives stressing relationships between people as a resource that may help to overcome historical disruptions.

### Language and group status

Below we will analyse the role of language in identity building among Russians by comparing Muscovite repertoires with Russians outside of the capital. In the interviews conducted in Moscow the language issue did not appear spontaneously, but was probed. The interviews revealed that language acts as a symbolic border maker vis-à-vis the Anglo-American world. Information communications technology (ICT) – computers, smart phones, tablets – along with popular culture are viewed as spoiling the purity of Russian. This is seen as posing a danger to national and cultural continuity. The sub-repertoires vary from technological fatalism (i.e. Russia has to adopt technological innovations from the English-speaking world) to blaming the power elites who control the mass media for weak patriotism.

All of this [use of foreign words] is simply destroying the Russian livelihood. What does it begin with? With the government, with the press. Remove from the Russian language all that is not ours (F, middle age group, Moscow).

These repertoires are not unique to Russians in Moscow, but are also found in interviews with Russians in Tatarstan and Kazakhstan. The simplification of written Russian with its loss of stylistic richness and the extensive use of audiovisual technology, reading of comics and neglect of the Russian classics among youth are seen as negative developments.

Thus, language as a symbol problematises the groups' relations with the outer (Western) world, echoing the opposition between Slavophiles and Westernisers in Russian history. Yet, in creating a division between Russian and Western culture and language those interviewed still fail to see language as providing a unifying symbol for the Russian ethnic group. Rather, language and culture are viewed as drawing in-group boundaries between power elites and laypeople and the older and younger generations. Thus, the hierarchic scale that positions high culture and literary language at the top is used in symbolic boundary making.

Russian language repertoires in Estonia show much more variation than those in Moscow. Although high culture and literary style remain highly esteemed, in Estonia linguistic variation associated with use of mass media and digital technologies and oral language (speaking in Russian with neighbours) are valued as carriers of positive group distinction and cultural continuity, rather than viewed negatively as a threat.

Question: What measures are necessary in order to preserve the Russian language?

Answer: Watch television, read newspapers in the Russian language. Use the Internet. Read literature (M, middle age group, Narva).

Language variations due to borrowing were understood as 'natural' continuously occurring processes, not as the result of destructive intervention by the mass media.

Really, you think that one can preserve language in its current state, whatever that may be? In my opinion, it changes every day, every second and now it is this kind of change (M, younger age group, Tallinn).

The more tolerant stance towards variation in language and how language change is understood differentiates Estonian Russians from Russians living in the Russian Federation and Kazakhstan. Estonian Russians show a readiness to re-work, to adapt this cultural resource to a changed power relationship with the titular group.

In addition to Russian's symbolic meaning, the knowledge and use of language may serve as a necessary defining factor for group membership. Somewhat surprisingly, only Russians in Estonia considered knowing Russian necessary to be an ethnic Russian, a defining attribute of the ethnic prototype. A linguistic mission to use the language actively was positioned highest among the imagined 'duties' of ethnic group membership.

[To be a Russian means] first of all, to speak the Russian language, also know the culture, the history of one's own people (M, older age group, Narva).

The perception of language as a marker of ethnic group membership raises a question as to how the acquisition of second or third languages is related to identity structure. People used specific grammatical structures like, "I am proud that I am Russian, *even though I learned Estonian*" (Ru. *хоть я и учила эстонский*, emphasis added), which reflect the implicit assumption that learning other languages and communication with other ethnic groups may not be well tolerated by the members of the in-group. In addition the following quotation illustrates imagined opposition between ethnic identity and foreign language acquisition:

[To be Russian] means to be a carrier of the Russian language. But *regardless of this* (Ru. *Но несмотря на это*), to know other languages as well is very important (F, younger group, Tartu, emphasis added).

Language-centred self-identification was unique to Estonian Russians and was not found in the other cases. Despite tensions created by state language policies, the usage of Russian in Tatarstan and Kazakhstan is not understood as a 'mission' of ethnic group members as bearers of cultural continuity.

In Tatarstan, the dominance of the Russian language is simply taken for granted. The ethnic bond is sensed as something belonging to the private sphere and individual practice, not the public sphere. Individual practice is viewed apart from collective practice. The oral practice of Russian is represented as a continuously evolving process, but not one signifying ethnic boundaries.

I am Russian only when I read Russian literature, maybe then, the rest of time I just live and work along with Tatars and other nations [ethnic groups], everyone is the same. The only thing is that everyone speaks Russian; a priority like that, maybe, was historically constructed, other than that I do not consider that someone singles out the Russian nation, maybe, from others, no, that should not be (F, younger age group, Kazan).

Power relations established by language policy can shape identification patterns. The construction of group boundaries by Tatars is represented as somewhat disturbing to the cultural continuity inherited from the Soviet era, but does not yet serve as a force uniting Russians.

In schools there is less of it [Russian] being taught, all the same they somehow began to force more Tatar language. If a person can, good for them, if one cannot, we have one shared language, Russian (F, younger age group, Kazan).

In discussions about the acquisition of Tatar and Kazakh a distinction is made between oral and written (literary) language. Learning the oral language is explained as a matter of negotiation, but the need to learn the written (literary) language is doubted citing the fact that many titulars do not know the literary language and sometimes are not fully fluent in the titular oral language. Although this lack of fluency among Tatars and Kazakhs is framed as cultural disruption, an artefact of Soviet practice, it still is considered relevant to current language policy.

In Kazakhstan, the Russian community's collective sense of job loss due to the lack of the Kazakh language is referred to in border-building vis-à-vis the titular group. Yet, the distribution of resources, such as jobs, is perceived to be organised not along linguistic cleavages, but rather along kinship lines.

If you look among politicians, there are practically no Russians. Look at any congress: it is in the Kazakh language. The same if it is some kind of meeting of a large organisation.

Question: Is it enough to know the Kazakh language and then to build a political career?

Answer: Not always enough. Still Kazakhs have kinship-based relationships; it is known from history, especially among us here in the South, this mentality is evident. Sometimes tribalism is very very prominent (M, middle age group, Shymkent).

Language can also be a tool of social integration. Doubts as to whether titular language acquisition is sufficient to be accepted in Estonian society are expressed by Estonian Russians (Vihalemm 2010; Siiner et al 2011). However, the metaphors that are used among Estonian and Kazakhstani Russians to explain exclusion from the labour market differ. Among Estonian Russians, job discrimination is explained somewhat ironically as somebody having a surname that is too long (Ru. *фамилия слишком длинная*). Usually Russian family names are longer than Estonian names, thereby making the name (language) the salient attribute. In Kazakhstan physical appearance is utilised to explain not being hired by saying that one has “not that shape of eye” (Ru. *не тот разрез глаз*). Here the distinction between the surname as an indicator of ethnic group membership, as opposed to a phenotype, a racial feature, plays a role.

In general, the role of language in identity varies considerably across the countries studied. In Estonia language symbolises a desire for cultural continuity – linguistic variations and language change are understood as reflections of a continuous and ‘natural’ process of language development. The collective and unifying mission of the Russian language is constructed in such a way that ethnic group membership is not threatened by personal multi-lingualism and ICT use. This contrasts with Russians in the Russian Federation and Kazakhstan where differences in language use carried strong symbolic value and language is used to differentiate among group members (for example younger and older generations), rather than to unite them. Narratives of cultural interruption in regard to the (written) literary language are used to delegitimise the political demands of titular groups in Kazakhstan and Tatarstan. Language policy by the Tatarstan Republic has had too limited an impact to generate new identification patterns, although these policies may be symbolically important for ethnic Tatars. In Kazakhstan, despite the official establishment of the Kazakh language, the cultural resources of both ethnic groups seem not to favour language becoming the focal symbol of ethnic identification.

### **Construction of an ethnic bond: spatial configurations**

Subjective identification, a sense of ethnic bond, as the basis of group membership varied by location. Among Estonian Russians, language and cultural attributes were perceived as uniting all Russians<sup>8</sup> while differences were less accentuated.

Religion, cultural values, language, mentality. Russians are not different from us no matter where they live (F, younger age group, Tallinn).

Russians outside of Estonia suggested much more varied and complex ways in which Russians differed by location. Among those living in the Russian Federation ‘Russianness’ was understood as a territorial civic idea as shown in the discussion on *rodina*. Indeed, among Muscovites the civic idea dominates over that of primordial ethnic ties. The following narrative of loss explains why the speaker thinks it senseless nowadays to focus on primordial ethnic origin. The ‘real’ blonde haired and phenotypic European Russians are said to be lost to history and the modern, territorially defined, *rossiian* is viewed as emerging from a centuries-long mixing of blood.

In general tell me whether we have pure Russians? Where are the Russians? None. I think that to find a pure Russian in our country is very difficult. Dostoyevsky said, or Karamzin, said: scratch a Russian, in him you will always find a Tatar. Sometimes we do not even know what is in our blood, what genes (M, middle age group, Moscow).

In Tatarstan, however, the same story is presented by Russians not in a mood of loss of genuine ethnic heritage, but as a positive symbol of civic assimilation. The mechanisms used in re-working the idea are different. The quotation below about Russians and Tatars is ascribed to a political leader instead of a literary source and the future is referred to instead of the past.

Vladimir Putin said it this way, using this phrase: “Whichever Russian you dig into, everywhere sits a Tatar”. Here, I am almost sure that he did not want to offend Russian[s] or Tatar[s], I think he said that every person is a citizen of the earth, in the distant future or maybe not so distant, nationality will be erased and we all will be just citizens (M, younger age group, Kazan).

The Mongol invasion that is represented in a negative manner among Russian Muscovites is given a more heterogeneous meaning among Russians in Tatarstan. Popular identity narratives that connect the Tatars of today with the Mongol invasion are much more nuanced when told by the Russians of Kazan. The heritage of today’s Tatars is constructed as ‘interrupted’ and mixed having no direct bloodline connection with the nomadic tribes who attacked Russia. The civic identification repertoire thus represents continuity via the mechanism of hybridisation. The borders between the ethnic groups are viewed as easily crossable.

While Russians in Tatarstan use a territorial, ethnically merged civic identity that rejects primordialism, those in Kazakhstan construct a three-dimensional prototype of local ethno-civic identity under the label Russian-Kazakhstani distinguishing themselves from Russians in the Russian Federation and local titulars. The Russian local dimension is built on an ‘us’ versus ‘other’ opposition with Russians living in Russia, especially in Moscow. In the following excerpt, the quality of interpersonal relations is highlighted as distinctive, rooted in local cultural values and norms.

I consider myself a Russian but my homeland is Kazakhstan. My distant roots are in Russia, but I am indigenous to Shymkent. I live in Kazakhstan, for me Kazakhstan will be closer than Russia. I lived in Russia for five years. I do not like that mentality in Russia that is currently present, on the street, you come



up to people, people turn their backs on you. People live in the same place for 17 years and don't know one another (M, younger age group, Shymkent).

Elements of a colonial centre–periphery mindset prevalent during the Soviet period are re-worked in narratives that reverse the value assessment. The 'centre' is portrayed as unfriendly and the 'periphery' as warm and caring. This opposition is illustrated by similes such as 'like abroad' and metaphors like 'turn their back on'.

The ethnic dimension of the local ethno-civic identity prototype is partially constructed on cultural-religious features, but also draws on a colonial narrative base. As indicated above, the utilisation of colonial modern–pre-modern construction is used by local Russians in order to explain the loss of their position of power. Sebastien Peyrouse (2008) has called this an essentialising discourse. For example, in the following selection the employment practices of Russians are represented as being somewhere 'ahead' (following a modernisation narrative) in an imagined time scale, as compared to those of Kazakhs, as indicated by the use of expressions like 'up until now' (Ru. *do cux nop*):

[...] *up until now* there has been this clan. A Russian never tries to work with relatives, so it seems to me. So as not to lose good relations he will never hire relatives. But Kazakhs, here, still do this to this day (M, middle age group, urban north Kazakhstan, emphasis added).

The narrative of modernisation is also associated with that of religion, but here the practices of titular groups are constructed in a more heterogeneous manner, as presented in the next section.

### Religious practice

The respondents' understanding of religion and its role in Russian ethnic identity varied considerably by country. The meaning of religion seems to be more connected with personal biography than specific country or context per se. Many of the respondents regardless of country were baptised and observed some religious traditions – funeral rites and Orthodox Easter. Such practices and personal religiosity were not always connected in the interviews. In the Soviet era religious rituals often were maintained despite official Soviet ideology which impeded the inter-generational transmission of their meaning. Some Russians simply viewed the tie between ethnic identity and Orthodoxy as natural, inherited from ancestors.

Religious practices may be so tightly intertwined with ethnic identity that they are sensed as ethno-cultural attributes, probably a construct of the Soviet era. This understanding of religious practice particularly characterised Russians living in countries with a strong Islamic tradition – Kazakhstan and Tatarstan.

It happened this way in our family that holidays and rituals are first and foremost considered Russian traditions, less so Orthodox Christian, since we are Russian it means that we must do this (F, younger age group, Shymkent).

Thus, religion is felt to be a carrier of national cultural continuity. When provided with a ten-item list of historical events and asked to choose the most significant ones, those interviewed typically chose the acceptance of Christianity in Russia due to its strong impact on the development of a distinctive Russian culture. Among Russians in Kazakhstan and Tatarstan, Christianity serves as an attribute of positive self-differentiation in relation to an Islamic cultural tradition.

Russians in Kazakhstan placed particular importance on religion's role in organising group relations. Orthodox practices are comprehended as a symbol uniting Russians.

Yes, I consider myself as Orthodox only culturally. My personal opinion is that in Kazakhstan, especially in northern Kazakhstan, that religion is becoming a priority for ethnic Russians, [Russian ethnicity and religion] are somehow interconnected with one another, Orthodoxy is like a small consolidating factor (M, middle age group, Astana).

In general, the role of Orthodoxy in the construction of Russian ethnic identity has a significant practice-based role (baptism, celebration of Easter) maintained by family tradition. Orthodoxy is believed to be deeply embedded in Russian culture, thereby differentiating ethnic Russians from titular ethnic groups. For Russians, Orthodoxy also denotes a strong sense of cultural continuity, especially in countries with strong Islamic traditions. This was not the case in predominantly secular Estonia. Today the narrative of belonging to the Orthodox tradition seems to lack the potential for group empowerment, but it has the potential to acquire symbolic power in conjunction with other public and cultural narratives (Paert 2016).

## Conclusions and discussion

The analysis compares ethnic Russian discursive rationalisation and explanation of ethnic descent, divergent features of identity and changed power positions in relation to the indigenous populations in Estonia and Kazakhstan, two independent states, and Tatarstan, a federal republic in Russia, juxtaposed between these people and Russians in the city of Moscow. The researched countries share some aspects of post-Soviet nation-building, in particular, those which aim to 'repair' the consequences of Soviet-era Russification by favouring titular languages, although they differ considerably in terms of how intrusive nation-building policy aims are in their impact on the everyday lives of people, as well as different state legitimising public discourses. The different contexts were also reflected in the peoples' personal meaning-making of their 'Russianness' and re-working Soviet and contemporary public narratives. In general, this analysis showed creative ways in which the private stories were constructed in response to the publicly circulating symbols and narratives.

Estonia represents the case of strong language policy intervention into Russians' everyday lives, while Kazakhstan and especially Tatarstan represent much 'milder' cases of mainly discursive re-orientation that for the most part tangentially touch peoples' everyday linguistic practices. The Russians who live in the Russian Federation (both in Moscow and Tatarstan) use the symbol of homeland (*rodina*) as a key element to give meaning to 'Russianness'; their explanations also stress the priority of uniform civic values and a territorially dominated civic definition of being Russian that rejects primordial ethnic ties. Among Russians in Tatarstan the impact of (nostalgic) Soviet discourse was stronger than among Muscovites, which may indicate the need to add symbolic legitimisation of the territorial-civic meaning-making of their ethnicity that is not felt by Russians living in the metropolis. Estonian and Kazakhstani Russians give relationships between people priority over the sanctity of territory and civic values. The most exclusive meaning-making of 'Russianness', which did not appear in the interviews conducted in other countries, emerged in Estonia with its language-centred Estonian national identity building and most 'stringent' case of significant language policy intervention into Russians' everyday lives. Estonian Russians construct language as the main ethnic symbol, ethnic group members' collective and unifying mission being a bearer of the Russian language. Our findings suggest that Russian symbolises cultural continuity rather than a fear of cultural disruption. At the same time Estonian methods of language-centred ethnic self-identification were very tolerant of personal multilingualism and language use varieties among ethnic group members. Although high culture and literary

language promoted by Russian language education are highly esteemed, mass media and oral repertoires are also valued as carriers of positive group distinction and cultural continuity. Language change is understood as a reflection of a continuous and 'natural' language development process. This phenomenon was not observed among Russians in the Russian Federation and Kazakhstan among whom 'purity' of language and linguistic variations were constructed as differentiating and thereby divisive among in-group members. This (re)definition of Russian identity is principally open to communication and solidarity across state borders (even if it meets certain estrangement from the side of Russians residing in other countries and living in other socio-cultural contexts) and gives ground for development of new diasporic identity in favourable conditions.<sup>9</sup>

Unlike the Estonian Russians who rationalise their current societal position as a reflection of language skills, Russians in Kazakhstan construct a three-dimensional identity prototype embracing territorial, ethnic and civic dimensions. The local territorial dimension is built up with the help of re-working the former colonial narratives in a reversed way – the Soviet-era centre (Moscow) is portrayed as offering a lower quality of interpersonal relationship compared to Kazakhstan (the former 'periphery'). Ethnic diversity is created vis-à-vis the Muslim Kazakhs. Orthodox practices are understood as an ethno-cultural unifying feature, while their religious meaning is weak. The essentialising narrative of the Russians being more 'modern' compared to the more religious Kazakhs on the one hand helps to overcome irritation with the distribution of benefits (i.e. good jobs) in favour of the titular ethnic group; on the other hand, it reflects the loss of primordial ties as a group mobilising resource. Thus, the narratives that came from the Soviet colonial past carry somewhat conflicting meanings and do not help group empowerment today. In general, Russians living in Kazakhstan have been open to various ideologies circulating in the public and made personal-level hybrid explanations of their identity.

The most 'untouched' by change and those most reliant upon Soviet ideology are Russians living in Tatarstan. Their meaning-making of their ethnic identity is centred around the civic idea and is thereby similar to Russians in Moscow but unlike the Muscovites they refer to the Soviet identification symbols and public narratives. The re-working of the Soviet legacy may be a certain resistance to the publicly circulating Tatarstan nation-building and identification meanings, and a search for additional symbolic support. Thus, the Tatar Russians have more or less maintained the (supposedly) Soviet ways of not thinking about themselves in ethnic terms.

## Interviews

Authors' fieldwork materials:

- Astana, Shymkent, Akmolinskaia Oblast, Kazakhstan, 2009;
- Kazan, Tatarstan, Russia, 2008;
- Narva, Tallinn, Tartu, Estonia, 2008;
- Moscow, Russia, 2008.

## Archival sources

- Estonian Citizen Survey (1991) Principle Investigators Cynthia S. Kaplan and Henry E. Brady. Fieldwork conducted by Saar Poll Ltd, data from personal archive of researchers.
- Estonian Citizen Survey (1992) Principle Investigators Cynthia S. Kaplan and Henry E. Brady. Fieldwork conducted by Saar Poll Ltd, data from personal archive of researchers.
- Life in Estonia 1989 = Survey "Elu Eestis 1989 / Life in Estonia 1989". Department of Journalism, University of Tartu and Mainor Ltd. Data from personal archive of Triin Vihalemm.
- Me. The World. The Media 2011 = Mina. Maailm. Meedia (2011) Survey database. Deposited in the Institute of Social Studies, University of Tartu.

## Internet sources

- Aliens' Act 1993 = Välismaalaste seadus. Riigi Teataja I 1993, 44, 637. <https://www.riigi-teataja.ee/akt/28574> [accessed 25 November 2016].
- Census 1959 = Vsesoiuznaia perepis' naseleniia 1959 goda. Natsional'nyi sostav naseleniia po respublikam SSSR, Demoskop Weekly. [Всесоюзная перепись населения 1959 года. Национальный состав населения по республикам СССР, Demoskop Weekly.] [http://demoscope.ru/weekly/ssp/sng\\_nac\\_59.php?reg=91](http://demoscope.ru/weekly/ssp/sng_nac_59.php?reg=91) [accessed 10 December 2015].
- Census 2009 = Census of population in Kazakhstan (2009). [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ethnic\\_demography\\_of\\_Kazakhstan#Census\\_of\\_2009](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ethnic_demography_of_Kazakhstan#Census_of_2009) [accessed 12 February 2013].
- Census 2010 = Census of Tatarstan population (2010). [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tatarstan#Ethnic\\_groups](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tatarstan#Ethnic_groups) [accessed 12 February 2013].
- Churches and Congregations Act (2002) Riigi Teataja I 2002, 24, 135. <https://www.riigi-teataja.ee/en/eli/530102013065/consolide> [accessed 12 January 2016].
- Citizenship law 1995 = Kodakondsuse seadus. Riigi Teataja I 1995, 12, 122. <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/akt/KodS> [accessed 25 November 2016].
- IM 2011 = Lauristin, M., Kaal, E., Kirss, L., Kriger, T., Masso, A., Nurmela, K., Sepel, K., Tammaru, T., Uus, M., Vihalemm, P. & Vihalemm, T. (2011) Integratsiooni monitooring / Integration Monitoring. AS Emor, Praxis Centre for Policy Studies, University of Tartu, Ministry of Culture. [http://www.kul.ee/sites/default/files/integratsiooni\\_monitooring\\_2011.pdf](http://www.kul.ee/sites/default/files/integratsiooni_monitooring_2011.pdf) (in Estonian), <http://www.praxis.ee/wp-content/>

- uploads/2014/03/2011-Estonian-integration-monitoring.pdf (in English) [accessed 2 March 2015].
- Language Act (2011) Riigi Teataja I, 18.03.2011, 1. <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/en/eli/506112013016/> [accessed 25 November 2016].
- On Religious Activity and Religious Associations (2011) Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan of October 11, 2011, No. 483-IV. [http://www.legislationline.org/download/action/download/id/4091/file/Kazakhstan\\_Law\\_religious\\_freedom\\_organisations\\_2011\\_en.pdf](http://www.legislationline.org/download/action/download/id/4091/file/Kazakhstan_Law_religious_freedom_organisations_2011_en.pdf) [accessed 7 November 2015].
- Population and Housing Census 2011 = Preliminary data. PCE04: Enumerated permanent residents by ethnic nationality and sex, 31 December 2011. Statistical Office of Estonia, Tallinn. <http://pub.stat.ee/px-web.2001/Dialog/varval.asp?ma=PCE04&lang=1> [accessed 10 December 2015].
- Smailova, A. A. (ed.) (2011) Itogi natsional'noi perepisi naseleniia Respubliki Kazakhstan 2009 goda. Analiticheskii otchet. Agentstvo Respubliki Kazakhstan po statistike, Astana. [Смаилова, А. А. (ред.) (2011) Итоги национальной переписи населения Республики Казахстан 2009 года. Аналитический отчет. Агентство Республики Казахстан по статистике, Астана.] <http://www.stat.gov.kz/getImg?id=WC16200032648> [accessed 18 September 2014].
- State Integration Plan 2008–2013 = Eesti lõimumiskava 2008–2013. [https://valitsus.ee/sites/default/files/content-editors/arengukavad/loimumiskava\\_2008\\_2013.pdf](https://valitsus.ee/sites/default/files/content-editors/arengukavad/loimumiskava_2008_2013.pdf) [accessed 10 August 2014].
- Tatstat = Territorial'nyi organ Federal'noi sluzhby gosudarstvennoi statistiki po Respublike Tatarstan. [Территориальный орган Федеральной службы государственной статистики по Республике Татарстан.] <http://tatstat.gks.ru> [accessed 25 November 2016].

## References

- Aminov, K., Jensen, V., Juraev, S., Overland, I., Tyan, D. & Uulu, Y. (2010) Language use and language policy in Central Asia, *Central Asia Regional Data Review* 2 (1), 1–29.
- Berg, E. & van Meurs, W. (2002) Borders and orders in Europe: limits of nation and state-building in Estonia, Macedonia and Moldova, *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics* 18 (4), 51–74.
- Brubaker, R. (2011) Nationalizing states revisited: projects and processes of nationalization in post-Soviet states, *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 34 (11), 1785–1814.
- Castells, M. (1997) *The Power of Identity. The Information Age: Economy, Society, and Culture II*. Blackwell Publishers, Oxford.
- Chandra, K. (ed) (2012) *Constructivist Theories of Ethnic Politics*. Oxford University Press, New York.
- Commercio, M. E. (2009) Emotion and blame in collective action: Russian voice in Kyrgyzstan and Latvia, *Political Science Quarterly* 124 (3), 489–512.
- Dave, B. (2007) *Kazakhstan: Ethnicity, Language and Power*. Routledge, London, New York.
- Drobizheva, L. M. (2013) *Grazhdanskaia, etnicheskaia i regional'naia identichnost': vchera, segodnia, zavtra*. Rossiiskaia politicheskaiia entsiklopediia, Moskva. [Дробижеева, Л. М.

- (2013) *Гражданская, этническая и региональная идентичность: вчера, сегодня, завтра*. Российская политическая энциклопедия, Москва.]
- Eesti rahvastik 1996 = *Eesti rahvastik rahvaloenduse andmetel II / Population of Estonia by population censuses II* (1996). Eesti Statistikaamet, Tallinn.
- EHDR 2010/2011 = *Estonian Human Development Report 2010/2011. Baltic Way(s) of Human Development: Twenty Years On*. Eesti Koostöö Kogu, Tallinn.
- Erpay, I., Tursyn, H. & Jandarbek, Z. (2014) Religious education in the religion-state relations after independence of Kazakhstan, *Asian Social Science* 10 (9), 108–114.
- Fierman, W. (1998) Language and identity in Kazakhstan: formulations in policy documents 1987–1997, *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 31 (2), 171–186.
- Fierman, W. (2005) Kazakh language and prospects for its role in Kazakh “groupness”, *Ab Imperio* 2, 393–423.
- Fierman, W. (2006) Language and education in post-Soviet Kazakhstan: Kazakh-medium instruction in urban schools, *Russian Review* 65 (1), 98–116.
- Fierman, W. (2012) Russian in post-Soviet Central Asia: a comparison with the states of the Baltic and South Caucasus, *Europe-Asia Studies* 64 (6), 1077–1100.
- Gabdrakhmanova, G. F. (2010) *Etnokul'turnye resursy ekonomicheskogo razvitiia*. Kazanskii universitet, Kazan'. [Габдрахманова, Г. Ф. (2010) *Этнокультурные ресурсы экономического развития*. Казанский университет, Казань.]
- Galbreath, D. (2006) From nationalism to nation-building: Latvian politics and minority policy, *Nationalities Papers* 34 (4), 383–406.
- Giddens, A. (1984) *The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration*. Polity Press, Cambridge.
- Guest, G. S., MacQueen, K. M. & Namey, E. E. (2012) *Applied Thematic Analysis*. Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks.
- Hogan-Brun, G., Ozolins, U., Ramonienė, M. & Rannut, M. (2009) *Language Politics and Practices in the Baltic States*. Tallinn University Press, Tallinn.
- Hogg, M. A. & Reid, S. A. (2006) Social identity, self-categorization, and the communication of group norms, *Communication Theory* 16 (1), 7–30.
- Iskhakova, Z. A. (1999) Iazykovaia orientatsiia tatarskogo i russkogo gorodskogo naseleniia Respubliki Tatarstan. – Minnullin, K. M. & Sharifullina, L. G. (eds) *Iazykovaia politika v Respublike Tatarstan: dokumenty i materialy (80–90-e gody)*, 293–302. Magarif, Kazan'. [Исхакова, З. А. (1999) Языковая ориентация татарского и русского городского населения Республики Татарстан. – Миннуллин, К. М. & Шарифуллина, Л. Г. (ред.) *Языковая политика в Республике Татарстан: документы и материалы (80–90-е годы)*, 293–302. Магариф, Казань.]
- Itogi 1959 = *Vsesoiuznaia perepis' naseleniia 1959 goda*: SSSR (1962) Gosstatizdat, Moskva. [Всесоюзная перепись населения 1959 года: СССР (1962) Госстатиздат, Москва.]
- Kaplan, C. S. (1997) International negotiations and plural societies: the cases of Estonia and Tatarstan, *International Negotiation* 2 (1), 43–78.
- Khazanov, A. M. (2008) Whom to mourn and whom to forget? (Re)constructing collective memory in contemporary Russia, *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions* 9 (2–3), 293–310.

- Karin, E. & Chebotarev, A. (2002) The policy of Kazakhization in state and government institutions in Kazakhstan. – Masanov, N., Karin, E., Chebotarev, A. & Oka, N. (eds) *Nationalities Question in Post-Soviet Kazakhstan*. Middle East Studies Series 51, 69–108. Institute of Developing Economies, Japan External Trade Organization, Tokyo.
- Kennedy, M. D. (2002) *Cultural Formations of Post-Communism: Emancipation, Transition, Nation, and War*. University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, London.
- Kølsto, P. (1996) The new Russian diaspora – an identity of its own? Possible identity trajectories for Russians in the former Soviet republic, *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 19 (3), 609–639.
- Kølsto, P. (1999) Territorialising diasporas: The case of Russians in the former Soviet republics, *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 28 (3), 607–631.
- Kølsto, P. (2000) *Political Construction Sites. Nation-Building in Russia and the Post-Soviet States*. Westview, Boulder, Oxford.
- Kosmarskaia, N. (2006) “*Deti imperii*” v postsovetskoi Tsentral’noi Azii: adaptivnye praktiki i mental’nye sdvigi (russkie v Kirgizii, 1992–2002). Natalis, Moskva. [Космарская, Н. (2006) “*Дети империи*” в постсоветской Центральной Азии: адаптивные практики и ментальные сдвиги (русские в Киргизии, 1992–2002). Наталис, Москва.]
- Krivko, N. I., Naimushina, S. Z., Sharapova, O. S., Kubakova, R. Ie., Skokbaeva, M. A. & Abdugarimov, S. S. (1999) *Kratkie itogi perepisi naseleniia 1999 goda v Respublike Kazakhstan: Statisticheskii sbornik*. Kazstatinform, Almaty. [Кривко, Н. И., Наймушина, С. З., Шарапова, О. С., Кубакова, Р. Е., Скокбаева, М. А. & Абдукаримов, С. С. (1999) *Краткие итоги переписи населения 1999 года в Республике Казахстан: Статистический сборник*. Казстатинформ, Алматы.]
- Kulzhanova, A. (2012) *Language Policy of Kazakhstan: An Analysis*. Master’s thesis. Central European University, Department of Public Policy.
- Language Act 2007 = Basic Legislative Acts on languages in the Republic of Kazakhstan (2007). Lawyer, Almaty.
- Laitin, D. D. (1998) *Identity in Formation: The Russian-Speaking Populations in the Near Abroad*. Cornell University Press, Ithaca, London.
- Laitin, D. D. (2003) Three models of integration and the Estonian/Russian reality, *Journal of Baltic Studies* 34 (2), 197–222.
- Lindemann, K. (2011) The labour market success of ethnic groups: the reality and perceived perspectives. – Saar, E. (ed) *Towards a Normal Stratification Order: Actual and Perceived Social Stratification in Post-Socialist Estonia*. Baltische Studien zur Erziehungs- und Sozialwissenschaft 19, 283–308. Peter Lang, Frankfurt am Main.
- Linz, J. J. & Stepan, A. (1996) *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America, and Post-Communist Europe*. Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, London.
- Makarova, G. I. (2009a) *Etnokul’turnaia politika federal’nogo Tsentra i Respubliki Tatarstan: strategii integratsii*. Institut istorii AN RT, Kazan’. [Макарова, Г. И. (2009а) *Этнокультурная политика федерального Центра и Республики Татарстан: стратегии интеграции*. Институт истории АН РТ, Казань.]



- Makarova, G. I. (2009b) V poiskakh novoi modeli etnokul'turnoi politiki federal'nogo tsentra i regionov Rossii (na primere respubliki Tatarstan), *Zhurnal issledovaniĭ sotsial'noi politiki* 7 (1), 21–38. [Макарова, Г. И. (2009b) В поисках новой модели этнокультурной политики федерального центра и регионов России (на примере республики Татарстан), *Журнал исследования социальной политики* 7 (1), 21–38.]
- Makarova, G. I. (2010) *Identichnost' tatar i russkikh v kontekste etnokul'turnoi politiki Rossiiskoi Federatsii i Respubliki Tatarstan*. Kazanskii gosuniversitet, Kazan'. [Макарова, Г. И. (2010) *Идентичность татар и русских в контексте этнокультурной политики Российской Федерации и Республики Татарстан*. Казанский госуниверситет, Казань.]
- Melvin, N. (1995) *Russians Beyond Russia: the Politics of National Identity*. The Royal Institute of International Affairs, London.
- Meshimbaeva, A. (ed) (2008) *Demograficheskie yezhegodnik Kazakhstana 2007. Statisticheskii sbornik*. Agentstvo Respubliki Kazakhstan po statistike, Astana. [Мешимбаева, А. (ред.) (2008) *Демографический ежегодник Казахстана 2007. Статистический сборник*. Агентство Республики Казахстан по статистике, Астана.]
- Miles, M. B. & Huberman, M. A. (1994) *Qualitative Data Analysis: An Expanded Sourcebook*. Sage, London, New York.
- Musina, R. (2007) Protseĭs reislamizatsii i problemy identichnosti tatar v postsovet'skii period. – Iskhakov, D. M. (ed) *Sovremennaiia tatarskaia natsiia: kontseptual'nye issledovaniia*, 177–201. Institut istorii im. SH. Mardzhani Akademii nauk Tatarstana, Kazan'. [Мусина, Р. (2007) Процесс реисламизации и проблемы идентичности татар в постсоветский период. – Исхаков, Д. М. (ред.) *Современная татарская нация: концептуальные исследования*, 177–201. Институт истории им. Ш. Марджани Академии наук Татарстана, Казань.]
- Paert, I. (2013) Religious identity, generation and memory among the Russian Orthodox believers in present-day Estonia. – *New Religiosity in Migration. Research Workshop of the Israel Science Foundation*. 27–30 May. Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, Beer-Sheva.
- Paert, I. (2016) Religion and generation: exploring concersion and religious tradition through autobiographical interviews with the Russian Orthodox believers in Estonia. – Nugin, R., Kannike, A. & Raudsepp, M. (eds) *Generations in Estonia: Contemporary Perspectives on Turbulent Times*. Approaches in Culture Theory 5, 188–211. University of Tartu Press, Tartu.
- Peyrouse, S. (2008) The “imperial minority”: an interpretative framework of the Russians in Kazakhstan in the 1990s, *Nationalities Papers: The Journal of Nationalism and Ethnicity* 36 (1), 105–123.
- Pilkington, H. (1998) *Migration, Displacement and Identity in Post-Soviet Russia*. Routledge, London, New York.
- Poleshchuk, V. (2009) Minority rights in Estonia report. – Poleshchuk, V. (ed) *Chance to Survive: Minority Rights in Estonia and Latvia*, 10–144. Foundation for Historical Outlook, Tallinn.
- Poppe, E. & Hagendoorn, L. (2001) Types of identification among Russians in the ‘near abroad’, *Europe-Asia Studies* 53 (1), 57–71.

- Ringvee, R. (2008) State, religion and the legal framework of Estonia, *Religion, State and Society* 36 (2), 181–196.
- Ringvee, R. (2014) Religion: not declining but changing. What do the population censuses and surveys say about religion in Estonia?, *Religion* 44 (3), 502–515.
- Rybakovskii, L. L. (1995) Migratsionnyi obmen naseleniem mezhdru Tsentral'noi Aziei i Rossiei, *Sotsiologicheskie issledovania* 9, 89–95. [Рыбаковский, Л. Л. (1995) Миграционный обмен населением между Центральной Азией и Россией, *Социологические исследования* 9, 89–95.]
- Sarsembayev, A. (1999) Imagined communities: Kazak nationalism and Kazakification in the 1990s, *Central Asian Survey* 18 (3), 319–346.
- Siiner, M., Vihalemm, T., Djackova, S. & Ramonienè, M. (2011) Keelepoliitika rakendamise ja selle seos venekeelse elanikkonna lõimumisega. – *Eesti Inimarengu Aruanne 2010/2011. Inimarengu Balti rajad: muutuste kaks aastakümnet*, 122–128. Eesti Koostöö Kogu, Tallinn.
- Smith, G., Law, V., Wilson, A., Bohr, A. & Allworth, E. (1998) *Nation-building in the Post-Soviet Borderlands: The Politics of National Identities*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Suleimenova, Ie. D. (2010) Iazykovaia politika i russkii iazyk v shkolakh Kazakhstana, *Vestnik TSMO MGU. Filologiya. Kul'turologiya. Pedagogika. Metodika* 1, 102–107. [Сулейменова, Е. Д. (2010) Языковая политика и русский язык в школах Казахстана, *Вестник ЦМО МГУ. Филология. Культурология. Педагогика. Методика* 1, 102–107.]
- Suleimenova, Ie. D. & Smagulova, Zh. S. (2005) *Iazykovaia situatsiia i iazykovoie planirovaniie v Kazakhstane*. Kazak university, Almaty. [Сулейменова, Е. Д. & Смагулова, Ж. С. (2005) *Языковая ситуация и языковое планирование в Казахстане*. Казак университеты, Алматы.]
- Sultanov, B. K., Shaukenova, Z. K., Morozov, A. A. & Kozyrev, T. A. (2010) *Mezhnatsional'nye i mezhkonfessional'nye otnosheniia v respublike Kazakhstan (po rezul'tatam sotsiologicheskogo issledovaniia)*. KISI pri Prezidente RK, Almaty. [Султанов, Б. К., Шаукенова, З. К., Морозов, А. А. & Козырев, Т. А. (2010) *Межнациональные и межконфессиональные отношения в республике Казахстан (по результатам социологического исследования)*. КИСИ при Президенте РК, Алматы.]
- Tatarstan Constitution 1995 = *Konstitutsiia Respubliki Tatarstan 1992* (1995). Tatknigoizdat, Kazan'. [Конституция Республики Татарстан 1992 (1995). Таткнигоиздат, Казань.]
- Telebaev, G. T. (2003) Religioznaia identifikatsiia naseleniia i religioznaia situatsiia v respublike Kazakhstan, *Sotsiologicheskie issledovaniia* 3, 101–106. [Телебаев, Г. Т. (2003) Религиозная идентификация населения и религиозная ситуация в республике Казахстан, *Социологические исследования* 3, 101–106.]
- Toomet, O. (2011) Learn English, not the local language! Ethnic Russians in the Baltic States, *American Economic Review* 101 (3), 526–531.
- Tõnurist, A. (2013) Eesti rahvuskoosseis. Väiksed rahvusrühmad. – Tõnurist, A. (ed) *Pilte rahvaloendusest. Census Snapshots*, 43–68. Eesti Statistika, Tallinn.

- Vihalemm, T. (2010) To learn or not to learn? Dilemmas of linguistic integration of Russians in Estonia, *Ethnicity* 2 (3), 74–98.
- Vihalemm, T. & Hogan-Brun, G. (2013) Language policies and practices across the Baltic: processes, challenges and prospects, *European Journal of Applied Linguistics* 1 (1), 55–82.
- Vihalemm, T. & Masso, A. (2007) (Re)construction of collective identities after the dissolution of the Soviet Union: the case of Estonia, *Nationalities Papers: The Journal of Nationalism and Ethnicity* 35 (1), 71–91.
- Zabirova, A. T. (2008) *Etnosotsiologija*. ENU imeni L. N. Gumileva, Astana. [Забирова, А. Т. (2008) *Этносоциология*. ЕНУ имени Л. Н. Гумилева, Астана.]
- Zardykhan, Z. (2004) Russians in Kazakhstan and demographic change: imperial legacy and the Kazakh way of nation building, *Asian Ethnicity* 5 (1), 61–79.
- Zhusupov, S. (2008) *Politicheskaja analitika: issledovaniia*. Arna-b, Almaty. [Жусупов, С. (2008) *Политическая аналитика: исследования*. Арна-б, Алматы.]

## Notes

This research was supported by the European Union through the European Regional Development Fund (Centre of Excellence in Cultural Theory) and institutional research funding IUT20-38 of the Estonian Ministry of Education and Research. The Helsinki Collegium for Advanced Studies offered an excellent environment for finishing this chapter. Interviews and focus groups were made possible by a Policy Connect Grant from the International Research & Exchanges Board and by Faculty Research Grants, Academic Senate, the University of California, Santa Barbara. These organizations are not responsible for the views expressed herein.

1 We understand that Russian Orthodoxy is not exclusive to ethnic Russians, but even during the Soviet era it often served as a source of cultural identification.

2 See the Appendix for details concerning the interviews and focus groups.

3 Thematic coding and textual analysis are defined as methods of data reduction that “move beyond counting explicit words or phrases and focus on identifying and describing both implicit and explicit ideas within the data, that is, themes” (Guest et al 2012, 10). They are “designed to identify and examine themes from textual data in a way that is transparent and credible” (op cit, 15).

4 There are semantic differences between the words *otechestvo* (‘fatherland’) and *rodina*. *Rodina* literally means ‘land of birth’, although it is typically translated as homeland in English. In the qualitative interviews only the term *rodina* was used. There was no discussion of different meanings of *rodina* and *otechestvo*.

5 Analysis is based on the original Russian language interviews. We would like to thank Margarita Safronova for draft translations of interview excerpts from Russian into English. Of course, the authors retain the final responsibility for the accuracy of the translations.

6 The word *rodina* also connotes semantically with kinship.

7 By public norms we mean the avoidance of (public) commemoration, collective ‘forgetting’ of repressions, especially the political-ideological reasons why the repressions took place (see Khazanov 2008).

8 Other sources indicate that the representation of Russians living in Russia is not so unidimensional, but the differentiation still goes much along the linguistic line. Estonian Russians are recognised by their local dialect when they visit relatives or friends in Russia.

9 The recent studies conducted in the period of political crisis indicate the increasing ethnic differentiation and diasporic feelings among Estonian Russians.

## Appendix 1. Description of interview participants

The description of participants is limited to those included in the analysis. Additional interviews were conducted with ethnic Estonians, Tatars, Kazakhs, and a small number of other ethnicities. The total number of those interviewed or participating in focus groups was 130. Interviews and focus groups were conducted by Saar Poll in Estonia, Center for Ethnic Studies, Tatarstan Academy of Sciences in Tatarstan, the Institute of Sociology, Russian Academy of Sciences in Moscow, and Professor Aigul Zabirova in Kazakhstan.

	Estonia	Tatarstan	Kazakhstan	Moscow
<b>Participants</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Gender</b>				
Male	10	10	7	9
Female	10	13	12	6
<b>Age groups</b>				
Younger (20–35)	6	10	10	6
Middle (36–50)	7	7	2	3
Older (51+)	7	6	7	6
<b>Place of residence</b>	5: Narva 5: Kohtla-Järve 5: Tallinn 5: Tartu	23: Kazan	7: Astana 7: Shymkent 5: Village, Akmolinskaia Oblast	15: Moscow
<b>Education level</b>				
Primary	3	1	2	0
Secondary	12	12	7	10
Higher	5	11	10	5
<b>Birthplace</b>	10: Estonia 10: Russia	12: Kazan 7: Elsewhere in Tatarstan 4: Elsewhere in Russia	2: Akmola (Astana) 8: Akmolinskaia Oblast 7: Shymkent 1: Elsewhere in Kazakhstan 1: Belarus	7: Moscow 6: Russia 2: Elsewhere



MIKS INIMENE ON?  
MIKS INIMENE ON?

ERN  
HE GRE



# Space

## Setting up space

Franz Krause

Space is made up. It is not a wide expanse upon which human life unfolds; not a meaningless, material plane that humans successively discover and endow with values and significance. Rather, it comes into being through practices, through processes of making. These include moving about and staying around, making ends meet and pursuing grand projects, passing laws and policing borders, building roads, drawing maps and telling stories. This does not imply, however, that space is not real. Anyone who has ever missed a flight, felt homesick, been denied a visa or had to take an unexpected walk will know that space is extremely real. Neither does it imply that humans are the only makers of space – of course not! Think of earthworms transforming the soil, of dogs making their owners take regular strolls, of meandering rivers, raging storms, think of plate tectonics. Humans make space, but they do so along with many others, and are often not the ones calling the shots.

How do humans participate in this plethora of makings? Some might say that they analyse available information, devise plans and proceed to execute them. Others claim that they make, and reproduce, cultural patterns through which they perceive and act upon space. The following two contributions suggest yet another way of understanding how humans participate in making space. This understanding takes the process of making seriously, as a creative activity situated within always shifting contexts rather than the realisation of pre-defined plans. It also places humans in the middle of uncounted other processes of making, many of which are non-human in origin, and explores how they interact and conflict, not across a veil of cultural concepts and patterns, but within a shared world.

The contributions are quite different: Jamie Kruis writes about river guides understanding and navigating a stretch of the Colorado River called Shoshone; Ester Bardone and Anu Kannike document so-called pop-up restaurants in Estonia. They share, however, a commitment to the understanding of space making beyond a differentiation of this process into direct perception, culture, economics and materiality. They share, moreover, a term that may be useful for conceptualising the human contribution to this process. They call it 'setting up'. The river guides' main principle is to 'set up' early – bringing their raft into a position, orientation and speed that will facilitate a safe, if exciting, passage through various

sections of the Shoshone rapids. For this, they take into account the technology of the raft, the capabilities of the tourists, the current river discharge, the maps and techniques they have memorised and incorporated through training and experience, as well as their impressions from a walk along the river just before the raft tour. The pop-up entrepreneurs also 'set up' their cafés and restaurants at particular times and in particular places. Rather than rafts and waves, they consider the weather and the prospective visitors, local culinary traditions and cosmopolitan trends, prices and motivations, festival themes and personal career ambitions.

Setting up is always about a combination of knowledge and perception with action and transformation. It is about simultaneously aligning existent processes of space-making to a human project, and arranging the project with these processes. It is about creating a situation where space 'co-responds'. Setting up is something humans can become good at – reading the river, designing a pop-up event – but it is also always an improvisation, as contexts and projects will never be the same twice, as Heraclitus would have perhaps said about Shoshone, had he ever rafted on it. It may even be argued that it is precisely this improvisation – a skilled and embodied activity that takes such on-going changes into account – which makes 'setting up' space successful. And successful setting up can by no means be taken for granted: at times, we find that someone or something has set *us* up, and our own setup fails, which is rather upsetting. Any project of setting up space might conflict with other such projects; but it may also 'correspond' to others and become stabilised or enforced by this correspondence.

Pop-up chefs and river guides make space through setting up – both themselves, and their social, technical, economic and hydrological contexts. Any representations and categorisations we may want to use to disaggregate these processes of setting up – into textual and material, public and private, marketing and tradition, constant and ephemeral, cognitive and bodily – are bound to be partial and dissatisfying. Through setting up, people 'landscape their lives' to use John Wylie's term from the interview further on in this collection; through setting up, they also 'enliven the landscape', if we use Kruis, Bardone and Kannike to turn Wylie's phrase upside down. Setting up, as rafting tours and pop-up restaurants can teach us, may serve as a productive way of understanding how space is made, and how humans participate in this making through their various projects and practices.





## Creating spaces of food experience: pop-up restaurants in Estonia

Ester Bardone, Anu Kannike

**Abstract.** The chapter focuses on a particular form of consumption in contemporary culture – pop-up restaurants – from the ethnological viewpoint, drawing on our on-going research in Estonia. We trace the emergence of a new phenomenon over the past couple of years, examining a variety of temporary food establishments in urban as well as rural settings. The chapter aims to examine how pop-up restaurants challenge borders between private and public, business and entertainment. Creative and experimental practices of lifestyle entrepreneurs and reflective consumers in such temporary restaurants create new liminal spaces where innovative ideas about food, the home, and community are negotiated. As Estonian food culture is becoming more and more hybrid pop-ups reflect global trends in the gourmet foodscape – an increased attention to environmental consciousness, local specialities and authentic experiences as opposed to industrial or mainstream restaurant food. By extending the borders of the conventional restaurant or the home into public space, the pop-up restaurants create spaces of negotiation between the private and the public and new forms of commensality.

### Introduction: the pop-up phenomenon

In the late 18th century restaurants emerged as a new kind of public space catering to individual tastes. Compared with other public eateries, the restaurant offered more personal treatment and elaborated a new logic of sociability and conviviality (Spang 2000, 66). In contemporary Western society, a new phenomenon in food culture – the pop-up restaurant – once again challenges the borders between private and public consumption. This chapter traces the emergence of this phenomenon over the past couple of years in Estonia, examining a variety of temporary food establishments in urban as well as rural settings.

A number of recent studies have argued for the examination of consumption as a spatial activity. Space and place are actively negotiated, created and

---

Kannike, A., Tasa, M. & Västriik, E.-H. (eds) (2017) *Body, Personhood and Privacy: Perspectives on the Cultural Other and Human Experience*. *Approaches to Culture Theory* 7, 217–243. University of Tartu Press, Tartu.

changed through consumption and, in turn, recursively affect consumption practices (Goodman et al 2010). Increasingly transient and mobile lifestyles and new technologies have resulted in diverse novel uses of public space. Temporary venues for consumption have been one of the most common manifestations of this phenomenon in recent years. Pop-ups are micro events that are put up at the kind of venue where people “collect as many experiences as possible” (Fernandes & Sharma 2013). Thus, the pop-up phenomenon is closely related to the ideologies of the “new economy” or “experience economy”, which advocate business services to create “experiencescapes” in order to engage clients’ senses and to surprise them with novel settings and ideas (Pine & Gilmore 1999; Jönsson 2002; Löfgren & Willim 2005). There is a growing range of public and private spaces catering for the needs of the “time-starved consumer on the move” (Bishop & Williams 2012, 68).

The pop-up phenomenon points to the blurring boundaries between public and private, professional and amateur, business and leisure, concerning both the use of space and time. Especially the border between the private and the public becomes increasingly ambiguous in pop-up events, giving rise to “states of liminality” (Zukin 1991). As we know from anthropological research, liminal practices are distinct from the routines and rules of everyday life creating in-betweenness in a spatial, social or cultural sense (see Rapport & Overing 2000, 229–236). Sharon Zukin argues that liminal space is a growing characteristic of the contemporary city in which localism, or neighbourhood urbanism, has been transformed into postmodern transitional space. Liminal spaces are ambiguous and ambivalent, they slip between global market and local place, between public use and private value, between work and home, between commerce and culture (Zukin 1991, 222).

Many pop-up shops, restaurants, performances, etc., reflect the hybrid nature of culture, and “explicitly offer new consumer experiences by blurring the usual boundaries between eating, theatre, music and art” (Bishop & Williams 2012, 213). More and more people work in a flexible manner both in terms of location and time (part-time jobs, home enterprises, etc.) and take up self-employment or a temporary project in addition to or instead of their present occupation as a lifestyle choice. The actors of temporary phenomena are increasingly multidisciplinary.

By examining four different cases of pop-up restaurants in Estonia, this chapter aims to give an overview of the emerging landscape of temporary eating establishments in Estonia and study how the innovative practices of entrepreneurs challenge borders between private and public, business and entertainment, giving rise to new liminal spaces in urban and rural settings.

## The pop-up restaurant

In the context of this chapter we want to stress that the term restaurant is used in a broad sense, not just as an enterprise where food is prepared by professional cooks, but as a public eating place, including temporary cafes, pubs, bars, etc. The pop-up restaurants, sometimes also called supper clubs,<sup>1</sup> are temporary eating establishments that may operate from a private home, although equally they may emerge in varied locations in public space (especially in bigger cities) and in festival settings. Historically the temporary geography of food consumption has existed in the form of, for instance, street food markets. However, in the case of the pop-up restaurant one may say that the temporary use is not just an instrumental but also an aesthetic decision – the performance of dining may redefine the everyday meanings of the social space used at different levels (cf Harris 2014). The temporary performances enacted in pop-up restaurants likewise fit into the experience economy schema as they create transitory spaces for new affective experiences that emerge from various forms of interaction and participation. The latter, in turn, challenge the habitual borders between the private and public in the restaurant scene (cf Noorani et al 2013, 115).

The pop-up dining concept has been developed in various ways, extending the conventional restaurant/cafe experience into streets, parks, museums, shops, art galleries, private living rooms and gardens. Sometimes it may take the form of “guerrilla hospitality” leading to the emergence of pop-up venues in dilapidated buildings and ruins in cities (see Lugosi et al 2010). Underground pop-up restaurants became popular in the 2000s in Britain and Australia but actually have existed well before in the United States and Cuba. The British pop-up restaurant scene is described as follows:

Occurring in unusual places – an abandoned shop, a boathouse, a garden or a hired location – it is ‘pop-up’ because it is temporary, either in terms of the space or the amount of time it will remain open. Frequently the chefs are professionals and the waiting staff experienced. Prices tend to be higher. But it is a great opportunity for young chefs without their own restaurants to showcase their food (Rodgers 2011, 18).

Thus, a pop-up restaurant may also be a kind of start-up for young professionals to gain exposure for their skills in the field of hospitality as they seek investors and attention pursuant to opening a restaurant or another culinary establishment.

Pop-up dining is likewise a good example of how lines between public and domestic spaces become blurred. In many cases pop-up restaurants operate

in a private home, garden or as an extension of the domestic space into the street. They may be legal, semi-legal or even illegal. Supper clubs, also characterised as “paid dinner parties” (Williams 2009) held in private homes are attractive among foodies because they are anarchic and adventurous and at the same time based on mutual trust. Supper clubs provide intimate encounters in somebody’s private space while being at the same time social events where guests can interact and share their love for food and thirst for the new (Tyler 2009). Furthermore, novel forms of domesticity and hospitality are emerging in contemporary culture that are looking for authentic tastes and at the same time intimacy that is often lost in anonymous urban consumption (Russo 2012).

Additionally, the virtual space of the new media, especially social media (for example, weblogs, Facebook), has facilitated the development of the pop-up restaurant movement. The information can be spread quickly, yet among selected people, and no investment in advertising is required giving amateur cooks the chance to enter a scene that was previously occupied by professionals (de Solier 2013). Thus, the pop-up phenomenon may also be related to the democratisation of contemporary foodscapes in which consumers want to actively participate in making their food and sharing it with others in settings alternative to traditional restaurants (Johnston & Baumann 2010).

In Estonia the term pop-up was taken into use relatively recently, mostly in connection with temporary design and fashion shops, and cafes, mainly of alternative or charitable character.<sup>2</sup> However, from the academic viewpoint the local pop-up phenomenon has been discussed briefly, mainly in the context of temporary urbanism/urban architecture (Kurik 2013). Although temporary eating establishments in public or domestic spaces are not a new phenomenon in Estonia (for example, at traditional fairs, markets or streets) the idea and concept of the pop-up restaurant arrived here just a few years ago.

We aim to discuss some aspects of pop-up restaurants as a multifaceted phenomenon, trying to outline novel features of these establishments in the context of Estonian food culture and the ways pop-up restaurants are positioned in the ambivalent zone between the private and the public. We mainly focus on activities of the hosts of the restaurants and their services. Through participant observation and in-depth semi-structured interviews (from 2011 to 2014) we established a personal rapport with people responsible for various pop-up establishments and aimed to pinpoint the motives, visions and practices of the restaurateurs. Due to the limited character of these restaurants both in time and space – once a year in Kärđla on Hiiumaa island, irregularly in Uus Maailm, approximately once a month in the case of the Tallinn Supper Club and from a couple of times a month to several times a week in the case of Ööbiku

Gastronomy Farm, depending on the season and visitor interest – short-term fieldwork was inevitable. Yet in all cases (except in the case of Kärđla) it involved several visits: first as clients documenting the overall atmosphere of the event, the specific setting, menu and communication patterns of the establishment, and introducing our aims to the hosts, and, secondly, for interviews. Apart from the interviews and fieldwork observations, we used as our sources websites and Facebook accounts, weblogs, as well as texts and photos in the printed press. Although the feedback from the customers of pop-up restaurants is of great analytical importance, it remained beyond the scope of this study as it would have required different methods for data collection and analysis.

### **Kärđla Cafe Day**

Food festivals have been an important part of culinary tourism as well as destination branding. In recent years pop-up cafes and other temporary eating establishments have become increasingly popular as part of tourism destination marketing as well as an expression of urban vernacular creativity that enables individuals to re-design the use and meaning of public space. The Kärđla Cafe Day, organised annually since 2007, is the oldest and best-known pop-up food event in Estonia. In recent years it has become one of the top summer festivals in Estonia, attracting huge crowds of visitors, mostly tourists from the mainland. On this centre of a small island of 8000 inhabitants “the host of a small cafe has to calculate upon a thousand guests per day, and that of a medium-sized cafe – two or three thousand” (Rudi 2013). It is also the largest pop-up event in Estonia in terms of space, totally transforming the habituary patterns of movement, communication and consumption in the township’s streets, parks, the seaside and private gardens. Recently, the cafe day has extended over the whole island with pre- and after-cafes (cafes on the day before and after the main event) in different villages, ports or museums.

The event was initially seen by the organisers as a revitalisation of a local tradition: workers from the Kärđla Textile Factory were among the first Estonians to start regularly drinking coffee in the mid-19th century, the fashion spread quickly and the people of Kärđla became known as “coffee pots” (*kohvilähkrid*) (Kohvikutepäev; Kohvilähkrid). On the first cafe day sixteen cafes were set up in private gardens and public places not related to dining (the city government building, the church, the museum, the port). Project leader Ere Naat described the event as a “cafe farce” that would enable people to “take a look at the strata of history and culture of Kärđla through the tradition of ‘coffee pots’” (Pulk 2007).

First set up by the local tourism organisation and now by the Kärdda Cafe Day NGO, it has united promotion of the island as a tourist destination with the spread of knowledge on local history and traditions. Helgi Põllo, research director of Hiiumaa Museum and history counsellor to the event, states that it is “a conscious valuation of traditions and cultural heritage” alongside other analogous enterprises as folklore festivals, village days, etc., thereby contributing to “the strength and sustainability of the identity of the community” (Põllo 2010).

The event has a permanent organisation committee which chooses about fifteen entrepreneurs, NGOs or just families or groups of friends from among the many applicants to set up a temporary cafe. All the cafes are supposed to have a theme reflected in the menu, decoration and entertainment program. Some themes only occur once, while others run through the seven-year history of the event, like cafes in historical or nostalgic styles that have an educational component: for example the Barons' Veranda, displaying a 19th century noble atmosphere, is decorated like a classroom of a century ago, some cafes resemble a village tavern or even a Soviet-style bus station. Another permanent theme is that of the sea, coastal life and the Baltic Sea region. Living on the island is supposed not only to shape the lifestyle, but also the mindset of the Hiiumaa people. Openness to foreign influence, hospitality and flexibility, as well as living “in accordance to the rhythms of nature” are values associated with the islanders and are considered worthy of preservation according to local cultural leaders (Põllo & Kokovkin 2007). Caring about the community and one's neighbours is also a part of the Kärdda Cafe Day ideology: a number of cafes have supported charities or communal projects (the local hospital, youth centre, people with special needs, renovation of a historical lighthouse, etc.) (see in detail: Kärdda kohvikutepäev a; b).

Over seven years the Kärdda Cafe Day has transformed from an improvised local event consisting of home cafes, into a large festival orchestrated to promote not only Kärdda, but the whole island as a tourist destination. The pompous opening ceremony is now held in the main square and on several occasions the President and his wife have been guests of honour. Comparing the names and programs of the pop-up cafes over the years reveals a turn towards more cosmopolitan and trendy menus and a turn away from traditional cafes and restaurants towards multi-dimensional performance arenas with concerts, workshops, children's events, TV and radio broadcasts and so on. Another noticeable development that began some years ago is the increasing localisation of food in some cafes, meaning that one finds on the menu adjectives like “local”, “ecological” or “natural”, echoing the global turn towards “the holy trinity of seasonal, organic and local” (Baggini 2014, 29).

The example of cafe Bella Rosa illustrates the changes in the character of the pop-up event quite vividly. Seven years ago, it started as a family cafe, describing itself as an intimate domestic garden cafe:

In a small and cozy home garden we are waiting for you with good coffee, tasty cakes, mushroom pies, [...] grandmother's currant drink, nice company and good spirits. If it rains, we give you shelter next to the rustling fire in the fireplace. If the weather is sunny, you can enjoy the beauty of the flower garden, good music and the adorable smell of roses (Cafe Bella Rosa 2007).

By 2013 the concept and image of the cafe had acquired a more cosmopolitan and professional character:

Bella Rosa is a piece of Italy in the small backyard of a home in Vabaduse Street. [...] guests can enjoy fine Italian music and a nice atmosphere. As a family business, Bella Rosa cares about its family members and café guests. We are equally caring of the workers in coffee, cocoa, tea and sugar plantations. That's why we use Fairtrade products in our café. In Bella Rosa, you will find *le persone in amore, temperamento come italia, un grande menù* and *la musica bella!* (Cafe Bella Rosa 2013).

In 2013 the personnel consisted of forty people: relatives, neighbours, friends and friends of friends. Although the garden was well groomed, the overall atmosphere was similar to a mainstream commercial restaurant terrace anywhere in Europe. Despite the efforts of the hosts, the place was overcrowded and the waiters overwhelmed with work. Here, the quiet domestic arena was transformed into a buzzing public space of consumption with professional service. Yet, in some other cases (for example a nearby vegetarian cafe) the one-day-entrepreneurs had managed to create a cosy and intimate atmosphere where visitors could sit on kitchen chairs or on rag carpet on the lawn and feel as though they were visiting a friend. The borders of the home became porous with domestic practices extending into the garden and the stretch of street in front of the house.

Although cafe organisers are supposed to demonstrate their knowledge of local history traditions,<sup>3</sup> actually few pop-ups serve local traditional food. This year there were two such cafes – a traditional Fishermen's Inn in the Fish Harbour (see Figure 1) and one in a neighbouring village specialising in 19th-century food and mixing coastal and small town traditions. This is somewhat surprising, considering that over the last years major initiatives (largely supported by the EU LEADER program) have been implemented in Hiiumaa with the aim of





**Figure 1.** The Fisherman's Inn at the Port of Kärđla. Kärđla Cafe Day, 2 August 2013.

strengthening ties between local food producers and local consumers, promoting the sustainability of the community and healthy eating through the “From farm to pot” initiative (including the organisation of cooking seminars and workshops, etc.).<sup>4</sup>

By the seventh year of the Cafe Day both the guests and organisers had become aware of the changes in the character of the event. The organisers tried to avoid the overcrowded feeling by spreading the cafes around the town. Yet, most visitors did not enjoy the day in an everyday manner in one cafe or restaurant, rather, like us, they tried to visit all of them, carefully following the orientation map and tasting a little bit here and there. Therefore, Kärđla was full of ‘processions’ moving from one attractive spot to another. Public and private spaces were turned into performance stages and united in the spatial structure of a major festival. At the same time the clear focus of the organisers on promoting local heritage and keeping the size, structure and quality of the event under control has prevented the Kärđla Cafe Day from becoming just another mainstream summer show.

The success of Kärđla has inspired several other communities in Estonia to adopt the same format in order to celebrate local heritage and/or revitalise local community life and attract tourists.<sup>5</sup> This is part of a global trend of place marketing in which food plays an important role. Food is used to encourage re-discovering and strengthening of the community as well as promoting the

place through varied forms of consumption, as with similar (food) festival performances elsewhere in Europe.

The Kärddla Cafe Day has developed from a spontaneous local initiative into a professionally orchestrated and partly commercialised place-marketing event. Here the pop-up phenomenon has not only extended domesticity into the public space, but also brought entrepreneurship into private homes and gardens. The structure and logistics of the event enable the visitors to participate in the creation of a special dynamic and communal spirit in urban spaces. The variety of temporary enterprises gives the clients an opportunity to experience the local milieu and traditions simultaneously with global- and urban-style settings and food.

### **Restaurant Day in the Uus Maailm district**

Restaurant Day, originally invented in Finland in 2011, is an event intended to promote and celebrate food culture and commensality with no professional or profit intentions. The event has become global transforming city spaces all over the world four times a year.<sup>6</sup> The character of the event is anti-bureaucratic and anti-hierarchical, it promotes creativity, cultural diversity and civic initiative.

In February 2012 an Estonian-Finnish family of artists living in Uus Maailm district near Tallinn city centre was the first to import Restaurant Day to Estonia, setting up a home restaurant called Savolax in their living room for one day. Apart from Restaurant Day in Helsinki, they also mentioned other events that promote organic and local food, home-made goods and recycling as their sources of inspiration. They served Savonian (a historical province in the east of Finland) regional food for about thirty people, mainly people from the neighbourhood, although there were also some visitors from Finland. Since then they have repeated this event a couple of times on restaurant days and during neighbourhood festivals in the back garden of their house. The family was satisfied with the outcome:

Kirsi: In one word, very positive, actually it was quite a hard day, but at the same time it makes you so happy. It gives the energy that pushes you to do it again.

Anu: Not the profit?

Marko: No, rather, in winter we calculated that we did not even get the electricity expenses back, maybe just the food bills. And now in summer it was so that we got most of the expenses covered, but we didn't count our own work.

Kirsi: So it's really rather fun and a hobby at the moment (Interview 13 June 2012).

A year after the first Restaurant Day in Helsinki, the Uus Maailm Society, to which Kirsi and Marko belong, introduced the event in their neighbourhood. The anti-hierarchical and community-building ethos was clearly voiced by the organisers: "Such enterprises manifest our attitude against bureaucracy and mass consumption" (Interview 13 June 2012). Some pop-up restaurants were half-illegal, for example the temporary cafes in the basement and garden of the Uus Maailm Society had no permission to sell alcohol, and the sanitary conditions left a lot to be desired. But one of the main organisers, Erko, stated: "The main aim for us is to have fun" (Interview 13 June 2012).

When we visited Restaurant Day in Uus Maailm in May 2012, several pop-up food establishments operated on the borderlands of the public and the private: a street in front of a house, a private garden or backyard, public green areas and new communal spaces like the Uus Maailm garden where herbs and vegetables are grown. In one case a pop-up cafe was set up in a first floor flat. In this case visitors did not enter the cafe, rather, access to food and drink was by climbing a ladder and visitors were served through an open window. Another cafe sold home-made burgers through a ground floor window. These practices follow the slogan of the Uus Maailm Society: "Home starts in the street". Thus, we are dealing with conscious expansion of homeliness and the blurring of the strict borders between the home and the public space, domesticating common areas. For one day, marginal or impersonal public spaces became arenas in which to celebrate communality and locality (see Figure 2).

In these pop-up restaurants playfulness and fantasy were important, and the quality of the guests' experience depended on their ability to play along or improvise with the hosts. The pop-up places were mobile both in space and time: one of the cafes opened in a basement and was later moved to the garden; operating times did not correspond to the day's schedule announced on the Restaurant Day Facebook page but were flexible. Opening depended on the time the hosts woke up and when they went shopping for the ingredients; closing time was when the food was sold out or the chefs wanted to take a break.

By ignoring standards of professional planning or service the hosts of pop-up restaurants emphasised an informal and homely atmosphere. Food seemed to be rather a means of socialising than an aim in itself. From the culinary viewpoint 'nostalgia food' (Grandma-style pies and biscuits, hamburgers, Baltic sprat sandwiches with vodka, pancakes) dominated, but there was also exotic food and drink (for example, Indian curry, chai) popular among the local young



**Figure 2.** Restaurant Day in Uus Maailm district. Kirsi and Marko from Savolax restaurant. Tallinn, 19 May 2012.

bohemians and spiritually minded guests and new age fans. However, whereas in Helsinki numerous ethnic minorities were present, introducing their food and culture, this was not the case in Tallinn.

Unlike the annual Uus Maailm Festival, which attracts visitors from all over Tallinn (where pop-up restaurants are one of the many elements of the event alongside street markets, concerts, playgrounds, etc.), Restaurant Day mainly attracted younger local families with children. Here, it was specifically the temporary and performative character of restaurants that enabled their hosts to enjoy a different role for one day, contributing to the community building goal. There were no long-term projects associated with these pop-ups:

Kirsi: Yes, to establish a restaurant as a full-time job, then perhaps the joy would vanish. Such a sweet thing and if it became real job...

Anu: So, you prefer the pop-up principle?

Kirsi: Yes, then it would still have the energy, the freshness, like, let's think again what we could do this time. Otherwise, when we would do it every day, it might follow very much the same path.

Anu: Routine?

Kirsi: Yes, routine, then the fresh energy would disappear quicker. We would rather surprise people once. One day is really very good, you work hard one day, and then it's over in a day, and you are happy, at the moment it suits us very well (Interview 13 June 2012).

The bohemian approach to public space as a common 'home' that manifested itself during Restaurant Day is not totally unproblematic. Some locals have voiced critical attitudes towards noisy and unruly behaviour in the streets and the lack of control over alcohol consumption during Restaurant Day, revealing different understandings of the borders of privacy, homeliness and communality.

Although the Restaurant Day movement has not yet gained larger ground in Estonia, similar temporary food establishments can be seen at community festivals elsewhere. For example, in May 2014 a special Courtyard Cafe Day was organised during the Kalamaja Days Festival in Tallinn. The spatial structure, idea and overall atmosphere of the event was very similar to that of the global restaurant days with a detailed orientation map, pop-up restaurants or cafes serving vegetarian or exotic food, support for global or local charity causes, all accompanied by concerts, theatre performances, sports competitions, arts and crafts workshops and second-hand sales (Kalamaja hoovikohvikud). Compared with other similar pop-up events the social and community-building dimension of the event was more pronounced – for example one cafe hosted a public discussion on the planning of a local street, some pop-up events collected funds for local jobseekers, and people of all social groups came together for a common dinner, sharing food at a 120-metre table.

All in all, Restaurant Day in Uus Maailm is an anti-bureaucratic and community-building event that aims to democratise the use of public space and domesticate the streets, parks and common gardens, etc., through carnivalesque practices. Playfulness and the enjoyment of the participants is of primary importance for the organisers and the main attractive element for visitors. Food underlines the democratic character of the event, offering experiences of homemade dishes and more familiar regional cuisines alongside other ethnic tastes. In this case the food serves as a vehicle for social bonding and open commensality rather than an aim in itself – the social experience predominates over the culinary experience and locality is created by people who open their homes to guests rather than by ingredients and recipes.

## Tallinn Supper Club

Supper clubs, as mentioned above, are paid dinner parties usually run from somebody's home yet open to everyone who has access to the information about this illegal endeavour. However, in different countries supper clubs may have different local characteristics, being more or less alternative and anti-mainstream. The Tallinn Supper Club is an underground restaurant located in the capital of Estonia that operates mainly from the home of Kristina Lupp, a Canadian native who has Estonian roots and has lived here for the last couple of years. She has worked as a cook in Toronto and Florence and did her Master's Thesis on the changes in Estonian food culture during the Soviet period. Cooking, travelling and writing are her passions and the supper club gives an opportunity to share these in many ways, leaving her freedom to keep cooking rather as a hobby than as a profession. "I thought that I don't want to open my own restaurant, but I would like to cook and if it happens once a month, it is not so much work" (Interview 22 January 2014). Kristina's trips have taken her to a variety of supper clubs in other cities and she was encouraged by her Estonian friend who currently lives in London and runs her own supper club.

The supper club was established in November 2012 and has had regular meetings with some longer breaks. The majority of Tallinn Supper Club events have taken place at the hostess' rented apartment located in an old house in the medieval centre of Tallinn. The rooms have high ceilings and large windows and white walls, furniture in pale green colours provides a neutral backdrop to the events celebrating different food styles. Recently the hostess bought a large white table that sits up to 14 guests. She admits that the lack of a car is one reason why she is not eager to choose other locations, however, some Tallinn Supper Club events have taken place at different venues (for example, other restaurants, private residences, etc.). The rule is that the venue is revealed only to the guests who have made the booking and pre-paid a donation for the event. According to Kristina the place is not what defines the supper club: "If I moved to another apartment the supper club would move with me" (Interview 22 January 2014).

Internet and social media are more than just media for feedback, they are the key pillars of the success of any secret supper club – this is how information is spread, clients found, etc. The Tallinn Supper Club has a mailing list that anyone can join; there is also a Facebook account that updates members with news about forthcoming events as well as past dinners (for example photos are shared).

Kristina emphasises that although surrounded by secrecy the Tallinn Supper Club should not be seen as an exclusive closed club for a limited number of

devoted members. She also distinguishes her supper club endeavour from the home restaurant (cf Vösu & Kannike 2011):

This supper club, it's like a dinner party. [...] Well, it's not like a home restaurant. It's about a small company at somebody's house. [...] There are some people who always bring me flowers or some small present [laughs]. It's weird for me because they have paid, why should they? [...] I think that you have the chance to meet people whom you wouldn't meet otherwise in your daily life (Interview 22 January 2014).

She says that the fact that she usually needs to be busy in the kitchen during the dinner does not bother her and she can get feedback from the guests at the end of the dinner or later via e-mail. In those supper club events that involve other chefs and locations Kristina sees herself as an intermediary who gives people interested in food a chance to meet culinary professionals face to face.

The Tallinn Supper Club has no standard menus although the hostess has some preferences concerning cuisine – she loves to cook Italian food but also Mexican food, especially because the latter is rare in Estonia. Local food and culinary traditions do not have a primary importance for her, although the Tallinn Supper Club has also hosted an Estonian dinner with top Estonian chef Inga Paenurm, who was also the executive chef to the President of Estonia. Kristina herself praises culinary experiments, interesting flavours and ingredients, tastes unusual in Estonian mainstream restaurants: “I love to demonstrate to people what ingredients exist. I would like them to taste something new” (Interview 22 January 2014).

Because of the cosmopolitan and global food styles her ingredients come from Canada, Germany, Sweden – depending on what exactly she wants to cook and what is available. For the local food, she visits both indoor and outdoor markets in Tallinn, however, some ingredients are problematic for Estonian producers. Food safety legislations in Estonia means that animal blood cannot be sold in a market, therefore for the Swedish Goose Supper, which included a spicy black soup (*svartsoppa*), she had to order the blood from Sweden. Kristina finds this situation absurd, especially because blood is used in many dishes, not least in Estonian traditional dishes (for example *verivorst* ‘blood sausage’).

Themes, scripts and menus for supper club events are also inspired by public holidays, seasonal festivities and various cultural impulses. For example, the Swedish Goose Supper on November 23, 2013, was triggered by a southern Swedish tradition of eating roast goose in order to celebrate St. Martin's day<sup>7</sup> and by Swedish friends the hostess has in Tallinn. The main course was a roast goose



**Figure 3.** Swedish Goose Supper invitation and menu.

stuffed with apples and prunes and served with red cabbage, Brussels sprouts and oven-baked Hasselback potatoes (see Figure 3). The goose, however, was not from Estonia but from Germany, because Kristina claimed that they could not find the same quality goose meat in Estonia. The event was held in a house belonging to the British ambassador (a personal contact of Kristina’s made access possible) with an elegant lobby and a stylish hall designed for dining. To add a more aristocratic touch to the event porters and waiters were invited for the extra service. There were more than 30 guests who were seated at three tables according to the seating plan, aiming to give people an opportunity to meet somebody they did not know as their neighbour. (However, this plan was not followed fully by all guests.) In spite of the noble venue the overall atmosphere of the dinner was quite informal, full of conversation surrounding food as well as shared personal stories. One of the guest chefs from Sweden shared his colourful memories of food and hospitality in different countries.



Food is an important element of the Tallinn Supper Club events, but from the interview with Kristina it was apparent that she gives significant importance to the commensality and social communication. The Supper Club events are places for social exchange, especially for foreigners living in Tallinn, who form a large number of the permanent visitors to the Tallinn Supper Club. Thus, social communication and interest in shared culinary surprises are the main motivations for both the hostess and the guests. Similarly, the hostess of a Swedish supper club describes her suppers as “social experiments” (Ridderheim 2012, 46) and Hannah Sugarman, the protagonist of the novel *The Secret Supper Club*, describes the aim of mutual social sharing as being “to swap stories and histories and see how food can bring people together” (Bate 2012, 139).

Interestingly the Internet and new media has not considerably increased the heterogeneity of people who regularly come to the events – foreigners dominate among the guests. Perhaps the language is also an issue here because the advertisements, e-mail communication and conversations are usually in English. In that sense the Tallinn Supper Club shares some similarities with other thematic clubs, albeit not exclusively, and also has some traits of the global subculture of foodies that combines love for food with the search for new experiences and social encounters. The fees or donations for the dinner are relatively high considering Estonians’ average income and this may be another reason why the active guests of the supper club dinners are mostly foreigners whose income makes them representatives of the local upper middle class. Such ambivalence between democratisation and distinction, which exists simultaneously in contemporary foodways and foodscapes, sometimes in the context of the same event, is characteristic of a global trend (cf Jönsson 2013).

Like supper clubs elsewhere, the Tallinn Supper Club may be characterised as a novel phenomenon in the contemporary cosmopolitan urban culture in which private homes may become subcultural social spaces in which food brings people together and enables commensality experiences shared with strangers. Stories about and around food, the intimate atmosphere and a bit of secrecy are more important here than extraordinary taste experiences.

### **Pop-up restaurant at the Ööbiku Gastronomy Farm**

The last pop-up restaurant we introduce is a different, somewhat borderline, example in comparison with the pop-up eating establishments considered above. It is run by professionals with the aim of establishing something permanent and the choice of a rural venue is in line with latest trends in Scandinavia, where acknowledged chefs are (re-)establishing destinations for culinary tourism

by looking for rural settings that would support the serving of local quality food (see Markowska et al 2011). However, the temporary restaurant at the Ööbiku Gastronomy Farm enables us to look beyond the boundaries of private and public in the urban context and see how new trends of entrepreneurship and consumption emerge in the countryside.

In the summer of 2013, one of Estonian top chefs Ants Uustalu and confectioner Kertu Lukas opened a pop-up restaurant in their home – a recently purchased farmhouse in Kuimetsa village, Rapla County.<sup>8</sup> The pop-up restaurant opened its doors in July and accepted 10–20 guests at a time. Although defined as “pop-up” by the restaurateurs the business concept is to develop the place into a gastronomy farm in the future. Thus, the pop-up restaurant functions as a liminal establishment in order to attract customers and promote the place before the permanent restaurant comes into existence.<sup>9</sup>

In 2013 the restaurateurs were both trained professionals with the previous work experiences in Tallinn. The chef has worked for the President of Estonia, for the Finnish Embassy and also in upscale London restaurants. The confectioner has, in addition, previous experience in media and public relations that facilitates knowledgeable marketing of the business. This background gave both Ants and Kertu significant “culinary capital” (Naccarato & Lebesco 2012) and helped to build up their business in a location far from the city lights. The Gastronomy Farm still needs to be established as an enterprise, therefore in 2013 Ants and Kertu were running catering and cooking courses and also participated actively in open-air festivals and fairs promoting high-quality Estonian cuisine based on fresh local ingredients.<sup>10</sup>

The hosts of Ööbiku Gastronomy Farm have declared their culinary principles and food values as follows: “quality ingredients, pure and rural tastes, classical culinary techniques and elegant finish” (see Rand 2013, 36). They saw their activity in the context of the current quest for local and authentic food, especially in connection with the Scandinavian developments (cf Jönsson 2013). Ants believes that good restaurants are moving from the cities to the countryside: “Where you have good ingredients, where you can actually grow your food. Then you have bigger profit and better quality. And you are more satisfied with what you are doing” (Interview 19 August 2013). Kertu adds that having a restaurant in a farm is something “every chef would like to do as a dream job”, because it gives an opportunity to earn a living while cooking for small groups – one can be very flexible about the menu (Interview 19 August 2013). Ants and Kertu agree that for them it is also a lifestyle job because at Ööbiku Farm they can practice the lifestyle they had been longing for when working in the city – here there is more freedom and space for oneself.

Ants does not see the gastronomy farm as a farm in the traditional sense where “one drives around a tractor and tends large animals”. Rather, it is a place where “new tastes are born”, where local culinary traditions are rediscovered and reinterpreted and cooking or gardening courses organised (Interview 19 August 2013). Thus, the Ööbiku Gastronomy Farm is an enterprise that introduces new ideas and practices of rurality (cf Bardone 2013; Woods 2011). Nevertheless, in 2012 ducks and in 2013 hybrids of wild boar and domestic pigs were kept at Ööbiku. The latter were a great attraction, especially for guests with children who could feed the animals living freely in a hog-pen on the forest floor. In the future, the aim is to involve more gardening and to promote it as part of the food culture education for the younger generation.

The pop-up restaurant was set up with a little investment following the principles of recycling and bricolage. The hosts cleaned a former barn on the farm themselves decorating it simply and furnishing it with second hand furniture. Kertu expressed her criticism of trendy restaurants with luxurious interiors where the quality of food and the efforts of the cook are sometimes underestimated. However, with the help of an investment loan the kitchen at the Ööbiku Gastronomy Farm (located in the main house) is fully renovated and with its stainless-steel surfaces and large cooking island in the middle corresponds to the standards of a professional kitchen, except for the wood-burning stove which is rare in urban restaurants. In the summer season outdoor cooking facilities, such as an underground oven and barbeque, were used to give the wild boar meat and bread unique smoky tastes.

With a few exceptions, the gastronomy farm uses the produce of other farms as locality, ecological production and genuine taste are the key food values supported in Ööbiku.<sup>11</sup> (Figure 4) Overall, both the setting and food celebrate a domesticity and simplicity that is given a professional touch through the careful selection, preparation and elegant presentation of the ingredients and dishes. The nostalgia for real tastes plays an important role in their food philosophy. The hosts stressed that they wanted to bring their clients back to forgotten tastes and values. In another interview, Kertu stressed that all food must come from the farm, forest and bogs: “Old childhood tastes or forgotten things, but adding a bolder and more modern twist [...]. For example, smoked duck eggs, apple tree smoked salmon, dandelion syrup or salad, nettle, oxalis or wild mushroom dishes...” (Rosen 2012). On the website of their enterprise Ants declares that his aim is to:

[...] surprise clients with the *luxurious simplicity* you might still recall as the green grass and blue sky of childhood when not every soup was seasoned with



**Figure 4.** Ants Uustalu, *chef de cuisine* at the Ööbiku gastronomy farm in 2014.

a bouillon cube or every piece of fish with lemon pepper (Ööbiku, emphasis added).

The internet and social media has played quite an important role in marketing the business as their main target group in 2013 seemed to be (urban) people from their own generation or slightly older – people in their thirties and forties.<sup>12</sup> The Ööbiku Facebook account is likewise used to inform guests about the dates and availability of dinners and lunches and to share visual information about the dishes or other events at which the chefs participated. The word was spread quickly and with the help of Facebook the dinner tables were usually booked well in advance.

However, not all of their customers are dedicated urban foodies, there have also been visitors from smaller places. The location close to Tallinn makes it easy to get back to the city by evening without the need to look for accommodation (in the future the gastronomy farm wants to provide farm-style lodging). Yet, the locals (except a biodynamic farmer who also originates from Tallinn) were rather sceptical about the idea of a restaurant in a former barn – “who would come to eat here?” (Interview 19 August 2013). Some local people involved in the catering business were also afraid of losing their business to the distinguished

chefs, but the hosts of Ööbiku sorted this out early on – they did not aim to deal with the catering of local parties and festivities, except for a few annual events that enable them to feel part of the community. Now locals often call them to provide home-grown vegetables or fruits. All in all the contribution of the enterprise to the local community is somewhat ambivalent – the ingredients come from the region, but the clients mainly from a distance.

The pop-up restaurant at Ööbiku Gastronomy Farm challenges the borders between city and countryside and is an example of rural gentrification, combining a village milieu and carefully selected local ingredients with gourmet cooking and service. Hosting guests in their private home in a farm, the chefs emphasise the values of being local, purity, and simplicity through a rustic domestic setting, at the same time underlining the exclusivity of such food by their professional input and relatively high prices. Yet, the pop-up restaurant at Ööbiku Gastronomy farm likewise challenged the borders between temporary and permanent – since autumn 2014 the restaurant was open all year round in the main building of the farm, and Ants continues to be the only chef in the house. The novelty and ephemerality of pop-up dining have vanished, supplanted by consistent quality and high reputation (2014–2016 Ööbiku Gastronomy Farm has been among the 50 best restaurants in Estonia).

## **Concluding discussion**

The temporal quality expressed in the term pop-up restaurant does not mean that we have a mere substitute for a ‘real’ enterprise. Instead, relying on our examples we suggest that it has extra qualities permitting many things that would be impossible in the long-term. Such temporary urban or rural restaurants are dynamic spaces allowing for innovation and experimentation for both lifestyle entrepreneurs and consumers.

Like the setting and the menu, the sensory elements of the atmosphere in pop-up restaurants are not fixed, but of transitory character, allowing the hosts to employ their creativity in diverse ways and provide a multitude of new restaurant experiences. The possibility to communicate and advertise through social media in a fast and flexible manner adds to the ephemerality and exclusivity of the pop-up dining experience, but also enables the customers to give immediate feedback and thus contribute to the development of such events.

There are multiple pop-up restaurants in Estonia, some of which are more focused on culinary, and some on social, experiences. Generally speaking, they entail anti-mass-consumption attitudes and celebrate people’s creativity. As Estonian food culture is becoming more and more hybrid, pop-up restaurants reflect

global trends on the gourmet foodscape – an increased attention to environmental consciousness, local specialities and authentic experiences as opposed to industrial or mainstream restaurant food. The pop-up restaurant scene in Estonia is quite diverse, in this being similar to that of other countries, and the material we studied enables us to suggest a preliminary typology:

- (1) pop-up community events and shared or commoditised hospitality and commensality;
- (2) pop-up cafes and restaurants organised by professional cooks or other food experts in order to gain more control over ingredients, menu and setting;
- (3) supper clubs as an introduction of a global format that is currently a limited phenomenon for small groups of foodie customers.

Indeed, such a classification just indicates some main aims and functions that a pop-up restaurant may have, as its more specific characteristics depend on the particular socio-cultural context in which it emerges. There are no two identical pop-up eating establishments and by definition it is impossible to step into the same pop-up restaurant twice.

Pop-up restaurant along with other pop-up enterprises, have brought new dynamics to urban and rural public and private spaces. Parts of public spaces have been privatised or domesticated to express individuality and offer intimate social encounters; at the same time some private spaces have been involved in wider public initiatives of community or neighbourhood building, promoting social cohesion and marketing localities. Thus, pop-up restaurants produce liminal spaces in habitual everyday environments.

In contemporary cities the formation of distinctive neighbourhoods is a way of giving a certain flavour to public spaces as spaces of sociability. This often runs parallel to the rise of environmental awareness and the search for sustainable urban forms where “impersonal urban space can be broken into interpersonal spheres of communities” (Madanipour 2003, 209). The pop-up restaurants in some new urban neighbourhoods contribute to the creation of the temporary *communitas* through non-habitual use of space and common eating experience among people who usually do not meet each other.

In the cases studied, it is not so much particular food styles that define a pop-up restaurant, although some chefs may take their job very seriously, but rather values related to creative economy and alternative consumption that matter. Some authors have claimed that supper clubs especially are manifestations of resistance to corporate restaurant culture. One radical supper club owner in the US states that supper clubs are “alternatives to the restaurant industry and its ultra-capitalist, ultra-exploitative, ultra-wasteful trappings” (Kennedy 2008). Although this is not always the case in Estonia, the pop-up restaurants studied

are seeking alternatives to mainstream food consumption often providing more local and personalised dining experiences. There is also a significant resistance to mainstream food consumption in which the authenticity of culinary and social experiences is believed to have vanished.

Some of our examples support the observation made by Greg Richards, who claims that food experiences

[...] contribute to local development in a range of ways, not just by stimulating food production, but also supporting the experience production system of the locality, developing the critical infrastructure, attracting consumers, stimulating cultural production and consumption and supporting regeneration in urban and rural settings (Richards 2012, 25).

In addition, pop-up restaurants may not contribute to the experience of locality in terms of food but in terms of the social experience, through immediate encounters between the host and guests.

'Homely' food, atmosphere and service are used for both community building and as an added value in the commodified experience economy (Jönsson 2013). Contemporary foodies are ready to pay extra for the unique setting and/or company. They value time-limited exclusivity and performance-like immediate encounters that may increase the feeling of authenticity of the consumption experience. On the other hand pop-up restaurants set up in private homes illustrate the tendency that the contemporary home is no longer an enclosed and clearly demarcated space – instead it is in continuous interaction with the outside world and parts of the home may be transferred into public spaces either through commercial or pop-up activities (Johansson & Saarikangas 2009, 11; cf Miller 2001; Vösu & Kannike 2011).

By extending the borders of the conventional restaurant or home into public space, pop-up restaurants create spaces of negotiation between the private and the public and new forms of communality. The liminal properties and heterogeneous multisensory experience make them attractive for both entrepreneurs and consumers. Thus, the new wave of temporary activities, including pop-up restaurants, might have deeper implications not only for personal creativity and community-building, but also wider spatial policy and practice. Pop-up dining demonstrates the importance of individuals as creative cultural agents who cook as well as eat.

## Interviews

Interview with Kirsi Miettinen and Marko Ausma, Tallinn, 13 June 2012. Transcript at the authors' disposal.

Interview with Erko Valk, Tallinn, 13 June 2012. Transcript at the authors' disposal.

Interview with Kertu Lukas and Ants Uustalu, Kuimetsa, 19 August 2013. Transcript at the authors' disposal.

Interview with Kristina Lupp, Tallinn, 22 January 2014. Transcript at the authors' disposal.

## Internet sources

Ängavallen a = Ängavallen: Sweet Dreams in Sweden. <http://www.thenewgastronomes.com/angavallen-sweet-dreams-in-sweden/> [accessed 17 September 2014].

Ängavallen b = Ängavallen. Kulinariskt. Ekologiskt. <http://angavallen.se/> [accessed 17 September 2014].

Café Bella Rosa 2007 = Kärldla kohvikutepäev. Aastakäigud. Café Bella Rosa (2007). <http://kohvikutepaev.ee/aastakaigud/2007/cafе-bella-rosa/> [accessed 17 September 2014].

Café Bella Rosa 2013 = Kärldla kohvikutepäev. Bella Rosa (2013). <http://kohvikutepaev.ee/en/2013/cafes/bella-rosa/> [accessed 17 September 2014].

Growing Gastronomists = Sirguvad söögisellid. Growing Gastronomists. <http://hiiusellid.webnode.com/> [accessed 28 March 2014].

Harris, E. (2014) Exploring the time-space in the contemporary city. Landscape Surgery. Social & Cultural Geography. Royal Holloway, University of London. <http://landscapesurgery.wordpress.com/2014/07/25/exploring-time-space-in-the-temporary-city/> [accessed 17 September 2014].

Hiidlaste Koostöökogu = Kohalik toit. Hiidlaste Koostöökogu. <http://www.kogu.hiiumaa.ee/index.php?page=kohalik-toit> [accessed 17 September 2014].

Kakskümmend seitse. Draama 2013 blogi. <http://etfestival.wordpress.com/2013/09/07/kakskumمندseitse/> [accessed 17 September 2014].

Kalamaja hoovikohvikud = Kalamaja ajaveeb. Kalamaja hoovikohvikud. <http://www.kalamaja.ee/2014/05/kalamaja-hoovikohvikud/> [accessed 9 June 2014].

Kennedy, E. (2008) Dining Off the Grid. *The Monthly*. The East Bay's Premier Magazine of Culture and Commerce, March. <http://www.themonthly.com/feature-03-08-1.html> [accessed 17 September 2014].

Kohvikutepäev = Kohvikutepäev leiab järgijaid. Saarlane.ee. <http://194.126.113.134/uudised/uudis.asp?newsid=49110&kat=5> [accessed 17 September 2014].

Kohvilähkrid = Kärldla kohvikutepäev. Kohvilähkrid. <http://kohvikutepaev.ee/kohvilahkrid> [accessed 17 September 2014].

Kostipäiv = Seto Külävüü kostipäiv 17. augustil. Võrumaa. <http://www.visitvoru.ee/uudised/seto-kulavuu-kostipaiv-17-augustil/> [accessed 17 September 2014].

Kärldla kohvikutepäev a. <http://kohvikutepaev.ee/> [accessed 17 September 2014].

Kärldla kohvikutepäev b. <https://www.facebook.com/kohvikutepaev> [accessed 17 September 2014].



- Mondo pop-up pood. <https://www.facebook.com/mondopood> [accessed 17 September 2014].
- Norrman, M. & Pettersson, L. (2011) Gourmet restaurants and small-scale food production – Swedish rural and urban regions, *ERSA Conference Papers*. European Regional Science Association. <http://www.sre.wu.ac.at/ersa/ersaconfs/ersa10/ERSA2010final-paper1664.pdf> [accessed 17 September 2014].
- Ööbiku gastronoomiatalu. <http://www.oobiku.ee/> [accessed 17 September 2014].
- Pop-up Kampala = Estonian World: Estonians popping up in Uganda: the story of Pop Up Kampala. <http://mondo.org.ee/en/estonian-world-estonians-popping-up-in-uganda-the-story-of-pop-up-kampala-2/> [accessed 17 September 2014].
- Põllo, H. & Kokovkin, T. (2007) Saarelisus ja saare identiteet. Raadio Ööülikool. [http://heli.er.ee/helid/oy/OY2007\\_Helgi\\_Pollo\\_ja\\_Toomas\\_Kokovkin\\_Saarelisus\\_ja\\_saare-identiteet.mp3](http://heli.er.ee/helid/oy/OY2007_Helgi_Pollo_ja_Toomas_Kokovkin_Saarelisus_ja_saare-identiteet.mp3) [accessed 17 September 2014].
- Põllo, H. (2010) Vaimse kultuuripärandi kaardistamisest Hiiumaal. [http://pk.rmk.ee/parandkultuur/25.03.10\\_tartu/p6llo\\_est.pdf](http://pk.rmk.ee/parandkultuur/25.03.10_tartu/p6llo_est.pdf) [accessed 17 September 2014].
- Pulk, K. (2007) Kärkla koduaiad, muuseumid ja raudlaevad pakuvad täna kohvi, *Eesti Päevaleht*, 3 August. <http://epl.delfi.ee/news/eesti/kardla-koduaiad-muuseumid-ja-raudlaevad-pakuvad-tana-kohvi.d?id=51096066> [accessed 17 September 2014].
- Restaurant Day. <http://www.restaurantday.org/en/info/about/> [accessed 17 September 2014].
- Ridderheim, K. (2012) *Restaurang i vardagsrummet. En kvalitativ undersökning av fenomenet middagsklubbar*. Kandidatuppsats. Uppsala Universitet. Sociologiska institutionen. <http://uu.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:530321/FULLTEXT01.pdf> [accessed 25 March 2014]
- Rosen, B. (2012) Tegus paar Ööbikuid, *Postimees*. *Naine24*, 16 June. <http://www.naine24.ee/869468/teigus-paar-oobikuid> [accessed 25 March 2014].
- Rudi, H. (2013) Mandrirahvas vallutas Kärkla õued, *Postimees*. *Tarbija24*, 5 August. <http://www.tarbija24.ee/1321632/mandrirahvas-vallutas-kardla-oued> [accessed 30 March 2014].
- Telliskivi pop-up museum. <http://telliskivimuseum.weebly.com/eng.html> [accessed 17 September 2014].
- The Pop-Up City. <http://popupcity.net/about/#ixzz2hJcoiVBQ> [accessed 17 September 2014].
- TMW Tastes = Tallinn Music Week Tastes: restaurants. [http://www.tallinnmusicweek.ee/tastes\\_2014.php](http://www.tallinnmusicweek.ee/tastes_2014.php) [accessed 17 September 2014].
- Tyler, A. (2009) Everyone back to mine: pop-up restaurants in private homes are the latest foodie fad, *The Independent*, 4 June. <http://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/food-and-drink/features/everyone-back-to-mine-popup-restaurants-in-private-homes-are-the-latest-foodie-fad-1696262.html> [accessed 17 September 2014].
- Williams, Z. (2009) The secret feast, *The Guardian*, 10 February. <http://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2009/feb/10/underground-restaurants-london> [accessed 17 September 2014].

## References

- Baggini, J. (2014) *The Virtues of the Table. How to Eat and Think*. Granta Publications, London.
- Bardone, E. (2013) *My Farm is My Stage: A Performance Perspective on Rural Tourism and Hospitality Services in Estonia*. Dissertationes ethnologiae Universitatis Tartuensis 4. University of Tartu Press, Tartu.
- Bate, D. (2012) *The Secret Supper Club*. Constable & Robinson, London.
- Bishop, P. & Williams, L. (2012) *The Temporary City*. Routledge, London, New York.
- Fernandes, K. & Sharma, S. (2013) Culture goes pop-up, *The Times of India*, 20 January. <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/life-style/people/Culture-goes-pop-up/article-show/18099810.cms> [accessed 27 March 2014].
- Goodman, M. K., Goodman, D. & Redclift, M. (2010) Introduction: situating consumption, space and place. – Goodman, M. K., Goodman, D. & Redclift, M. (eds) *Consuming Space. Placing Consumption in Perspective*, 3–40. Ashgate Publishing, Surrey.
- Hoekstra, D. (2013) *The Supper Club Book: A Celebration of a Midwest Tradition*. Chicago Review Press, Chicago.
- Johansson, H. & Saarikangas, K. (eds) (2009) *Homes in Transformation: Dwelling, Moving, Belonging*. Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura, Helsinki.
- Johnston, J. & Baumann, S. (2010) *Foodies: Democracy and Distinction in the Gourmet Foodscape*. Routledge, New York, London.
- Jönsson, H. (2002) Matupplevelser. – O'Dell, T. (ed) *Upplevelsens materialitet*, 55–71. Studentlitteratur, Lund.
- Jönsson, H. (2013) Chef celebrities, foodstuff anxieties and (un)happy meals. An introduction to foodways redux, *Ethnologia Europaea* 43 (2), 5–16.
- Kurik, K.-L. (2013) *Temporary City: Critical Approach to Temporary Urbanism, Temporary Use and the Idea of Temporary in a City: Four Case Studies from Tallinn*. Master's thesis. Estonian Academy of Arts, Urban Studies.
- Löfgren, O. & Willim, R. (2005) *Magic, Culture and the New Economy*. Berg, Oxford, New York.
- Lugosi, P., Bell, D. & Lugosi, K. (2010) Hospitality, culture and regeneration: urban decay, entrepreneurship and the “ruin” bars of Budapest, *Urban Studies* 47 (14), 3079–3101.
- Madanipour, A. (2003) *Public and Private Spaces of the City*. Routledge, London, New York.
- Markowska, M., Saemundsson, R. J. & Wiklund, J. (2011) Contextualising business model development in Nordic rural gourmet restaurants. – Aslos, G. A., Carter, S., Ljunggren, E. & Welter, F. (eds) *The Handbook of Research on Entrepreneurship in Agriculture and Rural Development*, 162–179. Edward Elgar Publishing, Cheltenham.
- Miller, D. (2001) Behind closed doors. – Miller, D. (ed) *Home Possessions. Material Culture Behind Closed Doors*, 1–19. Berg, Oxford, New York.
- Naccarato, P. & Lebesco, K. (2012) *Culinary Capital*. Berg, London, New York.
- Noorani, T., Blencowe, C. & Brigstocke, J. (2013) *Problems of Participation: Reflections on Authority, Democracy, and the Struggle for Common Life*. Authority Research Network, Lewes.

- Pine, J. & Gilmore, J. H. (1999) *The Experience Economy*. Harvard Business School Press, Boston.
- Rand, J. (2013) Gastronomiatalu luksuslik lihtsus, *Maakodu*, March, 36–39.
- Rapport, N. & Overing, J. (2000) *Social and Cultural Anthropology: The Key Concepts*. Routledge Key Guides. Routledge, London, New York.
- Rodgers, K. (2011) *Supper Club: Recipes and Notes from the Underground Restaurant*. Harper Collins, London.
- Richards, G. (2012) An overview of food and tourism trends and policies. – *Food and the Tourism Experience. The OECD-Korea Workshop*, 13–46. OECD Publishing.
- Russo, M. T. (2012) Home, domesticity and hospitality: a theoretical reflection, *Hospitality & Society* 2 (3), 309–320.
- de Solier, I. (2013) *Food and the Self: Consumption, Production and Material Culture. Materializing Culture*. Bloomsbury, London, New York.
- Spang, R. L. (2000) *The Invention of the Restaurant. Paris and Modern Gastronomic Culture*. Harvard University Press, Cambridge.
- Võsu, E. & Kannike, A. (2011) My home is my stage: restaurant experiences in two Estonian lifestyle enterprises, *Journal of Ethnology and Folkloristics* 5 (2), 19–47.
- Woods, M. (2011) *Rural. Key Ideas in Geography*. Routledge, London.
- Zukin, S. (1991) *Landscapes of Power: From Detroit to Disney World*. University of California Press, Berkeley.

## Sources of illustrations

- Figure 1 – Photo: Ester Bardone.
- Figure 2 – Photo: Anu Kannike.
- Figure 3 – Tallinn Supper Club, 2013.
- Figure 4 – Photo: Lauri Laan.

## Notes

This research was financed by the Estonian Ministry of Education and Research (IUT<sub>34-32</sub> “Cultural heritage as a socio-cultural resource and contested field”). The original version of the chapter was published as “Eating out and in between: observations from the pop-up restaurant scene in Estonia” in *Folklore: Electronic Journal of Folklore* (Vol. 68, 2017).

1 Historically the term supper club, especially in the USA, designated the closed clubs for entertainment as well as dining that became popular in the 1930s (see Hoekstra 2013).

2 For example, the charitable pop-up shop Mondo sells handmade items from Africa and Afghanistan (Mondo pop-up pood) and a pop-up cafe run by Estonians in Uganda employs people with special needs (Pop Up Kampala). The concept pop-up has also been used for temporary multidisciplinary art projects, for example the pop-up exhibition “27” set up in Tartu city centre during the annual drama festival and featuring “ideas, thoughts and magical spaces” of Estonian scenic designers (Kakskümmend seitse). In February 2014, the first pop-up museum in Estonia opened for two weeks in the Telliskivi Creative

City in Tallinn (Telliskivi pop-up museum) and a pop-up restaurant led by Ants Uustalu from Ööbiku farm in an art gallery served as a meeting place and club for Tallinn Music Week, a festival of contemporary Music (TMW Tastes).

3 “Be aware how your cafe is related to local history and think how to present this in the cafe” (Kohvikutepäev).

4 See in detail Hiidlaste Koostöökogu, Growing Gastronomists.

5 For example, the organisers were invited to Värska in order to train local people to set up a similar event (Kohvikutepäev). On August 17, 2013 the Seto Külavüü Kostipäiv (Seto Belt of Villages Treats’ Day) featured 10 cafes in farmyards and farmhouses. Although the event promoted local Seto food (fish, different pies, the local cottage cheese *sõir*, etc.) and the ingredients were of local origin, the style of these pop-ups, from names to entertainment programmes, was borrowed one-to-one from the Kärkla example (Kostipäiv).

6 One-day restaurants have so far popped up in 75 different countries and have catered for over 3 million customers (Restaurant Day).

7 St. Martin’s Day was traditionally celebrated in Estonia. Some domestic animals were slaughtered in order to celebrate the end of the harvest season. Folk dishes in Estonia include pig’s head with vegetables and various blood dishes were served. The custom to eat goose came quite late and was mainly practiced by the wealthier families.

8 Approx. 60–70 km from Tallinn, the largest city in Estonia.

9 Although small rural eating establishments have a long history in Estonia, the gourmet restaurant established in a rural setting has become a relatively recent trend in the modern culinary landscape related to the ongoing commodification and gentrification of the modern countryside (cf Markowska et al 2011; Norrman & Pettersson 2011). There is a similar venue to Ööbiku in South Estonia – Tammuri Farm Restaurant, run by an amateur chef. The principle of both restaurants is not to offer a standard menu and opening hours but to provide seasonally inspired dishes and accept only those guests who pre-book their visit (see Vösu & Kannike 2011).

10 Similar examples of pop-up restaurants promoting local food and local ingredients are, for example the Chamber of Taste Experiences and the Community Kitchen of Peipsimaa in St. Anthony’s Yard in Tartu.

11 In this sense they are quite different from the farm restaurant at Ängavallen Farm in Sweden (see Ängavallen a; b).

12 The website was built with the help of a professional webmaster and photographer.



## Shoshone as a text: a structural-semiotic analysis of reading the river as a whitewater raft guide

Jamie Kruis

**Abstract.** This chapter investigates the functional ‘reading’ of a river by white-water raft guides in order to understand the semiotic mechanisms involved in human direct perception of the environment compared to the reading of cultural texts. This research finds significance in the on-going search for theories and methodologies in the environmental humanities. Juri Lotman’s theory of text is applied in an ad hoc analysis of a section of river named Shoshone in Glenwood Springs, Colorado, USA in order to examine whether his theory is useful for interpreting and analysing human perception of the environment, and how his notion of text could be enhanced in this dialogue with a new research object. Lotman’s theory is found to be useful for describing the cognitive side of reading the river, as connections between visually perceived forms on the river are connected to specific bodily movements in response. Lotman’s theory is then brought into dialogue with the work of James J. Gibson, whose research on direct perception of the environment both problematises and potentially compliments Lotman’s theory on this material. Basic similarities between cognitive perception of the environment and the reading of cultural texts are suggested; namely, demarcation, hierarchical structure, and the realisation of a system of signs. Important differences are also discovered, such as the greater variety of interpretation afforded by cultural texts than interaction with the river, as well as the largely unconscious bodily attunement to the environment involved in reading the river. Two modifications are conclusively made to Lotman’s theory, informed by both the object and Gibson’s theories, as a step toward a semiotic research model for analysing human perception of the environment, which is at a blurry intersection between cultural mediation and physically functional perception.

---

Kannike, A., Tasa, M. & Västriik, E.-H. (eds) (2017) *Body, Personhood and Privacy: Perspectives on the Cultural Other and Human Experience*. *Approaches to Culture Theory* 7, 245–265. University of Tartu Press, Tartu.

## **Introduction: epistemology of Tartu semiotics**

Various notions of text have been applied to landscape in human geography. One common approach, textual analysis, is connected with discourse analysis, and “describes the attempt to understand the content, mode of address and authority, organization, and other aspects of language-in-use” (Dittmer 2010, 280). This approach centres on power relations and natural language-based concepts of text. Other applications of text include structural and post-structural approaches, the latter emphasising the interpretation side of the text and thereby aiming to uncover the multi-vocal nature of landscape representation (Duncan & Duncan 2010). Structural semiotic approaches, most often using theories derived from Ferdinand de Saussure, are criticised for the researcher’s alleged assumption that s/he is an “expert decoder” of the landscape (op cit, 226). Underlying these approaches and criticism is the idea that landscape as a text is notably separate from reality. Text in this sense is an arbitrary representation of landscape and something to be contested.

This chapter takes a different approach to textualisation of landscape in an application of Juri Lotman’s notion of text to direct perception of a particular section of the Colorado river, about 3.4 kilometres, called Shoshone in Glenwood Springs, Colorado, USA. A few words about epistemology are important in order to understand what is different about this approach, and why it is useful. The ad hoc, object-based epistemology often employed by Tartu semiotics reflects the assertion that different research objects, levels, or aspects of research objects may necessitate different languages of description, as well as modify the theory in the process of analysis. This relates to the importance of distinguishing the metalanguage from the object language, expressed in the notable statement: “we should distinguish between the conception of culture from its own point of view – and from the point of view of a scientific metasystem which describes it” (Uspenskij et al 1973, 1). This is a particular form of reflexivity based on the premise of modelling theory. The way that the researcher describes the object undoubtedly transforms it by selecting certain aspects and drawing particular organisational relations between them – a process guided by the organisation of the theories used and broader academic and paradigmatic discourse. Lotman states that this is the case for all theoretical knowledge, as “any logical model is known to be poorer [i.e. more abstract] than its object and can be an instrument of knowledge only under this condition” (1975, 199). However, in models like the one used in this analysis, extra-systemic empirical features found to contradict the researcher’s system of explanation do not intrinsically render the explanation insufficient, but are a necessary part of these two different levels of reality.

As Lotman states, deformation “is a means and a condition of knowledge” (op cit, 203). It is rather more important to ascertain the appropriateness of the model chosen for the research object, opening up a dialogue between the two. Instead of necessitating a more specific critical approach to power relations, a step often taken in human geography, this transformative phenomenon based on different codes, contexts, and interpreters – or in one phrase, the “theory of models” – is considered to be one fundamental aspect of meaning generation (op cit, 200). Additionally, the separation of text from reality is not something to be marked as a peculiar phenomenon, as reality for all observers is always partial, constructed, and transformed through modelling systems. Therefore semioticians do not necessarily consider their research as expert decoding, but rather as a useful, constructive point of view.

## **Theory, object, and discovery**

### **Theory and object**

Shoshone as a text is specific to the point of view of a river guide within the activity of whitewater rafting, explicating a functional connection between visually perceived forms and corresponding bodily actions. The material for this analysis includes visual, written, and verbal representations associated with river guiding, as well as previous participation by the author in a river orientation course and professional guiding on Shoshone and other rivers. This study finds significance in several contexts. First, it is part of a larger on-going search for suitable methodologies and research concepts in the environmental humanities (for example, ecocriticism, new materialism, human geography, and landscape studies) for interpreting and analysing human interaction with the physical environment. Second, this contributes to an understanding of the semiotisation of the physical environment in the context of the Tartu semiotic tradition by critically examining the use of literary concepts for environmental perception. Finally, this study contributes a possible approach for the emerging field of ecosemiotics, understood generally here as the semiotic analysis of the relations between nature and culture. Therefore, this study expands Lotman’s theory of text while also contributing to transdisciplinary research developments exploring relations between nature and culture.

The *Conceptual Dictionary of the Tartu-Moscow Semiotic School* has abstracted eight different definitions of text from Lotman’s work (Levchenko & Salupere 1999). For the purpose of this analysis, being rather far from traditional applications of text, just three basic features are taken from *The Structure of the Artistic*



*Text*: the text realises a system of signs, it is demarcated as a unit, and it has an internal, hierarchical structure (Lotman 1977). These basic features are chosen because direct perception of the river is not near as arbitrary as an artistic text, the latter of which is much more complex in combining multiple sign systems on the same level. An artistic text necessitates greater attention to extrasystemic features, having their own autonomous orders which often contradict each other, enabling the generation and storage of large amounts of information through this heterogeneity of sign systems. Only one sign system is described in this textualisation of the river, which cannot be localised at the cultural level, but is in between direct perception and culture. This more situated, functional knowledge is less open to interpretation than an artistic text. It is influenced by culture as a socially mediated activity pursued for a myriad of reasons, and as the body of knowledge associated with how to physically function on the river, what kind of technology is required, and the specific terminology associated with the activity and locality of Shoshone.

In practice, culture is responsible for providing the opportunity to develop this specific functional perception. Once actually rafting on the river, human physical capacities for perception and action come into play and attune to the river over time through practice, alongside the verbal and visual descriptions of how to be a good river guide, and explanations for things that go wrong. While the textual nature of a functional perception of the river could be said to be simpler than an artistic text, the experience as a whole is a rich one, ranging from phenomenological affect to the symbolic narratives attached to significant features in Shoshone, and to Shoshone as a whole. These aspects of whitewater rafting exceed the limits of this chapter, though they deserve further study.

The basic concept of text used in this analysis also complements James J. Gibson's (1986) approach to direct perception of the environment, who sought terminology to describe how optical information pick-up, enabled by locomotion within an entire perceptual system, consists of a concurrent recognition of variant and invariant structures in the environment. While Lotman is relied on much more heavily for this analysis, Gibson provides a relevant theoretical point of comparison in order to not only observe what Lotman's theory contributes, but also to understand how it is changed and problematised on this material.

Applying Lotman's notion of text to perception of the natural environment is unexplored territory both in human geography and in traditional Tartu-Moscow semiotics.<sup>1</sup> The closest application by Lotman himself was his analysis of St Petersburg, which suggests potential, but he primarily focuses on the level of the city as a whole, including historical development, mythologies, and symbolism embodied in the architecture and geography (Lotman 1990). The meaning

described in this chapter is functional meaning framed by a specific activity. Lotman's work has, however, served as an impetus for debates about the primacy of perception as a modelling system (for example Sebeok & Danesi 2000). Thomas A. Sebeok, who established the field of zoosemiotics and later catalysed the development of biosemiotics, has contended that a zoosemiotic modelling system must be the primary one, while language is a secondary modelling system and culture a tertiary one (for example Sebeok 1994). John Deely, a close associate of Sebeok, also contributes a great deal to the discussion on the semiotic threshold, and has thoroughly integrated these perspectives in his extensive work, *The Basics of Semiotics* (1990).

'Reading the river' is common phrasing used by river guides and river orientation instructors. There are many different ways of physically reading the river that occur simultaneously. One not only sees the current in contrast with slower moving water, but feels it in the way that the boat moves. Guides constantly adjust their actions in response to situated, multi-sensory information, a process referred to by Gibson with a variety of terms, such as "attuned", "sensitized", and "education of attention" (1986, 254). Tim Ingold calls this process "sensitisation", defined as the "fine-tuning' of the perceptual system to new kinds of information" (2000, 166). Ingold's term sensitisation will be used from here on to refer to Gibson's concept. Such a process itself may warrant a different metalanguage or level of description, though the process as a whole could be positioned in a potential model that combines Lotman and Gibson on this material, which is discussed in part three.

The notion of text borrowed from Lotman appears to be most useful for describing the cognitive side of reading the river, with a focus on a habitual connection between visual recognition and bodily actions. Cognitive approaches and visual perception in landscape studies and human geography have been reacted against for their historical roots in a nature-culture dichotomy, giving rise to "phenomenological, non-representational, actor-network and performative theories [...] which emphasize materiality and embodiment, prediscursive knowing and fluidity" (Duncan & Duncan 2010, 239). However, cognitive and visual aspects cannot be denied importance, especially in this activity. Their functional significance for river guides is reflected in one of their key maxims, 'set up early'. Because the river is constantly moving, this means consciously reacting in preparation to what is spotted up ahead on the river in terms of bodily movements to position the boat, modify speed, and communicate with the crew the plans for action.

## Research questions and discoveries

Two main research questions drive this analysis, one ontological, and the other theoretical. The first question is, what are the similarities and differences between human perception of the environment and reading a cultural text? This question is a very relevant one for semiotics as a study of general meaning-making, and finds special significance in the context of Tartu semiotics today, which includes the rich history of cultural semiotics alongside the growing fields of biosemiotics and ecosemiotics. The second more theoretical question is, can Lotman's theory of text, having originated in literary theory, provide a useful model for interpreting human perception of the environment? This opens up the opportunity for potential changes to be made to his theory in the process of this dialogue with a new research object, which could expand and enhance his theory of text.

The answers to these questions are pursued in two ways. The first approach, covered in part two, is object-focused in an analysis of *Shoshone* as a text. Reading the river as a river guide is a hybrid activity that blurs the boundaries between cultural mediation and direct perception of the environment, paving the way toward combining them into a new model. This analysis reveals something important in the research object which could further refine Lotman's theory of text in relation to a possible type of research object under the umbrella term 'human perception of the environment'. The fluctuating water level of the river, which is within the text, functions as a meta-sign that changes the internal sign relations of this text in a systematic way.

Meta-sign is a term adapted from Gregory Bateson (2000 [1972]) to describe paradoxical signs that are both within the frame and acting as the frame. Lotman refers to similar features in traditional texts in relation to their cultural contexts, when he states: "a text may contain within it both textual and metatextual elements as particular substructures [...]. In this case the communicative currents move vertically" (Lotman 1988, 56). In the case of the natural environment, such a meta-sign is based on repetition of a significant change in the environment, which has been dealt with in landscape studies in terms of rhythms or seasonality. The formal marking point for such a sign is only partly arbitrary, as the habits of action are based on affordances offered by the river, the technology of the raft, and the physical capabilities of human beings, in addition to the cultural level of whitewater water rafting. Meta-signs may be one way of recognising seasonal changes or rhythms in the environment that systematically reorganise the internal sign relations of perceived environmental structures. Other changes may occur as a gradual change of content that eventually crystallise into a new internal structure, which parallels landscape researcher Kenneth Olwig's notion

of qualitative seasons, or “this qualitative bounding of quantitatively unbounded phenomena” (2005, 261). Systematic variance, whether indicated by signs within the text or coming about from a gradual change of its internal sign relations, as opposed to the variance generated by diversity in interpretation, is an additional theoretical component required for analysing perception of the natural environment as a text.

The second perspective taken in this chapter, discussed in the final part, is at the level of theory in a discussion of the possible interaction between Lotman and Gibson on this material. Lotman provides a more precise semiotic metalanguage for analysing the semiotisation of the river, while Gibson provides a more general theoretical basis for linking together perception and action in terms of pragmatics and physical constraints. Important differences are also explicated between these two theories. Most notable is the different role of the subject in Lotman’s notion of text and Gibson’s approach to perception of the environment, which relates to different methodologies and explanations of meaning-generation. Charles Morris’s general theory of signs is used as a reference point for comparison and an additional resource for terminology in the move toward combining Lotman and Gibson into a new model. Lotman’s theory of text, enriched by both the object and Gibson’s theories, is found to be a useful contribution toward the analysis of this research object, uncovering similarities and differences between meaning generated through cultural texts and meaning generated through perception of the environment.

## **Analysis of Shoshone as a text**

### **Demarcation**

As mentioned before, three basic features of the text are used to describe Shoshone. First, the text must be demarcated as a unit. This unit can carry different functions for different social communities (Lotman & Piatigorsky 1978). Shoshone is collectively demarcated by a variety of users, including commercial rafting companies, the forest service, and private adventurers, by the ‘put-in’ or boat ramp (located on the highway exit called Shoshone) and the Grizzly Creek ‘take-out’ (located on the highway exit called Grizzly Creek), or the next boat ramp down-river of the put-in. This level of the whole functions economically for rafting companies as it marks one possible ‘trip’ tourists can purchase. It also marks a section to be patrolled by the forest service, a federal institution responsible for ensuring, among other things, that commercial companies are following safety laws associated with using the river. This unit also functions for

various individuals in over a dozen YouTube videos, who record their adventurous experiences with water-proof video cameras on the river trips. Such videos include “Shoshone” in the title or description and begin and end the video with the put-in and take-out boat ramps.

Of most interest for this analysis is the functional meaning of the whole for river guides, which is expressed by the International Scale of River Difficulty (Whitewater). This system rates particular rapids as well as whole sections of rivers like Shoshone on a scale of one to six, six being too dangerous for commercial usage. These ratings are based on the general morphological structure of the river and the strength of flow of the river. Shoshone is divided in a partly arbitrary way into ‘high’ and ‘low’ water according to seasonal changes in the water level, and is rated a class four at high water and a class three at low water. What is most significant about this classification system in relation to Shoshone as a text is that from class three and up, previous visual inspection of the river is required before one can actually travel the river. This means walking alongside the river and noting significant features and possible routes that can be taken, as ad hoc reading would be too dangerous. Therefore, a functional textualisation of the river, or in other words, a memorisation of significant features (often facilitated by giving them proper names, as will be seen in the next section) and habitual actions associated with them to form a specific route through a bounded section, is probably more common from class three rapids and up, when visual inspection and a specific cognitive map is necessary.

### **Sign system and hierarchical structure**

The second basic feature of the text is that it must realise a system of signs. Lotman states that, in this sense, the text is the material realisation of an abstract system, analogous to Saussure’s speech and language (Lotman 1977). The abstract system realised by Shoshone consists of visually recognised and termed features of the river with corresponding habitual actions shared (at least) by the local rafting companies and a river orientation course at the local community college, Colorado Mountain College. The author calls this system the river-bound sign system. The structure of the river-bound sign system can be understood in comparison to natural language. Since Lotman references Saussure’s language and speech, the structure of natural language can be understood in Saussure’s terms; that is, a system of phonetic and conceptual differences (respectively: cat/hat; father/mother) (Saussure 2011 [1959]). The river is a fitting analogy to Saussure’s idea of amorphous thought and sound, and its features are also intelligible in

terms of differential value. Relevant contrasts distinguish larger features, exhibiting a hierarchical structure of perception.

Hierarchical structure in terms of perception of the natural environment has been described by both Gibson and landscape architect Anne Spirn with a term called “nesting”, and Spirn explicitly relates this to language (Gibson 1986, 9; Spirn 1998, 16). Nesting describes how features of the environment appear as forms within forms, each level having a different order, such as a leaf within a tree within a forest. The river is a bit different in that there is a relative independence of form from a constantly flowing substance, probably creating a different phenomenological affect. However, forms on the river still exhibit a hierarchical structure that is important for functional meaning. At the most minimal level are those differences that function to recognise features – differences in the speed of the water, the direction of flow, and the texture, shape, and colour of its surface. At the next level are those termed features such as the current, eddies, rocks, and waves. They are more complex in that they consist of multiple differences working together. A significant difference from Saussure’s concept of language, however, is that such differential value on the river is not entirely arbitrary, but is based on perceptual capabilities of humans, affordances offered by the river, and the material technology associated with the specific activity of whitewater rafting.

There are many examples of differential value in the river-bound sign system. One very important feature is the current, or the fastest moving part of the river, where it is generally best to keep the boat, as it helps build speed for waves. The current is only intelligible in contrast with slower moving water. Another feature is an eddy, or calm water that slowly moves in a circular direction against the main current. Eddies are created by an upstream obstacle, such as a jutting shore or a large rock. They are distinguished by a line separating them from the rest of the water flowing downstream, as well as a glassier surface and a detectable difference in the direction of flow. Eddies function as places to stop the boat, often necessary to comply with the safety law enforced by the forest service to maintain visual and auditory connections with other rafts that are part of the same company and trip. The habitual actions for entering an eddy are to position the boat at a forty-five-degree angle to the eddy with the back of the boat pointing toward it, come as close to the upstream obstacle as possible without hitting it, and enter backward with as much speed as possible.

Another example is a sleeper, or a dangerous rock just under the surface of the water. They are barely detectable by a slightly slower moving spot on the water with a subtle glassy appearance. Sleepers are obstacles always to be avoided by the raft. In addition to recognising waves in general, which are distinguished by differences in speed, shape, colour, and direction of water flow, one must recognise

waves that are safe to hit, and waves that are not. Safe waves must have a higher amplitude than the water level directly upstream, and are therefore determined by a difference in height. The rule for action associated with hitting waves is to hit them straight on, with enough speed, the latter depending on the height of the wave. Therefore, after spotting an oncoming wave, the guide will begin rowing and command the crew to paddle. As soon as the guide sees the front end of the boat reach the base of the wave, this is a sign to dig both oars in the water and push through the wave with as much strength as possible.

The final feature that will be mentioned here is that of the rapid, or a series of waves. The entrance of a rapid usually forms a downstream 'V'. In general, it is best to enter down the centre of this 'V'. It is easily detectable by the difference in colour, shape, and movement. While general terms such as current, eddy, and wave are used to distinguish features of the water, another practice associated with textualising the river is applying proper names to certain rocks, rock complexes, eddies, waves, rapids, and entire sequences of rapids, like Shoshone. This is shown in a map used by the company, Whitewater Rafting, LLC., where the author worked as a river guide.

As can be seen, reading the river as a river guide means recognising relevant features and moving through the river accordingly. This is more of a kinetic experience than reading a novel, appreciating a work of art, watching a film, or listening to a symphony. Gibson's ecological affordance theory stresses the reciprocal relationship between locomotion and visual perception, because affordances, or action possibilities offered by the environment, need to be physically explored and discovered by the organism (Gibson 1986). He states: "we must perceive in order to move, but must also move in order to perceive" (op cit, 223). This marks a key difference from traditional applications of Lotman's text, uniting perception, cognition, and physical movement in semiosis.

### **The river textuality**

Lotman describes the text as the material embodiment of the system (1977). He states: "We should stress that in speaking of the material expression of a text, we have in mind one highly specific property of sign systems. It is not 'things' themselves, but the relations of things, which are the material substance of sign systems" (op cit, 53). Shoshone as a text is materialised in its particular relation of features to each other in time and space in order to enable corresponding habitual actions, which in their totality form a specific route taken by river guides. Using Korzybski's famous distinction between the map and the territory, Bateson (2000 [1972]) states that what gets onto the map are differences that make

a difference. In its materialisation as a text, Shoshone has become a set of differences that make a difference. In addition to countless rocks, waves, and eddies that go unnoticed from the perspective of the river guide, there are infinite other differences that could be made when viewing Shoshone from other perspectives, such as a geologist, or a tourist.

The distinguished features such as rapids, rocks, and eddies, most of which are given proper names in Shoshone, never function in isolation but always in relation to each other in space and time. The minimal un-termed differences in the appearance of water relate to each other spatially, in their functioning to distinguish the greater forms, and can be found at any spot on the river. The author's use of the term spatially is in an ideal sense, meaning the horizontal dimension of the river, as if viewed from the side as a fixed slice. This is opposed to sequentially, or the vertical or temporal dimension of the river described by terms such as up-river and down-river. The greater forms such as the current, eddies, rocks, and waves relate to each other both spatially and sequentially, simultaneously used to indicate local and immediate actions of orientation and those in preparation to 'set up early' for upcoming features. The named rapids from Baptism to Maneater are comprised of multiple waves, and while they function in the same way as the other more generally termed features in terms of spatial and sequential orientation, they relate to each other only in terms of a sequence, as they are all included in the route.

An example will help demonstrate some particular sign relations of this text. The rapid, Tuttle's Tumble, lies sequentially in between a large sleeper and a dangerous rock complex named Marty's Diner. The sleeper indicates the entrance of Tuttle's Tumble, and the guide angles and positions the boat relative to this rock and the first wave. The guide also builds speed upon recognition of a certain distance from the sleeper. Upon entering Tuttle's Tumble, the guide keeps in mind that Marty's Diner is just down-river on the left, and after digging the oars in the water to push straight through the first two waves, s/he turns the boat 180 degrees in order to back away from it (which entails pulling on the two oars), which is the strongest, quickest manoeuvre. Passing Marty's Diner is a sign for the guide to turn the boat back around again 180 degrees, in order to back across the river to avoid the next rock. This next rock is a sign to set up early, in terms of position and speed, for the next rapid called The Wall. This brief example is meant to demonstrate the internal sign relations of this text.

Lotman (1977) also states that being a realisation of the abstract system, the text always contains non-systemic as well as systemic elements. Because of its level of difficulty and intense morphological relations, certain parts of Shoshone have their own rules. For example, the normal code for action when approaching

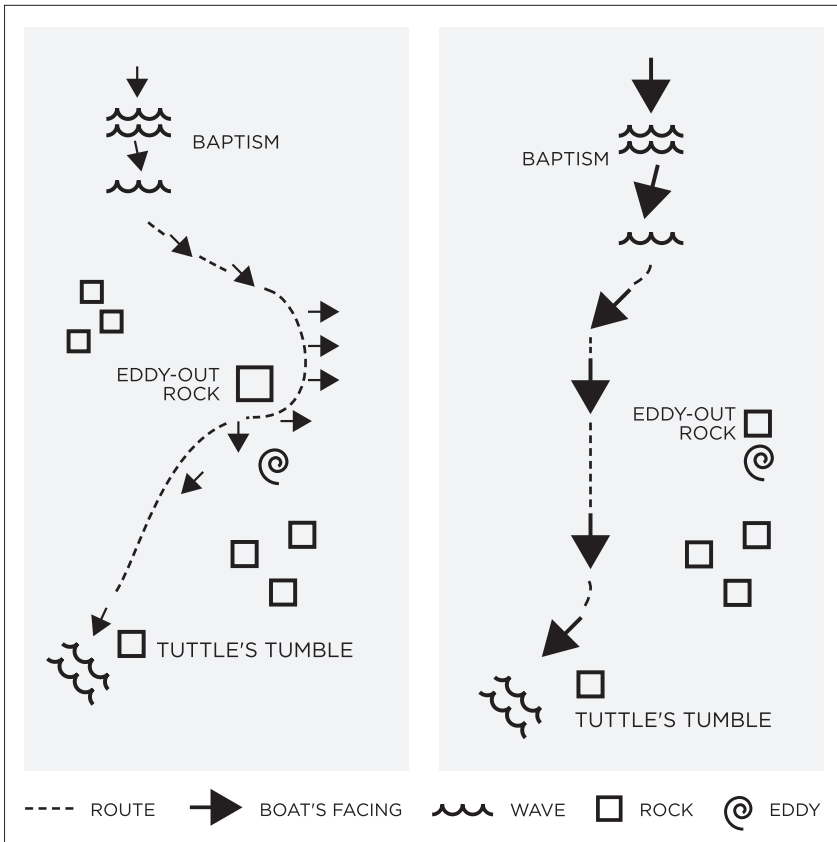


a wave is to hit it straight on, yet many areas in Shoshone force one to hit waves sideways in order to start crossing the river as fast as possible to avoid upcoming dangers. Shoshone contains so many extra-systemic elements that it requires its own intensive training, even after the guide has learned how to read the river in general. This includes walking the river and using visual diagrams to teach the guides the relevant features and corresponding actions they should take on Shoshone, before practicing on the actual river.

### **The water level as a meta-sign**

One interesting feature revealed by this new application of Lotman's theory of text is what the author terms a meta-sign, which is adapted from Bateson's (2000 [1972]) idea of metacommunicative signals, which paradoxically occur within contexts while functioning as frames for those contexts. Shoshone is formally divided by river guides into high and low water, each of which have different respective routes and different training requirements. High water consists of 4000 to 6000 cubic feet per second (cfs), 6000 being the highest level that commercial companies are allowed to do on Shoshone. At the marking point of 4000 cfs, the internal sign relations within Shoshone change. The significant rocks and rapids all remain in the same place physically and have the same names, but their functional relations to each other change.

This can best be demonstrated with a brief example. Upon approaching the first rapid Baptism, the guide builds as much speed as possible and hits the first wave straight on. By the third and last wave of Baptism, there are two different action courses the guide should take depending on a formal distinction made between high and low water. In low water (Figure 1), the third and last wave of Baptism is a sign to turn the bow of the boat slightly to the left in preparation for an upcoming rock named Eddy Out Rock. The guide merges into the left hand side of the river, and upon reaching a certain distance from Eddy Out Rock, turns the boat sideways and positions it so that the back end of the boat comes as close as possible to this rock in order to back into the eddy directly below it. This eddy is especially difficult to catch, so backing into it (the strongest manoeuvre) is a must. Once the boat is stopped in this eddy, the guide verbally prepares the crew for the upcoming rapid, Tuttle's Tumble, which is back on the right side of the river. Low water enables this crisscrossing from left to right without getting caught up on the rocks down-river of Eddy Out Rock. In high water (Figure 2), the third wave of Baptism has a different meaning: to turn the boat to the right, to stay on the right hand side of the river, and enter Tuttle's Tumble straight on. Because the water is so much stronger and faster at this level, it is impossible



**Figure 1.** Low water orientation on the Soshone river.

**Figure 2.** High water orientation on the Soshone river.

to cross the river from Eddy Out Rock to Tuttle's Tumble without getting caught up on the rocks downstream. The higher water level also washes out the rocks on the right hand side of the river that need to be avoided in low water. This shows that at the marking point of 4000 cfs, the water level (formally speaking, but not necessarily in practice, as the specific marking point itself is not perceptible) changes the internal organisation of the text. In high water, Eddy Out Rock is not even part of the structure, as the water moves too fast to catch the eddy safely. Therefore, the water level acts as a meta-sign that is both within the text, and about the text as a whole.

This shows how the guides have systematised this dynamic, showing one way in which they cope with a fluctuating environment. Lotman describes a text's invariance by its particular relations of signs, which are organised hierarchically, the levels of which are held together with structural relations. He states: "It is these stable bonds (within each level and between levels) which give the text the quality of an invariant" (Lotman 1977, 53). He then describes that the text is broken up into variants as it functions in its social environment, i.e. as it is read by different readers. Since the water level relates to the text as a whole, acting as a sort of self-referential sign that changes how the entire text is read, it is not a variant that occurs due to an individual reader's particular background. Therefore, the natural meta-sign is something new to add to Lotman's theory of text, or a semiotic approach in general, in relation to perception of the environment.

### **A dialogue between Lotman and Gibson on reading the river**

This section explores possible complementarity between the theories of Lotman and Gibson, as well as their important differences. Reading the river as a river guide is at a blurry intersection of a culturally mediated activity and physical interaction with the environment. Neither Lotman's theory of text nor Gibson's theory of direct perception of the environment are appropriate for this analysis on their own terms. Lotman's notion of text does not yet have the theoretical tools available for dealing with the on-going, pragmatic nature of a mutually constitutive subject-in-environment. Shoshone as a text deviates from Lotman's traditional applications in that it is tied to physical human capabilities and natural environmental affordances, thus is much less open to interpretation than an artistic text. One might try to navigate the rapids however they wish, but would quickly get corrected by the river. This object cannot be described in terms of Gibson's theory alone either, as rooting sign processes between human physical capacity and environmental structures alone would omit the vast influence of cultural mediation, such as socially transmitted knowledge, linguistic constrictions, and technologies of the raft. The fact that different technologies such as kayaks can have different routes points to the more arbitrary influence of culture on this material.

Gibson's theory of direct perception of the environment stresses the physical capacities of the organism and the environment, as well as constant learning and situational knowledge, emphasising both immediate needs and historical experiences of the organism. He redefines perception in his academic context as a "skill that can be educated" (Gibson 1986, 246). This fluid concept of perception is connected to his lack of attention to the immanent structure of particular

environmental objects and their delimitation, as his notion of invariant structure or nesting is more general. Lotman's notions of demarcation, internal sign relations, and realisation of a system of signs provides what Gibson's theory lacks in terms of describing the particular internal sign relations immanent to a bounded, meaningful cultural unit. This necessitates a closer look at these theories in order to see if it is possible to combine them in a model for environmental objects influenced by both nature and culture.

Key differences between these two theories of meaning-generation are inter-related and include a different role of the subject, a different notion and status of learning, and a different locus of meaning-generation. The different role of the subject is reflected in both the methodology and metalanguages of the two fields. The different terms used in the work of Lotman and Gibson, such as (respectively) reader or receiver as opposed to subject or perceiver, connotatively indicate the different ontological status this aspect holds toward meaning-generation, as the former terms are more passive, and the latter more active. In Lotman's more structuralist writings, meaning is considered immanent to the text. His methodology does not take the particular interpreter of the text into account as much as the character of the text as such, and its embeddedness in other cultural texts. In order to understand a text, the reader must know (whether consciously or unconsciously) the codes which it realises. Thus, learning is implicitly delimited to learning the codes with which to understand the text. Meaning for Lotman is something either transmitted or generated by the text, which is analogous to an "autonomous individual" or "autonomous personality" (Lotman 1988, 56–57). Meanings of signs are therefore always bound to their relations with other signs and the interaction between larger sign systems, which is theoretically outside of the subject.

For Gibson, perception of the environment occurs in a complementary relation between the physical properties and activities of the subject and information available in the environment, independent of the subject. Gibson explains this apparent contradiction with his concept of sensitisation, or a constant attunement to the physical world in which new meanings can always be discovered by the subject. Information in the environment, for Gibson (1986, 243), is not transmittable but "inexhaustible", because perception is a constant process. Thus, learning for Gibson is also constant (though it could be argued to occur in different degrees of intensity) and nearly synonymous to perception. Gibson's notion of learning has a much higher status and different conceptualisation than it does in Lotman's theory of the text, which implies a more traditional perspective of learning as the transmission of an abstract code.<sup>2</sup> Gibson's concept of learning is relational and situated, based on variant conditions rather than invariant

content. While the same case could be argued for the interpretation process of a cultural text, it simply is not the focus of Lotman's attention in his analyses. The primary meaningful distinction for Gibson is the distinction between self and environment, which parallels Jakob von Uexküll's elementary sign, or "ego-quality" (Uexküll 1992, 288). The subject therefore plays a much greater role as physically part of the structure of meaning, which is relational in both space and time, and complementary to the environment. The invariant structures, or meaning, perceived by the subject are situationally and developmentally relative, dependent on the organism's physical properties, historical background, and pragmatic circumstance.

This all points to a different locus of meaning-generation in Lotman's and Gibson's respective theories. Charles Morris' general theory of signs is useful as a reference point for comparison, whose division of sign relations into syntactics (relations of signs to each other), semantics (relations of signs to their objects) and pragmatics (relations of signs to their users) provides a resource for further terminology and understanding (Morris 1971). Lotman, especially in his methodology of what he selects as his research objects, pays most attention to relations between syntactics and semantics, as signs and their meanings are immanent to the text and outside of the interpreter. Pragmatics for Lotman is understood as the variance according to social function and interpretation of the text. Gibson, on the other hand, stresses the connection between semantics and pragmatics. A different definition of code provided by Timo Maran helps describe Gibson's different emphasis, which is, "a system of correspondences between messages and their significance or behavioural outcomes" (Maran 2012, 148). Syntactics, semantics, and pragmatics need to be combined for this material, as Lotman's approach leaves out the physically constrained bodily attunements of the river guide, while Gibson's approach in terms of syntactics does not get any more specific than the general label of hierarchical structure or nesting, which fails to analyse specific internal sign relations of particular, delimited environmental objects. Morris' theory of signs on its own is also too general to use for this object, as it leaves out the important function of the demarcation and textuality of Shoshone.

One possible step toward combining Lotman and Gibson on this material is to differentiate two levels of pragmatic constraints on Shoshone as a text. At a greater level of abstraction, pragmatics frames semantics and syntactics (the latter two being the correlation of bodily actions with visually perceived forms on the river). The pragmatics at this level concern general physical capabilities of human beings, including vision and movement, as well as the technology of the raft, the cultural influences of the activity, and local affordances of the river. All of these factors contribute to the specific route, or the totality of visual

forms + actions, through Shoshone as a whole. At this level of pragmatics, both cultural and natural constraints can be included without differentiating them into superficial categories of nature and culture. At a more concrete level would be situational pragmatics, which is where we can place Gibson's notion of constant perception-learning or sensitisation. This situational level of pragmatics is more physically constrained than the general level of pragmatics.

Reading the river as a river guide combines a cultural practice and a functional perception of the environment. Shoshone as a text is a culturally mediated and partly arbitrary, while the perceptual and kinetic capabilities of the river guides develop increasing precision toward it over time through direct engagement with the river. Such a hybrid activity blurs the boundaries between cultural texts and direct perception of the environment, but opens up possibilities for combining the theories of Lotman and Gibson through the specification of a dual-leveled pragmatics. This contributes a step toward a research model for this activity, and potentially other similar activities involving human interaction with the environment.

## **Conclusions**

The aim of this research was two-fold: to discover similarities and differences between human perception of the environment and reading a cultural text, and to critically examine the usefulness of applying Lotman's theory of text to perception of the environment. The first step of this research was the application of Lotman's theory of text to the object of reading the river as a whitewater raft guide, in order to see which aspects of this theory are relevant and when. Based on the nature of the research object and a complementarity with Gibson's research on perception of the environment, three basic features of Lotman's theory of text were used: its demarcation, hierarchical structure, and realisation of a system of signs. This structural-semiotic approach is most useful for describing the habituated cognitive side of reading the river, which appears most relevant at class three rapids and up, when previous visual inspection, planning, and setting up early are crucial. This level of river difficulty requires previous visual inspection and a specific route to be taken through the section, which is also memorised as a cognitive map that enables guides to set up early on the river. One way to facilitate the memorisation of this route, as well as represent it in visual maps, diagrams, and verbal discourse, is to apply proper names to significant features of the river, which is demonstrated by Shoshone.

These features taken from Lotman's theory of text reveal the importance of demarcation and text-system relations for this material, which adds to Gibson's

approach. Gibson's more general notion of an invariant hierarchical structure, situationally extracted from the environment, does not attend to the internal sign relations of particular structures that are memorised and more fixed over time, especially those that carry cultural significance. Lotman's approach, coming from a cultural semiotic perspective, studies the significance of particular bounded meaningful units that have their own internal structure, which appears also relevant for the case of Shoshone, whose structure cannot be described based purely on physically functional or situational needs, but is culturally mediated and thus partly arbitrary. On the other hand, an important difference from Lotman's traditional applications of text, informed by Gibson's theory, is that cultural texts have a greater potential for a variety of interpretation, as they are less physically and pragmatically constrained than the activity of moving through a river. Another related difference is the kinetic experience of whitewater rafting, which unites visual perception, cognition, and physical actions in a functional semiosis, which is unlike the reading of traditional texts in the context of literary studies.

The analysis of this object also revealed an important modification to be made to Lotman's theory of text, which might be a step toward specifying his theory in relation to perception of the natural environment in general. This is a natural meta-sign, abstracted from the systematised water level of Shoshone. In other words, it is the regular impact on the text's internal structure by the seasonality of the environment, or a recurring holistic change, which marks another important difference in the research object from traditional applications of text. Therefore, when applying Lotman's notion of text to landscape, it is important to distinguish regular changes in the environment that result in a corresponding reorganisation of the text's internal structure. This aspect deals with the systematicity of landscape perception, and meta-signs such as the water level may be one mechanism of recognising these regular changes. Other changes may lack actual meta-signs and simply occur as gradual qualitative changes of content in the landscape that eventually crystallise into a different internal structure, which cyclically repeats itself. While this analysis focused on functional meaning only, other more phenomenological or symbolic meanings may also be altered by seasonality and meta-signs, and it may be promising to explore different types or layers of meanings connected to perception of a particular landscape.

The second approach in this chapter took a closer look at the interaction between the theories of Gibson and Lotman on this material, noting the different role of the subject, different status and conceptualisation of learning, and different locus of meaning-generation in each theory. This prompted another change to Lotman's theory of text, which is to take into account two levels of pragmatic constraint. The more abstract level acknowledges equally both cultural

and physical constraints, such as the local affordances of the river, the technology of the raft, the general physical capabilities of human beings, the activity of river guiding, etc., and is notably different from pragmatics in Lotman's traditional applications of text, which would be confined to the diversity of interpretation among readers. The general pragmatics associated with reading the river as a river guide are more fixed and abstract, framing the semantic and syntactic relations of Shoshone as a text. The situational level of pragmatics on the river is a more physical constraint that includes Gibson's process of sensitisation. This level is more analogous to the level of interpretation of a cultural text, which can vary per individual and social group, as both sensitisation to the river and interpretation of a cultural text are influenced by skill. Sensitisation itself may not be describable with Lotmanian text-based semiotics, as this is an emergent and largely unconscious learning process and the theory of text deals with forms. The ad hoc epistemology of Tartu semiotics is one way to mediate the lack of attention to this level, which probably warrants a different metalanguage and methodology.

To sum everything up, Lotman's basic theory of text was indeed useful in this analysis for describing mechanisms of cognitive river orientation as a river guide, in order to explicate similarities and differences between perception of the environment and reading a cultural text. A few extrasystemic additions to Lotman's theory were necessary due to some of the differences, informed by both the object and by Gibson's theory of direct perception of the environment. Morris' notions of syntactics, semantics, and pragmatics were used as a reference point from which to compare the approaches of Lotman and Gibson, leading to a combination of their theories. Morris' theory of signs alone was not used for this analysis because it is too general, as Lotman's textual features of demarcation, hierarchical structure, and materialisation of a system of signs were found to be relevant for Shoshone, as were Gibson's relations of subject and environment. The materialisation of Lotman's theory of text in this analysis, resulting in the addition of the natural meta-sign and two different levels of pragmatic constraints, is a step toward a research model for this activity, which could hold potential for exploring other similar cases of human interaction with the environment. This contributes a semiotic perspective to the on-going search for methodology and research concepts in the environmental humanities, including the emerging field of ecosemiotics, while continuing the tradition of Tartu semiotics by expanding Lotman's theory of text.



## Internet sources

Whitewater = Whitewater Rapids Classification Scale. Arkansas Valley Adventure. <http://www.coloradorafting.net/mirror/about-rafting/white-water-rapid-classification/> [accessed 29 October 2013].

## References

- Bateson, G. (2000 [1972]) *Steps to an Ecology of Mind: Collected Essays in Anthropology, Psychiatry, Evolution, and Epistemology*. University of Chicago Press, Chicago.
- Bourdieu, P. (1980) *The Logic of Practice*. Stanford University Press, Stanford.
- Deely, J. (1990) *The Basics of Semiotics*. Indiana University Press, Bloomington.
- Dittmer, J. (2010) Textual and discourse analysis. – DeLyser, D., Herbert, S., Aitken, S., Crang, M. & McDowell, L. (eds) *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Geography*, 274–286. SAGE Publications, London.
- Duncan, N. & Duncan, J. (2010) Doing landscape interpretation. – DeLyser, D., Herbert, S., Aitken, S., Crang, M. & McDowell, L. (eds) *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Geography*, 225–247. SAGE Publications, London.
- Gibson, J. J. (1986) *The Ecological Approach to Visual Perception*. Lawrence Erlbaum, Hillsdale.
- Hanks, W. F. (1991) Foreword. – Lave, J. & Wenger, E. (eds) *Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation*, 13–24. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Ingold, T. (2000) *The Perception of the Environment: Essays on Livelihood, Dwelling and Skill*. Routledge, London, New York.
- Kull, K. & Lotman, Y. (2015) Au sujet de la sémiotique de la vie et de l'évolution. (Entretien de Kalevi Kull avec Youri Lotman. Tartu, juin 1992), *Slavica Occitania* 40, 165–182.
- Levchenko, J. & Salupere, S. (eds) (1999) *Conceptual Dictionary of the Tartu-Moscow Semiotic School*. Tartu Semiotics Library 2. Tartu University Press, Tartu.
- Lotman, J. M. (1975) Notes on the structure of a literary text, *Semiotica* 15 (3), 199–205.
- Lotman, J. (1977) *The Structure of the Artistic Text*. Michigan Slavic Contributions 7. University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor.
- Lotman, Y. M. (1988) The semiotics of culture and the concept of a text, *Journal of Russian and East European Psychology* 26 (3), 52–58.
- Lotman, Y. M. (1990) *Universe of the Mind: A Semiotic Theory of Culture*. Indiana University Press, Bloomington, Indianapolis.
- Lotman, Y. M. & Piatigorsky, A. M. (1978) Text and function, *New Literary History* 9 (2), 233–244.
- Maran, T. (2012) Are ecological codes archetypal structures? – Maran, T., Lindström, K., Magnus, R. & Toennesen, M. (eds) *Semiotics in the Wild. Essays in Honour of Kalevi Kull on the Occasion of His 60th Birthday*, 147–156. Tartu University Press, Tartu.
- Morris, C. W. (1971) *Writings on the General Theory of Signs*. Approaches to Semiotics 16. De Gruyter Mouton, The Hague.
- Olwig, K. R. (2005) Liminality, seasonality, landscape, *Landscape Research* 30 (2), 259–271.

- Saussure, F. de (2011 [1959]) *Course in General Linguistics*. Columbia University Press, New York.
- Sebeok, T. A. (1994) *Signs: An Introduction to Semiotics*. University of Toronto Press, Toronto.
- Sebeok, T. A. & Danesi, M. (2000) *The Forms of Meaning: Modeling Systems Theory and Semiotic Analysis*. Approaches to Applied Semiotics 1. Mouton de Gruyter, Berlin, New York.
- Spirn, A. W. (1998) *The Language of Landscape*. Yale University Press, New Haven, London.
- Uexküll, T. von (1992) Introduction: the sign theory of Jakob von Uexküll, *Semiotica* 89 (4), 279-315.
- Uspenskij, B. A., Ivanov, V. V., Toporov, V. N., Pjatigorskij, A. M. & Lotman, J. M. (1973) Theses on the semiotic study of cultures (as applied to Slavic texts). - Eng, J. van der & Grygar, M. (ed) *Structure of Texts and Semiotics of Culture*. Slavistic Printings and Reprintings 294, 1-28. Mouton de Gruyter, The Hague.

## Sources of illustrations

Figures 1, 2 – Author’s own creation. Graphically designed by Mehmet E. Uslu, 2013.

## Notes

This research was supported by European Social Fund’s Doctoral Studies and Internationalisation Programme DoRa.

1 In an interview with Kalevi Kull in 1992, Lotman states that it would “undoubtedly” be legitimate to apply his theories to biology and that, “what does not exist in the simple will never exist in the complex” (Kull & Lotman 2015).

2 Pierre Bourdieu discusses this traditional concept of learning, termed “objectivism”, as inherent to the Saussurean paradigm of thought (1980, 26). In a foreword to Jean Lave’s and Etienne Wenger’s *Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation*, William F. Hanks also mentions this notion of learning in relation to “classical structural analysis” (1991, 16).



TAPA  
KÖI



Death

## Death as the transformation of personhood

Kristiina Johanson, Pikne Kama

“*Personhood* in its broadest definition refers to the condition or state of being a person” (Fowler 2004, 4).

Personhood is attained and maintained through relationships with other humans, things, places, substances, and so on, meaning that personhood is context dependent and in constant change (Fowler 2004, 4). Thus, a person’s body, his or her relationships to other persons and the surrounding world, movement and behavioural patterns, experiences, memories, etc., change in time. Similarly to the concept of identity, a person actively shapes his or her personhood only when alive. As a result, it might seem that from the person’s point of view, death is the end of personhood, whereas in reality, death only represents a drastic change in personhood.

Personhood is composed of the body, the soul, mind, efficacy, agency, etc. (op cit). Death is, undoubtedly, the end of the physiological functioning of the body, but it is not always the end of other aspects of a person’s personhood, such as the soul, efficacy, and agency in affecting situations. Since the body had a key role in the active shaping of personhood, it would seem that death would be the ultimate end point of being a person. The body is the only tangible element of personhood and there can be no doubt that a person’s body continues to play an important role even after death. It is removed from the sphere of the living with the help of various operations and customs, instead of being tossed aside as an empty package. The body seems to continue having a strange link to the soul inhabiting it; thus, cemeteries, where the physical remains of the deceased are found, are places where the souls of the dead can be encountered or where the dead are honoured.

If the personhood of living people is constantly in the process of active transformation, depending on their relationships with other persons, beings, objects, and places, then after their deaths their personhood becomes more static, until it disappears, along with memories, over a longer or shorter period of time. In modern funerals, the departed person is usually physically erased from our everyday lives; meanwhile, their personal items, memories and photos of them keep their personhood alive. In addition, the living also have a large variety

of practices for remembering, and for coping with grief. Numerous examples can be found in the past of how people try to avoid forgetting, as if it really mattered for the deceased person that the memory of them lived on – after all, it is, in a sense, the only way to remain ‘alive’. The living can also consciously start shaping a dead person’s personhood. Numerous historical examples of the conscious transformation of personhood can be found: gigantic grave monuments, biographies, legends, etc. As a result, a person’s personhood after his or her death may significantly differ from that personhood while alive. Immediately after death, a person loses direct control of his or her body and it is subsequently managed by other people. Hence, after death, a person’s personhood may actually be more reflective of other persons’ demands and desires. The copious folklore about the dead appearing to the living when their requests regarding their burial have not been fulfilled is probably influenced by the awareness of this fact. In folk religion, the dead are certainly not seen as a passive force but as having an active influence on the living. Through death, an individual could acquire a new and more powerful sphere of action.

## References

Fowler, C. (2004) *The Archaeology of Personhood. An Anthropological Approach*. Routledge, London, New York.



## Individual and collective burial places: an analysis of the Viimsi *tarand* graves of northern Estonia

Maarja Olli, Anu Kivirüüt

**Abstract.** The aim of this chapter is to analyse the individual and collective features of Iron Age burial places based on a case study of the Viimsi *tarand* graves – a grave type primarily thought of as reserved for the elite – located in north Estonia and dating to 350–500 AD. The chapter will present osteological and statistical methods followed by a spatial and artefactual analysis to explore the individual and collective traits present in this burial place. Based on the analysis, some individual features stood out among the commingled bones and personal items. Individuality was generally expressed through certain grave goods and unurned cremated bone deposits.<sup>1</sup> Traces of collectiveness were suggested by the commingled bones and some commingled personal items that might not have primarily been grave goods for the deceased, but which found their way to the graves during different rituals. The research showed that even in generally collective graves, traces of individuality are readily observable. This chapter therefore provides new information on Iron Age society and customs in northern Estonia.

### Introduction

Graves are analysed using many different approaches in archaeology; in this chapter, the focus is on gaining a better understanding of the individual and the collective, in death and in life. People's state of being is constantly changing throughout their lives, and subsequently in their deaths. On some occasions it is very individual but on other occasions it can be highly relational, being maintained and altered through social practice (Fowler 2004, 4, 85). The social actions and the complex relations behind them shape the material culture we find in the graves. Burials, rituals, the grave itself and the grave goods may not reflect the actual set of relations in life, but they can represent what was held important, social ideals about the nature of personhood, appropriate relationships, ideal image of the deceased, etc. (Fowler 2013, 522–523).

---

Kannike, A., Tasa, M. & Västrik, E.-H. (eds) (2017) *Body, Personhood and Privacy: Perspectives on the Cultural Other and Human Experience*. *Approaches to Culture Theory* 7, 271–292. University of Tartu Press, Tartu.



The aim of this chapter is to discuss the meanings of mortuary practices, grave goods and graves and in particular discuss which aspects of the dead and of the living were expressed through them in regard to the individual and the collective. Was personhood in death collective as has been stressed by Tõnno Jonuks (2009, 235) or can some traces of individuality be found? The Viimsi *tarand* graves, which are located in northern Estonia and date from 350–500 AD, the end of the Roman Iron Age to the beginning of the Migration Period (Lang 1993, 54–55), were chosen for in-depth analysis in order to address these issues. The graves in Viimsi are two of the few fully excavated and well-documented *tarand* graves and as both of the authors had conducted individual work on the graves, a more thorough and combined analysis was deemed necessary. By combining the knowledge of the period, the graves and the methodological approaches, it may be possible to reach new conclusions about the complexity of the collective and the individual in the Roman Iron Age – a topic that has not been widely discussed in Estonian archaeology.

The methods employed in this study were both archaeological and osteological and the results of the analyses were combined, using a combination of osteological methods and bone material, both cremated and inhumed. The analyses of the bone material, the corresponding pyre temperatures and age and sex of the identified individuals, were conducted using the methods published by Megan Brickley and Jacqueline McKinley (2004), and Per Holck (2008 [1987], 90). The location information of the bone clusters recorded during the excavations was deemed adequate, therefore the osteological data was used for an intra-site spatial analysis. Any observable patterns of placing the dead into *tarand* graves were assessed based on similarities and differences in the distribution of the bone material. The placement of the artefacts in the grave was studied with the same spatial analysis principles as for the bones. In addition, the location of artefacts and bone clusters/burials was also compared to determine any possible relationships.

Combining the osteological analysis with the artefacts, subsequently connecting the individuals with their grave goods, can shed new light on how and why the dead and certain artefacts were placed into *tarand* graves, explaining the relationship between society and the individuals buried there. From the results presented in this chapter, we will also suggest how the state of being could be expressed from information recovered from *tarand* graves.

## Earlier interpretations and theoretical background

*Tarand* graves are communal burial places with rectangular stonewall enclosures called *tarands* (Lang 2007, 170). When these graves first appeared in the landscape in the pre-Roman Iron Age, they contained only inhumation burials with one rectangular enclosure assigned for one body (op cit, 170, 178, 192). Over time, cremation became a more popular way of disposing of the dead with the cremated bones and most of the artefacts being scattered in the *tarand* area, mainly inside, but also outside, the walls (op cit, 178, 192, 194, 196, 200). However, during the Roman Iron Age, inhumation was practiced alongside cremation, mainly in northwestern Estonia (op cit, 196). Therefore both inhumed and cremated bones are found in the rectangular *tarands* and most of the bones and artefacts are severely commingled.

The Viimsi grave complex consists of two typical *tarand* graves, which were excavated in 1990 (Lang 1990a; 1990b). The graves were used from approximately the second half of the 4th century to the end of the 5th century AD, based on the dating of the grave goods (Lang 1993, 54). As is typical of the *tarand* graves of northwestern Estonia, the Viimsi graves contained both cremation and inhumation burials (Kalling 1993, 67–68; Lang 2007, 196). The larger of the graves, Viimsi I, was richly furnished and contained many burials, whilst the smaller, Viimsi II, had only a few burials and few grave goods. The reason for this is assumed to be that the time period of burials in the second grave may have been shorter (Lang 1993, 54–55). It has also been proposed that the graves were burial places for two families (op cit, 57). But the dominant interpretation is that each new *tarand* was created for each new generation (Lang 1999, 76).

*Tarand* graves in general are considered to be the burial places for the people who belonged to the higher social strata. This is because of the monumental nature of the graves, which dominated the landscape (Lang 1996, 471–473; 2007, 192). Many (but not all) graves were richly furnished and, based on demographic calculations, there had to be many more people living in the area of what is now present day Estonia, so not all members of the society had the chance to be buried in *tarand* graves (Lang & Ligi 1991, 25; Ligi 1995, 222–223; Lang 1996, 469–470; 2011, 115). *Tarand* graves are mainly situated at distinctive locations in the landscape, for example the Viimsi *tarand* graves are situated at the edge of a limestone cliff on a peninsula (Lang 1993, 7; Jonuks 2009, 217). Therefore it is assumed that the people who were buried in *tarand* graves were not only wealthy landowners but ritual leaders as well, which set them apart on many levels from other people in society (Jonuks 2009, 236).

It is often thought that cremation is a custom practised by the elite as the pyre itself demanded wood, which was expensive to collect (Holck 2008 [1987], 17; McKinley 2006, 81; Walker et al 2008, 135). This theory may not be applicable to the cremations discussed here as a firewood shortage does not seem plausible in Estonia due to it having always been highly forested. Although this still does not rule out the possibility that the cremated were the elite. In several *tarand* graves other than those in Viimsi, the dead have been both cremated and inhumed and placed in the same monumental grave construction. To understand this phenomenon, we will try to see from the burial location of the artefacts along with other characteristic grave features, any social differentiation between the cremations and inhumations.

The cremation process can be either considered a technological, ritual or social transformation (Oestigaard 1999). In this paper we will concentrate mainly on the social aspect surrounding cremations and will analyse inhumation burials in the same way. As both of the methods of disposing of the dead were used in the Viimsi *tarands*, the similarities and differences in the burial practices should also give us an insight into the relations between the living – both the buriers and descendants – and the dead.

It is clear that the state of being is rapidly transformed through the cremation of the deceased (Oestigaard 1999, 358–359). Firstly, the physical body is deliberately transformed and fragmented by the community practicing cremation, taking an active role in controlling the changes happening to the person (Rebay-Salisbury 2010, 64). In addition, many aspects of social relationships are moulded through mortuary practice (Parker Pearson 2003 [1999], 84). The state of being will transform and new relationships will be established in addition to transforming the body. Mortuary practices also deconstruct the person and then subsequently reclassify him or herself (Fowler 2004, 45).

Tõnno Jonuks (2009, 235) has assumed that because of the often mixed (cremation) burials in *tarand* graves, there was a belief in a collective, quite anonymous ancestral soul, in which some personal features of the individual remained present. Because grave goods were not differentiated, which means none of them really stood out in comparison to others, it is assumed that the elite ancestral collective had egalitarian features (Lang 1996, 472; Rohtla 2003, 137; Jonuks 2009, 236). This means that based on the knowledge we have from most of the previous studies, it was important just to be a part of the elite and there was practically no distinction within the elite in death. According to sociologist Richard Jenkins, the main difference is that individual identification emphasises differences while group identification emphasises similarities (2008 [1996], 38). Both individuals and groups identify themselves contextually and the context consists of time,

space and also of the group to which that individual belongs. An individual cannot identify him- or herself without being identified by the group, and vice versa. It is an on-going process from both sides and comes into being within interaction (op cit). Some features of individuals who belong to one group are similar, while at the same time they may have had some features which set them apart from the other group members. This, for example, could be manifested in different treatment in funerary rituals (cremation or inhumation), being placed in the grave and/or being buried with distinguishing grave goods. Some thoughts on attributes of the elite of the elite<sup>2</sup> in *tarand* graves have been present in older studies (Ligi 1995, 223) but have not been further investigated.

Apart from the possible function of grave goods in differentiating the individual from the group, they probably had many other meanings and functions as well. The contextualisation of grave goods is important in order to come closer to understand their meanings and functions in the mortuary context (Ekengren 2013, 187). It is important to view mortuary ritual as a sequence of transformative acts and graves as the outcome of these actions (op cit). Meaning is created through practice, experience and by the interaction between people and things (Nilsson Stutz 2010, 35; Ekengren 2013, 181). Fredrik Ekengren has pointed out important aspects that are relevant to comprehending the function and meaning of grave goods: it is important to study which depositions were intentional, to assess in what parts of the ritual the objects were used, the spatial arrangement of the objects, typology and physical properties; in addition to which it has to be remembered that one object may have held several meanings (Ekengren 2009, 45–47; 2013, 181–183). Bearing in mind these aspects, different grave goods that may emphasise either collective or individual features can be distinguished. This can be represented by artefacts that went through the same transformation as the body (for example cremation) and may have been considered part of the body and of the deceased's identity (Rebay-Salisbury 2010, 67). Personal items could also have been placed in the grave some time after initial inhumation, something that could have relied on the special function of the items or on something else, depending on the context (op cit). Relational being could have been emphasised, for example through the remains of ritual feasts and/or gifts to the dead (Fowler 2004, 44). Items in the grave could also have been used to embody the new personhood of the deceased and their new role and position in society, rather than being personal belongings (Ekengren 2013, 186–187). It remains difficult to understand the complex meanings of grave goods, although some attempts are made in this chapter to shed new light on the meaning of artefacts in *tarand* graves.

## **Viimsi graves**

The graves<sup>3</sup> provide interesting information about people of the Roman Iron Age and early Migration Period. The bones and the artefacts have been scattered all over the grave area and no intact burials were found. Before the salvage excavations, the Viimsi grave areas had already been disturbed. Viimsi I, initially by some fruit trees and later by a mechanical excavator which had scoured off the top 30–50 cm of the surface, damaging almost completely the mid-section of the grave. Therefore, in most cases it is difficult to distinguish between intact or disturbed areas. The Viimsi II grave was less damaged by a small wooden construction (a modern triangulation tower) which had left postholes (Lang 1993, 7, 15). Even though the graves had been damaged, there still remained a large intact area, for which the quality of the documentation was good and therefore the finds and the bones could be analysed with some confidence. As the osteological information published by Kalling (1993) was not enough to be used as the basis of the new analysis, the bones were re-analysed. The artefacts were also re-studied with an emphasis on their location and characteristics.

The graves are also interesting in regard to their furnishing. The Viimsi I grave was one of the three most richly furnished graves (known to the authors) in northwestern Estonia, between the end of Roman Iron Age and the beginning of the Migration Period, in contrast to the second grave which was very poorly furnished (Lang 1996, 469). Because of the high number of artefacts and bones in the first grave, we believe it is possible to study the pattern behind the location of different artefacts and bones. If we do find distinguished burial areas within the grave, then a distinction between the elite can be studied. In addition, the relationship between the richly and poorly furnished graves can be discussed based on the evidence from Viimsi.

## **Methods**

The bones and artefacts were examined and connected to their find contexts, then the locational information was retrieved from the excavation plans. The artefacts had been recorded with their location and depth; however, the bones had only been recorded with their location data, the depth therefore could not be identified.

For the new osteological assessment all of the bone fragments were analysed. The age and sex was determined where possible and the minimum number of individuals and information about their health was recorded. In addition to the anthropological features, the physical characteristics of the bones were

also assessed: the different colours and surfaces of the fragments were looked at to understand the cremation techniques and the taphonomic processes that had occurred inside the graves. The sex and age of the individuals was assessed by standard methods using the works of C. Owen Lovejoy (1985), Douglas H. Ubelaker (1989), Louise Scheuer and Sue Black (2004), Hugo F. V. Cardoso and Rita S. S. Severino (2010).

The re-analysis of the artefacts included looking through the finds catalogue and assessing the data categorically. The four main categories were: personal adornments, utensils, weapons, and ceramics. With the help of spatial analysis, the purpose and use of the items was assessed: whether the items were grave goods connected with specific individuals or could be associated with mourning or remembrance events, if they were not as such directly associated with the dead. Based on the characteristics of the items, their meaning and function was presumed and also used in the interpretation of actions on the grave.

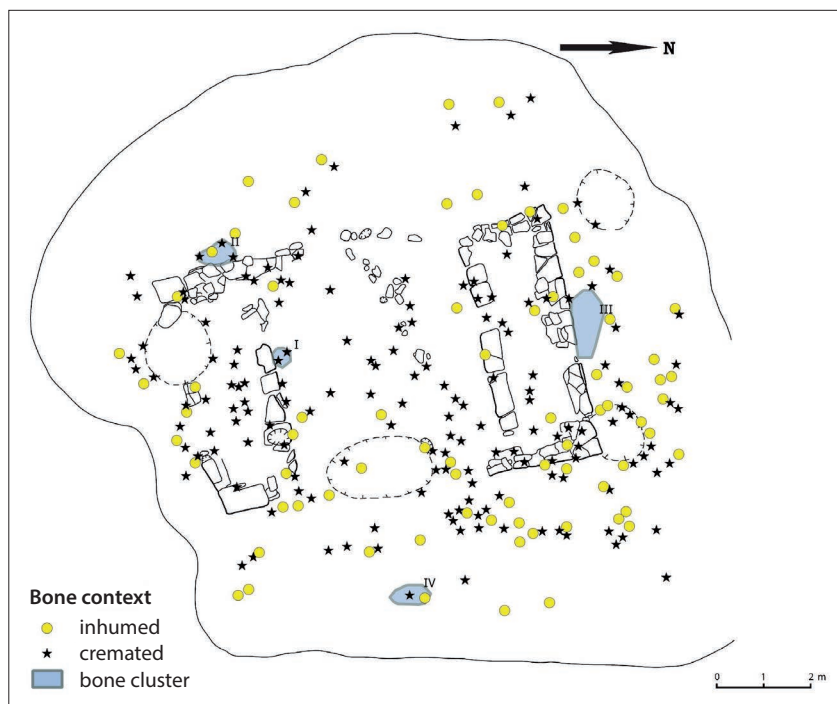
The collected data was categorised and sorted in order to be analysed statistically. Several chi-square and Kolmogorov-Smirnov statistical tests<sup>4</sup> in IBM SPSS 20 were conducted on the cremated material as well as on the data about artefacts. In the statistical tests, grave area references were used, the bones and artefacts were analysed by their location in the grave and the *tarands*. The goal was to understand whether the clustering of the bones was random or whether the similarities between the clusters of artefacts or weight of bones were statistically significant.<sup>5</sup>

The finds were marked on the grave plans in arbitrary squares. The number of finds was observed in the aforementioned squares. The weight of bone elements was also observed in the squares, although not in layers. The density of the finds and bones is expressed in Figures 1 and 2.

## The Viimsi I grave

### Bones

The material unearthed from Viimsi I was eclectic and numerous. There were 264 bone contexts, among which at least four bone clusters were present in the grave area (Figure 1). Three of these were noticed during the excavations (Lang 1993) and one was added recently. The first clusters found were located (I) in the central southern part of the *tarand* D (bone context 104, although 162 was probably also part of the cluster), (II) on the western side outside *tarand* B (182, 258, 260), and (III) in the north slightly outside *tarand* A (skeleton I) (Lang 1993). The new cluster (IV) was found on the eastern side of *tarands* C and D (161) and



**Figure 1.** Distribution of bone clusters, cremated and inhumed bones in the Viimsi I grave.

contained the bones of a child aged 6–10. Clusters 104 and 162 (I) contained cremated individuals: a man aged 45–50 and a child aged 6–10. Cluster III has not survived – this cluster, with mainly the cranial bones of a 20–30-year-old man, was not among the bone material.<sup>6</sup> Nevertheless, its former existence was considered a fact as several researchers have seen the burial (Kalling 1993, 67). The cluster on the western side of *tarand* B (II) contained the bones of a cremated adult individual. The bones of an inhumed adolescent (160) were close to the last cluster (IV).

Altogether, it can be said that at least 29 cremated individuals and a minimum of 13 inhumation burials were made in the grave area. The number of cremation burials was determined by the petrous portion of the occipital bone, but the number of inhumation burials was concluded from the number of 5th left metatarsals and the overall age composition of the juvenile buried individuals (Kivirüüt 2011, 39). The bones that were no longer present (for example the cranium of

cluster III) were not included in the count but it can be assumed that the number of individuals in the grave was larger. All of the age groups were present, the oldest individuals died at over 55 based on the wear of the teeth, while the youngest was new-born based on the bone development.

The individuals did not show many signs of disease, therefore the health of the buried will not be discussed here, but two individuals had cut marks. A fragment of the right side of a male mandible and a fragment of radius had diagonal cut marks on their posterior sides, pointing down. The bones were located outside the *tarand* area to the west, a few meters apart. The cut marks probably did not belong to the same individual as the radius was of rather small size to belong to the man. Nevertheless, neither of the traumas showed signs of healing, so they must have occurred close to the time of death. The mandibular fragment and the cut mark were also slightly green which indicates nearby bronze objects, perhaps personal jewellery. Neither of the cut marks could be associated with any specific activity.

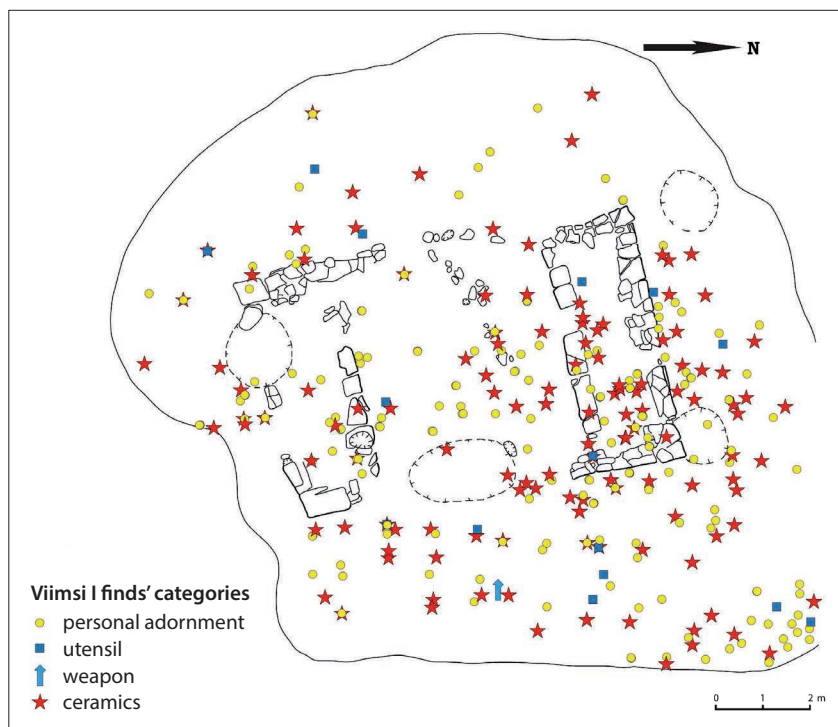
Most of the bones that had been coloured green in the Viimsi I grave were finger bones, most probably because of the rings that had been buried with them. In two cases, the dead had worn the rings on thumbs. Unfortunately, the rings and the phalanges could not be connected with the help of spatial analysis. In one case (context 239), a left clavicle and left 1st rib had been coloured green on the mid-section of the body, but were not located near any bronze artefacts.

Based on the location analysis it seemed that the cremated children were buried in the southern areas of the grave whereas bones of inhumed juveniles were found almost everywhere at the edges or outside the *tarands*, except in the western part of the grave area (Figure 3).

## Items

The artefacts from the Viimsi I grave were divided into four groups: personal adornments, utensils, weapons, and ceramics (Figure 2). Most numerous groups of artefacts in the Viimsi I grave were ceramics. A total of 612 sherds from at least 32 different vessels was found (Lang 1993, 50–51). Most of them have been dated to the 5th–6th centuries, although one vessel dates back to the Late Bronze Age or Pre-Roman Iron Age<sup>7</sup> and two to the end of the Middle Iron Age or Viking Age (op cit, 50–54). The majority of the ceramic sherds did not have a carbonised organic layer on them, which might point to these vessels not being used for cooking but rather as more general containers (food, personal items, bones, or something else).

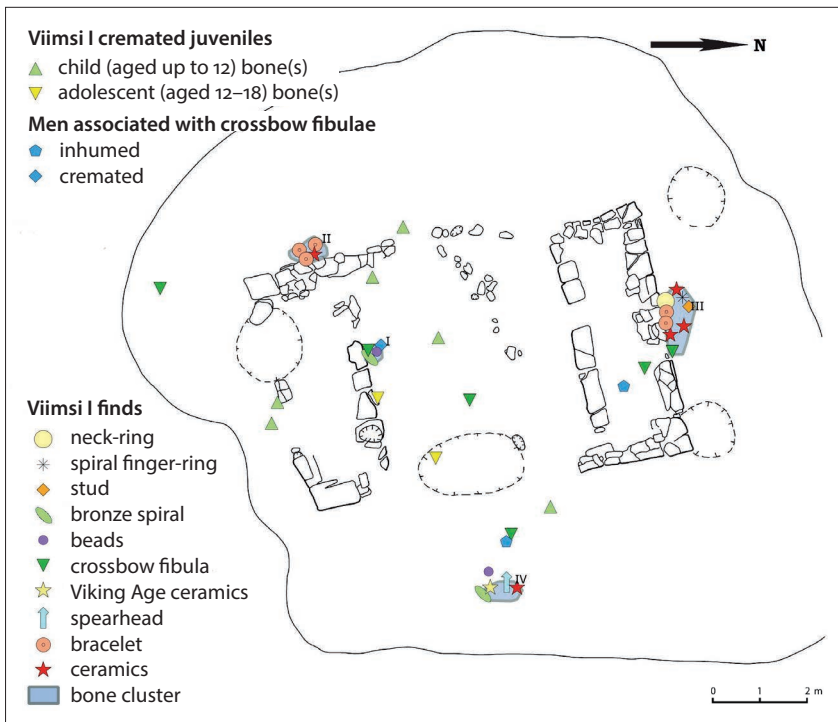




**Figure 2.** Distribution of the artefact groups in the Viimsi I grave.

The second largest group of artefacts was personal adornments, including bracelets, crossbow fibulae, neck rings, finger rings, glass beads (mostly blue), stone beads (fossils, of which some may have been used as spindle whorls), parts of belts and bronze spirals. Many of the bracelets and finger rings are decorated although only at the ends and with quite simple ornamentation consisting mainly of lines. Some of the bracelets and spiral finger rings looked as though they had been deliberately damaged (for example pulled wide). Three of the bracelets (AI 5947: 149, 150, 170) were seemingly placed as an assemblage next to bone cluster II (Figure 3).

The majority of crossbow fibulae are of the type that are commonly found in northern Estonia's *tarand* graves (Rohtla 2005, 126). The most elaborate from Viimsi I is the crossbow fibula (AI 5914: 212) with a spade shaped foot covered with silver sheet (unfortunately it was found in displaced soil and its possible



**Figure 3.** Distribution of bone clusters and artefacts, men with crossbow fibulae and cremated juveniles in the Viimsi I grave.

connection to certain burials could not be assessed). Of the seven crossbow fibulae that were found from the intact parts of the graves, four (AI 5914: 48, 57, 74, 176) were found with the bones of male individuals (Figure 3). Of two of the finds it is possible to say more clearly that the fibula was part of the outfit the individual was buried in: first, a heavily burned fibula (AI 5914: 74) with the cremated bones of a male individual (bone context I) and secondly, an unburned fibula (AI 5914: 48) east of the missing skeleton (III). It can be assumed that the burned fibula was on the pyre with the deceased and the unburned fibula was buried together with the inhumation burial.

One of the two neck rings (AI 5914: 66) was found outside *tarand* A, next to bone cluster III (Figure 3). The ring was broken from one side. It remains unclear whether it had been deliberately damaged or not. The other neck ring (AI 5914: 241) was also found outside of the *tarands* although there were only a few hand

and foot bones close to it. The two neck rings were both rather small in size (diameter around 10 cm).

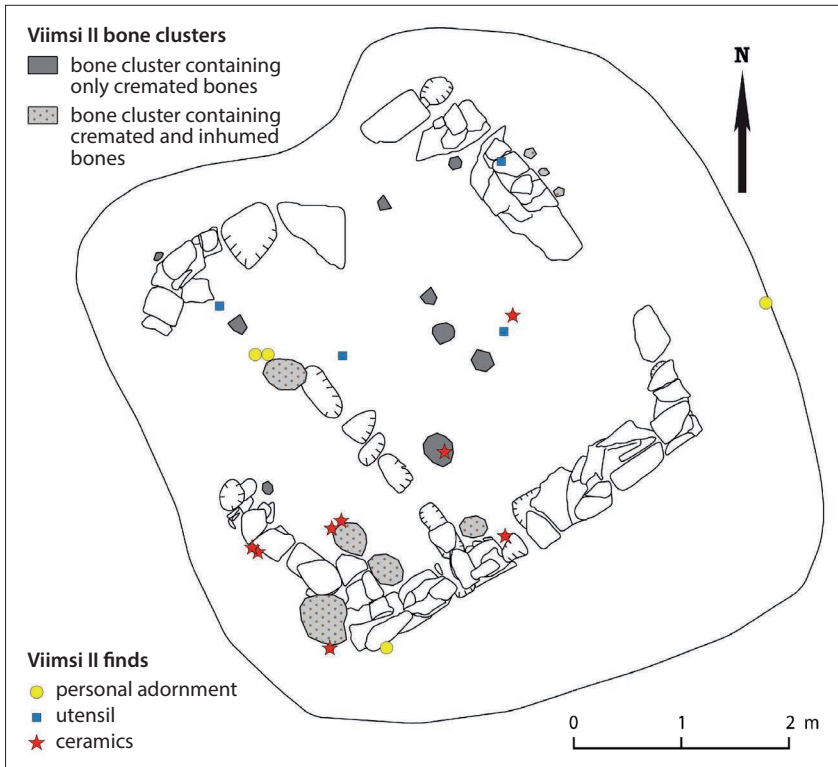
The third group of artefacts, in which knives, a scythe, an awl, a whetstone and a razor belonged, was utensils. The last group was weapons and consisted of only one small spearhead. The spearhead (AI 5914: 127) was located next to bone cluster IV (Figure 3).

Based on the visual assessment, many bronze items did not have features recognisable from being in fire, which means that they were either burned at low temperature or not burned at all. Metallographic analysis showed that some iron items (knives, a razor and the scythe) had been burned on a pyre (Peets 1993, 81–83). Unfortunately, most of the iron items were not preserved well enough to study their use-wear marks. Only one knife definitely had marks showing that it had been used frequently before placing it into the grave; the scythe was so well preserved that it could be said that it had not been used at all (op cit).

Based on the statistical analysis there was no statistical significance in the distribution of items, their categories and their number in the *tarands* and the area outside of the *tarands*.<sup>8</sup> Nevertheless, it is possible that there originally were some rules governing the placement of the items in the grave but the bulldozer had disturbed the original placement. In the parts where the grave remained intact, a few clusters of items and bones were observable. These clusters generally contained special objects that were few in number. However, these clusters contained more common grave goods that were also present in other parts of the grave, like sherds of ceramic vessels (clusters II, III and IV), bronze spirals (clusters I and IV) and glass beads (clusters I and IV).

## Viimsi II grave

The second grave was rather poor in artefacts compared to the first. As with the first grave, the most numerous group of artefacts was ceramics. A total of 59 sherds from at least two vessels were found (Lang 1993, 53). The second group, utensils, consists of knives and razors. The third group, personal adornments, consists of only two crossbow fibulae and a stone bead. No weapons were found in the grave. Statistically there is no significant difference in the distribution of items, their number and groups of items in the two *tarands* and the area outside of the *tarands*.<sup>9</sup> Almost half of the artefacts were located close to the bone clusters (Figure 4); mainly sherds of ceramic vessels but also a knife, a fragment of fibula, a bracelet and some unidentifiable iron items. The second fibula was located under the wall of *tarand* B (AI 5915: 9). Many vessel sherds (AI 5915: 5, 6) were



**Figure 4.** Distribution of bones and artefacts in the Viimsi II grave.

found immediately outside the wall of the *tarand* and therefore it can be assumed that the vessels were placed on the edge of the grave, from where they have fallen.

The individuals in Viimsi II were buried in bone clusters, but it seems that the bones have been lost in time (Lang 1993). In the 1990s Ken Kalling identified two inhumations (an adult and a new-born) and one cremation burial in the Viimsi II *tarand* grave (Kalling 1993, 68). Unfortunately, the bones from Viimsi II are currently not available and therefore the material could not be used for the present study.

## Discussion

Individual and collective identities are entangled with each other and constructed collectively (Jenkins 2008 [1996], 37, 46). For example, people can belong to a sub-community based on their occupation and still stand out from others in society, or identity attained in a rite of passage is certainly a community as well as individual event of accepting a person into a certain community (Fowler 2004, 45). Items can express and be emblems of the attained (idealised) identities as well as treatment of the body after death and its placement into the grave (Fowler 2013, 520–521).

### Individual features

Based on the restudied material, some traces of individual burial features, which persisted after the funerary rite, are observable. Those elements are defined by the clusters of bones and artefacts that show that they were buried in the grave together. Items could have been personal belongings, symbolic items – which had to be buried with the deceased –, or items that were in some other way connected to the deceased. Green bones also show that the deceased were buried with bronze items. For example, if the phalanx is green, then the item was probably a finger ring. Other assumptions of what bronze ornaments were worn can be made based on what bone was green. Another individualising element is the fact that these clusters of bones or burials are spatially distinct from the others. Therefore they were highlighted and partially separated from the others. At the same time they were still within the community of the dead but just maybe more prominent or/and had a special position or belonged to a special sub-group. Most of the assumptions below are made based on the first grave because the location of bones was identifiable. There are also clear individual features in the second grave, but because the bones are missing, no correlations of the people with items can be made.

At least four crossbow fibulae in the Viimsi I grave can be associated with male burials. Based on a stained left male clavicle and 1st rib, there is a possibility that the fibula was worn on a shoulder to fasten, for example, a cloak. Many richly furnished male, female and warrior's graves in the Baltic region often contained a crossbow fibula in addition to other grave goods (Vaitkunskienė 1995, 105; Bliujienė 2002, 149). Crossbow fibulae were also the attributes of the Roman legionnaires who had those items as a part of their standard military inventory; the more decorated it was, the higher rank he had (Stout 2001, 80; Swift 2009, 159–163). It has also been pointed out that people in Estonia who wore the

crossbow fibulae with spade shaped foot could have belonged to the elite (Rohtla 2005, 139). Crossbow fibulae in Viimsi graves could have been personal items because in addition to their possible status or identity related meanings, they are also functional items to fasten clothes. They could have been worn by certain (male) individuals quite often in a visible place to manifest their possible status or identity. These males might have had a similar identity in common; perhaps they formed a sub-group within the elite, something that also points to a collective identity.

The small spearhead that accompanied the cremated child burial or inhumed adolescent (bone cluster IV) could also have been a more prominent adolescent's or child's personal item. However, it also could have been a symbolic item which might have represented the special position the child or adolescent might have attained if he/she would have grown up. It is quite remarkable because weapons in general are quite rare in *tarand* graves (Lang 2007, 216). It is unlikely that weapons were not used in life, but for some reason they were usually not part of people's identity in death.

Two clearly differing items are the neck rings. According to Tõnno Jonuks, neck-rings, found from wealth deposits of Roman Iron Age Estonia, could have been attributes of ritual leaders who belonged to the elite (Jonuks 2009, 234, 236). In addition, generally neck rings may have held special meaning throughout prehistory in southern Scandinavia and northern Europe (op cit, 232). There is a possibility that the individuals from Viimsi I grave who were buried with neck rings held special positions in society. Based on the diameter of the neck rings, an adult could not have worn them, so it can be assumed that they belonged to children with a special position or that they were symbolic or ritual items, not made/used for wearing but for other purposes. Another possibility is that a person could have received a neck ring as a child marking the attainment of a certain identity.

There is also a cluster of bones (II), three bracelets and ceramic sherds. This is a deposit that does not contain any spectacular items, although the number of bracelets in one place is remarkable. It is difficult to speculate how the ornaments and the individuals were connected. It is likely that the items and the bones were deposited in the same place at the same time or that the ornaments were deposited after some time. In the latter case, the memory of the people who were buried there could have remained and the items were not put into any anonymous bone cluster but rather were placed to accompany the remains of that person. One possibility is that they were personal items, although they could also have been offerings or grave adornments made just for the deceased.

At least seven individuals stood out from the 42. The missing male skeleton (bone cluster III) is the most interesting of them all. This skeleton was distinguished from others by several unburned grave goods: a small (deliberately?) broken neck ring, a crossbow fibula and other ornaments (two bracelets, a spiral finger-ring, a stud). It is unlikely that he wore the neck ring because of its size, therefore its ritual or symbolical meaning is assumed. The neck ring could have been ritually killed because its owner was dead or the ring may not have belonged to the deceased during his lifetime and was placed to his grave for some other purpose, for example to emphasise his importance, to give him special grave goods merely because of his position. He was also distinguished from others spatially, being buried outside the *tarand's* walls where he was quite accessible for follow-up rituals at the grave, making him part of the collective identity of the society.

It is likely that those seven held a special position among the elite. It is not very clear what that position was but it was made visible with items that could have been personal, and more functional items (for example crossbow fibulae) and/or items which were personal but held a more symbolic meaning. Mainly it was the burials of men that stood out, so it can be assumed that they were the ones with a higher position among the elite. Their special positions set them apart and were expressed in death; therefore this must have been necessary for some reason. Perhaps the ancestral soul bore some more elements of individuality than so far assumed.

There was no statistically significant difference in the distribution of items in either of the two Viimsi *tarand* graves. Nevertheless, the clusters of bones and artefacts stood out and it could be assumed that items had been placed to the grave close to the bone clusters. However, this might not have been the only way the items found their way into the grave.

Individuality was most strongly expressed in small bone clusters. The fact that people had been buried in deposits indicates an individual approach. Even though only three cremation burial deposits and one probable inhumation burial have been recorded, it could be said that those people were special and needed to be treated differently compared to the others. As the burial place had been in use for a long time, the less damaged Viimsi II grave contained clear bone clusters although the grave had been severely disturbed by the excavator. It is also possible that at first, all of the cremation burials in Viimsi I were placed in deposits and inhumation burials were placed as a whole. The last phenomenon is indicated by the only possible inhumation burial (cluster III) that could have been buried either parallel or crosswise to the northern wall of the *tarand A* (Lang 1993).

### Collective features

Most of the artefacts were scattered in the grave and could not be associated with any certain burials, which could indicate that they found their way into the grave through different rituals which may have taken place during or in between the burial events. This corresponds with the assumption that *tarand* graves were places where different rituals, in addition to burial, took place (Lang 2007, 202). The fact that many of the scattered ornaments in the grave have been deliberately damaged could indicate rituals during which the items had to be damaged (the dead had to receive 'dead' items?). However, it is hard to distinguish items that were scattered over the grave during the mortuary ritual and items which were brought to the grave thereafter. The function of ceramic vessels in the grave is unknown although there is speculation that ceramics in *tarand* graves can be the remnants of ritual activities on the graves that took place between the burials (Vassar 1943, 239; Jonuks 2009, 219). Another possibility is that the vessels were used to transport burned bones or grave goods to the grave.

There are not many green bones that would indicate that people were buried with the items. However, there are many unburned items in the graves, not directly connectable to the inhumed bones. One of the reasons for not being able to connect the items with the bones is definitely the commingled nature of the grave contents. It is also possible that the items were placed in the grave separately from burials, which may indicate several actions during the burial event. In that case, the connection between the deceased and the items was loose and placing the items into the grave was rather a symbolic act than placing a specific item for a certain deceased. These symbolic acts could also have taken place in between burial events. The items in graves can be considered among other possibilities as items bound up in gift exchanges with the dead (Parker Pearson 2003 [1999], 85). By gift exchange with the dead the living give a symbolic part of themselves to the ancestor (Fowler 2004, 34), which confirms the ties and connections between the community constructed of living people and the ancestors.

Based on the osteological material as well, the people buried in the grave were a collective, a functioning society, as the graves contained all of the body parts and the different bones were scattered rather evenly over the grave areas discussed here. The stage of commingling shows that human remains could have been randomly scattered in and around the *tarands* with only a few people buried in well-defined deposits or inhumed. In addition, people of various age groups and both sexes were identified. There were some suspicions that some grave areas may have been assigned for some types of individuals.



The reason for the placement of the bones of the individuals can also be associated with rituals, especially in the case of adolescents and cremated children as their bones were found only at the southern end of the Viimsi I *tarands*. The different treatment of the bones of the juvenile individuals could have occurred because the individuals who had not reached adulthood may have had different roles in the society (Jonuks 2009, 167–168). The adolescent bone cluster on the northeastern end of the *tarand* A can be associated with the layer that had been moved by the excavator. The child and infant bones on the east and northeastern sides around the *tarands* could belong to later burials as burying children in stone graves even during medieval times has been recorded (Laneman 2012, 106).

It is assumed that *tarand* graves are burial places for one family (Lang & Ligi 1991, 225). One family in the Viimsi area could have been burying their dead in the first grave and another in the second. The community of Viimsi II may not have been as long-term as of Viimsi I, or the ones buried in Viimsi II could have been incorporated in the first family at some point and this process resulted in fewer burials and items in Viimsi II grave. The two graves do not seem to be qualitatively different, the dissimilarities were probably only in their sizes and usage periods.

## Conclusions

This chapter gave some new insights into the study of the collective and individual features in the Viimsi *tarand*-graves at the end of Roman Iron Age and the beginning of the Migration Period (350–500 AD).

The individuality was mainly expressed through some grave goods and distinguishable burials which were generally cremation burial deposits and one inhumation burial. The deposits were placed in different grave areas and were observable in the less damaged parts of the *tarands*. It may be assumed that some of the cremation burials were deposited in clusters and inhumation burials were once placed anatomically correctly. However, based on the excavation plans Viimsi II contained bone deposits consisting of both cremated and inhumed human remains. At least four male individuals were buried with a crossbow fibula. There were also other personal or symbolic items like the small neck rings, which may not have been for wearing but to identify ritual leaders or people who were in some other way special. A spearhead next to a child burial may be a personal item and/or denote the special position the child might have attained if he/she had reached adulthood. The most interesting feature was the missing inhumation burial that had many grave goods, while the most exciting find was

the small neck ring and the crossbow fibula. These state that the individuality of the deceased was very clearly emphasised. Therefore, based on the Viimsi grave material, it can be stated that the elite of the elite were (male) individuals who wanted to be distinguished in death, something that was mainly expressed by certain grave goods and defined burials.

The children and adolescents were possibly buried separately at the southern end of the grave. This could indicate that their role in society had not yet been acquired.

Collectiveness may have been expressed through the scattered bones and grave goods that could not be associated with any certain burials. As the placement of the bones into specific deposits in the Viimsi I *tarand* grave cannot be proven, it is also probable that most of the cremated bones were scattered all over the grave area and inhumations were commingled in that process or were dug up and scattered over the grave area as well. Scattering and the possible damaging of the grave goods might indicate that some rituals could have taken place during or in between the burial events, in which case their meaning may have primarily been connected to the act of commingling itself. Placing grave goods into the grave could have represented and perpetuated the connection between the living and the dead, who formed a functional community.

### Archival sources and collections

AI 5914 – finds from the Viimsi I *tarand* grave at the Tallinn University Archaeological Research Collection.

AI 5915 – finds from the Viimsi II *tarand* grave at the Tallinn University Archaeological Research Collection.

Lang, V. (1990a) *Viimsi I tarandkalme kaevamisaruanne 1990*. Manuscript at the archives of the Tallinn University Archaeological Research Collection.

Lang, V. (1990b) *Viimsi II tarandkalme kaevamisaruanne 1990*. Manuscript at the archives of the Tallinn University Archaeological Research Collection.

### References

Bliujienė, A. (2002) The main stylistic features of the Baltic crossbow brooches in the Migration Period. – Kazakevičius, V. et al (eds) *Archaeologia Baltica* 5, 145–161. Lithuanian Institute of History, Vilnius.

Brickley, M. & McKinley, J. I. (2004) *Guidelines to the Standards for Recording Human Remains*. Institute of Field Archaeologists Paper No. 7. British Association for Biological Anthropology and Osteoarchaeology, Department of Archaeology, University of Southampton, Southampton.

- Cardoso, H. F. V. & Severino, R. S. S. (2010) The chronology of epiphyseal union in the hand and foot from dry bone observations, *International Journal of Osteoarchaeology* 20 (6), 737–746.
- Ekengren, F. (2009) *Ritualization – Hybridization – Fragmentation. The Mutability of Roman Vessels in Germania Magna AD 1–400*. Acta Archaeologica Lundensia, Series prima in 4°, No. 28. Department of Archaeology and Ancient History, Lund University, Lund.
- Ekengren, F. (2013) Contextualizing grave goods: theoretical perspectives and methodological implications. – Tarlow, S. & Nilsson Stutz, L. (eds) *The Oxford Handbook of the Archaeology of Death and Burial*, 173–192. Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- Fowler, C. (2004) *The Archaeology of Personhood. An Anthropological Approach*. Routledge, London, New York.
- Fowler, C. (2013) Identities in transformation: identities, funerary rites, and the mortuary process. – Tarlow, S. & Nilsson Stutz, L. (eds) *The Oxford Handbook of the Archaeology of Death and Burial*, 511–526. Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- Holck, P. (2008 [1987]) *Cremated Bones. A Medical-Anthropological Study of an Archaeological Material on Cremation Burials*. Anatomical Institute, University of Oslo, Oslo.
- Jenkins, R. (2008 [1996]) *Social Identity*. Routledge, London, New York.
- Jonuks, T. (2009) *Eesti muinasusund*. Dissertationes archaeologiae Universitatis Tartuensis 2. Tartu Ülikooli Kirjastus, Tartu.
- Kalling, K. (1993) Viimsi kalmete luuainese antropoloogiline analüüs. – Lang, V. *Kaks tarandkalmet Viimsis, Jõelähtme kihelkonnas*. Tõid arheoloogia alalt 2, 67–69. Eesti Teaduste Akadeemia Ajaloo Instituut, Tallinn.
- Kivirüüt, A. (2011) *Põletatud luude uurimine: meetodika ning praktika Viimsi I tarandkalme leiukompleksi näitel*. Bachelor's thesis. University of Tartu, Department of Philosophy, Institute of History and Archaeology.
- Laneman, M. (2012) Stone cist grave at Kaseküla, western Estonia, in the light of AMS dates of the human bones, *Estonian Journal of Archaeology* 16 (2), 91–117.
- Lang, V. (1993) *Kaks tarandkalmet Viimsis, Jõelähtme kihelkonnas*. Tõid arheoloogia alalt 2. Eesti Teaduste Akadeemia Ajaloo Instituut, Tallinn.
- Lang, V. (1996) *Muistne Rävåla. Muistised, kronoloogia ja maaviiljelusliku asustuse kujunemine Loode-Eestis, eriti Pirita jõe alamjooksu piirkonnas. Maa, muistised ja kultuur I–II*. Muinasaja teadus 4. Eesti Teaduste Akadeemia Ajaloo Instituut, Tallinn.
- Lang, V. (1999) Kultuurmaastikku luues. Essee maastiku religioosest ja sümboliseeritud korraldusest, *Eesti Arheoloogia Ajakiri, Estonian Journal of Archaeology* 3 (1), 63–85.
- Lang, V. (2007). *The Bronze and Early Iron Ages in Estonia*. Estonian Archaeology 3. Tartu University Press, Tartu.
- Lang, V. (2011) Traceless death. Missing burials in Bronze and Iron Age Estonia, *Estonian Journal of Archaeology* 15 (2), 109–129.
- Lang, V. & Ligi, P. (1991) Muistised kalmed ajaloolise demograafia allikana. – Jaanits, L. & Lang, V. (eds) *Muinasaja teadus* 1. Arheoloogiline kogumik, 216–240. Agu, Tallinn.
- Ligi, P. (1995) Ühiskondlikest oludest Eesti alal hilispronksi- ja rauaajal. – Lang, V. (ed) *Eesti arheoloogia historiograafilisi, teoreetilisi ja kultuuriajaloolisi aspekte*. Muinasaja teadus 3, 182–270. Eesti Teaduste Akadeemia Ajaloo Instituut, Tallinn.

- Lovejoy, C. O. (1985) Dental wear in the Libben population: its functional pattern and role in the determination of adult skeletal age at death, *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* 68 (1), 47–56.
- McKinley, J. I. (2006) Cremation... the cheap option? – Gowland, R. & Knüsel, C. (eds) *Social Archaeology of Funerary Remains*, 81–88. Oxbow Books, Oxford.
- Nilsson Stutz, L. (2010) The way we bury our dead. Reflections on mortuary ritual, community and identity at the time of the Mesolithic-Neolithic transition, *Bodies, Ritual and Religion. Documenta Praehistorica XXXVII. Neolithic Studies* 16, 33–42.
- Oestigaard, T. (1999) Cremations as transformations: when the dual culture hypothesis was cremated and carried away in urns, *European Journal of Archaeology* 2 (3), 345–364.
- Parker Pearson, M. (2003 [1999]) *The Archaeology of Death and Burial*. The History Press, Stroud.
- Peets, J. (1993) Noad ja vikat Viimsi I tarandkalmest. – Lang, V. *Kaks tarandkalmet Viimsis, Jöelähtme kihelkonnas*. Töid arheoloogia alalt 2, 79–84. Eesti Teaduste Akadeemia Ajaloo Instituut, Tallinn.
- Rebay-Salisbury, K. (2010) Cremations: fragmented bodies in the Bronze and Iron Ages. – Rebay-Salisbury, K., Sørensen, M. L. S. & Hughes, J. (eds) *Body Parts and Bodies Whole: Changing Relations and Meanings*, 64–71. Oxbow Books, Oxford, Oakville.
- Rohtla, M.-L. (2003) *Ambõled Eestis*. Bachelor's thesis. University of Tartu, Department of Archaeology.
- Rohtla, M.-L. (2005) Crossbow fibula as a reflection of social status and relations, *Inter-archaeologia* 1, 121–145.
- Scheuer, L. & Black, S. (2004) *The Juvenile Skeleton*. Elsevier Academic Press, London.
- Shennan, S. (2008) *Quantifying Archaeology*. Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh.
- Stout, A. M. (2001) Jewellery as a symbol of status in the Roman Empire. – Sebesta, J. L. & Bonfante, L. (eds) *The World of Roman Costume*, 77–100. University of Wisconsin Press, Madison.
- Swift, E. (2009) *Style and Function in Roman Decoration: Living with Objects and Interiors*. Ashgate, Farnham, Burlington.
- Ubelaker, D. H. (1989) *Human Skeletal Remains: Excavation, Analysis, Interpretation*. Taraxacum, Washington.
- Vaitkunskienė, L. (1995) The formation of a warrior elite during the Middle Iron Age in Lithuania. – Kazakevičius, V. & Sidrys, R. (eds) *Archaeologia Baltica* 1, 94–106. Institute of Lithuanian History, Vilnius.
- Vassar, A. (1943) *Nurmsi kivikalme Eestis ja tarandkalmete areng*. Doctoral thesis. University of Tartu.
- Walker, P. L., Miller, K. W. P. & Richman, R. (2008) Time, temperature, and oxygen availability: an experimental study of the effects of environmental conditions on the colour and organic content of cremated bone. – Schmidt, C. W. & Symes, S. A. (eds) *The Analysis of Burned Human Remains*, 129–136. Academic Press, London.

## Sources of illustrations

Figures 1–3 – Drawings: Maarja Olli and Anu Kivirüüt after Lang 1993, 9, figure 3.  
Figure 4 – Drawing: Maarja Olli, after Lang 1993, 16, figure 4.

## Notes

The authors would like thank the anonymous reviewer for his or her useful comments, and everyone who was kind enough to read the paper, give linguistic advice and feedback on the subject. This research was supported by the European Union through the European Regional Development Fund (Centre of Excellence in Cultural Theory) and by the Kristjan Jaak national scholarship programme which is funded and managed by the Archimedes Foundation in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Research.

1 In this paper, unurned cremated bone deposits refer to bones that were probably deposited together and may have remained in their original place.

2 People among the elite who had more refined features.

3 Finds from the Viimsi graves are stored at the Tallinn University Archaeological Research Collection (Viimsi I – AI 5914, Viimsi II – AI 5915).

4 For details see Shennan 2008.

5 The bone weight (Kruskal-Wallis sig. 0.085>0.05) was the same across all grave areas; body part distribution (Chi square df. 1, 2-sided sig. 0.171–0.714>0.05) did not show any statistically significant differences across the less damaged tarands A and B. As the bones from Viimsi II were not available for comparison, no more statistical tests were conducted on these remains for this paper.

6 The cranium is irrelevant in the count of individuals.

7 Probably not connected with the grave but with some earlier settlement sites nearby (Lang 1993, 50).

8 The distribution (Chi square df. 1, 2 sided sig. 0.064–1.000>0.05) was the same across all grave areas and did not show any statistically significant difference across the less damaged *tarands* A and B.

9 The distribution (Chi square df. 1, 2 sided sig. 0.073–0.990>0.05) was the same across all grave areas.

## Tricking death? The role of the awareness of death in self-transformation of personhood according to Georges Bataille

Normunds Titans

**Abstract.** This chapter presents the death awareness-related ideas of the French thinker Georges Bataille (1897–1962). The relevant texts of Bataille will be interpreted as part of his own practice of self-transformation. According to Bataille, a human being is caught up between two contrasting drives. On the one hand, there is a desire to maintain an autonomous personhood, separate existence and continuity, which implies the overcoming of death. On the other hand, the awareness of the inevitable fact of death denegates this continuity into discontinuity. The latter brings about unbearable anguish for the lost personhood and simultaneously another desire transforming the personhood: the desire for the once lost intimacy with everything, pure immanence of losing oneself into totality, into otherness. Paradoxically, this is unfeasible because of death, but at the same time achievable only through death. Since death – properly understood – terminates the entry into intimacy and continuity, for there is no personhood left to experience it, in order to have the transforming experience of continuity, one has to ‘trick’ death, to undergo death without actually dying through some simulacrum of death. For Bataille, a paradigmatic instance of such an impossible possibility of tricking death is sacrifice, and he also transposes the structure of sacrifice into several other ways he believes to be effective in self-transformation through the awareness of death, such as eroticism and literature – accordingly dealt with in this chapter. The chapter also has evaluative sections, raising issues on the banalisation of death through spectacle in the modern culture, on whether and how self-transcendence through the awareness of death is possible in view of Bataille’s thinking of radical finitude, and on how to read Bataille after Jean-Luc Nancy’s proposal regarding the impossibility and intolerability of the idea of sacrifice in contemporary culture.

---

Kannike, A., Tasa, M. & Västriik, E.-H. (eds) (2017) *Body, Personhood and Privacy: Perspectives on the Cultural Other and Human Experience*. *Approaches to Culture Theory* 7, 293–311. University of Tartu Press, Tartu.

## Introduction

This chapter deals with death in the context of transformation of personhood. I will approach this topic through the lens of the French thinker Georges Bataille (1897–1962), who was so versatile a writer that the easiest way to categorise him, if this is possible at all, would be to label him a cultural theorist, in view of the fact that cultural studies can be a sort of meta-discipline, comprising literature, arts, philosophy, religion, history, sociology, anthropology and other areas in which Bataille wrote, also decisively influencing later post-structuralist and post-modern thought (Foucault, Derrida, Baudrillard, Kristeva, Barthes, Lyotard et al) that has also in a great extent shaped the form and content of cultural studies as we know this discipline today. Paul Hegarty (2000), for instance, presents Bataille as a “core cultural theorist”.

Death is one of the main subject matters of Bataille’s writing, and his pre-occupation with death can be understood in the wider cultural context of the early-to-mid-20th century. This period sustained not only two world wars but also a paradigm shift in attitudes towards death. From antiquity through the Middle Ages and on, death was under the control of religion and thereby ‘tamed’. Religious belief in salvation and an afterlife helped people cope with the fear of death. Death was generally accepted as a matter of course, prepared for and even anticipated. With the advent of modern science and the Enlightenment, religious beliefs started to lose ground gradually, and new coping mechanisms were needed. As a result, as Philippe Ariès (1974) observed in his ground-breaking work *Western Attitudes towards Death from the Middle Ages to the Present*, a cultural paradigm shift in attitudes towards death occurred: from public and ‘tamed’ to ‘wild’ death, from acceptance to denial of death by ignoring it, making invisible, banishing from public discussion. It has even been suggested that, as sex was a taboo topic during the Victorian era, something like this happened to death-related topics during the early-to-mid-20th century, making death less visible and intrusive through changes in customs, protocols, and social behaviour (Bryant & Peck 2009, xxxv). At the same time, to continue this analogy, taboos have always been irresistibly transgressed. Obsessive fascination with death emerges in the culture that denies death and dying, and Bataille exemplifies such a contra-culture.

Bataille approaches the topic of death in two ways. On the one hand, being a cultural theorist in the broad sense referred to above, he represents a sort of cultural studies approach, i.e. exploring death as a socio-cultural phenomenon, investigating death-belief systems as they have been constructed in different historical societies. Bataille’s special favourites are the ancient societies in which

religion was born concomitantly with the instrumental reason as a result of the nascent self-consciousness and the resulting awareness of death. In view of becoming aware of their mortality, ancient people somehow had to secure their future, and they achieved this through work and beliefs in gods and immortality. Contemporary socio-biological approaches to the study of religion still hold on to similar explanations of the origins of religion.

On the other hand, Bataille defies the cultural studies approach in the sense that he also focuses on the meaning of death itself, apart from the meanings and functions of death-beliefs in various cultural contexts. At the same time, the aforementioned Bataille's indirect influence on the contemporary discourse of cultural theory can also be traced through his writings on death, and precisely in this second sense – as a personal experience of transgression<sup>1</sup> of the boundaries of reason through the awareness of death. For example, the contribution of Bataille's transgressive understanding of death to celebrating the exposure of life to death in modern culture has been traced (Noys 2005, 101–124).

In this chapter, I will treat the latter line of Bataille's thinking on death. I suggest that those aspects of Bataille's thought that deal with death have a special significance for him. They are not neutral, theoretical 'armchair' speculations but are 'written with blood', having deep existential meaning for him, and also testimonies of an agonising inner experience in the face of death: losing the most loved ones (especially his lover and partner Laura), war raging around, having a potentially terminal illness, abandoning himself to ruining revelry, etc. The process of writing these texts itself becomes Bataille's spiritual (if one can use this word in the case of Bataille, an atheist) practice, exercise in his own self-transformation through the awareness and provocation of death. His writing becomes a form of self-sacrifice, total expenditure of himself, writing himself to death. All analyses and expositions of Bataille's texts in this chapter are to be understood in this perspective.

To make Bataille's understanding of death manageable in a chapter, I will narrow its scope to his interpretations of sacrifice. This chapter has five sections. The first three treat Bataille's reflections on the paradox of tricking death, sacrifice and its transformations in eroticism and literature, followed by a section on Bataille's meditation on the Chinese *ling chi* torture and a concluding section. The latter two sections are evaluative and raise issues, inter alia, on the modern culture's banalisation of death through spectacle – of which Bataille is no exemption, – on whether and how transgression through the awareness of death is possible in view of Bataille's thinking of radical finitude, and on how to read Bataille after Jean-Luc Nancy's (1991) programmatic proposal regarding the



impossibility and intolerability of sacrifice in the contemporary culture and the need for sacrificing sacrifice itself.

### **Tricking death?**

According to Bataille, a human being is caught up in an impossible condition, between a Scylla and Charybdis of two contrasting drives. On the one hand, there is a desire to maintain an autonomous personhood, separate existence and continuity, which implies a longed-for overcoming of death (even by the last resort to a kind of a utilitarian belief in God to facilitate this). On the other hand, the awareness of the inevitable fact of death denegates this continuity into discontinuity. The latter brings about unbearable anguish for the lost personhood and simultaneously another desire transforming the personhood: the desire for the once lost intimacy with everything, pure immanence of losing oneself into the totality of being, into otherness. Paradoxically, this is unfeasible because of death, but at the same time achievable only through death. Since death as a total annihilation terminates entry into intimacy and continuity, for there is no personhood left to experience it, in order to have the transforming experience of continuity, one has to trick death, to undergo death without actually dying, by way of some sort of a simulacrum of death.

It can be noted here that Bataille's preoccupation with death is by far not unprecedented. There have been *memento mori* ascetic traditions in Christianity and various practices of extinguishing one's individuality in Eastern religions. For example, in Hinduism and Buddhism, one has to die completely, also meaning the death of the ego, in order to merge with Brahma or enter into Nirvana; Zen Samurais believed death to be a kind of entry into continuity comparable to Bataille's understanding. In this respect, I think it was not a coincidence that Yukio Mishima – the brilliant Japanese actor, poet, writer, practitioner of bushido and interpreter of Bataille<sup>2</sup> – committed *seppuku*.

### **Sacrifice**

For Bataille, a paradigmatic instance of the impossible possibility of tricking death and attaining the limit state of consciousness can be found in the ancient rites of sacrifice. Death can be enacted via the anguish and lure of sacrifice, where one can identify with the offered victim's actual passing into continuity without the need for spectators to die. Even if for an instant, through the experience of extreme horror, all language, thought, knowledge and lucid consciousness disappear, allowing an awakening, vertiginous glimpse into continuity. Notably,

Bataille holds that for modern persons, there is no need for old ritual sacrifices, as there are other, more tolerable alternatives where the structure of sacrifice is still at work. Below I will consider two of them in some detail. One such way of tricking death, forestating death without actually dying, for Bataille is eroticism. Through the violence of the 'little death' (the French *la petite mort*, the orgasm) of the sexual act, the two lovers undergo effusion into the state of immanence and continuity with being. Eroticism also undergoes spiritual sublimations, for example into divine love, religious ecstasy or the like. Another present-day alternative to sacrifice for Bataille is mimetic immersion in literary and visual art representations of violence and death-related horrors. Today this comes off much more effectively through film (cinematography was not as developed in Bataille's time, although Hitchcock was roughly his contemporary).

Bataille's thought has been aptly described as a sustained attempt to give an account of an experience of sacrifice, which takes different forms (French 2004, 55). Sacrifice is a kind of meta-concept bridging such areas in Bataille's writing as literature, philosophy, religion, politics, economics, etc. In this chapter, I intend to concentrate on self-transformation of personhood through the awareness of death and deal with Bataille's thinking on sacrifice from this perspective only, not going into its political, economic, social and other ramifications. To keep the discussion of sacrifice focused on the individual aspect, I will not go into the details of the communal, collective function of sacrifice, notwithstanding the fact that it is the most essential one and extensively treated by Bataille. At the same time, this individual focus is also facilitated by Bataille's own retreat from the political and public scene and immersion into his own 'inner experience' during World War II – although this seclusion was not necessarily of a quietist or conformist kind and can be interpreted as a peculiar kind of nonviolent protest against the Nazi power, as an alternative mode of resistance (see, for example, Irwin 2002, xxvii).

There is a biographical detail that also may be of interest here. Before the aforesaid dissociation in the war period, during the activity in the *Acéphale* society,<sup>3</sup> he is reported as even considering the enactment of an actual human sacrifice. Rumours go that there was even a willing victim in the group, and Bataille purportedly asked him to prepare a legal document to absolve the executioner and the group of liability (Irwin 2002, 20). Another story goes that Bataille proposed to offer himself as a sacrificial victim (see, for example, Kendall 2007, 155). Supposedly, the only obstacle in both cases was that no one agreed to assume the role of executioner. Since it was a secret society, we do not know about the seriousness of the intention. Even if it was just Bataille's whim, no more than a symbolic gesture in the spirit of this society's indirectly subversive approach

to political protest, it still is an expression of extreme radicalism characteristic of Bataille's earlier period of life, on which the influence of Surrealism was not insignificant even after Bataille's break with the movement.

I suppose that Bataille's subsequent solitary inner investigations during the World War II period mark a transition to maturity in his life and creative work. With this, he becomes less radical, also realising the impossibility and ineffectiveness of sacrificial practices in modern times and instead concentrating on transformed forms of sacrifice, including its spiritualisation or internalisation for one's own aims of self-transformation, turning the sacrificial violence unto oneself until effacement. From this perspective, literature and eroticism also come into play and "text and bedroom" (cf Goldhammer 2005, 153) accordingly become the 'sacrificial sites' that do not require actual violence. Before getting there, I will refer to two typical texts that characterise Bataille's theories regarding ancient sacrifices.<sup>4</sup> It is evident that these interpretations are far from being scientifically objective accounts. Instead, they appear rather fictional and exhibit existential connotations, thereby representing Bataille's tendency of spiritualisation of sacrifice mentioned above. The perspective from which Bataille approaches the subject betrays this tendency, as he tries to make conjectures of what happens during sacrifice in the spectators' consciousness.

In *Eroticism* Bataille describes how the sacrificial victim dies in the solemn rite and the spectators share the feeling of continuity that this death of a discontinuous being passing into continuity reveals (1986a [1957], 22). He stresses that the killing must be spectacular for this to happen, and then gives a sort of substantiation for his knowledge of what goes on in the ritual of sacrifice. This substantiation is found nowhere else than in his own personal experience: "We should incidentally be unable to imagine what goes on in the secret depths of the minds of the bystanders if we could not call on our own personal religious experiences" (op cit). Thus, Bataille seems to believe that he is able to know what happened in the minds of participants in sacrifice on the basis of a universal human experience. This is a very questionable hermeneutical assumption indeed, not only in contemporary culture, in view of the dominating principles of diversity and particularity, but already not long after Dilthey, who could have been the last hermeneutician advocating the possibility of such universal experience.

In the second fragment I would like to refer, which is from *Inner Experience*, Bataille's discourse becomes all the more personal, as if he was trying to live the part of the sacrifice. While in the previous text Bataille believed to be able to understand ancient sacrifices because of his own share in a universal religious experience, here the narrative of sacrifice is switched to the first person – 'me', and, for this reason, human sacrifice is the 'only true' sacrifice (1988 [1954], 194).

Bataille writes in this vein: in sacrifice “the victim, whom the sacrificial knife puts into death’s power, is there for me. In him, I was able to perceive myself destroyed [...], felt myself to be in solidarity with the existence which fell before me into Nothingness” (op cit). Then goes an account of tricking death:

If I myself were dead, if I myself had been destroyed, my anguish would not have gone further than the knife. I would not have been able to recognize myself open to the winds of the outside since all knowledge would be dissolved in me as soon as my heart would have ceased to beat. In order that in me this existence given to men [sic!] cease to be unprofitably closed and *communicate*, it was necessary that another die before me (Bataille 1988 [1954], 194, original emphasis).

These are already spiritualised accounts of sacrifice, i.e. referring to the consciousness of participants and its interpretation in view of one’s own experience. Bataille’s handwritten note to *Inner Experience* adds that the necessity for sacrifice should not be understood in a literal sense but as the expression of the nature of things that ancient human beings found in their rites. What matters is that which is revealing itself in anguish to the mind, not acts to be accomplished (op cit, 196). Consequently, the actual sacrificial acts become superfluous.

Moreover, notwithstanding his own theories as to what was going on in ancient sacrifices, Bataille is ready to acknowledge the hermeneutical problem of crossing the ‘great ugly ditch’ (I use Lessing’s notorious phrase here) of history that separates us from the past. He concedes that the conceptualisation of sacrifice in scholarly books engages in intellectual servitude. Historical facts are abused by being considered as appropriated and digested things, whereas the past cannot be possessed. Erring is inevitable. The same may pertain to his own theories of sacrifice. They might be only provisional, fictitious. No one knows what in fact grounded the old sacrifices and what was taking place in the minds of the participants. Thus, descriptions of sacrifice become a kind of fiction. Sacrifice, after all, turns out to be no more than poetry. No wonder that Bataille concludes another account of sacrifice – saying how a sacrificer sees himself die as being one with the sacrificial weapon – by saying that it is a comedy! (Bataille 1990 [1955], 19).

The current failure of older sacrifices calls for performance of deeper sacrifices at a different level. The earlier sacrifice as compensation for abuse or barter does not work anymore. Today, the reduction of human beings to servitude has different consequences – in the political realm, for example (Bataille 1988 [1954], 134). In a word, in this situation, when contemplation of the ancient sacrifices

has become irrelevant, they may be substituted with all kinds of subterfuges, and they should lead to a different kind of sacrifice: ultimately that of reason itself, of intelligibility, the ground itself upon which a human being stands – they must be rejected; this ‘God’ in a human being must die (op cit, 133–135). That is to say, sacrificial projections should be pushed to further levels of spiritualisation situated in a larger perspective of the sacrifice of reason itself – this strongest foothold of subjectivity that prevents transgression that Bataille is seeking. The spiritualised principle of sacrifice, still allowing one to have a glimpse into death without dying, according to Bataille, is at work in other areas, such as eroticism and literature, briefly considered below.

### **Eroticism as sacrifice**

In Bataille’s interpretation, eroticism is associated with death and therefore with sacrifice. If eroticism is so understood – as a simulacrum of death – and consciously practiced, in Bataille’s perspective, it becomes a powerful means for the self-transformation of its practitioners.

To begin with, originally, the common ground of eroticism and sacrifice is transgression. As an intentional transgression, sacrifice is a deliberate act with an aim of attaining a sudden change in the victim by putting him or her to death. Before that the victim was enclosed in its individual, discontinuous existence, while after that the victim is violently brought back into continuity with all being through death. The intentionality of this act, on Bataille’s account, is similar to that of a sexual act in ancient times as he understands it:

The lover strips the beloved of her identity no less than the blood-stained priest his human or animal victim. The woman in the hands of her assailant is despoiled of her being. With her modesty she loses the firm barrier that once separated her from others and made her impenetrable. She is brusquely laid open to the violence of the sexual urges set loose in the organs of reproduction; she is laid open to the impersonal violence that overwhelms her from without (Bataille 1986a [1957], 90).

Admittedly, such a text by Bataille is doubly transgressive today. While at the time of writing, it could be transgressive due to still widespread cultural taboos related to free talk about the subject of sex, today we cannot fail to perceive it in the light of the feminist critique of patriarchal and misogynist bias in regard to sexuality and clichés of male and female roles in it which Bataille clearly epitomises. Moreover, the text may also make the reader think of rape, although this

is a matter of interpretation. I think that rape is not what is meant here. It rather seems that in this fragment Bataille associates the violence, which the described female is subject to, with the functioning of sexual organs. This violence is perceived as external inasmuch as the organs function spasmodically, independently and outside of the control of mind and will.

The scene described seems to have nothing in common with how we today understand eroticism as something much more than physical intercourse. Eroticism associates with yearning for another, with gentle feelings, intimacy, communication, etc. It appears that in Bataille's usage, the word eroticism is a kind of umbrella term, covering a broad range of meanings – from brute sex to emotional love and even divine love, as we will see shortly.

Apart from the violent sex scene quoted above, what if even in a more civilised, contemporary understanding of lovemaking, it can still destroy the self-contained character of participators. Even taking off one's clothes, for example, can have such an effect, since nudity contrasts with self-possession and discontinuity and marks a state of communication, revealing a quest for a possible continuance of being beyond the confines of the self (Bataille 1986a [1957], 17). The sexual act itself also contributes to a kind of dissolution of person's discontinuity. As Bataille describes, in this process of dissolution, the male partner is active, while the female partner is passive, being the first who is dissolved as a separate entity, thus paving the way for the subsequent fusion of both. Dissolving the two separate beings, the sexual activity reveals their fundamental continuity, "like the waves of a stormy sea" (op cit, 17, 22). If orgasm is called 'the little death', the sexual act itself, I would say, could be called 'the little sacrifice', with the difference that in actual sacrifice the victim is divested not just of clothes but of life itself (cf op cit, 22).

Undeniably, Bataille is inexorably (hetero)sexist in this account as well. Man is the 'sacrificer' and woman the 'victim'. Despite the fact that the woman's experience of continuity is also recognised, the overall impression is that she is being used as a means for the transformation of man's consciousness. Although this may be true, I am a little bit puzzled why Bataille falls into these patriarchal clichés of the passive female and active male roles in sex in these texts, because in his literary works these roles are generally reversed: women stand out as active and dominant, while the men they are related to are often portrayed as passive and weak-willed, also sexually. To name some of Bataille's protagonists where such reversal is conspicuous: Simone vs the narrator ('I') in the *Story of the Eye* (1928), Mme Edwarda vs the narrator (Pierre Angelique) in *Madame Edwarda* (1941), Eponine vs Robert in *L'Abbe C* (1950), Lazare and Dirty vs Troppmann

in the *Blue of Noon* (1957), the mother vs her men in *My Mother* (posthumously, 1966), and Marie and the Count in *The Dead Man* (posthumously, 1967).

The above account is more about sex or physical eroticism in Bataille's classification. However, Bataille also has some subtler forms of eroticism in store. The second stage is emotional love which, as Bataille thinks, can be even more violent than the physical one, as it entails much more suffering and anguish in the situation of failure to attain permanently the desired continuity with the beloved. In effect, "love raises the feeling of one being for another to such a pitch that the threatened loss of the beloved or the loss of his love is felt no less keenly than the threat of death" (Bataille 1986a [1957], 241). Love, like death, manifests as "a swift movement of loss within us, quickly slipping into tragedy and stopping only with death" (op cit, 239). Moreover, the idea of death is linked with the urge to possess. As it sometimes happens, if the lover cannot possess the beloved, he may think of killing her rather than losing her otherwise, or else he may wish to die himself, to make a suicide (op cit, 241), or to simultaneously kill the beloved and himself after that – such stories reappear from time to time in criminal news.

Nevertheless, Bataille also admits that it is indeed possible that for a lover the truth of existence is disclosed through the beloved in the mundane emotional love. And this, as it seems, should be possible to everyone in their ordinary cohabitation. Everything depends on the perspective of how one perceives his or her partner, provided that the sacrificial element is present. This same partner who is with me in the daily life, at times may appear no longer as the one who prepared meals, washed herself, bought small articles, etc. This human being, who belongs to this world of utility, now becomes 'sacrificed' and transforms into the other in an emotionally charged erotic encounter:

She is vast, she is distant like that darkness in which she has trouble breathing, and she is so truly the vastness of the universe in her cries, her silences are so truly the emptiness of death, that I embrace her inasmuch as anguish and fever throw me into a place of death, which is the absence of bounds to the universe. But between her and me there is a kind of appeasement which, denoting rebellion and apathy at the same time, eliminates the distance that separated us from each other, and the one that separated us both from the universe (Bataille 1993 [1976], 115–116).

Here again we can note that the text is in the first person, as if Bataille described his own experience.

Thirdly, given the precarious and accidental character of reaching this state through the emotional love, humanity has from earliest times endeavoured

to reach this liberating continuity by means that are not dependent on chance – on whether one happens to meet a partner with whom to experience this or not (see Bataille 1986a [1957], 21). This is mystical experience, which Bataille believes to be stemming from the experience of religious sacrifice, with the difference that it replaces the palpable object with an imaginary object proposed by mythology and elaborated by theology (Bataille 1993 [1976], 168) – an object that is no longer subject to chance, as was the case in the emotional love (see Bataille 1986a [1957], 23). After all, God is classically understood as an eternal, immutable and absolutely necessary being. And also in this case, at least in the Christian tradition, the mystical way must pass through the horror and violence – of Jesus sacrificed on the cross. If not always stigmatically, then at least mimetically.

Finally, mention can be made in the context of eroticism's relation to death that necrophilia would be the best case in point, with the corpse being a representative sacrificial site for the erotic partner intent on passing beyond the limited pleasures of this world (episodes of necrophilia are found in Bataille's literary works, such as *The Story of the Eye* and *My Mother*, but I will not analyse them here). As Stuart Kendall (2007, 84) also notes: "Short of suicide, identification with the dead is the closest one may come to embodying the self-loss demanded by the death drive."

### **Literary sacrifice**

Another exemplary instance of contemporary workings of sacrifice for Bataille is literature, fiction, poetry. Fictional representation of death and bloody events is an effective contemporary mimetic substitute for sacrifice. The fictional nature of literature helps us bear things that would exceed our strength if they were real: "We do well to live vicariously what we don't dare to live ourselves" (Bataille 1993 [1976], 106).

For Bataille, the awareness of death cannot do without a subterfuge – a spectacle of representation. Without that, we would, like animals, remain ignorant of death. And nothing is less animal than fiction, being separated from reality, from death. Human beings do not live by bread alone but also by tragedies and comedies with which they willingly deceive themselves. While we share eating with animals, we transcend animals due to our participation in rites and performances. Or else – we can read. Literature is an extension of performances, tragic or comic (Bataille 1990 [1955], 20).

In tragedy we identify with some character who dies, believing that we die, although remaining alive. Pure and simple imagination suffices in this case, but it has the same sacrificial meaning (op cit). The accent is different in comedy,



where death momentarily appears as light and easy to us. However, this does not mean that its horror is lost; “it simply means that for an instant we have risen above it” (Bataille 1973 [1957], 68). Comedies teach us that, by fleeing wisely from the elements of death, we want to preserve life. Although the folly of laughter is superficial and burns as it comes into contact with real death, “from the symbols of the emptiness of death it draws a heightened consciousness of being” (op cit). Bataille sums up: “Our tragedies and our comedies are the continuation of ancient sacrificial rites” (op cit, 69). Through tears and laughter, anguish and its transcendence correspondingly, a state of effusion can be reached. Thus, literature is a principal heir of religions, also receiving the legacy of sacrifice, as “this longing to lose, to lose ourselves and to look death in the face, found in the ritual of sacrifice a satisfaction it still gets from the reading of novels” (Bataille 1993 [1976], 106).

Poetry, in turn, for Bataille, is sacrifice in which words are victims, inasmuch as they are used as the instruments of useful acts. Language is servile. Being only such, it can be a precondition of human existence, introducing efficacious relations between human beings and things. But we want to tear words from these links as if in a delirium, making them lead from the known to the unknown, the realm of the sacred (Bataille 1988 [1954], 135). In this way, poetry as the sacrifice of words and images causes a transition from impotent sacrifice of objects to that of the subject him- or herself (op cit, 208).

The distinctions are blurred. As indicated above, due to the hermeneutical impasse, sacrifice is poetry. And the opposite is also the case – poetry is sacrifice; and after all there is nothing in religion that cannot also be found in poetry (see Bataille 1973 [1957], 84). Yet, Bataille holds that ultimately poetry is flawed in the perspective of the broader sacrifice of reason referred to above, in which everything is victim and to which poetry is subordinated. Although this sacrifice is also imaginary, just like poetry, having no actual bloody conclusions, it differs from poetry in that it is total, that it does not withhold any pleasure still sustaining the subject in poetry (Bataille 1988 [1954], 155).

### **Sacrifice beyond representation?**

The deficiency of literature as a way of tricking death is also expressed in a sentence where Bataille acknowledges that if it is necessary that a human being reaches the extreme limit, that his or her reason gives way, that God in him/her dies, then “words, their sickest games, cannot suffice” (Bataille 1988 [1954], 135). How to interpret this sentence? Could it be that Bataille after all wants to revert from the mimetic representations of sacrifice to the contemplation of actual



**Figure 1.** Chinese torture *ling chi* ('death by a thousand cuts') performed in the cases of gravest crimes. Different body parts and limbs are slowly cut off using a set of special knives, leaving just the head intact. The victim on this picture is anonymous, but mistaken for Fou-Tchou-Li, guilty of the murder of the Mongol prince Ao-Han-Ouan and executed in 1905 (Bataille 1989 [1961], 204).

sacrifice in view of the insufficiency of fictional simulacra to erase the subject? This possibility can be entertained, for example, in view of his lifelong fascination with a series of the Chinese torture pictures (Figure 1 is one of them).

Bataille meditated on this picture for years in order to attain the extreme limit of the possible, an altered state of consciousness, and his approach is clearly modelled on the internalised accounts of sacrifice, such as those I have given above, and this is also confirmed by the following text:

Method in meditation is analogous to technique in sacrifice. The point of ecstasy is bared if inside myself I shatter individuality that confines me to myself. So too sacredness replaces a victim in the exact moment the executioner kills or destroys it. Chancing on an image of torture, I can turn away in fright. But if I look I'm *beside myself* [...]. The confining and limiting

world of my individual being opens when, horrified, I see torture. A sight of torture opens my individual being violently, lacerates it (Bataille 1986b [1961], 35, original emphasis).

Bataille acquired the Chinese torture picture in 1925 and “never stopped being obsessed by this image of pain, at once ecstatic and intolerable” (Bataille 1989 [1961], 206). Years later, in 1938, a friend initiated Bataille into the practice of yoga. Bataille recalls in his last book:

It was on this occasion that I discerned, in the violence of this image, an infinite capacity for reversal. Through this violence – of which even today I cannot imagine a more insane, more shocking form – I was so stunned that I reached the point of ecstasy [...] What I suddenly saw, and what imprisoned me in anguish – but which at the same time delivered me from it – was the identity of these perfect contraries, divine ecstasy and its opposite, extreme horror (op cit, 206–207).

It can be noted that this report bears a resemblance to a *mysterium tremendum et fascinans* experience, although inverted compared to Rudolf Otto’s (1958 [1917]) classical account, according to which the terrible mystery (*schauervolles Geheimnis*) of the wholly other in the numinous experience is terrifying (*tremendum*) and yet fascinating (*fascinans*). Bataille’s experience is inverted in the sense that for Otto the idea of the holy or the sacred (*das Heilige*) comes first, evoking the feeling of simultaneous trembling and lure, whereas for Bataille the irresistibility of horror itself evokes the element of sacredness in religions and his own quasi-religious, sacred-like experience.

In another text Bataille writes about choosing the object for meditation, preferring not God, but, humanly, the young Chinese felon shown in the photos while the executioner tortures him, sawing the knee bone at the moment. Bataille goes on:

I was connected to this unhappy being in ties of horror and friendship. But when I looked at this image to the *point of harmony*, the necessity of being only myself was cancelled. And at the same time this object I chose disintegrated into vastness and, in a storm of pain, was destroyed.

Each person is a stranger to the universe, belonging as he or she does to objects, meals, newspapers, which by circumscribing us and creating our *individuality* leave us ignorant of all else. What connects existence to *all else* is death; looking at death, you stop belonging to your room, to family and

friends – you're part of heaven's free play (Bataille 1986b [1961], 46, original emphases).

This is the loss of the subject that Bataille is ultimately looking for – the subject's self-sacrifice – and, as we can see from here, it amounts to an altered state of consciousness resulting from a sacrificial meditation on being one with the dying victim. The Chinese torture victim in these meditations can even be deemed becoming for Bataille a kind of modern-day equivalent to the suffering Jesus on the cross contemplated by Christian mystics – of course, without the soteriological role conferred on Jesus by the latter, but with some stigmatic connotations nonetheless.

The Chinese torture scene, obviously, goes far beyond poetry/fiction. Even if it is a representation by virtue of being a photograph, it is not a fictional simulation but a photo of a real event. Still, the question is, can we really reach the real (death)? In this context, Benjamin Noys (2005, 104, 122), for example, talks about the fascination with the real (death) characteristic to the 20th-century culture, to which Bataille contributed through his influence on modern art. The Chinese torture photographs show the kind of a body which modern art has been fascinated with and the void into which the transgression leads. However, as Noys (op cit, 104) aptly points out, when “we reach for transgressive death as the real, all we are left with is the spectacle of the real”. This is true of Bataille, as the way he approaches transgressive death is through the Chinese torture photographs. And this is true of the modern culture, which is a culture of images, of spectacles, of what Baudrillard called “simulation” (for him mostly on TV screens). “Today the real experience of death is often the experience of the image of death, and the search for the real becomes a search amongst images” (op cit, 122). The result of this is that death becomes banalised in spite of Bataille's opposite efforts. “Bataille is trying to restore a dignity to death through making it the most abject spectacle, whereas death in modern culture finds its true horror in its very banality” (op cit, 118). Moreover, the fascination with death-related images in today's popular culture can be interpreted as a further manifestation of the same death denial that Bataille challenged. “The saturation of cultural space with thanatological images may desensitize people and thus reduce viewer anxiety about death and dying” (Bryant & Peck 2009, 813). Hence, Bataille's efforts have had, I would say, ‘autoimmune’ effects.

### **Sacrifice to be sacrificed?**

I indicated earlier that Bataille transposes his own experiential presuppositions to the presumed experience of performers/victims of sacrifice. Seeing the Chinese torture picture, one is, of course, tempted to think that the victim sublimes his horror into ecstasy. But, is not the hermeneutic problem in effect here as well? How can one know what the victim feels? As Jean-Luc Nancy asks in “The Unsacrificeable”: “[H]ow to think so in truth, if the eye that sees – and not the one that is here looked at – does not know what it is seeing, or even if it is seeing?” (1991, 27). And, it seems that it is precisely the long tradition of the spiritualisation of sacrifice that prevents the gaze from seeing the naked truth of sacrifice. The question is, and Bataille comes to it as well, whether there can be any “supreme moment” at all beyond the manifestation of naked horror? (referred to in Nancy 1991, 30). This pertains not only to this picture but, say, also to those taken at the Nazi or Soviet concentration camps; this pertains to any actual past or present-day massacre, the latter perhaps being the only experience that today can be perceived as analogous to sacrifice (Richardson 1994, 119). There is nothing left for sacrificial appropriation, and a time may be ripe to renounce not only any real sacrifice but also its phantasms, simulacra.

Moreover, Bataille could have been pushed toward such a ‘sacrifice of sacrifice’ in a larger context of his thought of radical finitude and nihilism. Here we can also follow Nancy’s lead, with the reservation that I would not unequivocally agree that what he calls the “trans-appropriation” of sacrifice (which can be associated with the spiritualisation of sacrifice I was talking about) is applicable to Bataille in the sense that the sacrificial structure is abandoned for the finite world, but only so that “the infinite sacrificial structure of this appropriation of the Subject may emerge more clearly” (Nancy 1991, 25); or in the sense that it is “the appropriation of the Subject who penetrates negativity, that sustains itself there, that survives its own destruction, and that returns to itself as sovereign” (op cit, 35).

As I repeatedly indicated, Bataille aimed his sacrificial exercises precisely at overcoming subjectivity. Of course, there is no way for Bataille that the subject survives the destruction of death; yet, the survival of the person on this side of death, returning to his or her self-consciousness in a transformed, sovereign manner after the ‘little death’, after immersion in a tragedy, after a successful sacrificial meditation, etc., may be the case here. So, Nancy’s claim is not entirely unfounded, as the subject returns to him- or herself after its own temporary loss during the simulated death. Self-transformation through the awareness of death can become a sort of benefit for the subject. However, then the true meaning of

sacrifice according to Bataille himself, which is total expenditure and loss without any gain, would be compromised. Sacrifice would be a failure “if Bataille were to claim that it can be used for the purpose of returning lost intimacy to the possession of self-consciousness” (Gemerchak 2003, 191). Rather, while intimacy cannot be possessed, what we are left with is our condition of being doomed to relentlessly seek it, without actually finding (op cit).

To return to Nancy’s argument, it goes something like this. If existence is arranged only towards its own finitude, then thinking should take place apart from sacrifice. Finitude means that existence cannot be sacrificed because existence itself is offered to the world, offered by no one to no one. Finitude is not negativity cut out from being, while granting access to the restored integrity or sovereignty. Finitude implies that sovereignty is nothing, whereas sacrifice, in contrast, is always linked to fascination with an ecstasy turned towards the other or an absolute outside of finitude, into which the subject is diverted or spilled in order to be restored. But one cannot enter the limit ‘between’ death and continuity, the space of the play of sacrifice, on condition of finitude. Then there is no other limit than that of finitude itself, and transcendence, if there is such, should remain immanent, hollowed out from the immanence itself – to which Nancy would no doubt agree, elsewhere calling it “trans-immanence” (Nancy 1997 [1993], 55).

But then again I would say that this is Bataille’s position as well, only more ambiguous than Nancy’s due to the former’s preoccupation with transgression. Michel Foucault’s deliberation on the limit to be transgressed and the transgression also illustrates this ambiguity. Foucault admits that the limit “could not exist if it were absolutely uncrossable and, reciprocally, transgression would be pointless if it merely crossed a limit composed of illusions and shadows” (Foucault 1977 [1963], 34). At the same time, the situation is that transgression cannot but exhaust its nature in crossing the limit, as it knows no other life beyond this point in time. So, on the one hand, “this point, this curious intersection of beings that have no other life beyond this moment where they totally exchange their beings [for example in sacrifice, eroticism, etc.], is it not also everything which overflows from it on all sides?” (op cit) The “limit opens violently onto the limitless, finds itself suddenly carried away by the content it had rejected and fulfilled by this alien plenitude which invades it to the core of its being” (op cit). But then the question is “toward what is transgression unleashed in its movement of pure violence, if not that which imprisons it, toward the limit and those elements it contains?” (op cit, 34–35).

I will express Bataille’s paradox in another way: he wants to transgress the limit by various means of ‘tricking’ death, while the transcendence beyond the

limit is death itself – and complete death at that, with no beyond. Can death in this sense be considered transcendence and therefore transgression real? It depends. From the point of view of belief in ‘other life beyond this moment’, such a transgression may seem deficient. Yet, for Bataille, although death is complete, it is not just cessation, but an active principle – completion of life, its condition and dissolution – keeping the course of life in constant tension (see Richardson 1994, 37). Is it not the case that such death is still totally other? Perhaps even more other than in the event of the belief in a hereafter, because in the latter case death is no longer death, also not leaving the place for such an anguish as that of Bataille, and for the ensuing practice of philosophy as a desperate attempt to ‘trick’ death through sacrifice and its surrogates.

## References

- Ariès, P. (1974) *Western Attitudes towards Death from the Middle Ages to the Present*. Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore.
- Bataille, G. (1973 [1957]) *Literature and Evil*. Marion Boyars, London, New York.
- Bataille, G. (1986a [1957]) *Erotism: Death and Sensuality*. City Lights Books, San Francisco.
- Bataille, G. (1986b [1961]) *Guilty*. Lapis Press, Venice.
- Bataille, G. (1988 [1954]) *Inner Experience*. SUNY Press, New York.
- Bataille, G. (1989 [1961]) *The Tears of Eros*. City Lights Books, San Francisco.
- Bataille, G. (1990 [1955]) Hegel, death and sacrifice. – Stoekl, A. (ed) *On Bataille*. Yale French Studies 78, 9–28. Yale University Press, New Haven, London.
- Bataille, G. (1991 [1967]) *The Accursed Share I*. Zone Books, New York.
- Bataille, G. (1992 [1973]) *Theory of Religion*. Zone Books, New York.
- Bataille, G. (1993 [1976]) *The Accursed Share II*. Zone Books, New York.
- Bataille, G. (2003 [1966]) *My Mother, Madame Edwarda, The Dead Man*. Marion Boyars, London, New York.
- Bryant, C. D. & Peck, D. L. (eds) (2009) *Encyclopedia of Death and the Human Experience*. SAGE, Los Angeles, London, New Delhi, Singapore.
- Foucault, M. (1977 [1963]) A preface to transgression. – Bouchard, D. F. (ed) *Language, Counter-memory, Practice. Selected Essays and Interviews by Michel Foucault*, 29–52. Cornell University Press, Ithaca.
- French, P. (2004) Bataille, Georges. – Murray, C. J. (ed) *Encyclopedia of Modern French Thought*, 55–60. Fitzroy Dearborn, New York, London.
- Gemerchak, C. M. (2003) *The Sunday of the Negative: Reading Bataille Reading Hegel*. SUNY Press, Albany.
- Goldhammer, J. (2005) *The Headless Republic: Sacrificial Violence in Modern French Thought*. Cornell University Press, Ithaca, London.
- Hegarty, P. (2000) *Georges Bataille: Core Cultural Theorist*. SAGE, London.
- Irwin, A. (2002) *Saints of the Impossible: Bataille, Weil, and the Politics of the Sacred*. University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis.

- Kendall, S. (2007) *Georges Bataille*. Reaktion Books, London.
- Nancy, J.-L. (1991) The unsacrificeable. – Nouvet, C. (ed) *Literature and the Ethical Question*. Yale French Studies 79, 20–38. Yale University Press, New Haven, London.
- Nancy, J.-L. (1997 [1993]) *The Sense of the World*. University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, London.
- Noys, B. (2005) *The Culture of Death*. Bloomsbury Academic, New York.
- Otto, R. (1958 [1917]) *The Idea of the Holy*. Oxford University Press, London, New York.
- Richardson, M. (1994) *Georges Bataille*. Routledge, London, New York.

## Source of illustration

Figure 1 – Bataille 1989 [1961], 204.

## Notes

1 Perhaps it is not the best word to denote the overcoming of the boundaries of reason meant here, as it basically is pejorative and refers to transgression of moral norms, taboos, etc. Nevertheless, I use this word, since it is Bataille's favourite, and for him the transgression of instrumental reason takes place exactly by means of transgressing the moral norms, taboos, etc. Cf his 'pornographic' stories.

2 See his essay "Georges Bataille and Divinus Deus" in Bataille 2003 [1966], 11–20.

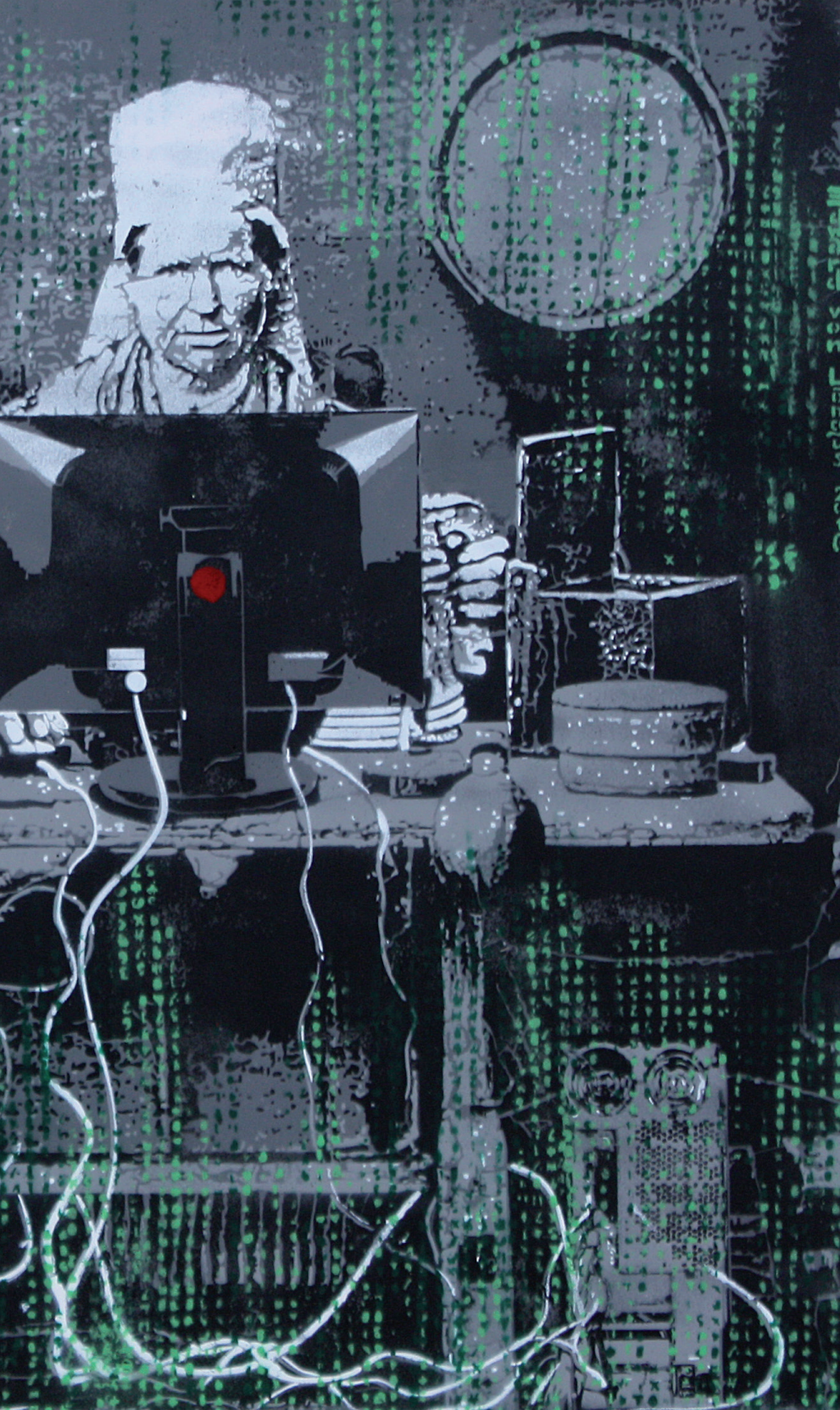
3 Founded by Bataille in 1936. *Acéphale* means 'headless', headlessness symbolising the renouncement of calculating reason, hierarchical power structures, etc.

4 For brevity's sake, I will omit Bataille's longer, more 'scholarly' investigations, such as those in Bataille 1991 [1967]) and 1992 [1973], for example. The point I want to make can also be inferred from these longer texts specifically devoted to sacrifice.





# Interviews



## **Autoethnography and applied cultural analysis**

Interview with Billy Ehn

*What was your first contact with the autoethnographic method like?*

During the years 1970–1984 I conducted several ethnological fieldwork trips using the method of participant observation: in a Swedish paper mill community, in Serbian and Slovenian emigrant places, among Yugoslavian immigrants in Sweden, in a Polish town, at a Swedish chemical factory, and at several day-care centres for children in an ethnically very heterogeneous part of Stockholm. At that time I did not think of this fieldwork as ‘autoethnographic’, but in a way they were: I used myself as both a research tool and a source of information. My own experiences became a part of the investigation as I was a part of the field. During these fieldwork sessions I learned that you as a participant observer are using yourself, your body, mind and personality, not only prescribed scientific methods, to produce knowledge.

The first time I more consciously used autoethnography was some years ago when I observed myself as a carpenter in a small DIY-project, making duckboards for the shower room at home and writing about it. The second time was when I broke a leg and went to hospital, where I waited five days for surgery, resting in my bed with the laptop on my stomach, staring at the ceiling, attentive to my own feelings and thoughts, but also listening to and observing the nurses, physicians and other male patients around me. Both these occasions of spontaneous autoethnographic ‘fieldwork’ resulted in articles in scientific journals.

*What makes autoethnography special (among other ethnographic methods)?*

In a way autoethnography is not so very special. As always in research you have to convince the reader that your text is based on good empirical material that is correctly handled theoretically and well analysed. You have to be self-critical, of course, and your language has to be clear, solid, and to the point.

In another way this is a rather odd and slightly controversial method. The researcher turns the ethnographic gaze inward on the self, while maintaining the outward, analytical gaze, looking at the larger context wherein ‘self-experiences’ occur. This means that the autoethnographer is treated as simultaneously the subject and the object of observation.

How can you defend such a choice of research method? Sometimes, depending on the scientific surroundings, you can't. Your work will sometimes be judged as subjective, unreliable and 'un-scientific'. The best you can do then is to explain very carefully what the point is using autoethnographic material, without being too defensive.

*What are the pros and cons of this method?*

One of the points of using your own experiences as starting points for ethnographic work is that it makes you reflect hard on what is actually happening in the research process. Observing and writing about myself, for example as a hospital patient or a DIYer, has inspired me to think more about the importance of the researcher's self in all ethnography and cultural analysis. It is one thing to learn how to do ethnographic research from the handbooks, and a rather different one to learn it 'in the field' by trial and error.

Participant observation and interviewing are of course not the only instances where the researcher has to think reflexively about the influence of his or her personal presence. However, they probably are the most crucial examples of subjective research. When studying social life on the whole we more or less use ourselves to portray and understand various phenomena, but often without really taking the self into fair consideration. An explicit discussion of autoethnography and self-narratives should make us more conscious of the personal aspects of research. How do our own experiences, interests and emotional lives affect the interpretations of other people and their behaviour? My experience is that autoethnography is a good way to practice the crisscrossing between feelings and reflections and make you a more sensitive fieldworker.

*What kinds of topic can, according to your experience, best be studied by using this method?*

Autoethnography has a rather broad field of application with a lot of topics to be studied, only limited by the imagination. I think it is an especially good way to explore how you can describe and interpret emotions, thoughts and sensory experiences, phenomena that are difficult to reach directly when studying other people. After that you are better prepared to observe and interview them about similar things.

Moreover, autoethnography is a good way of exercising observation and interpretation in any situation, without disturbing other people. It's also a helpful technique to learn more about the complexity of doing fieldwork. You will

get to know more about how the research material is produced in situ. Thus, autoethnography may work as a way of improving both ordinary fieldwork and writing.

In such exercises you will have the time and opportunity to experiment with different ways of looking, listening and writing. For example, what happens if I write about my actions without mentioning anything about thoughts and feelings? What if you look at the present from a historical point of view? What would a sensory ethnography look like, taking account of smell, taste and touch? These are only a few of all possible autoethnographic possibilities.

Doing good ethnography simply means using all conceivable kinds of material and analysing them, for example, from a cultural point of view. The autoethnographic version is a means for those purposes. After that, of course, you have to broaden your perspective and put your personal experiences in a larger social and cultural context.

In academic education autoethnographic exercises prove to be an effective way to teach students how to do cultural research, using their senses. When they return from their first fieldwork, for example observing social life in a department store or a railway station, or describing their own family's celebration of Christmas, they are often excited by their new ability to see or hear or smell something else than before at places and in situations they thought they were familiar with. Performing observations and writing field notes makes them more attentive to how strange ordinary everyday life may appear, depending on how you look at it. It is one thing to read about this discovery, quite another to experience it yourself.

*What are the most surprising discoveries you have made using autoethnography?*

This is a question you have not asked, but if you allow me to, I will still answer it, because I think it is essential for what we are doing as (auto)ethnographers and cultural analysts.

One of the most surprising findings in my autoethnographic studies was that I have not been conscious of being observed all the time, in spite of being this observer myself. In fact, many times I forget that I am a research object because I am immersed in my role and lived experience, for example as a carpenter or a hospital patient. It is not until (five minutes or a whole day) afterwards that I become intellectually aware of what has been going on. This means that as an autoethnographer you will often try to remember later on what you did and experienced when you were totally concentrated on a special task or event. What

did you perceive half consciously? What does the time gap do to your memorised observations?

Subjectivity should therefore not necessarily be seen as a threat to ethnographic detachment. Instead you should transform it to an analytic resource, by treating it in the same way as other people's subjective experiences. This means that the ethnographer will reflect on her or his fieldwork as a co-production with those being studied, as a special part of the on-going interaction.

Finally, still you cannot simply transfer this method into conventional research into social behaviour. Introspection or watching yourself is something other than observing other people. As an autoethnographer, studying your own experiences, you have for sure a privileged access to the thoughts and feelings of the observed person. In theory, you ought to be a good informant about yourself. Regarding other people you mostly have to imagine what they are up to.

However, my efforts to be an object of autoethnographic observation have only partly succeeded. It turned out that I have not always been a reliable witness of my own actions. A haze of unconsciousness, blurred feelings and silent knowledge has made me sometimes a secret to myself. Even now I have had to guess. When studying other people, your basic assumption should therefore be that you *never* know what they are really thinking and feeling, whatever they tell you. You can only get some biased knowledge about what they say and do by observing and listening to them carefully, always in doubt about what they mean. In this endeavour imagination and empathy are indispensable research assets.

*When conducting autoethnography, those close to you are often inevitably involved in the study through descriptions of everyday life, whether they like it or not. How have you solved ethical questions related to this? In your article "Doing-it-yourself: Autoethnography of manual work" (2011) you use your own home and your own family stories as 'material'. Was it necessary to hold back some descriptions in order not to infringe on the privacy of your family?*

To answer this question directly, I can tell you that I asked my wife and my father-in-law, who are both described as temporary participants in my DIY project on our timber house at the sea, to read my article. They had no objections to it, except a minor one from my father-in-law, who has been my master teaching me all kinds of DIY tasks, especially carpentry. When I write that he had not expected that a professor should like to work hard with his hands, he first grumbled a little, as if he did not recognise himself as having such a prejudice. But the fact is that the first time we worked together on the roof of the house he looked surprised that I worked as hard as him with hammer and nails. So I kept the

phrase in the published article – and he has not complained. But his first comment made me conscious that you can never be sure what people will react to when described in an ethnographic study.

In the other autoethnographic project at the hospital, I did not tell my three co-patients, the nurses or the physicians that I was observing and describing their behaviour as well as my own experiences. They only saw me eagerly pressing the laptop keys, not knowing that I was writing field notes. In the article they of course are anonymous, but the hospital and the ward are surely possible to identify if you want to, so there is an obvious ethical problem here. However, in this little investigation I concentrated egocentrically mainly on my own situation in a hospital bed with my plastered leg lifted. What the other actors in this scene would say about my story of these five days I will never know. I left some copies of the article with the nurses, but did not get a response. They had other patients to take care of.

Here we have yet another ethical dilemma in doing autoethnographic research, as is implicated in your question. Even if you intend to write a mainly self-narrative about your own experiences, other people are often included without their consent. They may be mentioned either as anonymous passers-by or as more active parts of the social stage. In public settings, such as a street or a railway station, this is not a big problem. But in semi-public places, like a hospital or a workplace, you have to be more careful regarding the privacy of other people.

*In the book The Secret World of Doing Nothing (2010) that you wrote with Orvar Löfgren, you reflect on 'doing nothing' (which is probably not the most trendy thing in a world inclined rather towards multitasking and efficiency). Thanks to different technological innovations, it seems that people do nothing less and less. Instead, while waiting for a bus, standing in a checkout line in supermarkets, travelling by train, etc., many people constantly use different technological devices and applications, which seems to change the nature of 'doing nothing'. In the contemporary world, what places and times could we name the oases of 'doing nothing'?*

I really like this question and especially the concept of 'oases of doing nothing'. From a radical point of view it is tempting to answer no, there are no such oases in the Western world. Whatever kind of physical passivity people seem to be busy with, they are at least doing *something*: breathing, thinking, daydreaming, hoping, feeling, and so on. If you are just sitting in a chair or resting at a couch, staring emptily into the air, you are in fact doing something with your body, and that is an activity with social and cultural connotations. You cannot sit or lie down

in a neutral way. You are always communicating norms, values, habits with your body posture that are learned through interaction with other people.

But if you are more open-minded about doing nothing, I would propose three possible fields of inactivity: sleeping in a bed, sunbathing on a beach, or being an extremely bored pupil during a dull lesson at school. Of course something is going on even in these situations, but what? How do you make an ethnography and cultural analysis of sleeping? What is going on in the minds of sunbathers and what are they communicating? Do bored pupils remember anything at all from a lesson in which they seemingly did not listen to the teacher? Here you can try to get behind the façade of nothing at all happening to discover a parallel mystical world. Try that as an adventure in exploring everyday life! And why not start with your own experience in the bed, at the beach or in the lecture room? Just by describing it you will probably discover something surprising about it.

*You have also carried out research on the advantages and difficulties of applied cultural research. How do you encourage students to take part in projects with a more practical orientation? In what fields, in addition to Academia and cultural sphere, ethnologists in Scandinavia tend to work?*

Here I have to give two separate answers to your questions, and have to restrict the answers to Umeå University; one answer is about students of cultural analysis and the other about students of ethnology.

In our four-year Cultural Analysis Program in Umeå (directed by the Ethnological division at the Department of Cultural and Media Studies) the students continuously are taking part in different practical projects at companies, agencies and public authorities. In their education they, among a lot of other things, learn how to produce equality and diversity plans, as well as how to arrange meetings and discussions about leadership, gender inequality and working group dynamics. Racism and domestic violence are other fiery subjects for practical projects. Moreover, the students are visiting schools, hospitals and other workplaces to present the usefulness of ethnographic methods and cultural analysis in order to understand what is going on there.

This combination of regular education and external projects is also a way of creating an awareness of and a demand for professional cultural analysts in the labour market, where the students later hope to get, and in several cases already have, jobs, for example as counsellors, commissioners or investigators. They may also work as project managers, personnel recruiters, producers, administrators, equality directors and diversity strategists. Even if they are not employed directly as cultural analysts they realise that they have the utility of their education almost



wherever they work. The ability to observe and analyse people's behaviour from a cultural point of view is a useful resource in a society where there is a lot of tension, conflict and misunderstanding due to ethnic, class, gender and sexual differences.

Our ordinary courses in ethnology (maximum two years) do not have the same practical orientation as the Cultural Analysis Program and do not in the same systematic way prepare the students for the labour market. There are no special jobs as 'ethnologists', except a few at museums. Moreover, only a few students get a degree in ethnology; instead they continue with other courses or programs. So it is difficult to answer your question about what kind of fields ethnology students tend to work in after the university. We only hope that they, like cultural analysis students, will have benefits from their education whatever employment they get.

*In your article (Ehn & Löfgren 2009) you have contemplated how the forms of research presentation – in the case of applied cultural research – influence investigation. But isn't this question also relevant in Academia? In your research have you done any experiments that differ from the traditional forms of representing results?*

To be honest, we have done only a few such experiments. In some cases the students have been requested to take pictures to illustrate some symbolic phenomena or ritual behaviour. They have drawn maps to show how people move around in a mall or in a square for one hour, in different periods of the day. They have tried writing in different styles, describing or talking about something using fiction or poetry. They have also written short autobiographical stories to show their own cultural backgrounds. Another exercise is role playing, demonstrating how people behave in different situations. One of my own recent experiments was in connection with a lecture about how to make the familiar strange. I simply asked the students to go home and look upon their own living place as strangers, as if they never had been there before, and to write some pages about that experience. That was a fun and rewarding experiment.

*You have claimed that in some ways the working processes in contemporary art and culture research are similar, and that in some ways they differ. Could you please elaborate a little on this issue? In which way could or should cultural research learn from contemporary artists?*

Today contemporary art is seen as an alternative form of knowledge production, one that to some extent has its own aims, rules and methods. But it is also easy

for ethnographers and cultural analysts, looking at artworks, to recognise their own ways of working. The question is where a more open exchange between artists and cultural researchers might lead. Although each unique artwork seems to have its own methodology, there are some common factors that provide an answer to that question.

One is that many artists are making use of themselves both as actors and as research objects. They are living experimentally and their actions have obvious consequences for their lives. They film themselves and deal with deeply personal questions.

Cultural researchers do not usually go as far as that – even though we do make use of ourselves to produce and analyse material, for example as autoethnographers. Accordingly, there is something for us to learn from artists' experiences in our own methodological discussions about participant observation and reflexivity. How deeply affected are we by the subjects we are researching? What kinds of trace are we leaving in their lives?

Secondly, contemporary artworks approach the issue of materiality in very tangible ways. The artists are physically active when dealing with objects of different kinds. They grub and tear, they build, destroy, sort and squeeze.

Materiality has recently become a hot topic among cultural researchers, always eager to find new analytical viewpoints. However, thinking and writing about physical things is quite different from doing something practical with them, as many artists do when utilizing their inquisitive and corporeal methods. Cultural analysis of sofas or lawn mowers is usually undertaken at a safe distance from the objects and leaves them untouched. Artists do not seem to be constrained by any such reverence. Their listing, piling and destroying things may sometimes resemble an orderly scientific method, although in fact the impression it gives is more of a parody. Perhaps even cultural researchers should dare to be more blasphemous and once in a while just see what happens.

Another relevant field of cultural analysis is emotional life. Here the artists are not satisfied simply to describe and analyse feelings; instead they want to produce actual experiences. They want to amuse, to worry or to provoke. Much of contemporary art is indeed emotional – even when it is called conceptual – when it comes to its creation, forms of presentation, and influence on the viewer. When artists systematically implement wild whims they are exploiting their spontaneity professionally. For a cultural researcher this raises questions about the significance of one's own emotions in the production of knowledge. Should they be ignored in order to give an impression of scientific objectivity or should they be used as an exploratory resource?

Finally, many artists are gifted with the ability to find and communicate surprising meanings in ordinary life – this is certainly something that many cultural researchers very much want to do. Artists accomplish this by working patiently with whatever they have to hand. They stare at it, tear at it and turn it over again and again, until finally something begins to happen. They investigate and film their ‘stuff’; they read, theorise and talk about it. During this process of metamorphosis, some things are enlarged while others are miniaturised. Still others are stylised, and in the end the objects are estranged from the familiar.

Contemporary art is a rather complex enterprise – like ethnography and cultural analysis. Practical deeds, as well as emotional and intellectual work, are crucial to the creation of the artworks. Carrying out wild ideas in public not only calls for fantasy and wilfulness, it also requires orderly methods.

This manner of working is thus not totally unfamiliar to cultural researchers. The process of producing material, analysing it, and writing a text is rather reminiscent of artists’ oscillations between systematic endeavours and capricious playfulness. Periods of *Sturm und Drang* alternate with periods of indolence. All of a sudden you may have a flash of genius and be inspired to work. But artists do seem to have a special ability to extract grains of gold from chaff. How on earth do they do this?

In these four methodological areas, I think an open exchange between artists and cultural researchers would be productive. However, living experimentally, working physically, exploiting spontaneity, and seeing things that other people simply do not see, are all experience-based skills that can’t be acquired entirely (or at all) through intellectual efforts. A great deal of practise is required to realign your habitual way of thinking.

Many culture researchers have used, with varying degrees of systematisation, artistic methods such as transformation and experimentation. Some, of course, also utilise visual means such as pictures and films, to present knowledge. Even fiction and fantasy may be important tools, as well as aimless searching (serendipity). But researchers in general tend to be more compliant than artists when it comes to scholarly requirements. However, since the purpose is to produce new knowledge and understanding, one must sometimes dare to try ways that defy prevailing norms and perhaps break some academic rules. By taking inspiration from artistic methods, it should be possible to produce more surprising cultural analysis.

Exactly how this will be achieved is, of course, difficult to predict. Carrying out artistic experiments in cultural research is quite different to utilising them as clarifying illustrations. Even though researchers from many fields are, at least in some parts of the investigative process, already working intuitively, most of

them probably do not perceive this to be an essential part of their methodology. I think it is precisely in this regard that artists, with their combination of unbridled creativity and craft skills, may provide encouragement. In any event, it will be interesting to see the results of a more open exchange between artists and cultural researchers in the future.

Questions were formulated by Pihla Maria Siim and Kirsti Jõesalu

## References

- Ehn, B. (2011) Doing-it-yourself. Autoethnography of manual work, *Ethnologia Europaea* 41 (1), 53–63.
- Ehn, B. & Löfgren, O. (2009) Ethnography in the Marketplace, *Culture Unbound. Journal of Current Cultural Research* 1, 31–49.
- Ehn, B. & Löfgren, O. (2010) *The Secret World of Doing Nothing*. University of California Press, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London.

## Bodylore and embodied knowledge

Interview with Katharine Young

*You coined the term 'bodylore' in 1989 and it has become a fruitful umbrella concept for different studies related to the body. The term seems to cover almost every aspect of a bodily being – arts, crafts, modifications of a body; body techniques in a Maussian way; cultural representations of a body in different forms, including texts, pictures and sculptures. Could you give us some background to this term and the process of its formation?*

My original training was in philosophy, specifically phenomenology, which starts from embodiment in a world that at once unfolds from around the body as its centrality and absorbs the body into its materiality so that the body becomes what Maurice Merleau-Ponty calls the 'flesh of the world'. So I came into folklore with a predilection for what is now called body theory. Both feminist theory and queer theory had already turned intellectual inquiry toward the body but folklore had no discursive space for such a tack. It had stuck with or got stuck in its traditional genres, as if it had been captivated by its own traditionality. I had myself gotten seduced by stories – a classic genre – but I was, as it were, kinaesthetically alive to the as-yet imperceptible body pressing for attention in the field. So when I was organizing the first of what would become a series of panels on the bodylore at the American Folklore Society Meetings in 1989, I suddenly saw a way to jostle the pieces of the field and get them to fall into a new pattern. The body, it turned out, was as distinctively culturally constructed as any other aspect of the cultural order. The new term was designed to announce the new orientation.

*In Bodylore (1993) you underline the fact that body is invented, not given, and is therefore more cultural than a natural object. According to you, where would our physical body, our biological reality – tissues, metabolism, natural ageing, etc. – be located? Could it be that 'body' is, nevertheless, something given, and that the 'lore' is invented over and over again?*

You see that in this question, you are trying to reconstitute the Cartesian dualism I (along with an entire post-phenomenological lineage of philosophers) have been trying to dismantle. You are trying to get me to split off the sheer materiality of the body, as if that were literal, real, and given, from mere thoughts, which

you take to be figurative, imaginary, or subjective impressions overlaid on what is really there. As I put it elsewhere, “The truth about objects is supposed to lie beyond the perceiver’s idiosyncratic grasp of them” (Young 2011, 55). The counter to this sort of presumptive objectivity has been an equally presumptive subjectivity that assumes, as I again put it in the article, that “I am stuck with my own particular subjective hold” on things because “I have access only to my own impressions” (op cit, 56). My experience of my own body discloses the impossibility of this split. Though indubitably material, my body is never fully object to me. I cannot just think things about it or believe things about it; it is my thinking enfolded, my beliefs embodied. I do not have lore separate from the body I am.

*Western medicine is based on the Cartesian dualistic view of the body. Today some scientists from different fields of research have challenged this way of approaching the human mind and body. To name a few relevant books one could mention Descartes’ Error: Emotion, Reason, and the Human Brain (1994) by neuroscientist Antonio Damasio, and the book Philosophy in the Flesh: The Embodied Mind and its Challenge to Western Thought (1999) by linguist George Lakoff and philosopher Mark Johnson. In their approach to the mind–body issue they can be regarded as followers of Maurice Merleau-Ponty’s line of thought. Do you think there is any chance that ideas of this kind could influence the body discourse of Western medicine and lead towards a more united conception of the human being in the future?*

Curiously, neither of the theorists you mention is a phenomenologist. Damasio is a reductivist who regards emotion as a chemical trace in the brain, which he calls a *somatic marker*, rather than as a modality of being toward the world. Lakoff and Johnson think of themselves as *embodied realists*, who take embodied experience to percolate up into thinking, which remains different in kind. You are quite right that both are wrestling with Cartesian dualism. But both are still thinking in terms of a correspondence between mental events and physical events rather than thinking of thinking as a kind of physical event. It’s quite difficult, I find, to think phenomenologically about the body, especially in a field like medicine, in which extraordinarily intricate and sophisticated biochemical manipulations affect the body forcefully. The catch is that none of them tells us very much about what it is like to think or to feel or to be sick, injured, dying, dreaming, dancing, falling, gesturing, or any of the other engagements our bodies have with the world.

*You started your career as a folklorist with special interest in narrative, and in your first book Taleworlds and Storyrealms: The Phenomenology of Narrative (1987)*

*you focused on oral storytelling and the framing aspects of a presented narrative. Your next book Bodylore (1993) explored the body as an invention and how it is constituted in culture and in lore generally. Presence in the Flesh: The Body in Medicine (1997) moved on even farther from the initial topics and dealt with the dehumanised body. When you look back, how do you see your journey from one topic to another?*

While I was reading philosophy at the University of California, Berkeley, I took a fancy to folklore: its quiriness, its oddity, its way of being at once preserved and overlooked, its capacity to open a tiny aperture through which to perceive culture. So even as I was laying down the foundations of my later thinking, I was finding something to think about. Philosophy turned to the social world and found there something obdurate, something resistant to theorizing, something that forced me again and again to rethink theoretical assumptions. My first turn, doing graduate work at the University of Edinburgh in Scotland, was toward art and literature. I studied aesthetics. When I came to the University of Pennsylvania to do my PhD, I took up oral instead of literary narrative and developed what would become my first book on the phenomenology of narrative, *Taleworlds and Storyrealms*. Storytelling is, of course, the embodied form of narrative, so I was still thinking about embodiment. When I started my research on the phenomenology of the body in medicine for what would become my second book *Presence in the Flesh*, I extended my field of inquiry from narrative to other discursive practices and the corporealities they brought into play. *Bodylore*, the book I edited, recentered research that had another footing in folklore around the body. My current work on co-verbal gestures attends to both talk and the body in a practice that has to do with how the body shapes talk and at the same time with how the body presses through talk into interaction. But all the work I have done in folklore has proceeded from a phenomenological grounding.

*Taleworlds and Storyrealms was based on your fieldwork in the 1970s. For Presence in the Flesh you conducted a lot of fieldwork in a hospital. Did your earlier experience of folkloristic interviews help you to lead fieldwork in the hospital? How did these fieldwork experiences differ from each other? How did the experience of doing fieldwork in hospital influence you personally?*

I should perhaps note that I never do interviewing. Interviews do not get you to the truth of things. They just get you another layer of data to be interrogated, along with observed behaviour, for what it might reveal about how members of a culture present a self under various conditions, this one being the interviewing

condition. I do something more like overhearing and looking over interactions to which I am present, which I note down and audiotape in order to puzzle over afterwards. For my current research on gestures, I now videotape interactions. So over time the analysable artifact had gotten denser but my practice of being present to cultural phenomena in the flesh has not changed. It has, however, opened to more sensory modalities. The auditory focus of the analysis of storytelling in everyday life opened into the auditory and visual focus of the study of the body in medicine, and now opens to the auditory, visual, and tactile-kinaesthetic focus of the gesture analysis. As you might guess, I have recently been thinking about olfactory and gustatory modalities. The effect of this particular history on me personally has been, I think, a pulling away from the disembodied abstractness of speculative philosophizing and a settling into a more full-fleshed form of embodied thinking, a sort of felt phenomenology, which I find much livelier.

Questions were formulated by Katrin Alekand and Merili Metsvahi

## References

- Damasio, A. (1994) *Descartes' Error: Emotion, Reason, and the Human Brain*. Putnam Publishing, New York.
- Lakoff, G. & Johnson, M. (1999) *Philosophy in the Flesh. The Embodied Mind and its Challenge to Western Thought*. Basic Books, New York.
- Young, K. G. (1989) *Taleworlds and Storyrealms. The Phenomenology of Narrative*. Martinus Nijhoff, Dordrecht.
- Young, K. (ed) (1993) *Bodylore*. The University of Tennessee Press, Knoxville.
- Young, K. G. (1997) *Presence in the Flesh. The Body in Medicine*. Harvard University Press, Cambridge.
- Young, K. (2011) Gestures, Intercorporeity, and the Fate of Phenomenology in Folklore, *Journal of American Folklore* 124 (492), 55–87.



## **Embodied seeing-with-the-world**

Interview with John Wylie

*What makes a landscape?*

The way this question is phrased is interesting to me. The implication is that a landscape is something made, a product – therefore something secondary, in a sense? I suppose that the standard answer to this question, the first definition one would offer to new students, would be that a landscape is the product of the interaction between more primary ‘natural’ and ‘cultural’ or ‘human’ forces. I don’t really believe that, though – because I don’t believe that the natural and the cultural can really be separated out in this way.

Another standard current answer would be that a landscape is never made as such, it is rather always ‘in the making’ – in other words it is never complete or finished. And this is because any landscape is in fact composed of different, never-ending ‘makings’. Different types of movement, rhythm, pulses, practices and performances; some regular and routine, some exceptional.

If I were to be more metaphysical about this, as is perhaps my wont, then I would say that for me, an essential characteristic or ingredient of landscape is distance. Some years ago, I might have said that action, involvement, engagement were what ‘made’ a landscape. But now I feel that landscape is that which is in an existential sense ‘in the distance’, or ‘the distant’. This does not mean that it is irrelevant or even distant in the geographical sense. Rather I think that a landscape is something other to us, something we are estranged from, something that is both there and not-there, something we do not (despite all attempts) ever become ‘as one’ with. This distance gives landscape its allure and its strangeness – its richness as an idea.

*What benefits – academic and political – does an approach to places, areas or trajectories as ‘landscapes’ bring?*

Two years ago I went to an EU meeting of ‘landscape experts’ in Brussels. The aim of the meeting was to lobby for funding for a landscape programme of some sort. One of the speakers, a quite senior official from the EU-COST programme from memory, stood up and asked, “what is the question to which ‘landscape’ is the answer?”

I had no ready answer – perhaps because I’ve never thought of landscape as an ‘answer’. But many in the room did; for them – academics from all over Europe – a landscape approach was one that put people, locality and community first and centre, a landscape approach was one that was opposed to capital and to state-led, top-down ideologies. In a world dominated by big business, and by remote, technocratic government, landscape was an organic and ‘bottom-up’, almost grassroots and participatory endeavour.

So – I suppose that is one answer to your question. Another would be that ‘landscape’ is not, for me, a way of thinking about something more primary – area, environment etc. Landscape is already primary, is the pre-objective as Merleau-Ponty put it. More pragmatically, I do think that, while landscape’s rich endowment of cultural associations is sometimes a hindrance, the term nonetheless is preferable to both ‘space’ and ‘place’ as a means of understanding human being-in-the-worlds.

*What do you remember as your most striking learning experience when writing your 2007 book Landscape?*

I have a relatively simple answer here – before writing the book I had only a very limited awareness of J. B. Jackson and the ‘vernacular’ way of understanding landscape he proposes.

I think I have actually learnt a lot more since writing the book, to be honest. I’ve learnt how prickly people can be when they think that their way of approaching landscape has been marginalised or overlooked! I have also learnt a lot more about how other disciplines approach landscape – in particular landscape archaeology, performance studies, architecture and ecocriticism. I’ve recently agreed to write a 2nd edition of the book, and I anticipate that it will include much more material from disciplines other than cultural geography.

*You have described landscape as “the materialities and sensibilities with which we see” (Wylie 2006, 519). How does your approach to ‘visualising’ landscape depart from the much-criticised ‘visual bias’ in landscape studies? How do other forms of embodied engagement in landscapes, including listening, touching and the performance of practical tasks, figure in your approach?*

A lot of my work from c. 2002–2006 was at its core about trying to understand vision as an embodied faculty, and thus trying to work against the longstanding association of the visual with the mind, thought etc. I wanted to explore and advocate an active, embodied seeing-with-the-world.

That said, I don't think it is really possible to disassociate landscape from a certain type of aloof vision entirely. While it is only one story about landscape, I don't think we can plausibly ignore centuries of influential art and writing that explore landscape as a certain way of seeing. I have spent the last year working with a professional artist, Dr Catrin Webster, who has been teaching me the rudiments of landscape drawing and painting.

*How do people learn landscapes? And to what extent is that different to learning about landscapes?*

When I talk to my own students about this, I speak about the many and different ways in which people 'landscape their lives'. And by this I mostly mean the practical, sometimes daily actions and rhythms we are all engaged in – for example, travelling, inhabiting and remembering. I would name these as three principal ways in which life is landscaped.

A corollary for me would be that there seems to be an association between landscape, maturity and reflection. Like the way that history and biography become more interesting the older one becomes. Like the way younger children appear to have little aesthetic interest in views.

*You describe one of your main research interests as the “intertwinings of self and landscape” (Professor John Wylie). What is the relation between the landscape a person inhabits, and her or his identity? And how does that reflect on what human geography has to say about the concept of cultural identity?*

In one way, I am quite suspicious of notions such as 'cultural identity'. My own personal ethos is quite strongly anti-nationalistic, for example. I am not a good 'joiner', not a good 'group member'. I worry too that 'cultural identity' gets taught and understood in too structured a fashion, as if there really were these implacable and fixed structures (class, gender, race) that shape us. This isn't to say that our context has no influence; that would be mad to deny! But I suppose I am more interested in agency, in subjectivity. In terms of landscape, I'll repeat from above – for me landscape is paradoxically integral to identity, precisely because it is that which we do not-belong-to.

*Previously, landscapes have been described as material substance, as a set of norms and conventions, and as practically performed relationships. What are the chances of overcoming these seemingly irrevocable differences in the study of landscape? Or would they be better kept apart?*

I think that I have mellowed a bit with age – to an extent, I have stopped trying to persuade everyone that my understanding of landscape is the only possible one. It is a multiple concept, in many ways. That said, I can't accept a simple materialist (Sauerian?) understanding of landscape – I think that is lacking, even if 'material culture' and landscape archaeology have taken it much further. As regards the other descriptions of landscape given here – I would say that, yes, norms and conventions do exist, and take form via landscape, but they only do so in practical and performative ways. A norm has little reality if it is not performed – this is my understanding of Foucault, for example.

*In what ways can geographers and artists learn from each other regarding the understanding of landscape?*

Can I say that geography is an art, and that virtually all art forms – painting, writing, sculpture, music – involve the creation of new spaces? My conception of geography is increasingly and probably idiosyncratically 'artistic', insofar as I view geography as primarily a creative activity. My talk in Tartu (November 2013) was almost entirely about the relationship between geography and art – painting specifically.

Questions were formulated by Franz Krause and Kadri Kasemets

### **Internet source**

Professor John Wylie. Head of Geography, and Professor of Cultural Geography. [http://geography.exeter.ac.uk/staff/index.php?web\\_id=John\\_Wylie&tab=research](http://geography.exeter.ac.uk/staff/index.php?web_id=John_Wylie&tab=research) [accessed 23 February, 2015].

### **References**

- Wylie, J. (2006) Depths and folds: on landscape and the gazing subject, *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 24, 519–535.
- Wylie, J. (2007) *Landscape*. Routledge, London, New York.

## Personhood in archaeology

Interview with Chris Fowler

*Personhood, defined broadly as the state of being a person, sounds like something very comprehensive, as opposed to identity, in which case we know of different social, cultural, ethnic, biological (gender- and age-specific) identities. How is personhood then different from the sum of our identities? Both are a part of what makes us a uniquely specific person, aren't they?*

This is tricky, in that the term 'personhood' can be used in several overlapping but different ways in English, as can identity. Personhood can indeed be defined as the state of being a person. There are several things that I think differentiate studies of personhood from studies of identity. Firstly, while studies of identity focus on the inter-subjective relationships between one person and another, or between individual and society, studies of personhood *also* attend to the relationship between person and world, or, if you like, persons and non-persons. Rather than studying, say, material culture as expressions of human identity, as symbols, or as tools used to construct identity, studies of personhood focus on the composition of persons out of such media and the way that persons and aspects of personhood are distributed through the material world due to the relations between or among humans and non-humans (things, substances, animals, places, supernatural entities, etc.). The point here is that studies of personhood need not consider the individual identity of a human person – indeed, studies of personhood emphasise both that the idea of the person as individual is only one way that personhood can be understood and experienced, and that it is not only human beings that can be persons and not only human bodies that comprise the media and locus of personhood. Much of the anthropology and archaeology of personhood explores persons as divisible or 'dividual' rather than 'individual', focussing on the way that persons are multiply-authored composites of relationships and aspects with identities that are not fixed throughout life but changeable. One example might be to think about the person as a composite of, say, mind, body and soul, where each of these aspects can be altered through different kinds of activities and relationships. Of course, identities are relational too. The term identity is twofold: it at once relies on identifying things that are identical in character and also on identifying the features of a thing or person that are distinctive about it. As I see it, personhood does not sum up a total identity; personhood

rather intersects with other features of identity (for humans, animals, things, etc.). It is another axis of identity along with those you mentioned (gender, ethnicity, age): an axis that concerns the emergence of a human being or another entity as a person or as important in the generation of personhood for others. Things and animals may have identities without being persons – indeed, we cannot ignore that full personhood has been denied to some human beings by others even though those denied full personhood have identities (for example slaves). A person's personhood, then, certainly stands in relation to other features of their identity – their age, their sex or gender, and so on – but is not the totality of their identity. Indeed, I find it hard to imagine how identity could ever be totalised: in any given situation certain relations are brought to the fore and others left in the background. Sometimes personhood is openly at issue, and sometimes it is not. Commonly, though, I think personhood is at issue in that, whatever the cultural context, it is open to debate, negotiation and contestation: consider the ongoing debates over where personhood starts (for instance in debates about abortion) or ends. In some cultural contexts, past and present, the issue might be who – or in our terms what – may or may not be a person or a person-like being; for instance, this seems to have been a particular issue for many indigenous communities of the Americas including, historically, the Maya.

*How did you come to the question of personhood in archaeology and what advantages does it give, in your view, when interpreting archaeological data?*

To take the second point first, I think being aware of the different ways that personhood is understood, generated and negotiated makes our accounts of the past more accurate and more open to the range of possible past ways of being in the world. At the most general level, I would argue that personhood is always relational – the question is what kinds of relations exist in any cultural context, and what kinds of persons are generated as they engage in those relations? If we did not explore diversity in personhood, diversity in ways of relating to one another, to the dead, to animals and places, to natural and supernatural phenomena, then we would be left to assume that past persons thought of one another as, treated one another as, modern, western individuals. Yet they did not live the world we live in: the technologies, things, buildings, social formations, medicines, beliefs, were all different. If we study different worlds, past worlds, we have to consider different persons. That is not to say that we share nothing of our personhood with people from the distant past, but that we need to carefully consider what is similar and what differed. Just as historians and social scientists working on present worlds explore 'technologies of the self', so archaeologists

have to bear in mind the different impact of living in communal spaces compared to individual bedrooms, say, or living in a community where the dead are buried quickly, intact, after death compared with living in one where the dead are exposed to the elements and/or the bones of one person are combined with those of others and/or retained among the settlements of the living.

I'm not sure I'll get all this quite right or in the right order, but I think I stumbled on studies of personhood towards the end of my 3-year undergraduate degree at Southampton in the mid 1990s. I was preparing for a dissertation exploring concepts of sharing and belonging in hunter-gatherer communities and the implications of these for understanding archaeological remains. The literature I was introduced to indicated that members of the human community related to animals and places in ways that stressed affinity, negotiation, shared belonging and dialogue rather than ownership. During my final year two new lecturers arrived (Julian Thomas and Yvonne Marshall) and introduced me to other anthropological texts on relatedness and personhood – I stayed for postgraduate study supervised by Thomas and Marshall, and within that I read a combination of anthropological studies of personhood and cultural theory studies on persons and identity more broadly (for example Judith Butler's work on performativity). The anthropological studies emphasised the way that each person is composed out of relations with others, and also highlighted the role of giving and receiving objects and substances in the ongoing constitution of personhood. It struck me that many archaeological texts dealt with prehistoric persons and their decisions rather mechanistically and with the implicit idea that their concerns were similar to the concerns of modern, western, individuals. But the cultural studies (and anthropology) of the modern western world I had read also illustrated that identity – and, I supposed, personhood – was relational here too despite the predominance of our idea of the person as a discrete, biological individual. During my PhD I was studying Neolithic mortuary practices and monuments on the Isle of Man, and started considering how the funerary treatment of the dead – the way that a person is deconstituted – relates to the constitution of a person in life. This was of particular interest since in the Neolithic of the British Isles some of the bodies of the dead went through various processes of fragmentation after death. Some were placed in large stone-built tombs which could be re-accessed repeatedly. Sometimes human remains were stacked together, and very occasionally (re)assembled in semblance of an intact skeleton – even though the bones originated in more than one skeleton. I sought to put such mortuary practices into the context of other uses of materials and object bodies at the time, such as the composite construction of the tombs, or of ceramic vessels that were broken and left at the tombs alongside the human remains. Through some post-doctoral

research I undertook at Manchester University in the early 2000s, I increasingly explored connections between the composition of persons in life and their decomposition in death, and different relationships between the treatment of humans and animal bodies, things and places, by reading widely in anthropology and emerging studies of personhood in archaeology (I was certainly not the only person working on this!). This culminated in a book *The Archaeology of Personhood: An Anthropological Approach*, published in 2004.

*Death is considered to be the most dramatic change of personhood. As funeral rituals are performed by others, what is the role of the deceased in affecting his or her own personhood after death? Could you give us one interesting example from the past of a person controlling the change in his or her personhood caused by death?*

Since personhood is distributed through the material world, rather than locked in the body, there are many ways that people extend aspects of their person beyond death: some of these are quotidian, some special projects. For starters we could think of diaries, personal portraits (extending an image of the person after death), or intimate objects that become heirlooms. As to an example of person affecting the transformation of their own personhood after death, it is rather difficult to present you with a prehistoric example as so little is known of the intentions of any single person. This is not a problem for prehistorians in studying the transformation of personhood during and following death since we can focus on how the material world, including the remains of the dead person, are transformed within an inter-subjective field: that is to say, we can attend to the relational effects of the funeral on a location, on the body and associated objects, and draw inferences about the effects on a community of mourners. But if you would like an example of how a specific person was transformed through death, in part by their own agency and in part through the interactions with and of others, then one good example would be Emma-Jane Graham's (2009) study of Roman senator Marcus Nonius Balbus. When he was alive Balbus played an important role in civic life in Herculaneum and funded the construction of some important public buildings. After Balbus died, the personal investment he had made in the town was acknowledged – statues of Balbus were erected, there was an annual festival in his honour, and an empty seat was reserved for him at the theatre. Balbus was given a special funeral rite in which his body was made partible: a finger was removed, and buried at an altar, while the rest of his body was cremated. I don't know how much of this Balbus himself intended, but we could say that the gift that Balbus had made to the community in life was paid back after death, and that he was elevated to a new status in part because of his



actions in life. I think the connection between Balbus' distribution of his efforts in life and the reciprocal action of the town after his death is pertinent to your question. It also reminds me of an ethnographic study of funerals among a Melanesian community where elements of the person that are distributed among relatives and other contacts in life – in the form of pigs, crops and also prestigious, durable items that will convey that person's image well after their death – are brought to form a 'corpus' at a funeral, and afterwards redistributed among the mourners. In each case, though in different ways and through different media, aspects of the person endure well after their death. I think that those of us who study personhood and death have to attend to the way personhood is renegotiated dialogically between the person dying and other members of the community, and to the range of media that become invested with memories of the dead, keeping different aspects of their identity and personhood present after they have died. Some of these practices are funerary rituals, but some also continue in acts of mourning both unusual and quotidian.

Questions were formulated by Kristiina Johanson and Pikne Kama

## References

- Fowler, C. (2004) *The Archaeology of Personhood: An Anthropological Approach*. Routledge, London.
- Graham, E.-J. (2009) Becoming persons, becoming ancestors. Personhood, memory and the corpse in Roman rituals of social remembrance, *Archaeological Dialogues* 16 (1), 51–74.

## Index of names

Page numbers featuring photographs are given in *italics*

- Aarelaid-Tart, A. 15  
Abdukarimov, S. S. 207  
Agamben, G. 101–104, 115  
Aitken, S. 264  
Albæk, E. 134, 142  
Aldridge, M. 136, 141  
Alekan, K. 10, 15, 23, 27, 74, 327  
Alho, I. 177  
Allenova, O. 110, 112  
Allworth, E. 209  
Altman, I. 124, 141  
Alvargonzález, D. 19, 28  
Aminov, K. 187, 205  
Anderson, B. 146, 158, 160  
Andrews, M. 177  
Ang, S. C. 97  
Annist, A. 10, 32  
Ao-Han-Ouan 305  
Ariès, P. 294, 310  
Arkipova, A. 100, 112  
Aru, K. 150, 160  
Arukask, M. 15  
Aslos, G. A. 241  
Astakhov, P. 110, 113  
Aulino, F. 87, 96  
Au, S. 82–83, 96  
Ausma, M. 225–226, 227, 239  
Babkin, N. 106–107, 112  
Baggini, J. 222, 241  
Bakhtin, M. M. 39, 49  
Baklanov, A. 110, 112  
Balbus, M. N. 335–336  
Balzer, M. M. 44, 49  
Bamberg, M. 163, 165–167, 176  
Bardone (= Vösu), E. 10, 15, 26, 214–215, 217, 230, 234, 238, 241–243  
Barnhurst, K. G. 128, 141  
Barthes, R. 294  
Bataille, G. 26, 293–311  
Bate, D. 232, 241  
Bateson, G. 250, 254, 256, 264  
Baudrillard, J. 294, 307  
Baumann, S. 220, 241  
Bauman, R. 39, 49  
Bechmann, A. 125, 141  
Bell, D. 241  
Berg, E. 180, 205  
Bhabha, H. 146, 160  
Bingham, A. 128, 134, 141  
Bishop, P. 218, 241  
Blackman, L. 23, 28  
Black, S. 277, 291  
Blanes, R. L. 55, 65, 69  
Blazer, S. M. 132, 141  
Blencowe, C. 241  
Bliujienė, A. 284, 289  
Bohr, A. 209  
Bonfante, L. 291  
Bornhöhe, E. 150, 160  
Bouchard, D. F. 310  
Bourdieu, P. 264–265  
Bowman, M. 50  
Brady, H. E. 204  
Braithwaite, D. O. 142  
Brandeis, L. 123, 143  
Branting, H. 126  
Brickley, M. 272, 289  
Briggs, C. 39, 49  
Brigstocke, J. 241  
Brown, L. 134, 141  
Brubaker, R. 180, 205  
Bryant, C. D. 294, 307, 310  
Brzozowska, D. 28  
Butler, J. 334  
Cagnoli, S. 70  
Calarco, M. 115  
Cannell, F. 57, 69  
Cardoso, H. F. V. 277, 290  
Carter, S. 241  
Castells, M. 185–186, 205  
Cavoukian, A. 122, 140  
Chamberline, B. F. 123, 129, 142  
Chandler, D. 84, 88–90, 96  
Chandra, K. 181, 205  
Chann, S. 77, 88, 95  
Chatman, S. 150, 161  
Chebotarev, A. 187, 207  
Chhim, S. 84, 96  
Chlopicky, W. 28  
Choi, B. C. K. 19, 28  
Choung, S. 97  
Chua, L. 98  
Clough, P. 62, 70  
Cocks, H. G. 131, 141  
Cocq, C. 38–39, 49  
Cohen, J. E. 122, 141  
Coleman, S. 48–49, 58, 70  
Colm, S. 84, 96  
Commercio, M. E. 190, 205  
Cook, J. 98  
Cooley, T. 123  
Coward, R. 135–136, 141  
Crane, H. K. 58, 70  
Crang, M. 264  
Crawford, C. S. 94, 96  
Csordas, T. 87, 96–97

## Index of names

- Cupach, W. R. 142  
 Damasio, A. 325, 327  
 Danesi, M. 249, 265  
 Darnton, R. 168, 176  
 Dave, B. 183, 186, 205  
 Dawes, S. 125, 141  
 DeAngelo, D. 10, 24, 77  
 DeCaroli, S. 115  
 Deely, J. 249, 264  
 DeLyser, D. 264  
 Derrida, J. 294  
 Descartes, R. 324–325, 327  
 de Solier, I. 220, 242  
 Després, C. 18, 20, 28  
 de Vreese, C. H. 134, 142  
 Dilthey, W. 298  
 Dittmer, J. 246, 264  
 Djackova, S. 209  
 Dolby, S. K. 165, 176  
 Douglas, M. 24, 28  
 Driessens, O. 134, 141  
 Driscoll, M. 178  
 Drobizheva, L. M. 182–183,  
 185, 189, 205  
 DuBois, T. A. 37, 49  
 Duncan, J. 246, 249, 264  
 Duncan, N. 246, 249, 264  
 Ebihara, M. 84, 96  
 Edwards, L. 139, 141  
 Ehn, B. 10, 15, 23, 314, 320,  
 323  
 Ekecrantz, J. 127, 141  
 Ekengren, F. 275, 290  
 Ekström, M. 126–127, 141  
 Enges, P. 37, 39, 49  
 Eng, J. van der 265  
 Eng, K. T. 97  
 Engler, S. 54, 70  
 Engström, M. 100, 113  
 Eriksson, G. 135, 141  
 Erpay, I. 188, 206  
 Evstifeev, D. 110, 113  
 Fabre, D. 164, 177  
 Fadeieva, I. 50  
 Farquhar, J. 94, 97  
 Fenwick, H. 131, 141  
 Fernandes, K. 218, 241  
 Fierman, W. 181–182,  
 186–187, 206  
 Fingerroos, O. 177  
 Fish, S. E. 146, 160  
 Forest, A. 85, 88, 96  
 Fosse, E. 97  
 Fotheringham, A. C. 32–33  
 Foucault, M. 91, 97, 101–  
 103, 108, 111, 115, 294,  
 309–310, 331  
 Fou-Tchou-Li 305  
 Fowler, C. 10, 15, 23, 268–  
 269, 271, 274–275, 284,  
 287, 290, 332, 336  
 Fraser, M. 23, 28  
 French, L. 84, 86, 97  
 French, P. 297, 310  
 Frodeman, R. 28  
 Frost, C. 133, 141  
 Funk, D. A. 51  
 Gabdrakhmanova, G. F.  
 182, 206  
 Gadamer, H.-G. 38, 49  
 Galbreath, D. 190, 206  
 Gannushkina, S. 107  
 Gardiner, M. Q. 54, 70  
 Gavison, R. 123–124, 141  
 Geertz, C. 175, 177  
 Gemerchak, C. M.  
 309–310  
 Georgakopoulou, A. 163,  
 165–167, 176–177  
 George, D. F. 146, 160  
 Gibson, J. J. 245, 248–249,  
 251, 253–254, 258–264  
 Giddens, A. 24, 28, 189,  
 206  
 Gilbert, M. 97  
 Gill, P. 142  
 Gilmore, J. H. 218, 242  
 Gjertsen, M. 79, 82, 95  
 Goffman, E. 163, 167, 171,  
 173–174, 177  
 Golder, B. 108, 115  
 Goldhammer, J. 298, 310  
 Goodman, D. 241  
 Goodman, M. K. 218, 241  
 Gowland, R. 291  
 Graham, E.-J. 335–336  
 Greco, M. 23, 28  
 Grigorian, A. 100, 113  
 Grygar, M. 265  
 Gubrium, J. F. 151, 160  
 Guest, G. S. 206, 210  
 Guillou, A. Y. 83, 97  
 Haanpää, R. 177  
 Habermas, J. 124–125, 142  
 Hagendoorn, L. 190, 208  
 Hakulinen, A. 172, 177  
 Hancock, P. 23, 28  
 Hanks, W. F. 264–265  
 Hansen, A. R. 81, 96–97  
 Haraway, D. J. 86–87, 97  
 Harbinja, E. 139, 141  
 Harding, S. 57–58, 70  
 Harris, E. 219, 239  
 Harro-Loit (= Harro), H.  
 11, 15, 25, 118, 121, 126,  
 142  
 Harvey, D. 146, 153, 156,  
 158–160  
 Hassam, A. 164, 169–170,  
 176–177  
 Hegarty, P. 294, 310  
 Heimo, A. 177  
 Heinonen, T. R. 177  
 Heng, R. 81, 97  
 Heng, Y. V. 79, 95, 98  
 Heraclitus 215  
 Herbert, S. 264  
 Hermann, K. A. 162  
 Herzfeld, M. 87, 97  
 Heyman, R. 125, 142  
 Hicks, D. 50  
 Hiimeaa, K. 147, 160

- Hinerman, S. 137, 142  
 Hinton, A. L. 84, 86, 97  
 Hinton, D. E. 84, 86, 97  
 Hirdman, A. 127–128, 142  
 Hirvi, L. 70  
 Hoekstra, D. 241–242  
 Hoffmann, M. H. G. 18, 28  
 Hofstede, G. 153, 160  
 Hogan-Brun, G. 182, 186,  
     206, 210  
 Hogg, M. A. 190, 206  
 Holck, P. 272, 274, 290  
 Holstein, J. A. 151, 160  
 Hoppal, M. 50  
 Høyer, S. 141, 143  
 Huberman, M. A. 190, 208  
 Hufford, D. J. 53–54, 68, 70  
 Hughes, B. 28  
 Hughes, C. 92, 97  
 Hughes, J. 291  
 Humphreys, L. 125, 142  
 Husum, H. 93, 95, 97  
 Il'ina, I. V. 36, 50  
 Ingold, T. 249, 264  
 Irwin, A. 297, 310  
 Iskhakova, Z. A. 188, 206  
 Iskhakov, D. M. 208  
 Iugai, L. 112  
 Ivanov, V. V. 265  
 Jaanits, L. 290  
 Jackson, J. B. 329  
 Jagger, E. 28  
 Jandarbek, Z. 206  
 Janssen, J. V. 157, 162  
 Jantsch, E. 18  
 Jebril, N. 134, 142  
 Jenkins, R. 274, 284, 290  
 Jensen, J. S. 54, 70  
 Jensen, V. 205  
 Jõesalu, K. 15, 23, 28, 323  
 Johanson, K. 11, 15, 23, 28,  
     268, 336  
 Johansson, H. 238, 241  
 Johnson, M. 325, 327  
 Johnston, J. 220, 241  
 Jönsson, H. 218, 232–233,  
     238, 241  
 Jonuks, T. 272–274, 285,  
     287–288, 290  
 Juraev, S. 205  
 Jürison, J. 147, 149–152,  
     154–157, 159  
 Kaal, E. 204  
 Kaaristo, M. 15  
 Kaavere, V. 160  
 Kadyrov, R. 109–110, 113  
 Kalling, K. 273, 276, 278,  
     283, 290  
 Kalyan, H. 96  
 Kama, P. 11, 15, 23, 28, 268,  
     336  
 Kannike, A. 11, 18, 22, 26,  
     28, 179, 208, 214–215,  
     217, 230, 238, 242–243  
 Kann, V. 147, 160  
 Kaplan, C. S. 11, 25, 179,  
     188, 204, 206  
 Karin, E. 187, 207  
 Karo, R. 15  
 Karpio, V. 168, 177  
 Kasemets (= Semm), K.  
     15, 23, 28, 331  
 Katainen, E. 177  
 Kauranen, K. 164, 177  
 Kazakevičius, V. 289, 291  
 Kemppainen, I. 178  
 Kendall, S. 297, 303, 311  
 Kennedy, E. 237, 239  
 Kennedy, M. D. 180, 207  
 Khazanov, A. M. 206, 211  
 Kinnunen, T. 177  
 Kirss, L. 204  
 Kirziuk, A. 112  
 Kisselburgh, L. 123–124,  
     140  
 Kitchin, R. 121–122, 142  
 Kivirüüt, A. 11, 26, 271,  
     278, 290, 292  
 Klaassen, O.-M. 148, 160,  
     162  
 Kleberg, M. 142  
 Klein, J. T. 19–20, 28  
 Klinge, M. 168, 177  
 Knüsel, C. 291  
 Kohn, E. 86, 97  
 Koidula, L. 162  
 Koivisto, V. 177  
 Kokovkin, T. 222, 240  
 Kølsto, P. 179, 185, 207  
 Konakov, N. D. 35–36,  
     43, 50  
 Kongo, L. 160  
 Koosa, P. 11, 24, 49–50, 53,  
     55, 70–71  
 Korhonen, R. 177  
 Korzybski, A. 254  
 Kosmarskaia, N. 185, 207  
 Kozyrev, T. A. 209  
 Krause, F. 12, 15, 23, 28,  
     214, 331  
 Kreutzwald, Fr. R. 146  
 Kriger, T. 204  
 Krishnamurthy, B. 142  
 Kristeva, J. 294  
 Krivko, N. I. 183, 207  
 Kroon, A. 141  
 Kruis, J. 12, 26, 214–215,  
     245  
 Kubakova, R. Ie. 207  
 Kuismin, A. 178  
 Kulemzin, V. M. 36, 50  
 Kull, A. 15  
 Kull, K. 264–265  
 Kulzhanova, A. 187, 207  
 Kurik, K.-L. 220, 241  
 Kuznetsova, A. 99  
 Kwon, H. 85–86, 97  
 Laan, L. 242  
 Labov, W. 165, 177  
 Laine, L. 173, 177  
 Laineste, L. 28

## Index of names

- Laitin, D. D. 179–180, 185, 207  
 Laitinen, L. 178  
 Laitinen, M. 169, 177  
 Lakoff, G. 325, 327  
 Lambek, M. 54, 68–70  
 Landres, J. S. 49  
 Laneman, M. 288, 290  
 Lang, V. 272–274, 276–277, 279, 282–283, 285–292  
 Lauristin, M. 204  
 Lave, J. 264–265  
 Laviolette, P. 22, 28  
 Lawrence, R. J. 18, 20, 28  
 Law, V. 205, 209  
 Le Bel, P.-M. 146, 161  
 Lebesco, K. 233, 241  
 Ledgerwood, J. 96  
 Leete, A. 12, 24, 35–36, 42, 49–52, 55, 64, 70  
 Lehmann, J.-P. 146–147, 158, 160  
 Lessing, G. 299  
 Levchenko, J. 247, 264  
 Ligi, P. 273, 275, 288, 290  
 Limerov, P. F. 36, 50  
 Lindemann, K. 182, 185, 207  
 Lindström, K. 264  
 Linz, J. J. 185, 207  
 Lipin, V. 36, 42, 50, 52  
 Littlewood, I. 147, 158, 160  
 Ljunggren, E. 241  
 Lock, M. 94, 97  
 Löfgren, O. 218, 241, 318, 320, 323  
 Long, N. 98  
 Lōngus, E. von 8, 27  
 Lotman, Y. M. (= J. M.) 245–252, 254–256, 258–265  
 Love, H. 168, 177  
 Lovejoy, C. O. 277, 291  
 Lugosi, K. 241  
 Lugosi, P. 219, 241  
 Luhats, L. 8, 15, 27  
 Lukas, K. 233–234, 239  
 Lukina, N. V. 36, 50  
 Lull, J. 137, 142  
 Lupp, K. 229–232, 239  
 L'vov, Iu. 100, 113  
 Lyons, M. 164, 169, 176–177  
 Lyotard, J.-F. 294  
 Maaring, K. 147–148, 160, 162  
 Macdonald, M. 135, 142  
 MacDougall, D. 87, 97  
 MacQueen, K. M. 206  
 Madanipour, A. 237, 241  
 Maetnaia, E. 110, 113  
 Magnus, R. 15, 264  
 Makarova, G. I. 182–183, 188–189, 207–208  
 Makarychev, A. 12, 25, 99  
 Malai, E. 99, 114  
 Malinowski, B. 48, 50  
 Malkov, E. 147, 149, 160, 162  
 Mallene, E. 147, 161–162  
 Mamedova, L. 106, 113  
 Maran, T. 260, 264  
 Markowska, M. 233, 241, 243  
 Marona, S. 96  
 Marschke, M. 84, 97  
 Marshall, Y. 334  
 Masanov, N. 207  
 Mascia-Lees, F. E. 23, 28  
 Masso, A. 12, 25, 145, 156, 158, 161, 186, 204, 210  
 Mauss, M. 74–75  
 Mausson, M. 324  
 Mayakovski, V. 194  
 McCutcheon, R. T. 53, 70  
 McDowell, L. 264  
 McGuire, M. B. 49  
 McKinley, J. I. 272, 274, 289, 291  
 Medvedev, S. 100, 110, 113, 114  
 Meintel, D. 58, 70  
 Melvin, N. 185, 208  
 Merleau-Ponty, M. 324–325, 329  
 Meshimbaeva, A. 182–183, 208  
 Metsvahi, M. 15, 23, 27, 327  
 Michelson, M. 147, 149–157, 160  
 Middleton, K. R. 123, 129, 142  
 Miettinen, K. 225–228, 227, 239  
 Mikkola, K. 178  
 Miles, M. B. 190, 208  
 Miller, D. 238, 241  
 Miller, K. W. P. 291  
 Mina Ja Lydia 8, 27  
 Minca, C. 103, 115  
 Miner, H. M. 32–33  
 Minnullin, K. M. 206  
 Mishima, Y. 296  
 Mizulina, E. 111–112  
 Moldanova, T. A. 36, 43, 50–51  
 Moldanov, T. A. 36, 43, 50, 51  
 Morozov, A. A. 209  
 Morris, C. W. 251, 260, 263–264  
 Mossière, G. 58, 70  
 Murray, C. J. 310  
 Musina, R. 185, 189, 208  
 Naat, E. 221  
 Naccarato, P. 233, 241  
 Naimushina, S. Z. 207  
 Namey, E. E. 206  
 Nancy, J.-L. 293, 295, 308–309, 311  
 Napolskikh, V. 50

- Nazarbayev, N. 187  
 Nersessian, N. J. 28  
 Niglas, L. 36, 51  
 Nilsson Stutz, L. 275, 290–291  
 Noorani, T. 219, 241  
 Norrman, M. 240, 243  
 Nouvet, C. 311  
 Novikova, V. 99, 114  
 Novikova, N. I. 46, 51  
 Noys, B. 295, 307, 311  
 Nugin, R. 208  
 Numminen, J. 168, 177  
 Nurmela, K. 204  
 Nylund, M. 141  
 O'Dell, T. 241  
 Oestigaard, T. 274, 291  
 Öjendal, J. 92, 97  
 Oka, N. 207  
 Olli, M. 12, 26, 271, 292  
 Olwig, K. R. 250, 264  
 Ong, A. 83, 97  
 Onishchenko, G. 100, 112, 114  
 Orban, V. 112  
 Otto, R. 306, 311  
 Overing, J. 218, 242  
 Overland, I. 205  
 Ovesen, J. 83, 98  
 Ozolins, U. 206  
 Paatsi, V. 148, 161  
 Packalén, E. 177  
 Paenurm, I. 230  
 Paert, I. 184, 201, 208  
 Pak, A. W. P. 19, 28  
 Parker Pearson, M. 274, 287, 291  
 Pärn, K. 15  
 Paterson, K. 28  
 Patterson, W. 165, 177  
 Patton, P. 101, 115  
 Peck, D. L. 294, 307, 310  
 Peegel, J. 148–149, 161  
 Peets, J. 282, 291  
 Peil, T. 22, 28  
 Pekar, T. 147, 158, 161  
 Peltonen, U.-M. 177  
 Pertsev, A. 100, 114  
 Petronio, S. 125, 142–143  
 Pettersson, L. 240, 243  
 Peyrouse, S. 181, 190, 200, 208  
 Phillipson, G. 131, 141  
 Piatigorsky (= Pjatigorskij), A. M. 251, 264–265  
 Pierson, J. 125, 142  
 Pikner, T. 15  
 Pilkington, H. 185, 208  
 Pilv, A. 26, 28  
 Pina-Cabral, J. de 70  
 Pine, F. 70  
 Pine, J. 218, 242  
 Pjatigorskij, A. M. *see* Piatigorsky, A. M.  
 Pletneva, L. M. 50  
 Pohla, T. 147–148, 161–162  
 Poleshchuk, V. 181, 208  
 Pöllo, H. 222, 240  
 Polonskii, I. 107, 114  
 Popad'eva, T. 99, 114  
 Poppe, E. 190, 208  
 Post, R. C. 124, 143  
 Pöttker, H. 126, 141, 143  
 Printsman, A. 15  
 Pulk, K. 221, 240  
 Putin, V. 99–100, 104–105, 107, 109–111, 113–114, 181, 185, 188, 199  
 Puumala, E. 102, 115  
 Raeymaeckers, K. 141  
 Rahumaru, R. 8, 15, 27  
 Rambam, S. 122, 143  
 Ramoniené, M. 206, 209  
 Rand, J. 233, 242  
 Rannut, M. 206  
 Rapport, N. 218, 242  
 Raudsepp, M. 15, 208  
 Rebay-Salisbury, K. 274–275, 291  
 Redcliff, M. 241  
 Reid, S. A. 190, 206  
 Remm, T. 15  
 Richards, G. 238, 242  
 Richardson, M. 308, 310–311  
 Richman, R. 291  
 Ricoeur, P. 38, 51  
 Ridderheim, K. 232, 240  
 Rimmon-Kenan, S. 174, 177  
 Ringvee, R. 184, 186, 209  
 Rochev, Iu. G. 36, 51  
 Rodgers, K. 219, 242  
 Rogozin, D. 106  
 Rohtla, M.-L. 274, 280, 285, 291  
 Romadanovski, K. 106  
 Rosen, B. 234, 240  
 Rosenow, D. 103, 115  
 Rubenking, N. J. 122, 140  
 Rudi, H. 221, 240  
 Rumm, K. 8, 15  
 Runkevich, D. 99, 114  
 Russell, R. 28  
 Russo, M. T. 220, 242  
 Rybakovskii, L. L. 181, 209  
 Saal, A. 150, 161  
 Saar, E. 207  
 Saarikangas, K. 238, 241  
 Saemundsson, R. J. 241  
 Safronova, M. 210  
 Salmi-Niklander, K. 12, 25, 163–164, 166–169, 172–175, 177–178  
 Salter, M. 103, 115  
 Salupere, S. 247, 264  
 Sarsembayev, A. 182, 209  
 Saussure, F. de 246, 252–253, 265  
 Sawyer, W. 127  
 Scheuer, L. 277, 291

## Index of names

- Schmidt, C. W. 291  
 Schmidt, J. C. 28  
 Schmitt, C. 102, 115  
 Schoeman, F. 141  
 Schudson, M. 126–127, 143  
 Scott, J. C. 85, 92, 98  
 Sebeok, T. A. 249, 265  
 Sebesta, J. L. 291  
 Sedara, K. 92, 97  
 Selart, E. 13, 25, 145  
 Selby, J. 101, 115  
 Seleznev, V. 110, 112  
 Selvadurai, N. 124, 143  
 Semm, K. *see* Kasemets, K.  
 Seppel, K. 204  
 Severino, R. S. S. 277, 290  
 Sevignani, S. 124, 143  
 Sharapova, O. S. 207  
 Sharifullina, L. G. 206  
 Sharma, S. 218, 241  
 Shaukenova, Z. K. 209  
 Shennan, S. 291–292  
 Sidrys, R. 291  
 Siikala, A.-L. 36, 48, 50–51  
 Siim, P. M. 15, 23, 28, 323  
 Siiner, M. 197, 209  
 Singh, S. 84–86, 98  
 Skokbaeva, M. A. 207  
 Smagulova, Zh. S. 187, 209  
 Smailova, A. A. 182–184, 205  
 Smith, G. 185, 209  
 Smith, J. 127, 143  
 Snellman, H. 70  
 Soekov, M. 8  
 Sokolova, Z. P. 51  
 Sørensen, M. L. S. 291  
 Spang, R. L. 217, 242  
 Sparks, C. 128, 134, 142–143  
 Spickard, J. V. 49  
 Spirn, A. W. 253, 265  
 Spitzberg, B. H. 142  
 Squire, C. 177  
 Stepan, A. 185, 207  
 Stoekl, A. 310  
 Stoller, P. 87, 98  
 Stout, A. M. 284, 291  
 Strathern, M. 80, 98  
 Suleimenova, Ie. D. 182, 187, 209  
 Sulkunen, I. 168, 178  
 Sultanov, B. K. 184, 209  
 Swift, E. 284, 291  
 Symes, S. A. 291  
 Taddicken, M. 125, 143  
 Tamboukou, M. 177  
 Tammaru, T. 204  
 Tammiksaar, E. 160  
 Tarlow, S. 290  
 Tart, I. 15  
 Tasa, M. 13, 22, 28  
 Taussig, M. 38, 42, 45–48, 51  
 Tavares, D. 146, 161  
 Telebaev, G. T. 183–184, 209  
 Tender, T. 156, 158, 161  
 Terekhova, N. 107, 114  
 Thomas, J. 334  
 Thompson, J. B. 137, 143  
 Titans, N. 13, 26, 293  
 Toennesen, M. 264  
 Tönurist, A. 183, 209  
 Toomet, O. 185, 209  
 Toporov, V. N. 265  
 Touch, V. 79–80, 95  
 Toulouze, E. 35–37, 48, 51–52, 70  
 Trankell, I.-B. 83, 98  
 Tulle-Winton, E. 28  
 Tulloch, J. 142–143  
 Tuomaala, S. 177, 178  
 Turner, B. 24, 28  
 Tursyn, H. 206  
 Tüür, K. 22, 27  
 Tuvikene, Ü. 156, 161  
 Tyan, D. 205  
 Tyler, A. 220, 240  
 Tyler, M. 28  
 Ubelaker, D. H. 277, 291  
 Uexküll, J. von 260, 265  
 Uexküll, T. von 260, 265  
 Ugur, K. 15  
 Uk, K. 84–86, 96, 98  
 Uliashov (= Ulyashov), O. I. 36, 48, 50–51  
 Ummelas, M. 147, 161–162  
 Uslu, M. E. 265  
 Uspenskij, B. A. 246, 265  
 Uulu, Y. 205  
 Uus, M. 204  
 Uustalu, A. 233–236, 235, 239, 243  
 Vaitkunskienė, L. 284, 291  
 Valk, E. 239  
 Valk, Ü. 50–51  
 Vallikivi, L. 61, 71  
 Vandenbussche, S. 141  
 van Meurs, W. 180, 205  
 van Peer, W. 150, 161  
 Vassar, A. 287, 291  
 Västriik, E.-H. 13, 18  
 Vaughan-Williams, N. 103, 105, 115  
 Vella, Y. (= Iu.) 35, 46–47, 51–52  
 Verstraeten, H. 141  
 Vihalemm, P. 204  
 Vihalemm, T. 13, 25, 179, 186, 197, 204, 209–210  
 Vihola, T. 177  
 Vilkuna, M. 177  
 Volkova, M. 112  
 Volkova, O. 108, 115  
 Von Bomb 27  
 Voolaid, P. 27–28  
 Vösu, E. *see* Bardone, E.  
 Walker, P. L. 274, 291  
 Warf, B. 159, 161  
 Warren, S. 123, 143  
 Webster, C. 330

- Weibel, D. 70  
 Weisenfeld, G. S. 153, 161  
 Welter, F. 241  
 Wenger, E. 264–265  
 Wesalainen, F. 174  
 Wesalainen, J. 174  
 Westin, A. F. 124, 143  
 Widestedt, K. 142  
 Wiklund, J. 241  
 Wilkinson, E. 147, 158, 161  
 Williams, L. 218, 241
- Williams, Z. 220, 240  
 Willim, R. 218, 241  
 Wilson, A. 209  
 Wilson, L. 98  
 Wisborg, T. 97  
 Wood, J. T. 142  
 Woods, M. 234, 242  
 Wylie, J. 13, 23, 215,  
 328–331  
 Yatsyk, A. 13, 25, 99  
 Yokoyama, T. 158, 161
- Young, A. 94, 98  
 Young, K. (= K. G.) 14, 15,  
 23, 324–325, 327  
 Zabirowa, A. T. 182–183,  
 188, 210–211  
 Zardykhan, Z. 182, 187, 210  
 Zhusupov, S. 184, 210  
 Žižek, S. 100–101, 115  
 Zukin, S. 218, 242