Folklore

Electronic Journal of Folklore 52

Folklore
Electronic Journal of Folklore
http://www.folklore.ee/folklore
Printed version
Vol. 52
2012

Folk Belief and Media Group
of the Estonian Literary Museum

Estonian Institute of Folklore

Folklore

Electronic Journal of Folklore
Vol. 52

Edited by
Mare Kõiva & Andres Kuperjanov
Guest editors:
Tuulikki Kurki & Kirsi Laurén

Tartu 2012

Editor in chief	Mare Kõiva
Co-editor	Andres Kuperjanov
Guest editors	Tuulikki Kurki, Kirsi Laurén
Copy editor	Tiina Mällo
News and reviews	Piret Voolaid
Design	Andres Kuperjanov
Layout	Diana Kahre

Electronic version is supported by Estonian Science Foundation (grant no. 8137).
Printed version is supported by state programme projects EKKM09-168 and EKKM09-170.
This special issue was supported by the research project Writing Cultures and Traditions at Borders (Academy of Finland, SA 131578).

Indexed in EBSCO Publishing Humanities International Complete, Thomson Reuters Arts & Humanities Citation Index, MLA International Bibliography, Ulrich's Periodicals Directory, Internationale Volkskundliche Bibliographie / International Folklore Bibliography / Bibliographie Internationale d'Ethnologie), DOAJ, C.E.E.O.L., ERIH (B)

Editorial address:
Folklore: Electronic Journal of Folklore
Vanemuise 42–235
51003 Tartu
Estonia
phone: +372 737 7740
fax: +372 737 7706
e-mail: folklore@folklore.ee
home page: http://www.folklore.ee/folklore

ISSN 1406-0957
doi:10.7592/FEJF2012.52

CONTENTS

doi:10.7592/FEJF2012.52.kurki_lauren

INTRODUCTION TO *BORDERS AND LIFE-STORIES*

Tuulikki Kurki, Kirsi Laurén

Borders came into global focus during the last decades of the twentieth century. The reason for this was the large-scale geographical, political, and societal changes that took place in Europe, for example, the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the fall of the Berlin Wall, the formation of the European Union, and the gathering momentum of global migration movements. These large-scale changes permanently altered the characteristics and significance of national borders in Europe. Instead of being boundaries of strict separation, borders became flexible gateways and pronounced areas of interaction and negotiation. Furthermore, the large-scale changes which were being experienced had a strong impact on the lives of individuals in various borderlands. They altered the way that individuals and groups of people, whose lives were affected by the presence of borders, defined their identities. Since the establishment of the modern nation states, the rhetoric that constructs national unity and the so-called national culture has confined identities and cultures to specific, clearly bounded geographical areas (Malkki 1992). From this point of view, emigrants and refugees appeared simply as dislocated people and as 'the others' to the dominating national cultures and societies (Hammar-Suutari 2009; Ronkainen 2009; Davydova 2009). Today, due to global migration and the opening of national borders, the need to construct identities on different bases has become necessary. New identities are not necessarily confined to a place, region, or ethnicity. Instead, they are constructed in relation to borders and movements across them (Alvarez 1995; Paasi 2002).

Since the beginning of the so-called topic of border studies in the 1980s, the focus of research has mainly concentrated on national borders, cross-border co-operation and border practices. In these approaches where geography, history and social sciences have dominated research, the border has been understood mostly as a tangible and political entity. Cultural borders, on the other hand, have featured in humanities research since the late 19th century. One of the

earliest noted researchers to discuss borders from an anthropological point of view was the German ethnologist and geographer Friedrich Ratzel (1844–1904). His approach has been labelled as anthropological geography (Anthropogeographie) and it forms the beginnings of modern political and human geography (Cahnman 1943; Danielsson 2009: 1–2).[1] During the 20th century, anthropology, ethnology, linguistic and cultural studies, for example, have focused on the borders between cultures and languages, and on social borders between the sexes, age groups, and class (Van Gennep 1909; Douglas 1966; Turner 1977). Furthermore, the symbolic bordering processes and construction of the cultural 'other' have been the stimulus for essential questions in cultural anthropology since the establishment of the academic discipline in the late 19th century.

Within Europe, borders received renewed interest in cultural research due to the changes in geography and the geopolitical balance (Schimanski & Wolfe 2007). However, in Anglo-American anthropology and geography, the USA-Mexico border had already become the focus of attention in the 1950s and 1960s (see Anzaldúa 1987; Hicks 1991; Alvarez 1995; Sadowski-Smith 2008). During the past decades in Finland, borders have been explored within landscape studies, from the point of view of cultural representations. Case studies have been conducted that focus on Finnish-Russian Karelia (the area divided by the Finnish-Russian national border) and from the viewpoints of ethnicity and locality in the border area (Häyrynen 2006; Fingerroos 2004; Löytty 2005; Davydova 2009; Suutari & Chikalov 2010; Hakamies 2012). During the past ten years, new trends in studying borders have emerged. In literature research and cultural studies, and for example, a stress on the aesthetic, literary and artistic aspects of borders can be seen (Schimanski & Wolfe 2007; Sadowski-Smith 2008; Nyman 2009; Järviluoma-Mäkelä et al. 2012).

In contemporary cultural research, the border is often examined as a space and place where various individual and collective (e.g. cultural and political) interests and significations confront each other (Knuuttila et al. 2006; Silberman et al. 2012). Usually, the voices of the groups in power and their expressed meanings of the borders dominate public discussion. However, borders that are experienced and signified by individuals do not necessarily follow these politically defined borders or the significations of borders that are collectively or commonly shared. In everyday life, borders are formed on the micro-level by social interaction, and through individual experiences and narratives. Nevertheless, political and ideological discourses influence the way the borders are accounted for in individual oral or written narratives.

The theme issue *Borders and Life-Stories* focuses on geographic, cultural and micro-level borders which are examined through written life-stories and narratives. The micro-level perspectives used in these articles make visible

symbolic and metaphoric borders, which often remain completely unrecognised in the wider macro-perspectives. There are two reasons why these remain unrecognised: The first is that outsiders do not recognise them, because at a micro-level, symbolic and metaphoric borders only become recognisable in everyday interaction. The second reason is that symbolic and metaphoric borders are so self-evident to insiders that they often remain unexplicated, even though such borders influence everyday interaction. Due to the characteristics of symbolic micro-level borders, they must be studied by means of methods, materials and viewpoints different than those used to study political and institutional borders. Everyday life and experience-based narratives concerning borders and borderlands have been a special focus of attention in anthropology, folklore studies, and literature research, as well as the marginalised voices of women and various minorities on various national, cultural and social borderlands. However, these viewpoints have recently become the focus of attention in political geography, human geography, and sociology (e.g. Eskelinen et al. 1999; Pöllänen 2007; Silberman et al. 2012).

The articles of the theme issue *Borders and Life-Stories* examine published and unpublished memoirs and life-stories, as well as poetry, in which national borders, borderlands and crossing borders are central themes. The life-stories and memoirs are individual accounts, yet they reflect the collective, culturally shared narratives and meanings of borders that are maintained in literature, media, art and politics. Therefore, the analysed texts open viewpoints to larger cultural and collective narratives about borders and make visible their multilayered character.

The articles stress two themes in the analysed texts: The first is the narrative construction of the narrator's identity in relation to the national border, and in relation to 'we' and 'other' on the different sides of the Finnish-Russian, Estonian-Russian, or the Finnish-Swedish national borders. The identity formation process in relation to the national border is often emotional and traumatic. In these cases, the border appears as a dividing line or a boundary that has a permanent influence on an individual's life. For example, the border can violently separate the narrator from his or her roots, home, and family members, or society or the 'other' people across the border are experienced as a threat. One of the strongest motives to write a life-story, memoir or poem may be the narrator's need to process his or her emotions and trauma, and to form a coherent life-story that has trajectories from the past towards the future (Aarelaid-Tart 2006). The second theme is the construction of various symbolic and metaphoric borders contained within the narratives. The time, place, and space of the narration influence how the narrators make the border understandable and meaningful to themselves. Therefore, the life-stories, memoirs, and

poems that are covered, reveal the flexible and unstable characteristics and meanings of borders to the narrator.

The theme issue consists of four articles. Tiiu Jaago examines life-stories of an Estonian woman who was born in 1918. The woman wrote four separate life-stories in 1996–2004: three while living in Estonia and one while living in Russia. The narratives describe the narrator's life with her closest circle of acquaintances, and also whilst being alone (both when free and imprisoned), in her homeland and abroad. Jaago studies these life-stories using Juri Lotman's theoretical framework of the cultural border and focuses on the following questions: Where are cultural borders located? Are such borders perceivable? Who can define the borders? Jaago's analysis of the life-stories reveals the ambiguous and flexible characteristics of borders. Furthermore, Jaago's article emphasises that the understanding of the cultural 'other' is always subjective, contextually determined, and strongly bound with the narrator's life story.

Kirsi Laurén's article studies elderly Finnish people's attitudes towards the Finnish-Russian national border and life in the national borderland. The focus of the analysis is on the subjects' written memories and especially on the narrators' emotions and the fear that they expresses in the narrative. One reason for the centrality of emotions and fear in the narratives is that World War II (which caused significant geographical and cultural changes in the Finnish-Russian national borderland) still appears as a significant time period in the narrators' memories. The analysis reveals that emotions that stem from war memories have a long-term influence on the narrators' concepts of the [Russian] border and [Russian] people. Everyday life, on the other hand, is characterised through the concepts of remoteness and wilderness within the narratives and the narratives' concerns over the fear of predators, for example, crystallises the idea of the remoteness of the borderland areas in relation to the populated centres.

Tuulikki Kurki's article focuses on Finnish writer Taisto Huuskonen and his novel *The Child of Finland* (Laps' Suomen, 1979). The biographical novel describes Huuskonen's illegal defection to the Soviet Union in 1949, his life in the Soviet Union and his return to Finland in 1976. The article claims that crossing the national border had a crucial impact on Huuskonen's life-story and identity. The reason for this is that crossing the border in one direction or the other forced Huuskonen to redefine his identity, belonging and loyalty towards various ideologies and nations. The crossing of the national border and its consequences were also a traumatic experience, which had a strong influence on how Huuskonen constructed his narrative 'I' in relation to 'us' and 'others' on the different sides of the national border. The article interprets Huuskonen's novel in the context of trauma literature. The writing in which the trauma was concerned was caused by a voluntary or involuntary movement across the

Finnish-Russian border, which was politically problematic in Finland until the late 20th century. Nevertheless, the number of trauma literature narratives on this topic has increased in Finland and also globally as a genre since the last decades of the 20th century. The context of contemporary trauma literature opens Huuskonen's novel for discovering meaningful ways of reading in the 21st century.

Anne Heith's article examines how the experiences of internal colonialism may be expressed in literary writing through the analysis of Bengt Pohjanen's poem *Ragheads* (Rättipäät, 1996). Bengt Pohjanen is a writer using Meänkieli (Tornedalian Finnish) in the Tornedalian valley in the Finnish-Swedish national borderland. In the analysis, Heith focuses on the tension expressed in the poem, which is caused by the homogenising modernity in a Swedish nation-building context, and the particular situation of the Tornedalian Finnish minority in northern Sweden. The article proposes that the poem represents a re-mapping of 'the national' and 'the international' as commonalities are established between the Swedish national minority of the Tornedalians and migrants in European metropolitan centres.

In addition to the articles, an interview of Professor Stephen Wolfe is included in the theme issue. Stephen Wolfe has a prominent role in the cultural research on borders: in addition to several publications on the border theme, he is the co-organiser of the *Border Poetics* research group at the University of Tromsø. In the interview (conducted in December 2011), Wolfe introduces his own research in border studies as well as some topical issues of cultural research that focus on borders.

To complement the articles on borders and life-stories, two review articles examining films and borders are included in the theme issue. The first, written by Holger Pötzsch, examines Knut Erik Jensens' documentary film *Stella Polaris* (1993), which is a constellation of memory fragments pertaining to life in a northern Norwegian fishing village over a period of 50 years. Pötzsch's analysis focuses on various ideas of liminality within the film. A second review, written by Saija Kaskinen, analyses Lauri Törhönen's film *Border 1918* (*Raja 1918*, 2006). The film focuses on the aftermath of the 1918 War in Finland and establishing of the national border between Finland and Russia. The analysis discusses the border as an entity that determines the development of the characters in the film.

The theme issue also includes Tiina Suopajärvi's review of a methodologically centred article compilation *Along Textual Borders. Multidisciplinary Perspectives on Written Materials* [*Tekstien rajoilla. Monitieteisiä näkökulmia kirjoitettuihin aineistoihin*] (SKS, Helsinki) edited by Sami Lakomäki, Pauliina Latvala and Kirsi Laurén. The compilation (published in 2011) introduces fresh

methodological approaches in text analysis, written by scholars in cultural and folklore studies, anthropology, literature studies, history, and social sciences.

As editors, we are most grateful to the writers of the theme issue: Tiiu Jaago, Anne Heith, Holger Pötzsch, Saija Kaskinen, and Tiina Suopajärvi. We are very grateful to Stephen Wolfe for the extensive interview, which he kindly provided to us in writing. We are most grateful to the refereers of this theme issue for their valuable work, and also to Nicholas Rowe from The Written Word.eu for his excellent language revision and commentary on the texts. We are thankful to Margaret Livingston and Silja Kaskinen for their language revision of Saija Kaskinen's article. Last but not least, we are most grateful to the *Folklore* journal and to the Editor-in-Chief Mare Kõiva for giving us the opportunity to publish this theme issue, and to the copy editor Tiina Mällo and Diana Kahre for the final layout.

The theme number has been initiated and edited within the research project *Writing Cultures and Traditions at Borders* (SA131578) at the University of Eastern Finland.

NOTE

[1] Ratzel's ideas were misused for extreme nationalistic purposes by the national-socialists in Germany in the 1930s and 1940s (Danielsson 2009). Therefore, some of Ratzel's key concepts and ideas have a notorious reputation; however, this lies outside the scope of this introduction.

REFERENCES

Aarelaid-Tart, Aili 2006. *Cultural Trauma and Life Stories*. Helsinki: Kikimora Publications.

Alvarez, Robert R. Jr. 1995. The Mexican-US Border: The Making of an Anthropology of Borderlands. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, Vol. 24, pp. 447–470, doi: 10.1146/annurev.an.24.100195.002311.

Anzaldúa, Gloria 1987. *La Frontera / Borderlands: The New Mestiza*. San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books.

Cahnman, Werner J. 1943. Concepts of Geopolitics. *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 8, No. 1, pp. 55–59, doi:10.2307/2085449.

Danielsson, Sarah K. 2009. Creating Genocidal Space: Geographers and the Discourse of Annihilation, 1880–1933. *Space and Polity*, Vol. 13, No. 1, pp. 55–68, doi:10.1080/13562570902780944.

Davydova, Olga 2009. *Suomalaisena, venäläisenä ja kolmantena. Etnisyysdiskursseja transnationaalissa tilassa.* [Being a Finn, A Russian, or Something In-Between.

Ethnicity Discourses in Transnational Space.] Joensuun yliopiston humanistisia julkaisuja 57: Joensuun yliopisto.

Douglas, Mary 1966. *Purity and Danger. An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo*. London & New York: Routledge.

Eskelinen, Heikki & Liikanen, Ilkka & Oksa, Jukka 1999. *Curtains of Iron and Gold. Reconstructing Borders and Scales of Interaction*. Aldershot: Ashgate.

Fingerroos, Outi 2004. *Haudatut muistot. Rituaalisen kuoleman merkitykset Kannaksen muistitedossa*. Helsinki: SKS.

Van Gennep, Arnold 1909. *Les Rites de Passage*. Paris: É. Nourry.

Hakamies, Pekka 2012. Karjala venäläisin silmin. Neuvostoasukkaat luovutetussa Karjalassa. [Karelia in the Eyes of the Russians. Soviet Residents in the Annexed Karelia.] In: Outi Fingerroos & Maunu Häyrynen (eds.) *Takaisin Karjalaan.* [Returning to Karelia.] Helsinki: SKS, pp. 75–104.

Hammar-Suutari, Sari 2009. *Asiakkaana erilaisuus. Kulttuurien välisen viranomaistoiminnan etnografia.* [Alien Customer. Ethnography of Intercultural Official Encountering.] Joensuu: University of Joensuu, Publications of Karelian Institute. http://epublications.uef.fi/pub/urn_isbn_978-952-219-303-2/urn_isbn_978-952-219-303-2.pdf, last accessed on November 27, 2012.

Häyrynen, Maunu (ed.) 2006. Theme number: Rajoja tilassa ja ajassa. [Theme number: Borders in Space and Time.] *Alue ja Ympäristö*, No. 2.

Hicks, Emily D. 1991. *Border Writing: The Multidimensional Text.* Theory and History of Literature Series, Vol. 80. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Järviluoma-Mäkelä, Helmi & Knuuttila, Seppo & Logrén, Anne & Turunen, Risto (eds.) 2012. *Syrjäseudun idea. Kulttuurianalyysejä Ilomantsista.* [The Idea of Remote District. Cultural Analyses of Ilomantsi.] Helsinki: SKS.

Knuuttila, Seppo & Laaksonen, Pekka & Piela, Ulla (eds.) 2006. *Paikka. Eletty, kuviteltu, kerrottu.* [Place: Lived, Imagined, Narrated.] *Kalevalaseuran vuosikirja 85*. Helsinki: SKS.

Löytty, Olli (ed.) 2005. *Rajanylityksiä. Tutkimusreittejä toiseuden tuolle puolen.* [Border Crossings. Researching Beyond the Otherness.] Helsinki: Gaudeamus.

Malkki, Liisa 1992. National Geographic: The Rooting of Peoples and the Territorialization of National Identity among Scholars and Refugees. *Cultural Anthropology*, Vol. 7, No. 1, pp. 24–44, doi:10.1525/can.1992.7.1.02a00030.

Nyman, Jopi (ed.) 2009. *Post-National Enquiries: Essays on Ethnic and Racial Border Crossings*. Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

Paasi, Anssi 2002. Rajat ja identiteetti globalisoituvassa maailmassa. [Borders and Identity in Globalized World.]. In: Taina Syrjämaa & Janne Tunturi (eds.) *Eletty ja muistettu tila.* [Lived and Remembered Space.] Helsinki: SKS, pp. 154–176.

Pöllänen, Pirjo 2007. Etnografinen tutkimus Suomessa asuvien venäläisten maahanmuuttajanaisten perhekäsityksistä. Marginaalissa vai keskiössä? [Ethnography of the Conceptions of Family among Russian Immigrants in Finland.] *Lähde. Historiatieteellinen aikakauskirja*, pp. 189–201.

Ronkainen, Jussi 2009. *Väliviivakansalaiset. Monikansallisuus asemana ja käytäntönä.* [Hyphenated Citizens – Multiple Citizenship as Status and Practice.] Joensuu: University of Joensuu.

Sadowski-Smith, Claudia 2008. *Border Fictions. Globalization, Empire, and Writing at the Boundaries of United States*. Charlottesville and London: University of Virginia Press.

Schimanski, Johan & Wolfe, Stephen 2007. Entry Points: An Introduction. In: Johan Schimanski & Stephen Wolfe (eds.) *Border Poetics De-limited*. Hannover: Wehrhahn Verlag, pp. 9–26.

Silberman, Marc & Till, Karen E. & Ward, Janet (eds.) 2012. *Walls, Borders, Boundaries: Spatial and Cultural Practices in Europe*. New York & Oxford: Berghahn Books.

Suutari, Pekka & Shikalov, Yury (eds.) 2010. *Karelia Written and Sung. Representations of Locality in Soviet and Russian Contexts*. Helsinki: Kikimora Publications.

Turner, Victor W. 1977. *The Ritual Process. Structure and Anti-Structure*. Ithaca & N.Y.: Cornell University Press.

doi:10.7592/FEJF2012.52.jaago

CULTURAL BORDERS IN AN AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL NARRATIVE

Tiiu Jaago

Abstract: This article examines the life story of a woman born in a village in southern Estonia in 1918. It is based on two life stories told in Estonian and one told in Russian, as well as a story about her home. The stories were written at the initiative of the researcher between 1996 and 2004 and are stored in public archives. These texts have been chosen in that they are characteristic of the multifaceted phenomenon of inter-cultural contact: the narrator is of Estonian descent; she was imprisoned during the German occupation and taken to Germany, where she lived among local Germans and Red Army soldiers after the war; she married a man of Russian descent who served in the Red Army; from 1948, she and her family lived in a culturally diverse environment in Kohtla-Järve. The focus of this research is on the manifestation of cultural borders at the levels of life history, self-description and cultural context. The narrator presents herself as a person who is not constrained by cultural borders. The relative importance of various cultures in her life and her self-perception is dependent on the general historical and political context and the context of everyday life at the stage of her life that is being described. This aspect emphasises the flexible and volatile nature of cultural borders; however, the analysis of the text reveals the permanence of cultural borders – the narrator cannot step out of her cultural background when describing a culture that she sees as 'other'.

Keywords: cultural borders, cultural diversity, life story, the Second World War, the Soviet era

…I am still confused, darting this way and that; time itself will run out before I find myself on a straight path. But am I supposed to find a straight path at all?[1]

In research on everyday culture, folk narrative and popular storytelling, the subject of cultural borders may be viewed from the standpoint of communities, such as an encounter with a cultural 'other' (see, for example, Greverus 1988; Wienker-Piepho & Roth 2004). A meeting of cultures at a territorial border may raise the issue of border culture (*Grenzkultur*), as a mix of cultures in which it is impossible to speak of simple cultural contacts – instead, there exists a 'third space' or an intercultural area (Schmeling 2000: 349). Cultural exchange that

is based on the culture of new settlers in a certain region may include a layer of local culture that previously existed in that region. For example, the replacement of place names in the Karelian region conquered by the Soviet Union took place in a situation where a newly imported culture 'met' a completely different tradition of place names that persisted in the region (Hakamies 2006: 33–35). Astrid Tuisk (2002) has studied how Estonian migrant community in Siberia domesticated the land they inhabited by name giving.

Similar to the aforementioned studies, this article focuses on cultural borders: encounters with the 'other', the potential blending of cultures and even the issue of exchanging one culture for another. However, I examine these phenomena from the standpoint of an individual, rather than that of a community, comparing the autobiographical narratives of a woman born in southern Estonia in 1918; three of them have been written in Estonian and one in Russian, which date back to between 1996 and 2004.[2] Cultural borders are examined from three different aspects: an individual's life (the events that bring the narrator together with the cultural 'other' or other cultures), her self-description (the narrator's analysis of her position in the melting pot of different cultures), and the cultural background of the narrative (firstly, how the story in question is positioned in the context of other stories told at the same time and, secondly, how the narrator positions herself with regard to Estonian-speaking and Russian-speaking readers).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The first half of the article concerns the narrator's life history and focuses on factors that can be interpreted as relating to cultural borders.[3] Since my article is based on the study of folklore (which looks less at the topic of a story and more at how the events are interpreted and what techniques are used by the narrator), it is important to consider the conditions in which the texts to be analysed were created. The texts submitted by the narrator to life writing campaign or recorded at the researcher's request are autobiographical accounts of the author's life. A story of real life is connected both to the events being described and the time when the story is told. This means that the stories are always created through an interaction with other texts and other narrators and listeners, thus it is useful to take this into account when interpreting a story (cf. Welzer 2000; Palmenfelt 2006; Laurén 2010).

Cultural borders are perceived subjectively, rather than being seen logically or unambiguously (cf. Schneider 2004). This applies to more than just the texts being analysed, since research is also affected by the factors chosen by

the researcher as the basis for defining cultural borders. In the analysis of the life story that provides the subject of this article, the primary border marker is the use of language (Estonian or Russian – two languages that are clearly different). The narrator prefers to portray life in an Estonian-Russian mixed family through personal relationships and does not focus on cultural differences. As a researcher, I am taking the opposite approach, basing my analysis on differentiating between Estonian and Russian culture and only then examining how the narrator positions her personal relationships on the landscape of cultural differences. I have chosen to use Yuri Lotman's treatment of the semiotic (culturally significant) border as a general theoretical framework for defining the phenomenon of the cultural border:

> The border of semiotic space is the most important functional and structural position, giving substance to its semiotic mechanism. The border is a bilingual mechanism, translating external communications into the internal language of the semiosphere and vice versa (Lotman 2005: 210).

Of course, since semiotic space is abstract, the cultural border may not be visually discernible. However, in cases where a cultural border coincides with a territorial border, it is manifested wherever there is need for 'translation'. Since every culture requires internal organisation, the environment outside that culture is perceived as the 'chaotic external sphere'. The border between organised (comprehensible) and unorganised (different, incomprehensible) spaces is the source of questions that make us organise the 'other' based on our culture (or, in other words, to translate the foreign culture into the 'language' of our own culture). Lotman also points out the subjective nature of the cultural borders and demonstrates that viewpoints both inside a culture and outside its borders may not coincide at all, which is why the location of the border of a specific culture depends on the observer's position (Lotman 2005: 213). In the texts I have analysed, my aim has been to look for factors in the sequence of events contained within the narrative, which could be identified as markers of social as well as ethnic and cultural borders. Events in life stories are usually reported in chronological order and this also applies to the narratives analysed in this article. Causality also plays a role in the event structure of a story, in addition to temporality (Grišakova 2010). I attempt to understand how the narrator interprets the events of her life story from the standpoint of the narrative as a whole and how she justifies the selection of events she has chosen to include in her autobiography. In advance it can be said that from this standpoint, the cultural background of the narrator proved to be important (including, for example, her relationship with literature and music).

The second part of the article focuses on the cultural background of the narratives (for instance, I examine how the story told in Estonian differs from that

told in Russian, aside from the fact that they use different languages). In her study on experiential narratives, Kirsi Laurén emphasises the fact that along with describing real life events, narratives also reveal the cultural background in which the narrators of the stories have grown and that have shaped their identities (Laurén 2010: 426). This is also true in the case of the narratives analysed in this article: the narrator may have an excellent command of both languages and the events on which the narrative is based, and the life experience connected to the events may be the same, but it is still impossible for the narrator to use the same storytelling techniques in Estonian and Russian. For example, she cannot explain much to her Russian-speaking audience through Estonian poetry, although she uses such quotes in an expressive manner within her Estonian text. The opposite is also true: she is not familiar enough with Russian poetry to address her audience through it, not to mention using it to interpret her life experience. Therefore, regardless of her language skills, she cannot find an equal (or analogous) common cultural element with her Estonian and Russian readers.

CULTURAL BORDERS IN THE LIFE STORY

The narrator was born on November 8, 1918, in a southern Estonian village where her parents had a farm. 1918 was a pivotal time in Estonian history. The Russian Empire had ceased to exist although the Imperial era still persisted in the stories of the narrator's ancestors and grandparents. The First World War ended three days after she was born. Her parents and grandparents had lived through this war. Her father was 'under the gun' (her own words regarding her father's participation in the war) and later told his children about his life as a soldier and sang songs he had learned during the war. The War of Independence for Estonia's national sovereignty began on November 28, 1918, and lasted until January 3, 1920 (Estonia declared its independence on February 24, 1918).

She spent her childhood and youth in the independent Republic of Estonia where fundamental political change was a thing of the past and people concentrated on coping with their daily lives. In her story, this fact is reflected in the descriptions of the daily chores of a family living on a farm and a lifestyle characteristic of Estonian society at the time: she describes how the children tended to the herd, and the skills she had to learn in order to cope with farm life as an adult. She also talks about her grandmother's interesting stories and folk wisdom as well as the family's passion for music and a Christian way of life.

In 1937, she married a schoolteacher. This changed the narrator's life not only in the personal sense, but also socially. She was no longer a member of a

farmer's family – she had become a representative of the urbanising culture. Instead of farm work, her life was now dominated by issues of education and temperance. Since her husband was a communist, the course of her life after the incorporation of Estonia into the Soviet Union in 1940 began to be shaped by the changes in the status of Soviet power within Estonia. For instance, her stories put an emphasis on the beginning and end of the war between the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany (June 22, 1941, and May 9, 1945). After the start of the war, her communist husband was shot by the German occupation forces. For her, the end of the war meant being freed from a German prison camp. According to Aigi Rahi-Tamm (2005: 42) approximately 4,000 people from Estonia were sent to prison camps during the German occupation. The narrator was one of those prisoners, having been arrested in the winter of 1943 for associating with people who supported the Soviet regime. She was first imprisoned in Tartu and then Tallinn. When the front was moving westward, she was taken to the Stutthof camp in Poland late in the summer of 1944. However, her stories never devote much attention to the Soviet mass deportations carried out on June 14, 1941, and March 25, 1949, when nearly 30,000 people were sent to concentration camps or forced exile in the eastern regions of the Soviet Union (Rahi-Tamm 2005: 25, 29, 41). Unlike the narrative in question, most life stories told to the public during the same period (the 1990s) emphasise the issue of Soviet repression (Hinrikus & Kõresaar 2004: 24; Kõresaar 2004: 54–56).

As a former prisoner, she was unable to immediately return to Estonia after the end of the war in May 1945, so she stayed in the Soviet zone in Germany, living among local Germans and the Red Army soldiers who had won the war. A year later she married a man of Russian descent, who served in the Red Army. They were initially hoping to settle in Russia, but her husband found work in Kohtla-Järve, a rapidly developing industrial town in north-eastern Estonia, which was sovietised very quickly after the war.[4] The narrator has lived in Kohtla-Järve since 1948.

In her descriptions of life during the Soviet era, she focuses on describing her family life rather than the social situation:

> I had an interesting life. There were so many new experiences. I was free to immerse myself in the routine of my daily home life for long periods of time because I knew that [my husband] would always think of something new and interesting.[5]

For her, this was a safe time together with her family as opposed to during the war. Her understanding of the Soviet regime was altered by the facts she learned about other people's fates, rather than her own experience. She says that her change of mind occurred in 1953, after Stalin's death, when people

who had been deported to Siberia began to return to Estonia. She was able to relate to the experiences these people had had while imprisoned:

> [---] her tragic experiences in the Siberian taiga led me to seek parallels with what I had experienced in the camps in Germany. There was some terrible similarity between the two. I was much older by then. I had to admit that my naive belief in Russian communism had waned.[6]

Due to the fact that the narrator's prison experience was publicly recognised during the Soviet period, she was invited to talk in schools and she participated in the work of an association of former prisoners through which, in 1968, she was able to visit the former Stutthof prison which had been turned into a museum. The people repressed by the Soviet authorities were only able to publicly talk about their experiences at the end of the 1980s (see Jaago 2004b: 179–181; Kõresaar 2005: 17–20). Over time, she grew to understand lives that were different due to political reasons from a standpoint that was not based on the concepts of right and wrong: "My goodness, I hadn't heard anything about Gulags back then."[7] – "Now I think myself how difficult it must have been for the huge number of Gulag victims to be silent… I don't even know when information about this began to leak through."[8]

Her stories portray the early 1990s (the first years after the restoration of Estonia's independence) as a rather grim period: the economic reorganisation and the establishment of private companies led to a situation in which bars had to be installed on the windows of homes to protect them from intruders, and murder and fraud became an everyday phenomenon. She tries to distance herself from the changing social situation and focus time and again on her family.[9] In the texts stored in the *Estonian Life Histories* collection and written in the second half of the 1990s and the beginning of the 2000s, autobiographical events are predominantly placed in the context of the liberation of Estonia from foreign rule (cf., e.g., Kõresaar 2005: 17–35). She, however, does not describe her attitude towards the restitution of independence in Estonia. Her writing is based on her personal everyday experiences at the beginning of the 1990s, and she refers to this period with the comment: "what an awful time to live in". This is partly due to her living environment – Kohtla-Järve had been established as and had developed into a Soviet town. Compared to people living elsewhere in Estonia, the collapse of the system was more difficult for the people of Kohtla-Järve, both economically and mentally. There were many who lost both their livelihoods and their homes, and the culturally diverse town also had to adjust to the change in mutual relations between ethnic groups in Estonian society (cf. Jaago et al. 2008: 290–295; Jaago 2011). However, her opinion of the beginning of the 1990s is also influenced by the fact that one of her sons died as a result

of events related to the world of complicated disorganised laws and business relations, which was characteristic of the period in question.

Therefore, the political framework of her course of life is as follows: war (1918–1920), peacetime (1920–1941), war and imprisonment (1941–1945), a new period of peace which is also the Soviet era (1945–1991), the first years after the restoration of independence to the Republic of Estonia (the 1990s). It is clear that her individual timeline intersected with the political and historical timeline and this is how she sees it: "I am a child of my times, and I got caught in the cogwheels of history".[10] Despite being "caught in the cogwheels", she is not a passive individual. Her active nature becomes apparent when we analyse the cultural levels of her narratives. For example, it is noteworthy that she conceptualises her life through poetry. The end of the story she wrote in 1996 is a straightforward example of this[11] and she wrote the story while mourning for her son who had died a year and a half earlier. This mourning brings up the question of the meaning of life and she quotes the Estonian poetess Anna Haava:

> Is this what life is?
> A fleeting, restless dream,
> a string of struggles, tribulations, losses [---].

"No," she declares, and the opinion coincides with the words of Virve Osila, another poetess:

> In life you must know how to
> wish for miracles
> feel all the joy and bear all the burdens [---].[12]

Time and again, she lingers on the symbolic borders in her life. Her readiness for crossing boundaries is exceptional. For example, although she was a child from a family of farmers, she wanted to and did escape that social class. Due to the fact that her mother had grown up in the city, they had a lot of things in their home that other people in the village did not. In her Russian-language story, the narrator says that during the time she lived in the village, she always wanted to stand out from the rest, although she could not say why. She also states that she liked her new life as a schoolteacher's wife, which provided her with access to new living conditions, new hobbies (such as learning Esperanto), and different people. Considering these facts, it is not at all surprising that after the war she was ready to start a new family with a representative of the Russian culture, which was significantly different from Estonian culture.

The perception of borders also has an effect on her descriptions of herself:

> There are two opposites living inside me. Perhaps this is because I am a Scorpio[13] and the sign is associated with both earth and water? Or

> perhaps the two opposites are Adam and Eve? Who knows, perhaps I am carrying on the tradition of the characters and industrious workers of burgher stock on my mother's side of the family? I have definitely inherited a solid dose of the salt-of-the-earth cheerful dreamer nature from my father's side.

Therefore, her 84 years on this earth have simultaneously felt "as if she was taking part in a horse race" as well as being "a dreamer at the window".[14] She discusses the reasons underlying her desire to differ from 'others' and the question of whether she really has to be either 'here' or 'there'.

THE ARCHIVAL CONTEXT OF THE STORIES

The texts analysed in this article have been taken from the collection *Estonian Life Histories*, which was created in 1989 (i.e., at the end of the Soviet era) on the initiative of the employees of the Estonian Literary Museum and by researchers of life stories. On the one hand, the development of this collection has been based on the century-long tradition of collecting folklore and cultural historical material in Estonia, where calls for contributions are published in newspapers and voluntary contributors send in their texts. On the other hand, the mid-1990s saw an increase in cooperation with Finnish sociologists and life story researchers (Hinrikus 2003: 178–181). Collection campaigns were held and they generally had a specific theme (e.g. *My destiny and the destiny of those close to me in the labyrinths of history* (1996), *Teacher, do you remember your life story?* (1997), *One hundred lives of a century* (1999), *Life for me and my loved ones amid a changing environment* (2000), etc.). This method of collecting material is relatively similar to the collection campaign tradition in Finland (cf. Pöysä 2006; Laurén 2010). The instructions for writing life stories, which are published in all Estonia's major daily newspapers, specify that the narrator should talk about his or her life and cover the entire life history. At the same time, the narrators are not expected to focus on specific sub-topics and they are not asked questions that would encourage them to elaborate, for example, on a historical event or a situation in their personal lives. The resulting contributions are written narratives of various length and structure. The collection currently contains approximately 2,500 written autobiographical accounts and several anthologies have been published on the basis of the collected material.[15]

The narrator whose texts are analysed in this article has submitted three life stories to the *Estonian Life Histories* collection. The motive for writing the first life story submitted in 1996 was the call made by the Estonian Life Stories Association and the Estonian Cultural History Archives for contributions related

to the topic *My destiny and the destiny of those close to me in the labyrinths of history*.[16] One year later, she submitted to the archives an updated version of the same life story: while the biographical episodes mostly overlap with the earlier narrative, the author has added passages of poetry and has a different way of addressing the reader.[17] In 2004, she also submitted her story in Russian at the request of those in charge of compiling an anthology of Russian-language life stories.[18] I have also been able to use the materials I recorded during meetings with the author on December 11, 2002, and June 3, 2005, as well as her story about her home and family, which she wrote at my request in 2002.[19]

It is important to note that all four stories have been written after the end of the Soviet era, since Estonia regained its independence. The discursive background of the life stories written during the second half of the 1990s and stored in the *Estonian Life Histories* collection, was shaped by a shared focus on Estonia and the tendency to discuss topics suppressed by Soviet history, such as the political repressions carried out by the Soviet regime (see, for example, Kirss et al. 2004; cf. Kõresaar 2005: 12–14, 20–26). As already mentioned briefly above, the contribution analysed in this article is somewhat different. She discussed the crossing of cultural borders under the Soviet regime on an individual level (which, if we consider other life stories, was not the norm at all) and her experience of a German prison camp (which was a subject that had previously been publicly discussed during the Soviet era, unlike the issue of Soviet prison camps). Also, she does not equate the restoration of the independence of the Republic of Estonia with the restoration of Estonia's natural course of development after the interruption of the Soviet era; instead, she considers this period to be a "terrible time for living" and describes the hardships of the transition era as they appeared in her everyday life. In terms of depicting life in Estonia before the Second World War, her story is generally similar to others: the period is portrayed as a peaceful and safe time spent among a harmonious and functional farming family (see, for example, Kirss et al. 2004; Kõresaar 2004: 54–56; Kõresaar 2005: 37–110).

The general and expected catalysts for the events in narrators' lives in the written life stories of the second half of the 1990s were historical and political events. This also applies in the present case, although this narrator's stories belong among those narratives that stand out from the rest by way of their distinctive characteristics. It is conspicuous that she does not interpret the past through schemes that have become familiar to us through common discussions. For example, she does not idealise farm and village life to such an extent that it could, in terms of the story as a whole, become "a metaphor for the nation state" (see Kõresaar 2005: 41 concerning the concept and its treatment), nor does she describe her post-imprisonment reunion with her daughter, who was

left behind in Estonia, as a problem-free process: they were separated for five years and she did not recognise her daughter when they were reunited. Generally, the painful nature of such family reunions after the narrator's return from prison or exile (which, as a rule, meant that the people had been apart for six or seven years, and maybe more than a decade) was not admitted as publicly during the 1990s.[20]

Instead of representing a value system, the narrator of the texts subjected to analysis tends to use her life story to discuss the contradictions in life. On the one hand, she claims not to have been interested in politics, but on the other hand, politics is the factor that has the most direct influence on her personal life. In her narratives, she is more or less ready to depart from her familiar environment and is able to adapt what is already there, to the new. However, this is often accompanied by a conflict between her ideals and the reality of life. For instance, when she describes falling in love with the schoolteacher who played the violin, she forms an association between this event and her fondness for reading as a young woman: "The books used to take me away to distant lands and I could look forward to dreams of happiness and love." In this episode, she mentions a book that inspired her to imagine the prince of her dreams.[21] However, as a by-product of falling in love, she experiences a discrepancy between her ideal husband and reality. She describes her shock when she learned that the man she loved was a communist: for her, a communist was a person planning to overthrow the government, a negative character who stood in contrast to the feelings of safety that she had felt at home and at school. Despite this, the political reality and the negative image of communists do not prevent her from deciding that her beloved is a good person. The selection and order of the events in the life story indicate that the narrator does not call into question the choices she has made in her life. By telling her story in such a way during the 1990s, she ran a certain risk of having her choices interpreted through the prism of political convictions. Therefore, the reader may have decided that since the narrator joined the side of communists and representatives of the Soviet regime, she consequently did not hold Estonian culture and Estonia's national independence in high regard. In other words – her stories required the reader to be tolerant.

Her narratives are structured so that the communication of the sequence of events is frequently interrupted. She speaks with the reader and interweaves her story with poems from well-known authors, song verses and words of wisdom she has heard from others and carries with her as "important ideas about life". Her texts are handwritten (she does not use a computer or typewriter). She uses different colours and pastes photographs or clippings from other texts in between her own text. The letters I have received from her also contain a

varying number of quotes from Estonian poets, which she links to her message. When in December 2002 she gave me her story about her homes (which I had asked her to write), she apologised for having used poetry in the story. She started off that story with a quote borrowed from Betti Alver, one of Estonia's most famous poets, which spoke of the contradictory nature of our souls.[22] I asked her why she used poetry in her texts. She explained:

> I am not sure; it's just how I feel. It might be because I used to keep a diary. And in this diary, I would write at the beginning of each day… everything started with a poem… it was like a motto. [---] The poem gives your thoughts a direction. You might not know where to begin but the poem puts your thoughts on the right path.[23]

In connection with the habit of keeping a diary as a young woman, the narrator also showed me the current writing tradition practiced by her family: important anniversaries of their family members are celebrated by designing handwritten books that contain good wishes from the other members of the family. The books consist of short texts written especially for the occasion (memories, descriptions of episodes in the person's life, etc.), as well as verses traditionally used in albums or borrowed from songs, poems, and clippings from photographs, postcards or magazines. The collage technique described above is also used in the life stories the narrator has sent to the Literary Museum, although to a somewhat lesser degree. As such, it appears that the narration of the stories the author has submitted to the archives is often grounded in the narrator's earlier and parallel experience of storytelling or writing.[24]

THE THREE CULTURES IN THE NARRATOR'S LIFE

Above, I have discussed the narrator's readiness to cross the boundaries of an environment that is familiar to her. This is also true in the case of crossing ethno-cultural borders. As expected, the narrator presents (and probably also experiences) her life as a whole, rather than as a process of wandering within and between different cultural spaces. In the following section, I attempt to demonstrate that in the narrator's life these different spaces do not exist simultaneously or as a culturally uniform (merged) entity. Instead, they are experienced as separate spaces which the narrator can enter or distance herself from during different stages in her life, in different situations and when performing different roles. She portrays her movement in the common ground shared by the cultures from behind the cover of personal relationships. When she notices the merging of cultures within herself in the course of the process, she describes it as a temporary phenomenon and claims that she can shake it off.

Her post-war life in the Soviet occupation zone in Germany raises the issue of the boundaries between ethnicities (Estonians, Russians, Germans), as well as the division of power between the representatives of the different ethnic groups (as winners of the war, Russians also represented power). The convergence of the political and ethnic background in her personal life is marked by her marriage to a Russian Red Army officer in the summer of 1946. Just as in the case of her first husband, she avoids linking her decision to marry to choosing any ethnic or cultural 'side' and instead keeps moving in the border area between cultures without positioning herself clearly. To her, this is the obvious thing to do and she is able to do this because her choices are always based on personal relationships between people and she eschews general stereotypes and attitudes. A sense of the dominant and ever-present political power can be felt in the background of the narrative. This becomes apparent, for example, in her description of how her husband (a representative of the Soviet regime in Germany) helped the local Germans by finding work for them. Her own ethnic and cultural situation was rather peculiar during the period of her life she spent in Germany. For example, to the prison guards she was a Russian (*Russische Schweine*) because she came from Eastern Europe. A separate hierarchy of ethnic groups existed among the prisoners themselves and Estonians seem to have been positioned on the lower end of the spectrum, although she does not provide a very detailed description of this phenomenon.[25] When she accompanied her Russian husband to a party for the Red Army soldiers, the people with a Russian cultural background considered her style of dress to be Western European and her husband's friends' attitude towards her proved to be problematic. We can ask whether the event described in the life story is the context of the party or the experience of a different culture that made the narrator think about cultural differences reflexively. The latter would probably be the correct answer. The narrator provides a more explicit description of the connections between ethnicity and the division of power in her account of how she had a nanny in Berlin after the war. The narrator's neighbour, a German woman, was her nanny. On the one hand, members of the Russian community used to ask the narrator how she dared to leave her child in the care of a German person, while the nanny had to face rhetorical questions about how she could love the child of a Russian person.[26]

It is interesting to note that although the narrator socialised with her German neighbours, her story contains no descriptions of the everyday life of a German family. That is not true for Russian families, however. The narrator makes note of and describes the cultural differences she experienced when her husband took his wife and child to meet his mother. For example, she provides colourful descriptions of the Russian stove, the samovar, the religious icons

and her mother-in-law's tea drinking tradition and piety. Her comparison of the three cultural environments is summarised in the following observation:

> I felt that this home [of her husband's relatives in Russia] was governed by semi-patriarchal customs and was very different from anything I had encountered in Germany and even more so from my childhood home in the country.[27]

Also, the narrator's descriptions of post-war Germany make no mention of the maintenance of the city. Her memories of the first time she saw Moscow on May 2, 1948, however, are dominated by her dismay at seeing the streets filled with litter. Her attitude towards the maintenance of public order as an issue related to a clash of cultures is also briefly mentioned in connection with Kohtla-Järve in Estonia. She says that many of the Russians arriving in the town had served time in prison and used terrible language:

> Estonia became more alien to me. There were husks of sunflower seeds strewn about everywhere. The two cultures, mostly represented by uncultured individuals, would clash ever more violently and send sparks flying. One side thought that this was their land now and the other thought that it was their homeland.

The narrator's opinion was that "there should be order. Cleanliness".[28] Unlike her account of post-war Germany, her stories of the visits she has made to Germany in the recent past do mention the environment. She admires "the wonderful towns on the slopes of valleys [---] adorned by the abundance of flowers in May" where they "saw neither criminals nor policemen during our two-week trip".[29] These surroundings are contrasted with her own home during the same period: the one-room apartment in a concrete block house in Kohtla-Järve, which she protects with "two locks as well as a chain at night and a peephole, due to the fact that my new six-month-old TV set, radio and other appliances disappeared without a trace a year and a half ago and are being used by someone else," she says, referring to a break-in.[30] The manner in which she portrays 'the other' in comparison to her own home environment also reveals her feelings about her home at the time. If post-war Germany seemed familiar to her and similar to the environment she had known at home, she does not write about it. If Germany at the end of the 20th century stood in contrast to the post-Soviet environment of Kohtla-Järve, then on that level, the cultural environment of Germany was more familiar to her than that of Kohtla-Järve in the 1990s and 2000s.

The narrator proves that the cultures she was exposed to were mingling within her, by stating (in regard to her return to Estonia in 1948): "[---] a lot of

strange things stuck with me as a result of living in that jumble of Russians and Germans [in post-war Germany]".[31] She also discovered that she had started talking in a mixture of Estonian, Russian and German. Although this shocked her relatives in Estonia, it was a temporary phase. Language problems within her multi-ethnic family presented themselves in the long term, however. For instance, her daughter from her first marriage did not speak any Russian, which is why she could not communicate with her stepfather for many years: "it was several years before they could speak to each other" (but in which language?); the daughter born in Germany from her second marriage could speak Estonian and would reply to her Russian father in Estonian.[32]

All three children born from her second marriage have Russian names. In the case of one name, she says that she was unsure about her husband's choice, while in the case of another name she remembers having suggested it herself. Maybe these examples do not point to some ethnic and cultural orientation on the part of the narrator but alternatively, perhaps the lack thereof? She recognises the contrasts that exist within her family due to their different ethnic origins. For example, she and her husband used to participate in both Estonian and Russian cultural events, but only due to each other's influence, not because they personally wanted to. Also, the narrator states that her husband's gift to her for the birth of their son was made "according to Russian custom". She also mentions that he never made it back to Russia, since his grave is in Estonia. However, she does not consider these ethnic borders within her family as sources of conflict. She demonstrates that she and her husband made an effort to solve the problems stemming from their different backgrounds (choosing the names for their children, deciding how to spend their free time, etc.) to please one another.

In the case of the family, we see that the process of cultural reception occurs simultaneously and that occasionally choices have to be made (e.g. the choice of Russian names for the children or the fact that the Russian husband was buried in an Estonian cemetery), whilst at other times the parties remain neutral participants who simply note the differences (e.g. when they receive "a gift made according to Russian custom"). The relationships outside the family also seem to function, with the family tending to inhabit one cultural space at a time. In these cases, the presence of different cultures in the narrator's life may be seen as consecutive, rather than simultaneous (i.e., the cultures do exist side by side but are practiced separately, one by one). For example, the narrator describes spending summers with her children in her childhood home in the midst of her Estonian relatives in a southern Estonian village. When the family lived in Kohtla-Järve, they used to communicate more with Russians who were her husband's colleagues during the first few years (the end of the 1940s and

the first half of the 1950s). The narrator mentions, however, that eventually she felt an increasing need to experience the Estonian cultural context.

Therefore, the mutual connections between the cultural spaces in her life cannot be viewed from one dimension alone. As a result of personal relationships, different cultures may coexist more intensely in her private life but as the effect of personal relationships declines, so does the presence of the 'other' culture. At the same time, she is able to switch between cultural spaces during the same stage in her life: for example, she lives in the Estonian environment while spending summers in the country with her children and experiences the Russian environment in the winter when she communicates with her husband's circle of friends in Kohtla-Järve. Her description of either happening to enter or willingly entering the 'other' culture reveals how different she feels it is from her 'own' culture.

CULTURAL CONTEXT OF THE STORIES

Naturally, all of the texts tell the same life history; however, there are differences in how the narrator positions herself in relation to her imaginary audience. She opens her first story, written in 1996, with this statement:

> I do not know how life stories are written. My readers, I do not know who you are. I will lend you my eyes and my heart so that you might see and feel along with me.[33]

The story she wrote a year later begins with the following passage, however:

> I realise that the question may emerge, how I could condense the 78 years of my life into writing so that some more diligent readers might be able to finish the story. Why not? I have a stack of unbound empty sheets of paper on my desk. That's how I'll begin. The unbound pages of my life story.
>
> To live one's life to the end.
> To be close to someone.
> To be needed by someone.
> To do a bit more good than harm.
> Sometimes to be peaceful and happy. (Katre Ligi).[34]

While the first story is a coherent narrative that is not divided into subchapters, the second story is structured chronologically and thematically: the events are presented in the order that they occurred in real life, but the topics that the narrator discusses are expanded upon through recollecting and discussing similar events. She begins each new topic with a quote (a poem, a piece of folk wisdom,

etc.). If we take into account the time when the poems were published, we see that many of the collections of poems she quotes were published in the mid-1980s or during the second half of the decade. Clearly, this is another indication of the narrator's love of reading and its connection to her self-searching in the 1980s.

The life story written in Russian is composed as a story being told to the narrator's grandchild, a Russian woman, and becomes a kind of a dialogue between the two. She pastes clippings from her granddaughter's letters in between her own handwritten text in order to direct the flow and tenor of the story. Therefore, the narrator's use of the excerpts from her granddaughter's letters is analogous to her use of quotes from poems in the story she tells in Estonian. For instance, the story contains an excerpt from a letter sent to the narrator by her son's daughter who lives in Italy and reminisces about visiting her grandmother's childhood home. She writes that it was the most beautiful place in the world. The grandmother continues from here. She says that when she lived on the farm as a child, she wanted to soar like a bird and see what was hidden beyond the horizon. This way of presenting the past seems philosophical, to a certain extent. It displays the different points of departure of two young people: on the one hand, a young woman who is travelling the world looks back from Italy to the yard of her grandmother's childhood home, while on the other hand, the narrator recalls the days when she was young and wanted to see the world and escape the confines of her family's farm. This contrast is only imaginary, however, since the narrator is also familiar with the world that lies past the horizon she saw from her home. It seems that she has chosen this method for telling her story in order to find (or create) some experiences in her life that her readers could share. The effort to find this common element is supported by the collage technique, which makes the narrator's style so distinctive. She is not a narrator who would simply tell her life story.

The broader context of the stories the narrator tells in Estonian has its basis in cultural history: her descriptions of people's lives and daily existence paint a picture of the history of Estonian society and yet this clashes with political history. She talks about her ancestors' lives in Imperial Russia and the conflicts between the peasants and their landlords; she also tells her readers about school life in the Republic of Estonia, the organised activities related thereto and the cultivation of patriotism in the 1920s and 1930s. Her life story in Russian, on the other hand, focuses on personal relationships and avoids discussing the cultural background, which would likely be incomprehensible for someone who has not studied in an Estonian school or read Estonian literature. However, if we look at the situation from another perspective, it becomes apparent that she is unable to provide a background of cultural history in her Russian-language story due to the fact that she is not as familiar with Russian culture as she is

with Estonian or perhaps even German culture. Russian culture reaches her in a fragmentary manner and she describes the phenomena originating from it as being done "according to Russian custom" or in some other manner that emphasises their difference and the fact that they lie beyond her own cultural border. In the story she tells in Estonian, the narrator describes the children of her grandchildren and says that she is teaching them songs that have been well known to Estonians for several generations. As a reader, I recognise the songs from the titles she mentions (*Õrn punased purjed* [Red sails], *Kungla rahvas* [People of Kungla]), meaning that I know the words and melodies to these songs, I have heard them myself and I am able to place them according to periods and performers.[35] We come from the same culture. The narrator does not display such cultural connections in the story she tells in Russian. Although she says that her family used to enjoy singing, she does not mention which songs were sung. She says only that her mother sang "her city songs" (her mother had been born and raised in the town of Tartu), while her father sang "his war songs" (her father fought in the First World War). She refers to the different styles but not to the songs themselves, since the narrator does not share the common cultural element of the songs with her granddaughter. This is also true for her and the broader public to whom the story is actually addressed and who is, in this respect, in the same situation as her grandchild.

SUMMARY

The narrator describes contacts between different cultures based on her role at each stage of her life: she was a farmer's daughter and became the wife of a schoolteacher; after that, she was a political prisoner and became the wife of an officer in the army that had won the war and also belonged to another ethnic group; she was a member of an Estonian family and became a member of an ethnically mixed family. In describing the encounters between cultures, the narrator emphasises the role of personal relationships rather than her own cultural orientation. For example, her relationship with her husband who belongs to another ethnic group is based on love and a shared daily routine. She does not suggest that her communication with her husband brought about a merger of cultures. She demonstrates that cultural choices in her marriage were reduced to taking each other's feelings into consideration. Her relationships with her children and grandchildren are more complicated. Although she does not analyse those relationships as much as she does the one between her and her husband, she does point out that while the family of her daughter, whose life was grounded in Estonian culture, retained their connection to Estonia,

her sons' children, whose mothers were not Estonians, have moved to Western Europe. She sings "beloved songs from long ago" to her daughter's children and writes down her life story in Russian for the others.

When describing cultural differences, the narrator prefers to observe rather than judge. Even in the cases where she has to assume a cultural position in conflict situations, she does so by way of describing what she felt and avoids condemning 'the other'. This approach is in keeping with her general self-description: she continues to be prepared to cross cultural borders and stand out from others like her.

Cultural borders are expressed in the narrations through other factors. The division of political power between the cultures that come into contact with each other is one example of the occurrence of such factors that are, however, mainly related to the functioning of personal relationships in culturally diverse circumstances. The narrator's choice to base the telling of her life story on the personal level begs the question of how she interprets the connection between the co-existence of different cultures and political power. It is clear that in post-war Germany as well as in Soviet Estonia, different cultures made up a hierarchy. She makes note of this fact (the position of Estonian and Latvian prisoners when compared to prisoners of other nationalities; the relationships between her Russian husband and the local Germans; the choice of the language of communication and future expectations in an ethnically mixed family) but avoids discussing it further. One reason for such an approach may be the fact that she has experienced many cultural hierarchies during her life and they have proved to be changeable. Therefore, she does not focus on her own cultural preferences and generally tries to efface the issue of cultural hierarchies in her story. It seems that she even considers such hierarchies to be incidental, when compared to everyday humaneness, which is timeless. The other reason is related to her personality: she demonstrates the contrast between her ideals and real life. Quite a few of her ideals and several events in her life bring her into a position of power in the circumstances of cultural diversity (for example, her marriage to a Russian man makes her one of the winners of the war in Germany and a representative of the Soviet regime in Soviet Estonia). At the same time, in these situations, her own cultural background was 'other' in relation to the 'culture of power'. The situation had been reversed by the time she told her stories in the 1990s and 2000s, after Estonia had restored its independence, and in terms of her background, she belonged to the 'culture of power' although she had relinquished her position to some extent through the decisions she had made in life.

On the basis of the stories analysed here, the cultural borders and different cultural spaces identified within can be differentiated on three levels. First of

all, it appears that different cultural spaces existed side by side in the narrator's life and she practiced them consecutively rather than simultaneously. Let us consider, for example, her family life in a culturally diverse town compared to the summers she spent in her childhood home in an Estonian village; the get-togethers they had at home with her husband's Russian colleagues compared to her increasing need for an Estonian environment and spending time with Estonians, and the fact that she and her husband used to alternate between visiting Russian and Estonian cultural events. Secondly, her life among alien cultures in post-war Germany where she had no contact with Estonians led her to believe that cultures were blending within her. She experiences this as a detachment from herself: "am I the same person as before?"; "a lot of strange things stuck with me". In retrospect, this period was episodic in character due to the inflow of new situations and experiences. Thirdly, the comparison of Estonian and Russian texts revealed that different cultural backgrounds establish limitations for the narrator as well as the recipients of the story. Neither the narrator nor her audience can escape their cultural backgrounds in interpreting the life events and understanding the story, although the events that occurred in the narrator's life can be communicated in a similar fashion in both languages.

It follows that the presence of different cultural spaces in the narrator's life did not bring about a mingling of cultures – instead, the differences between the cultures are expressed through each other and in relation to each other. At certain points in her life, the narrator is able to move between cultural spaces. As a result of this process, comparable common elements can be found in different cultures (e.g. the issue of cleanliness in the narrator's comparison of her home and German culture). The immateriality and flexibility of cultural borders becomes apparent on this level of the life story. On the level where events are interpreted (which, according to Lotman, is a semiotic space), both the narrator and the reader have a need for their own specific cultural contexts. Cultural borders are much more rigid here than they are in regard to descriptions of life events. When she tells her story in Russian, the narrator is unable to use the same cultural texts and cannot rely on Estonian history as she does when telling the story in Estonian. This endeavour is rendered impossible by the lack of common cultural knowledge between the cultural space of Estonians and the cultural space of the Russian-speaking population of Estonia. This divergence of cultural backgrounds is not only apparent in the case of the two communities, but also within the narrator's own family, and so demonstrates that she is in fact unable to escape her own cultural background when describing a culture that she sees as 'other'.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This research was supported by the project *Writing Cultures and Traditions at Borders* (SA131578) and the European Union through the European Regional Development Fund (Centre of Excellence CECT).

The narrator's quotes have been adapted from the translation made by Tiina Ann Kirss (Kirss et al. 2004: 144–165, 298–317).

NOTES

[1] Letter sent by the narrator of the life story to the author: MK: Ida-Viru County, letter by M. T., 7–8 June 2003.

[2] The three texts are stored in the Estonian Cultural History Archives of the Estonian Literary Museum: the collection *Estonian Life Histories* – EKLA f 350, 405: 1 (1996, 61 pp.), 405: 2 (1997, 78 pp.) and EKLA f 350v, 57 (2004, 69 pp.). One written account (*Võõras* ja *oma* kodu ja lähiümbruses [*The foreign* and *one's own* in the home and its surroundings], 2002, 26 pp.), the narrator's letters to the author and the fieldwork materials related to the meetings are stored at the Department of Estonian and Comparative Folklore of the University of Tartu, MK: Ida-Viru County, M. T.

[3] I have previously analysed the Estonian autobiographical texts of the same narrator (Jaago 2004a). At that time, my analysis focused on her story in the context of conflicting historical events and migration.

[4] Kohtla-Järve became a town in 1946, after being established on the site of old villages and mining settlements. Among others, the inhabitants of Järve village had to remove their farmhouses and their village was replaced by a new town district built according to plans ordered from Leningrad (St. Petersburg). The population of the town was largely made up of immigrants who came to Estonia from the eastern parts of the Soviet Union. According to the 1959 census, for example, Estonians made up less than 40% of the population and this level had dropped to 23.1% by 1989 (see Valge 2006: 41–42, 59–60; Jaago 2004a).

[5] MK: Ida-Viru County, M. T. *Võõras ja oma kodu ja lähiümbruses*, 2002, p. 11.

[6] MK: Ida-Viru County, M. T. *Võõras ja oma kodu ja lähiümbruses*, 2002, p. 14.

[7] EKLA f 350, 405: 1 (1996), p. 32.

[8] EKLA f 350, 405: 2 (1997), p. 64.

[9] EKLA f 350, 405: 2 (1997), p. 77.

[10] EKLA f 350, 405: 1 (1996), p. 2.

[11] EKLA f 350, 405: 1 (1996), p. 60.

[12] The quoted poem by Anna Haava (1864–1957) was first published in the collection of poems *Siiski on elu ilus* [And yet, life is beautiful] (1930). I have assumed that the narrator found the poem from a selection of Anna Haava's poetry published in 1968 in the series *Väike luuleraamat* [Small book of poetry], p. 113. The poem *Elus peab*

oskama imesid ihata [In life you must know how to wish for miracles] by Virve Osila (b. 1946) was published in Osila's third collection of poetry entitled *Südameaed* ([The garden of the heart], published in 1993), p. 6.

[13] She was born in November, under the astrological sign of Scorpio.

[14] MK: Ida-Viru County, M. T. *Võõras ja oma kodu ja lähiümbruses*, 2002, p. 4.

[15] An edited version of the life story of the narrator whose texts are analysed in this article has been published in the first volume of the anthology *Eesti rahva elulood* ([Estonian Life Histories], Hinrikus 2000: 159–171) and the translation of this text into English by Tiina Ann Kirss can be found in the collection *She Who Remembers Survives* (Kirss et al. 2004: 298–317). The edited version of the story written in Russian has been published in the anthology *Rasskazhi o svoei zhizni* ([Tell us your life story], Hinrikus 2005: 28–51). In order for handwritten source texts to be published, they have to be standardised. The editing process reduces the originals to homogeneous texts, therefore reducing their individuality. However, the fact that the texts are collected in a single volume brings out the similarities between the life experiences, reinforcing the impressions that readers gain from reading about individual destinies. Due to the differences between the original and the edited version of the text, the two must be kept separate when conducting research. This article is based on the original texts.

[16] EKLA f 350, 405: 1 (1996).

[17] EKLA f 350, 405: 2 (1997).

[18] EKLA f 350v, 57 (2004).

[19] MK: Ida-Viru County, M. T. *Võõras ja oma kodu ja lähiümbruses*, 2002.

[20] The life stories of people who were imprisoned in concentration camps have been told since 1989 and, as a rule, they do not mention the estrangement between family members in the 1950s when people returned home from imprisonment and the mandatory exile that followed it (Jaago 2007). One of the rare exceptions is the following passage: "I had been away for 12 long years and had been starving for almost the entire time. The children had grown up and did not recognise me; they only knew I was their father due to the photos I had sent them when I was in exile." (EKLA f 350, 19.) However, the quote above only contains hints at problems in the family, rather than an in-depth discussion on the subject. The emphasis of the story is on the role that political repression plays in shaping a person's life. (cf. EKLA, f 350, 4 & 766.) On the other hand, the life stories written by the children of people who returned from Siberia address the issue of their reunions with their parents differently. The children who had been separated from their parents describe the sense of estrangement they felt when they saw their parents again (see, for example, EKLA f 350, 1369 & 2387).

[21] EKLA f 350, 405: 1 (1996), pp. 6–7. The work discussed here is the book *Helisev koidik* [The sound of the dawn] by the Hungarian author Reneé Erdös, which was translated into Estonian and published in 1935. The protagonist of the book is a young woman who is trying to comprehend the conflict between her ideals and reality. The boyfriend of the protagonist is also a product of the young woman's imagination and does not correspond to an actual man in real life.

[22] The poem *Võrdlus* [Comparison] by Betti Alver (1906–1989) was published in 1986 in a collection of poetry entitled *Korallid Emajões* [Coral in the Emajõgi River].

[23] MK: Ida-Viru County, M. T. Fieldwork report, 11/12/2002.

[24] In addition to the narrator of the story analysed in this article, I have contacted five narrators who have submitted their stories to the Estonian Literary Museum, and in every case it appears that the text sent to the archives can be examined in connection with the other texts written by the narrator.

[25] In the concentration camp at Stutthof, she was "in the Jewish part of the camp. Polish and Ukrainian women ruled here. As always, the smaller peoples such as Estonians and Latvians were minorities and had no say in anything." EKLA f 350, 405: 1 (1996), p. 19.

[26] EKLA f 350, 405: 2 (1997), p. 53.

[27] EKLA f 350, 405: 2 (1997), pp. 55–56.

[28] MK: Ida-Viru County, M.T. *Võõras ja oma kodu ja lähiümbruses*, 2002, pp. 15–16.

[29] MK: Ida-Viru County, M.T. *Võõras ja oma kodu ja lähiümbruses*, 2002, p. 16.

[30] MK: Ida-Viru County, M.T. *Võõras ja oma kodu ja lähiümbruses*, 2002, p. 4.

[31] EKLA f 350, 405: 2 (1997), p. 57.

[32] EKLA f 350, 405: 1 (1996), pp. 30–31; 405: 2 (1997), p. 58.

[33] EKLA f 350, 405: 1 (1996), p. 2.

[34] EKLA f 350, 405: 2 (1997), p. 1. Estonian poetess Katre Ligi, born in 1953. The poem was published in 1988 in the collection of poetry entitled *Aeg augustit ära saata* [Time to send August away], p. 115.

[35] The song *Õrn punased purjed* [Red sails] was published in Tallinn in 1936 as part of volume 15 of a collection of songs entitled *Modern lööklaulud* [Modern hit songs], p. 13. The songs published in this series mainly included well-known pieces from films or operettas of the 1930s and, to a lesser degree, original compositions. No authors have been provided for the song in question, although the English title of the song is mentioned as *Red Sails*. Written recordings of this song made between 1960 and 1971 can also be found in the Estonian Folklore Archives (RKM II 43, 506; 96, 510; 168, 366; 285, 240). *Kungla rahvas* [People of Kungla], original title *Vanemuine*) is a song written in 1896 by Karl August Hermann (1851–1909) for a melody by Friedrich Kuhlbars (1841–1924). The song has been sung at concerts, in schools, at national song festivals and family celebrations.

MANUSCRIPT SOURCES

EKLA – Estonian Cultural History Archives of the Estonian Literary Museum
RKM – Manuscript collection of the Department of Folkloristics at the Estonian Literary Museum (1945-1996)
MK – fieldwork materials of Tiiu Jaago in possession of the author

REFERENCES

Greverus, Ina-Maria (ed.)1988. *Kulturkontakt. Kulturkonflikt. Zur Erfahrung des Fremden*. Frankfurt am Main: Institut für Kulturanthropologie und Europäische Ethnologie.

Grišakova, Marina 2010. Narratiivne põhjuslikkus. [On Narrative Causality.] In: M. Grišakova (comp.) *Jutustamise teooriad ja praktikad*. [Narrative Theories and Practices.] Tartu: Tartu Ülikooli Kirjastus, pp. 52–67.

Hakamies, Pekka 2006. Soviet Settlers on a Strange Territory: Experiences and Narratives from the Former Finnish Karelia. In: M. Hurd (ed.) *Borderland identities: Territory and Belonging in Central, North and East Europe*. Eslöv: Gondolin, pp. 31–56.

Hinrikus, Rutt (ed.) 2000. *Eesti rahva elulood. Sajandi sada elulugu kahes osas* I. [Estonian Life Stories.] Tallinn: Tänapäev.

Hinrikus, Rutt 2003. Eesti elulugude kogu ja selle uurimise perspektiive. [The Collection of Estonian Life Histories and Perspectives of Studying It.] In: A. Krikmann & S. Olesk (eds.) *Võim ja kultuur*. [Power and Culture.] Tartu: Eesti Kirjandusmuuseum, Eesti Kultuuriloo ja Folkloristika Keskus, pp. 171–213.

Hinrikus, Rutt (ed.) 2005 = Khinrikus Rutt. *Rasskazhi o svoei zhizni*: *Zhizneopisaniia estonozemel'tsev*. [Tell Me about your Life. Life Stories of Estonians.] Eesti Kirjandusmuuseum & Ühendus Eesti Elulood. Tallinn: Aleksandra.

Hinrikus, Rutt & Kõresaar, Ene 2004. A Brief Overview of Life History Collection and Research in Estonia. In: T. Kirss & E. Kõresaar & M. Lauristin (eds.) *She Who Remembers Survives. Interpreting Estonian Women's Post-Soviet Life Stories*. Tartu: Tartu University Press, pp. 19–34.

Jaago, Tiiu 2004a. 'It was all just as I thought and felt': One Woman's World in the Context of 20th Century Events. In: T. Kirss & E. Kõresaar & M. Lauristin (eds.) *She Who Remembers Survives. Interpreting Estonian Women's Post-Soviet Life Stories*. Tartu: Tartu University Press, pp. 144–165.

Jaago, Tiiu 2004b. Narrationen von Heimat und Abstammung. Esten und ethnische Minoritäten in Estland erzählen. In: S. Wienker-Piepho & K. Roth (eds.) *Erzählen zwischen den Kulturen*. Münchener Beiträge zur Interkulturellen Kommunikation 17. Münster & New York & München & Berlin: Waxmann, pp. 173–185.

Jaago, Tiiu 2007. *Political Destinies: the Subject Matter of Stalinist Prison Camps in Estonian Life History Narratives* (manuscript).

Jaago, Tiiu 2011. Negotiating Place Identity in Life Stories from the Viewpoint of the Multiculturalism. *Ethnologia Fennica. Finnish Studies in Ethnology,* Vol. 38, pp. 96–111.

Jaago, Tiiu & Printsmann, Anu & Palang, Hannes 2008. Kohtla-Järve: One Place, Different Stories. In: E. Näripea & V. Sarapik & J. Tomberg (eds.) *Koht ja paik. Place and Location*. Studies in Environmental Aesthetics and Semiotics VI. Tallinn: Estonian Academy of Arts, pp. 285–303.

Kirss, Tiina & Kõresaar, Ene & Lauristin, Marju (eds.) 2004. *She Who Remembers Survives. Interpreting Estonian Women's Post-Soviet Life Stories*. Tartu: Tartu University Press.

Kõresaar, Ene 2004. Memory, Time, Experience, and the Gaze of a Life Stories Researcher. In: T. Kirss & E. Kõresaar & M. Lauristin (eds.) *She Who Remembers*

Survives. Interpreting Estonian Women's Post-Soviet Life Stories. Tartu: Tartu University Press, pp. 35–61.

Kõresaar, Ene 2005. *Elu ideoloogiad. Kollektiivne mälu ja autobiograafiline minevikutõlgendus eestlaste elulugudes.* Summary in English: Ideologies of Life. Collective Memory and Autobiographical Meaning-Making of the Past in Estonian Post-Soviet Life Stories. Eesti Rahva Muuseumi sari 6. Tartu: Eesti Rahva Muuseum.

Laurén, Kirsi 2010. Kirjoitetun kokemuksen kiehtovuus. [The Fascination of the Written Experience.] In: J. Pöysä & H. Järviluoma & S. Vakimo (eds.) *Vaeltavat metodit*. [Travelling Methods.] Kultaneito VIII. Joensuu: Suomen Kansantietouden Tutkijain Seura, pp. 426–449.

Lotman, Juri 2005. On the Semiosphere. *Sign Systems Studies*, Vol. 33, No. 1, pp. 205–229, doi:10.2753/RPO1061-0405270140.

Palmenfelt, Ulf 2006. The Dark Shadow of the Un-mentioned Event. Collapsing Taleworlds and Narrative Reparation. In: A. Kaivola-Bregenhøj & B. Klein & U. Palmenfelt (eds.) *Narrating, Doing, Experiencing. Nordic Folkloristic Perspectives.* Studia Fennica: Folkloristica 16. Helsinki: Finnish Literature Society, pp. 101–116.

Pöysä, Jyrki 2006. Kilpakirjoitukset muistitietotutkimuksessa. [Collection Campaigns in Oral History Research.] In: O. Fingerroos & R. Haanpää & A. Heimo & U.-M. Peltonen (eds.) *Muistitietotutkimus. Metodologisia kysymyksiä*. [Oral History Research: Methodological Issues.] Tietolipas 214. Helsinki: Suomen Kirjallisuuden Seura, pp. 221–244.

Rahi-Tamm, Aigi 2005. Inimkaotused. [Human Losses.] In: Ü. Ennuste & E. Parmasto & E. Tarvel & P. Varju (eds.) *Valge raamat. Eesti rahva kaotustest okupatsioonide läbi 1940–1991*. [The White Book: Losses Inflicted on the Estonian Nation by Occupation Regimes 1940–1991.] Tallinn: Eesti Entsüklopeediakirjastus, pp. 23–42.

Schmeling, Manfred 2000. Mischung als Konzept. Ein Aspekt kultureller Grenzüberschreibung in Kulturwissenschaft und Literarischer Praxis. In: R. Marti (ed.) *Grenzkultur – Mischkultur?* Saarbrücken: SDV Saarbrücker Druckerei und Verlag, pp. 349–365.

Schneider, Ingo 2004. Erzählungen als kulturelle Konstruktionen. Über Bedingungen des Fremdverstehens und Grenzen des Erzählens zwischen den Kulturen. In: S. Wienker-Piepho & K. Roth (eds.) *Erzählen zwischen den Kulturen*. Münchener Beiträge zur Interkulturellen Kommunikation 17. Münster & New York & München & Berlin: Waxmann, pp. 21–32.

Tuisk, Astrid 2002. The Place Folklore of Siberian Estonians Today. Reflections of Adaption. In: T. Jaago & M. Kõiva & K. Kärsna (eds.) *Lives, Histories, and Identities: Studies on Oral Histories, Life- and Family Stories*. Contemporary Folklore 3. Tartu: University of Tartu & Estonian Literary Museum, pp. 107–130.

Valge, Janek 2006. *Kohtla-Järve hilis-sotsialistlik segregatsioon*. Summary in English: Late Socialist Segregation of Kohtla-Järve. (Master's thesis in human geography.) Tartu: Tartu Ülikooli geograafia instituut. http://dspace.utlib.ee/dspace/bitstream/handle/10062/1358/valge.pdf?sequence=5, last accessed on October 13, 2011.

Welzer, Harald 2000. Das Interview als Artefakt. Zur Kritik der Zeitzeugenforschung. *BIOS: Zeitschrift für Biographieforschung, Oral History und Lebensverlaufsanalysen*, Vol. 1, pp. 51–63.

Wienker-Piepho, Sabine & Roth, Klaus (eds.) 2004. *Erzählen zwischen den Kulturen.* Münchener Beiträge zur Interkulturellen Kommunikation 17. Münster & New York & München & Berlin: Waxmann.

doi:10.7592/FEJF2012.52.lauren

FEAR IN BORDER NARRATIVES: PERSPECTIVES OF THE FINNISH-RUSSIAN BORDER

Kirsi Laurén

Abstract: This study discusses the socially and culturally constructed Finnish-Russian border which has been developed as a lifelong process, in the context of modern elderly Finns. It focuses on the emotions of fear represented in life and historically contextualised narratives discussing the post-war period in eastern borderlands. The included texts concentrate on border issues and are mainly based on the writer's personal experiences. The analysis is based on oral history methodology and highlights mainly the represented personal interpretations of the past, rather than actual historical events. The concept of fear is used as a theoretical tool to interpret the expressions of emotions in narrated memories. The study seeks to illustrate the causes of fear on the Finnish-Russian border in peacetime contemporary Finland.

Keywords: fear, Finnish-Russian border, experience, life-history, place

INTRODUCTION

The eastern borderline between Finland and Russia is the longest national border in Finland (1340 km)[1]. Today, a principal characteristic of especially the north-eastern and eastern border areas is sparse population. Over the last 40–50 years, settlements and job availability have been increasingly centralised around big cities, mainly in southern Finland's population centres. Nonetheless, many people who now live in different parts of Finland have spent their early life near the Finnish eastern border or in present Russian Karelia, which belonged to Finland prior to the Second World War (WWII). However, the memories of old borders and borderland landscapes remain in peoples' minds (see, e.g., Häyrynen 2006).

Among Finns, the fear of the Russian border and Russophobia have their roots in Finland's history and especially the events of WWII (e.g. Luostarinen 1986; Karemaa 1998; Vilkuna 2005; Lähteenmäki 2009; Raittila 2011). In 1939 the Winter War began with the Soviet Union's attack on Finland and the resettlement of evacuees from Finland's eastern border areas to western parts of

Finland. Finland had to cede East Karelia, parts of north-eastern Salla, and the Kuusamo and Petsamo regions, together with the outer archipelago of the Gulf of Finland to the Soviet Union. In 1940 the war ended with a defeat for Finland, however, in 1941 the Continuation War started and, along with Germany, Finland attacked the Soviet Union and the occupied East Karelia region. During this period, the Karelian evacuees once again returned to their homes. When the Continuation War ended in 1944, Finland was obliged to give up East Karelia and the resettlement of evacuees from ceded territories resumed. Over 400,000 Karelian evacuees had to leave their lands and establish new homes all over Finland, and Karelia was never re-taken. The Germans were driven out during the war in Finnish Lapland in 1944–1945 and in the post-war period that followed, the Soviet Union sought to maintain a good relationship with Finland. After these dramatic wartime events, Finland's position was uncertain and for years its future appeared as if it would follow a path similar to that of the Baltic States and Poland. Finland, though, managed to avoid occupation and maintained its independence (Fingerroos 2012: 483–484; Laine 1999: 155–156; Kinnunen & Jokisipilä 2012: 435–436; Meinander 2012: 49–50).

The roles of the Finnish-Russian border have varied a great deal, and this has reflected in Finnish culture and everyday life in the border regions. Undoubtedly, the fearful experiences of WWII have scared people for life on both sides of the border. During the Soviet period and after the war, the border between Finland and the Soviet Union was strictly guarded and almost impossible to cross. Today, the Finnish-Russian border is utilitarian and there is more interaction and transnational movement than in the period of the Iron Curtain. However, the border still exists and is distinct. It separates territories and two states. As such, this borderline has an influence on cross-border and cultural contacts because territorial borders are always boundaries for other territorial entities (Paasi 2000: 89).

My study discusses everyday experiences relating to the Finnish-Russian border in the narratives collected in an open writing collection campaign organised in today's Finland. These life-historically contextualised *border narratives* mainly concern elderly Finns (mostly over 60 years old) and their experiences and conceptions of the Finnish-Russian border. By border narratives I mean the texts that reflect the characteristics and functions of borders from the perspective of a micro-level (see Pickering 2006: 45). These border narratives are written by women and men who live (or have previously lived) near the Finnish side of the Finnish-Russian border or who have visited such regions. The texts were written in 2010, yet the time span reaches back to the 1930s when the oldest writers of the narratives were still children.

The aim of the study is to figure out how elderly people living near the Finnish side of the border write about their relationship with the border, and how they make sense of their border-related lives in their narratives (Doevenspeck 2011: 129). I take into account especially the sense of *fear* which is represented in these personal texts. Fear is a strong feeling and it is not the only emotion represented in the studied texts, and nor is it an emotional state that dominates the narratives of contemporary experiences of the Finnish-Russian border. Yet, in the different texts of the research material the representations of fear emerge so often and in such various ways that they deserve closer examination. Consequently, the central research question is: Why do elderly Finns (mainly from Eastern Finland) feel fear of today's Finnish-Russian border?

In their narration of different themes regarding their everyday life on the border, people express experiences, values, concerns and ideas that are important to them as individuals or as collectives (Klein 2006: 14). People's narratives expand our understanding of borders and bordering practices beyond institutional discourses (Prokkola 2009: 21). Border narratives bring out viewpoints on past events and their subsequent consequences that do not necessarily follow the official history or political discourses. The texts studied in this article represent an oral history[2] that reinforces publicly shared grand narratives and, in addition, buttressing counter-narratives (Bamberg & Andrews 2004). My approach to border narratives is experience-centred, by which I mean that the analysis rests on a phenomenological assumption that through a narrative or story, experience can become part of consciousness.

The personal and experience-centred border narratives of this study constitute oral history in written form and they are narrated in a life-historical context. Studying memories and oral history brings out interpretations of the past from the viewpoints of those 'below', such as marginal groups, defined social classes, women, children and isolated people (Fingerroos & Haanpää 2006: 27). The focus is on the so-called common people and on how they understand and remember past events, how they experience events and what meanings they give to their experiences (Jaago 2006: 1). Oral history is special because it tells more about the meaning of past events than the actual events themselves (Portelli 2006: 55). Therefore, the significance of oral history and the life-historically written personal narratives of border experiences are in their place in the history of a particular life, community and society (see Bornat 2002: 42).

Narrated memories of everyday life at borders are considered as representations of *places*; the places of the border area. Consequently, the concept of the place and its associations to reminiscing and oral history are essential in this study. Together with place, reminiscing and oral history, the concept of fear constructs the theoretical framework of this study. The framework is introduced

in subsections. Research brings forth the writers' viewpoints and examines the deep structures of the texts such as cultural meanings and textual cues, which highlight the author's emotional representations. Similarities and differences between the texts were considered, as well as text styles and word choice of the subject. The comparison of the similarities and differences between the texts helps to reveal the inner meanings of fear.

REMEMBERED PLACES AND EMOTIONS

Along with personal and collective ideas, border narratives are also representations of places. Thus, places like borderlands constitute an existential phenomenon, and not merely geographical objects (Relph 1996: 906). Places are not just static, they are processes – this can be taken to mean that places can be conceptualised in terms of social interactions, both local and those that stretch further afield. Thus, every place is a unique mixture of the relations that configure social space (Massey 1994: 155; Massey 1995: 59–61). Places are infused with meaning and feeling, and the way people feel about places indicates the various senses of that place. The meanings given to a place may be so strong that they become a central part of the identity of the people experiencing them (Rose 1995: 88–89). Most human experiences and memories are based on places and therefore the place – for example a border – refers to a micro-level world of meanings (Heimo 2006: 50).

Giving meanings to different things and places is a lifetime process. Every new experience is based on the past and that is why remembering is so important in processing both personal and social life in the borderland setting. Memory and recollection are in a central position when identifying with communities and cultures. Communities use these faculties to introduce and familiarise new arrivals with the community's collective past in order to help them to identify themselves. Such memories are often organised around places and objects (Misztal 2003: 15–16). The sense of fear of the Finnish-Russian border that emerges from the written memories of elderly Finns tells us not only about the authors' personal pasts but also their oral histories, so both the written form and the authors' life histories become the places of memory (see Portelli 1994: 61).

By reminiscing, the memories naturally intertwine with emotions. Typically, individuals often remember emotional events more than the non-emotional, and positively and negatively perceived events are more likely to be remembered than neutral ones (Kensinger & Schacter 2010: 602). For example fear, hate, and falling in love are strong emotions and strong emotions linked to the meaningful episodes in life are hard or impossible to forget. The reminiscing

and narrating, for instance, of pleasant or frightening things and specific life situations can spark off either positive or painfully emotional memories. Also, asking about certain things can trigger emotions in the subject that has been covered up (Kaivola-Bregenhøj 2003: 336–340).

THEORISING THE CONCEPT OF FEAR

Emily Hicks (1993) has stated that "border culture includes a deep fear, the fear of being seen/caught/asked for identification". Border culture is a strategy for facing fear and also demonstrates a will to deconstruct the language of representation, stereotypes, imitation, and violence (ibid.: 40). Hicks's statements are undoubtedly justified especially when trying to cross a border that is strictly guarded and not open or easily-crossed, especially for those without legal protection. The emotions of fear and contrary senses of security are also familiar to people who live their daily lives near national borders.

The sense of fear rises when we feel uncertainty and are ignorant of the threat we are facing. Many things can be perceived as frightening or threatening, for example violence, disaster or disease. People have different senses of fear and produce different reactions to them – one such reaction is to face the threat and veer between the alternatives of escape and aggression. Humans also have a socially and culturally 'recycled' or *derivative* fear that guides their behaviour, whether or not a threat is immediately present. This kind of fear is a sediment of our past experience of facing the menace directly. As Zygmunt Bauman (2006) says, this "sediment outlives the encounter and becomes an important factor in shaping our conduct even if there is no longer a direct threat to life or integrity". Derivative fear is the sentiment of being susceptible to danger – it is a feeling of insecurity and vulnerability (Bauman 2006: 2–3). In spite of fear's negative quality, it is a defensive feeling; it prepares us to react to threat and makes us able to function if needed. The feeling of fear evokes a need to avoid threatening occasions whether they are physical, mental or social. The sensibility to feel fear depends on both innate reasons and past experiences (Turunen 2004: 127).

Different eras pose different threats and different fears elicit different responses (see Bourke 2005: 6–7). Dangers can be concrete, real or imaginary. Often people feel fear, even though what may possibly constitute a danger may have little potential to be actually realised. Thus, fear is a condition of possibility (Furedi 1997: 15; Massumi 1993: 12). Nevertheless, the individual feeling of fear is always real. Whilst there are instinctive fears that most people share, there are also fears that are socially imbibed within cultures, from generation

to generation. Historical events like wars, environmental or financial catastrophes and accidents, form part of the collective memory so that people are more or less aware and provide for such kinds of possible threats and dangers in the future. For example, WWII remains one of the most threatening incidents in Finnish collective memory, and especially for the generation who lived during the war and the immediate period that followed.

In this article, fear is understood both as an individual state and as a social and collective experience. The physical and social dimensions are fundamentally intertwined in fear and this means that the fear of spaces and places is produced in the social process and, in addition, the relations of social power lie behind the perception of fear. Certain places provoke feelings of fear more than others. There are people and groups who seek to control such fear and there are those whose lives are pervaded by it. Accordingly, fear has material dimensions that are worth taking into account (Koskela 1999: 2; Pain & Smith 2008: 12).

We often maintain that the opposite concept of fear is *security*. Consequently, security implies that you are free from fear and threat, and/or you are capable of fighting against such threat. People usually have particular kinds of threats in their minds and they use the term 'security' in the context of these threats (Baldwin 1997: 15). Accordingly, in the border narratives of this research, fear is dialogically constructed with the sense of security.

BORDER NARRATIVES AS RESEARCH MATERIAL

The research material consists of selected texts gathered from open writing collection entitled *Living in the Borderlands – Experiences of Everyday life at Borders*.[3] This nationwide enterprise was organised by the *Finnish Literature Society* (FLS/SKS) and the *Writing Cultures and Traditions at Borders* research project in 2010.[4] This open writing collection was premised on gathering material, in the course of which voluntary contributors sent their written experiences and memories to the organisers. Writing collections are common in Finland and different archives[5] have focused on this activity. Usually, ordinary people are asked to write about their experiences of various themes and it is typical that people respond to these collections by writing about their experiences in a life-historical context (Latvala & Laurén 2012: 126). Before responding to an anonymous reader or researcher, authors have to decide which specifics and episodes of their personal life they dare to reveal. The type of narrative people finally decide to contribute naturally depends on the questions posed and the writers' trust in the researcher involved.

The *Living in the Borderlands* writing collection was targeted at the general public. The call for contributions was sent to the Folklore Archive's correspondents, about 200 people living all over Finland. The invitation was also distributed among several local newspapers in the east of Finland. People were asked to write about their experiences and daily life in the borderlands: *What is everyday life like in the borderlands? Write about your own experiences.* In the call for contributions, some themes were mentioned to help people recall their memories and to motivate them to write. Accordingly, the list of various themes functioned as a catalyst for reminiscence work (see Howarth 1999: 44). The themes mentioned were: cross-border contacts; the way of life and traditions on borders (past and present); borderlands in the eyes of children and young people; dwelling, working, school and studying on borders; fears concerning national borders; local perspectives on wartime; nature in the borderlands; trespassing and crimes at borders; importing groceries and goods; language issues on borders.[6]

Altogether, 36 people (22 women and 14 men), participated in the collection and sent 271 pages of unpublished text. The collection also includes nine photographs, two CDs, and two author's editions. Some authors sent two or even up to four different stories. The age of the writers varied between 50 and 91. Almost two thirds of the participants were born before or during WWII, thus, many of them were retired. Most of the authors were from North or South Karelia, and in consequence, about three quarters of the stories deal with the eastern border between Finland and Russia.[7] The authors represent various social backgrounds and occupations such as farmers, nurses, teachers, border guards and office employees. The collection *Living in the Borderlands* is archived at the Joensuu Folklore Archives of the Finnish Literature Society.

The collection focused on personal life and experiences. Even though it did not ask people to write life-historically, they did so and consequently the research has a life-historical and partly biographical context. Nonetheless, this is not a traditional biographical research which typically starts with an interviewer's broad request to interviewees to tell their whole life story (Rosenthal 2007: 49). In spite of the more restricted thematic emphasis (see previous page) people spontaneously started their narration by telling about their childhood and the years following it, intertwined with the border themes presented. Thus, a common narrative structure in these texts includes a distinction between past and present, and the ideas of future hopes and fears. A chronologically ordered life-historical series of experiences usually constructs quite a coherent story. People use this approach to tell more or less of their personal experiences and, consequently, about their emotions. It is typical in such cases that the closer the theme is for the narrator, the more emotional their story becomes.

The topics mentioned in the writing invitation obviously had an influence on the themes of narrated stories; they became a type of instrument of memorisation. The whole collection includes various themes, for example war time memories, narratives of crossing the border and author experiences of travelling in the Soviet Union and present day Russia. Many of the stories touch on the wartime, the evacuations during WWII and the fears and contradictory emotions concerning the proximity of the eastern borderline immediately preceding, during and after WWII. During wartime, the writers were either small children or had not yet been born. So, the authors recount their very early memories or memories heard from relatives or friends. Many of the stories are family narratives that combine the appropriation of both historical and remembered events ("As a child I was there"; "My mother and father were there and they said that…") (Portelli 2003: 6–7). Typically, these memories are of wartime experiences and how the war appeared through the eyes of the children or their parents, relatives or neighbours living near the Russian border.

It is quite obvious from the texts that the war was terrifying and many have negative and unforgettable memories of it, especially of the frightening Soviet enemy. But it is interesting that even today, many decades after the war, the sense of fear is prominent and comes up quite often in people's narratives. Regardless of not having lived during the wartime, many people living near the eastern border today recount the same feelings as those who had personally experienced the war. So, the feelings are probably partly imbibed from other people but also felt both individually and concretely in today's everyday life. Of course many cultural and social aspects such as school teaching, written history, media, literature and art have influenced peoples' minds, their attitudes and emotional states. So, along with many kinds of personal memories, the stories in the *Living in the Borderlands* collection also include heard and/or read stories related to WWII.

My analysis places emphasis on those narratives that highlight the sense of fear, especially in the post-war period. I have chosen 20 texts from the corpus narrated, written by 11 women and 9 men born between 1921 and 1949. Thus, the writers are relatively old, with the youngest of them being over 60 and the oldest almost 90 years old. The selected essays cover the writers' personal experiences but also include the stories and experiences heard from other people.

All the following text examples are from the *Living in the Borderlands* collection. The page numbers of the text examples (archive sources) are given in parenthesis.

DREAD OF BORDER AND THE SOVIET ENEMY

> *The country* [Russia] *stimulates, frightens – there were lots of beliefs and stories about it*. (Woman born in 1931, *Living in the Borderlands*, 2010, p. 38)

As the example above shows, fear is an emotion that often arises when elderly Finns write about their everyday life on the Finnish-Russian border. Authors write about the period of WWII in Finland and the sense of fear that prevailed, even long after the war had ended. Narratives tend to start by remembering a period of early childhood and adolescence, which take the aged writers' minds back to the wartime or to the stories they have heard of it. Near the border districts, the fear of the enormous Soviet enemy is described as a fear of death. Some parts of the narrated emotions reflect the atmosphere that prevailed among the family members or in the village community before, during and after WWII. Authors have heard their parents, relatives and other people's stories concerning the past events and the values implicit in the ethos of those days. By telling and retelling the heard stories and accounts of everyday life on the eastern border, the writers simultaneously unburden their strong emotions, and, in addition, their thoughts concerning the Russians. Accordingly, strong emotions like fear and the stories they have heard are carried from one generation to the other (see Latvala & Laurén 2012: 131).

During WWII the Finnish war propaganda also constructed an anti-Soviet atmosphere by presenting a terrifying snapshot of the Soviet Union. This propaganda has undoubtedly had an influence on people's conceptions of their eastern neighbour (Luostarinen 1986). During WWII and immediately after, the fear of a terrifying enemy was familiar to people on both sides of the border; the Finns were afraid of the Russians and the Russians were afraid of the Finns (Brednikova 2000: 27–30; Rainio 2009:135–138; Hakamies 2012: 96–100). Even today, Russia has a special role in the Finnish defence policy and is considered to be Finland's potential enemy; yet, it is potential in the sense that there are no actual hostilities between the two countries (Moisio & Harle 2002: 35–36, 53).

In the research material, the theme of fear of the eastern enemy comes out repeatedly. The oldest authors still remember the events of wartime, such as the evacuations, the sound of warplanes, the boom of cannons and the tragic messages they received of relatives who had died on the battlefield. Everyday life near the eastern border was felt to be chaotic and frightening in many ways, as it was also in other places in Finland. As a result of the war, hundreds of thousands of Finnish people from Karelia (eastern Finland) and parts of north-eastern Finnish Lapland had to move to other parts of Finland. Many important

cities like Sortavala and Viipuri in the Karelia region were ceded. This awakened negative emotions and enormous sorrow, especially among the ones who had to leave their home districts for good.[8] For example, a 69-year-old man who lived in South Karelia throughout his childhood, notes: "The new border that mutilates and amputates Finland, aroused impotent rage especially among people who lost their homes and birthplaces." (*Living in the Borderlands*, 2010, page 176)

WWII radically changed the Finnish-Russian border, both regionally and nationally. The new border was agreed upon in Moscow in 1944 and obliged both Finns and Russians to adapt to the situation (Kosonen & Pohjonen 1994: 360), but at the micro-level in Finland it is thought that the whole war and its losses were both a terrible wrong and a national disaster. The Soviet troops fighting against Finland, lost relatives and relinquished territories were felt as an insult against Finland's national and military self-esteem and against its cultural integrity. The lost regions remind the Finns invariably of the fear of bereavements, the danger of war and the dread of becoming part of a big eastern empire. To be swallowed up by this empire was at the time and still is the worst thing many can imagine transpiring. Threatening discourses which revolve around these frightening pictures are accepted quite unanimously within the national canon. Especially, the issues of the lost Karelia regions have, until recently, been an emotive and active subject of discussion. In consequence, for many Finns, Russia still represents otherness (Lähteenmäki 2009: 432–433; Fingerroos & Loipponen 2007; Fingerroos 2012: 30; Kangaspuro 2012: 50, 69).

WWII is a meaningful part of elderly people's life-histories and constructs nationally one of the most significant culturally shared narratives. This narrative appeals to sentiments – it is part of Finland's history, and this sentiment can also be seen in the post-war narratives of the research material. Fearful emotions have weighed heavily on people, especially those who lived near the border. As such, even in a peacetime period as late as 2010, the memories and visions of those involved were clear. For example, when describing her wartime fears, one 89-year-old lady writes: "I remember everything like it was yesterday" (*Living in the Borderlands*, 2010, p. 15).

After the war and during the Soviet period when the Finnish-Russian border was strictly guarded and hard to cross, people felt an invisible threat, and in their visions the threat came always from the eastern direction. Along with memories of war, one of the things that can be seen to cause negative emotions against the eastern border is the long period of the Iron Curtain. It was a period when the Soviet border was practically closed. There was little or no social intercourse between ordinary Finns and the Soviet people who lived in the border district. In consequence, the nation behind the border became unknown and forbidden; Finns and Russians were neighbours without know-

ing each other. They were spatially near to each other but remained isolated because of the guarded border. When these people on both sides of the border were not allowed to spontaneously engage with each other, there was little interest to build any relationship, not to mention making friends. If at the time they knew little of what the neighbours in the neighbouring country were doing, what kind of life they led or what could be expected of them, it would be difficult to feel any affinity towards them. Rather than to trust and feel secure, it was perhaps easier to imagine that the unknown neighbours were up to no good (Furedi 1997: 127–128).

In post-war border narratives, the clearest memories the Finns had of the Russians connect to the fearful memories of war. The narratives highlight how people were at all times prepared for the worst – to protect themselves against the eastern enemy. Negative attitudes to the eastern neighbour can be seen in elderly Finns' post-war narratives. When the authors reminisce about their childhood, they admit that they did not quite understand why various acts on the Soviet side of the border aroused suspicions and caused fearful reactions among adults.

> On one occasion when we were looking out of the kitchen window over the dark winter evening, there were flares soaring straight into the sky. Father sighed in passing that the *"'Vanjas'* [Russians] *have something to say, once again"*. In those days I did not ask more about the flares, and there were no explanations about them, but there was something frightening in them. I understood that it was not a question of fireworks that Mother had read about in a paper. (Woman born in 1947*, Living in the Borderlands*, 2010, p. 193)

Even though Russia is geographically next to Finland, many Finns have never visited the former Soviet Union or present-day Russia. According to border narratives, the eastern neighbour has often been placed as mentally distant from Finland (Latvala & Laurén 2012: 131). In addition to war memories, the writers base their images of the Soviet Union and Russia mostly on heard stories, news, movies, literature or other second-hand sources. Ordinary Russians are still felt as strangers although more and more Russian tourists visit Finland (especially the eastern part) every year. The narratives of elderly Finns' first post-war contacts with the Finnish-Russian border tell of suspicions and curiosity. For example, there is a narrative of a woman who lived 30 years abroad and moved back to eastern Finland during the 1980s. She recalls that in those days she and her foreign friends based their images of the Soviet Union upon western action movies and literature:

> The border created a kind of mystique to our lives because it was so near. All our foreign visitors were taken somewhere to the hills of Tuupovaara where the great Soviet Union could be seen far away across the border. The images of the Great Russia were based on our visions co-opted from some James Bond films or some other spy novels. (Woman born in 1943, *Living in the Borderlands*, 2010, p. 29)

When the Soviet Union collapsed at the beginning of the 1990s and the border gradually opened, people felt that something miraculous had happened; finally it was possible to see what lay behind the mysterious eastern border. This aroused confusing and very touching emotions among people on borders: "That moment in Värtsilä border station kept my eyes moistened", depicts a 63-year-old woman from Värtsilä, northern Karelia. (*Living in the Borderlands*, 2010, p. 193)

FEAR AND DEFIANCE AGAINST RUSSIANS

Immediately after the war many people in Finland did not accept the new border, and seditious ambience among local border people was not unusual. In people's minds it was inconceivable to have no possibility to visit earlier home districts, important cities and villages, even though they were so close behind the border. On the basis of the border narratives, most of the border people respected the official restrictions on the border zone, although some people used to express opposition to the rules and cross the border without the required special permission, even though it was a penal offence. Undoubtedly, forbidden border crossings were frightening but it was a way to brave the threat and express dissidence in a helpless situation, as this example shows:

> At the beginning of the 1960s, one kind of sport for village idiots in Närsäkkälä village in Kitee was to go to Russia [the Soviet Union] along the old straight road or along the frozen Lake Pyhäjärvi, as if the land behind the Russian border belonged to us [to the Finns]. Before the war there were close relations with Sortavala. Sortavala was the city of Kitee dwellers where they ran their important errands. It was only 30 kilometres from Närsäkkälä to Sortavala. (Woman born in 1949, *Living in the Borderlands*, 2010, p. 36)

Since the 1960s (and especially since the 1990s when the Finnish-Russian border opened up), border crossing has constantly increased and today there is a vivid interaction. The Finns, for example, visit their old home districts in the Russian side of Karelia, they work in Russia, and go shopping there. Intermarriages

are quite common as well. Similarly, Russians come to Finland for shopping, working, and, in addition, to buy land, houses and summer cottages. These last-mentioned issues are something that arouse contradictory emotions among elderly Finns. During the last decades, many Russians have bought houses and plots in Finland. The National Land Survey of Finland has estimated that there were over 500 related transactions in the course of 2011, and it is estimated that Russians own Finnish land to a value of over hundred million euros (*Talous-sanomat,* November 17, 2011). Russians bring financial welfare to Finland by buying land and buildings, but at the same time in Finland this activity stirs up a kind of suspicion, fear and anger towards them. It is suspected that Russians are once again trying to take over the Finns' domains and even though the Russians in today's Finland mainly represent a new generation who have nothing to do with the actions of the Soviet Union during WWII, their presence and acts in Finland arouse suspicion and anxiety among elderly people. Fearful memories and the conceptions of war are vivid, traumatic and they are actively maintained and handed down from one generation to the other. The following text illustrates some elderly Finns' negative attitudes to Russians in the city of Imatra in South Karelia, from the 1960s to 2010:

> Tourist and shopping tours from the Soviet Union to Finland, and plenty to Imatra, started as well. In the beginning, rumours unfolded against Russians, rumours of dangerous and impudent Russian tourists. There were talks about ready-made graves on the roadside, etc. These rumours stopped quite quickly but anger against Russians still persisted. The anger has increased along with the Russians' trades of land and summer cottages. Many people still resent the loss of Karelia. There is anger against Russian tourists even though they bring money to Imatra. (Man born in 1927, *Living in the Borderlands*, 2010, p. 261)

As the writer above notes: "Many people still resent the loss of Karelia". Russians were long associated with ruthless killing and death ("ready-made graves on the roadside"), although as the writer notes, the stories were just groundless rumours. Several border people mention in their narratives that sometimes they were afraid of illegal trespassers, and one writer relates a fearful experience of a Russian defector who thrust their way into her home. Today's fears are somewhat different than those of the earliest decades after WWII, as the threat of a new war is not a current topical issue. Nevertheless, inconsistent attitudes towards Russians are still alive, as can be seen in the descriptions of elderly peoples' narratives concerning land trading to the Russians. The border is now so ordinary that it is not even featured in daily life but the selling of

land to the Russians frightens and arouses helpless feelings in the narrative writers because "money has got power". A woman from South Karelia notes:

> It is no longer remembered that the border is so near. The border guards are vigilant and helicopters fly over the border from time to time. Nonetheless, at least when dark comes, I lock the door. I feel bad to hear again that some people have sold their houses to the neighbours [to the Russians]. Big money has power. (Woman born in 1930, *Living in the Borderlands*, 2010, pp. 206–207)

Traumatic memories, the heard and imagined stories of Russians and strong emotions have long-lasting effects on the personal and collective memory. For example, often experiences of a fear of death or helplessness make people feel that they are somehow different than before. Traumatic events and the time of recovery stay permanently in both the individual and collective life course (Aarelaid-Tart 2006: 35). Consequently, among elderly Finns the senses of fear and suspicion against Russia continue to some degree.

In this connection it is worth remembering that in Finland during the period of Finlandisation[9] (1968–1982) it was not appropriate to speak freely or negatively about the Soviet Union and past wartime memories. As such, in public discussions even traumatic war experiences remained in the background. During recent decades in Finland, it has been allowed to discuss freely and publicly the memories of WWII and the relationships between Finland and the Soviet Union and present-day Russia. Additionally, it seems important for elderly people on a micro-level to write about their negative emotions.

FEAR AND SECURITY IN REMOTE BORDERLANDS

Fearful emotions are also typical in the *Living in the Borderlands'* narratives which tell about life in fringe areas near the eastern border where people share their living environment with predators such as bears and wolves. The fear of animals is different to the fear of people, other cultures and nations, yet the narratives of facing fearful animals in border areas represent emotions that are relatively typical in a borderland environment.

When thinking of the natural habitats of predators we are accustomed to perceive them as being different to human environments. Cultivated fields, gardens and man-made buildings are the familiar and humanised world and the forest surrounding seems as a counterpoint to these cultivated environments of towns and cities. Especially during periods of urbanisation, the forest is envisaged as being infested with outlaws, wild animals, robbers, witches, and

demons (Tuan 1979: 81). For Finns, the images of the forest originate from the time of a hunting culture when the word *forest* (*metsä* in Finnish) also had the meaning of a border, fringe or edge. According to ancient Finnish myths and oral poetry, the forest was inhabited by spirits and powers of the hereafter and was to be treated with caution and deference. The most respected and largest animal in this environment was the bear. The interaction between humans and bears and the exercise of a bear cult has long traditions in Finland and has widely spread among hunting cultures in Northern Europe, Siberia and North America. The bear was a mythic totem animal and the funeral feast of the bear was held as a sacred ritual. Later on, as the agrarian culture spread, forests were exploited and because of the small number of available meadows, cattle often grazed in the forests. Since that period, the bear and the wolf have been regarded as natural enemies of people as they ravaged the cattle (Apo 1997: 46–49; Klemettinen 2002: 144; Sarmela 2006).

Today, the eastern fringe areas near the Finnish-Russian border are mostly rural countryside and people are still living near nature and forests. Predators thrive in the remote wilderness and they do not recognise national borders. Local residents are adjusted to this coexistence with predators, although the people who spend their time in forests (e.g. hunters, berry and mushroom pickers, and hikers), are sometimes afraid of them. The bear especially is thought of as frightening (Palviainen 2000: 77–87). The border narratives speak about being frightened of meeting bears and wolves near home districts. The next text example illustrates how the stories of being afraid of predators describe the relationship between humans and animals and also the life in borderlands situated in the middle of wilderness and on the edge of human environments:

> My images of the borderland interlocked with wolves, bears and all possible predators. [---] I remember that even in our home district, further from border, we were afraid of wolves. During at least one summer we took our cattle indoors, out of reach of wolves. I remember being scared to death many times when early in the morning I walked through the dark winter woods to the bus stop. Accordingly, in my mind, the first strangers coming across the border were wolves. Extremely frightening and cruel. (Woman born in 1949, *Living in the Borderlands*, 2010, p. 36)

In the narratives, the borderlands seem to symbolise something wild and unmanageable (*extremely frightening and cruel*). In this context it is noteworthy to highlight that in political discourses the bear has been used as a metaphor for Russia and the Soviet Union (see, e.g., Moisio & Harle 2002; Tarkka 2012). So, in border narratives, predators (and especially the bear) can be interpreted as having an ambiguous meaning.

It is an undeniable fact that sparsely populated borderlands are inhabited by predators that sometimes stray into people's territories. Contrary to the people living in marginal areas, people living in big cities and urban centres do not expect to face predators when they go out of their homes. In these borderland areas, however, encountering bears, wolves and lynxes is a genuine possibility. Such predators have always been part of everyday life in the remote countryside, even though they usually remain out of sight of people. Human control over these forest animals is restricted (or sometimes just impossible), and that is why border people feel the need to be prepared to face them in daily life.

Especially during the elk-hunting season in autumn, the newspapers in the east of Finland carry stories of hunting hounds being mauled by wolves. Sometimes bears enter people's gardens to eat apples, garden berries, cattle, sheep or dogs. In the countryside, people are often afraid of bears and wolves that might come too close to their homes. For example in the North Karelia border district, between 2000 and 2010, extensive damage was caused by predatory animals and even now people feel that carnivores are a real threat particularly to their children, for example, on their way to school. Consequently, the question of a feasible amount of wolves and bears arouses plenty of controversy both locally and nationally, culminating between the hunters and nature conservationists and also between the residents of the cities and the countryside (Rannikko et al. 2011: 30–39).

The frontier zone is an exceptional place to live because of its special restrictions concerning access and trespass. Official border guards administer security along the Finnish-Russian frontier zone. A long-time resident of the Finnish-Russian border writes about the border people's relationship to border:

> It seemed good to us; it was a safe place to live because later on the border guards passed by our house even two times a day. [---] The border was felt as ordinary, we were not afraid of it, we got used to it. (Woman born in 1939, *Living in the Borderlands*, 2010, p. 171)

The example above is written by a woman who says that after WWII, her childhood home was situated in the frontier zone and was only 500 meters away from the border. For some time after the war, border soldiers and guards used to live in their home, even though the home was small. The border zone had its pros and cons. It was not allowed to take photographs in the direction of the border and every person over 15 years old had to have a residence permit. If visitors like relatives were expected, the border guard detachment had to be notified beforehand. The writer says, however, that living in the border district aroused a sense of security ("it was a safe place to live"). The state authorities

were trusted, especially the border guards and the police, and she mentions that "we were not afraid of it [the border], we got used to it".

The impression described above is quite common among people who have lived near the border for a long time; yet, elderly border people also say that their relatives or friends from other parts of Finland or from abroad are usually afraid of the Finnish-Russian border. Border people seem to be used to giving reasons for their sense of security, which are marvelled at by other people. The everyday experiences of the border district and trust in the Finnish border guards, however, smoothes away the possible sense of fear – or at least leaves it in the background.

After WWII, many people in the eastern part of Finland found the new Soviet border tangibly more close to their homes than it used to be before the war. As time passed, people became accustomed to the nearness of the eastern border and their earlier sense of fear slowly subsided. The presence of Finnish border guards had a remarkable influence on the border inhabitants' adaptation to the new considerations of border regions. In the narratives, elderly people say that they feel safe when living near the guarded border, as no one can come near their home without somebody noticing. Finnish border guards are valued highly in the narratives and they are trusted to protect those living near the national border. Especially during the Soviet period, local Finns near the eastern border gained many types of assistance from the Finnish frontier stations and border guards. As the border guards had their eyes on the border zone, they took care of both national security and that of the local inhabitants. Gradually, the sense of fear shaded into a sense of security.

> In the early times we felt as if the border was securing our safety. People living elsewhere wondered how we even dared to sleep so near the border. We knew that the border was closed and the border guards were watching over the border. There were policemen in the Vainikkala frontier station. There was even no need to lock the doors during the night-time because criminals avoided borders. (Woman born in 1932, *Living in the Borderlands*, 2010, p. 41)

The tasks of the border guards are numerous but during recent decades they have changed more than ever. Finland signed the Schengen Agreement in 1996 (with implementation in 2001), and joined the EU in 1995. In consequence, cooperation with the EU increased further and the education of border guards in Finland was integrated into the programme coordinated by the EU (Warsaw). The purpose of border surveillance is to maintain order and security and, in addition, border guards must have the knowledge and capability to undertake criminal investigation and leadership (Pohjonen 2009: 86–87, 167–169; The

Finnish Border Guard, January 4, 2012). In 2009 the law changed so that, if the police are not available to perform urgent duties immediately, the border guard detachment may supplement them. The leading regional newspaper *Karjalainen* in North Karelia wrote in its editorial at the beginning of 2012 that today border guards are, aside from their main duties, invaluable in performing police duties, such as traffic control. As they have competence to undertake police duties, to administer first aid and have rapid response capability, they are essential for local residents in sparsely populated border regions, where it could take a long time to get the ambulance or the police (*Karjalainen*, January 4, 2012).

CONCLUSION

I have tried to demonstrate the micro-level approach to the Finnish-Russian border by concentrating on the life-historical border narratives of elderly women and men mostly from contemporary eastern Finland. The research focuses on their written representations of fear that seems to be one of the most repeated themes in their narratives. By reading the narratives side by side I noticed that different writers share each others' experiences and assumptions. Fear is connected to their personal and culturally shared knowledge of the Finnish-Russian border and the historical events relating to it, especially WWII. Memories of war and the fearful experiences of it are tightly stuck in elderly people's minds. In contemporary life, the remembered fearful emotions still have an effect on their attitudes and interpretations concerning the Finnish-Russian border and the Russians themselves. In addition to personal experiences, their social life, interaction, the stories heard from the others and the media have an influence on people's attitudes. However, today border people live their daily lives and give no special attention to the nearby national border, and the sense of fear no longer dominates their everyday life. On the other hand, however, reminiscing and telling of their fearful memories of the eastern border and the threat of the Soviet Union is obviously an important issue for them, and is partly a way to offload traumatic and fearful memories.

Many Finns (including the young) have not travelled to the Soviet Union or present-day Russia even though it is a neighbouring country. But, according to border narratives, those who have visited did not always feel very safe when crossing the Russian border, and that perception persists today. Interaction between Russians and Finns obviously lessens the sense of fear mutually. Nevertheless, in the border narratives of elderly Finns, Russians still represent something alien: they are not trusted to buy land and settle permanently in

Finland. Wartime experiences, heard stories of the war, and a strong emotion of fear, dominate their expressed attitudes towards Russia and the Russians. Among elderly border people, Finnish border guards are thought to be important in assuring both national and, in addition, local security, and they are appreciated and highly trusted.

Sparsely populated borderlands also hold special fears in regard to predators. These fears represent the remote location of borderlands, but the inhabitants' fear of predators in daily life differs from that of other people – the fear of having bears or wolves intrude into the home backyard is not so widely shared with other Finns, and in public discussions and the media, people in cities do not always seem to understand the border people's negative attitudes towards such animals. The fear of the eastern neighbours and the issues of the Finnish-Russian border, however, are much more commonly understood and shared.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This research was supported by the project *Writing Cultures and Traditions at Borders* (SA131578).

NOTES

[1] Finland has a borderline between its neighbouring states of Russia, Sweden and Norway.

[2] Oral history sources include both oral narratives and their transcriptions, and oral history based texts (Fingerroos & Haanpää 2006: 9).

[3] *Living in the Borderlands* collection. The collection is archived at the Joensuu Folklore Archives of the Finnish Literature Society, in Joensuu.

[4] The period of the writing collection was April 1 – September 30, 2010. See web pages of Writing Cultures and Traditions at Borders, project: http://www.uef.fi/wctb, last accessed on November 22, 2012.

[5] Especially the Folklore Archives at the Finnish Literature Society: http://www.finlit.fi/english/kra/index.htm.

[6] See the writing invitation on the Finnish Literature Society's web-page: http://www.finlit.fi/kra/keruut/raja.pdf, last accessed on November 22, 2012.

[7] The remainder of the texts deal with borders between Finland and Sweden, Finland and Norway, and the sea frontier between Finland and Estonia.

[8] More on the Karelia issues can be found, e.g., in: Kinnunen & Kivimäki 2006; Fingerroos 2010; Fingerroos & Loipponen 2007; Raninen-Siiskonen 1999.

[9] The period of 1968–1982 in Europe is called the time of *Finlandisation.* During that period the Soviet Union controlled Finland's domestic policy (see Kurki 2012 in this theme issue).

MANUSCRIPT SOURCES

Living in the Borderlands [Rajaseudun elämää] writing collection, 2010. The collection is archived at the Joensuu Folklore Archives of the Finnish Literature Society, marked by SKS, JPA, and Rajaseutu, pp. 1–261.

REFERENCES

Aarelaid-Tart, Aili 2006. *Cultural Trauma and Life Stories.* Helsinki: Kikimora Publications.

Apo, Satu 1997. The Forest in the Finnish Mind. In: Martti Torkkomäki (ed.) *Minun Suomeni.* [My Finland.] Helsinki: WSOY, pp. 46–49.

Baldwin, David A. 1997. The concept of security. *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 23, pp. 5–26, doi:10.1017/S0260210597000053.

Bamberg, Michael & Andrews, Molly (eds.) 2004. *Considering Counter-Narratives: Narrating, Resisting, Making Sense.* Amsterdam & Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

Bauman, Zygmunt 2006. *Liquid Fear*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Bornat, Joanna 2002. Reminiscence and Oral History: Comparisons Across Parallel Universes. In: Jeffrey Dean Webster (ed.) *Critical Advances in Reminiscence Work: From Theory to Application.* New York: Springer Publishing Company, pp. 33–43.

Bourke, Joanna 2005. *Fear. A Cultural History.* London: Virago.

Brednikova, Olga 2000. From Soviet 'Iron Curtain' to 'Post-Soviet Window to Europe': Discursive Reproduction of the Russian-Finnish Border. In: Pirkko-Liisa Ahponen & Pirjo Jukarainen (eds.) *Tearing Down The Curtain, Opening the Gates. Northern Boundaries in Change.* Jyväskylä: SoPhi, pp. 25–37.

Doevenspeck, Martin 2011. Constructing the border below: Narratives from the Congolese-Rwandan state boundary. *Political Geography* 30, pp. 129–142, doi:10.1016/j.polgeo.2011.03.003.

Fingerroos, Outi 2010. *Karjala utopiana.* [Karelia as an Utopia.] Jyväskylä: Jyväskylän yliopisto.

Fingerroos, Outi 2012. Karjalan kysymyksen kolme aaltoa. [The Three Waves of the Karelia Issue.] In: Outi Fingerroos & Maunu Häyrynen (eds.) *Takaisin Karjalaan.* [Returning to Karelia.] Helsinki: SKS, pp. 23–45.

Fingerroos, Outi & Haanpää, Riina 2006. Muistitietotutkimuksen ydinkysymyksiä. [Central Issues in Oral History Research.] In: Outi Fingerroos & Riina Haanpää & Anne Heimo & Ulla-Maija Peltonen (eds.) *Muistitietotutkimus. Metodologisia*

kysymyksiä. [Oral History Research. Methodological Issues.] Tietolipas, Vol. 214. Helsinki: SKS, pp. 25–48.

Fingerroos, Outi & Loipponen, Jaana (eds.) 2007. *Nykytulkintojen Karjala.* [Today's Interpretations of Karelia.] Jyväskylä: Jyväskylän yliopisto.

Furedi, Frank 1997. *Culture of Fear. Risk-taking and the Morality of Low Expectation.* London: Cassel.

Hakamies, Pekka 2012. Karjala venäläisin silmin. Neuvostoasukkaat luovutetussa Karjalassa. [Karelia in the Eyes of the Russians. Soviet Residents in the Annexed Karelia.] In: Outi Fingerroos & Maunu Häyrynen (eds.) *Takaisin Karjalaan.* [Returning to Karelia.] Helsinki: SKS, pp. 75–104.

Häyrynen, Maunu (ed.) 2006. Theme number: Rajoja tilassa ja ajassa. [Theme number: Borders in Space and Time.] *Alue ja Ympäristö,* No. 2.

Heimo, Anne 2006. Places Lost, Memories Regained. Narrating the 1918 Finnish Civil War in Sammatti. In: Annikki Kaivola-Bregenhøj & Barbro Klein & Ulf Palmenfelt (eds.) *Narrating, Doing, Experiencing. Nordic Folkloristic Perspectives.* Studia Fennica: Folkloristica, Vol. 16. Helsinki: SKS, pp. 47–63.

Hicks, Emily 1993. The Broken Line. In: Massumi, Brian (ed.) *The Politics of Everyday Fear.* Minneapolis & London: University of Minnesota Press, pp. 39–40.

Howarth, Ken 1999. *Oral History.* Stroud: Sutton Publishing Ltd.

Jaago, Tiiu 2006. What Actually Happened in Estonian Political History – Stories of the 20th Century Events from the Viewpoint of Popular Narrated History. *Elore,* Vol. 13, No. 1, pp. 1–23, http://www.elore.fi/arkisto/1_06/jaa1_06.pdf, last accessed on November 22, 2012.

Kaivola-Bregenhøj, Annikki 2003. The Narrator's Emotions. In: Lotte Tarkka (ed.) *Dynamics of Tradition. Perspectives on Oral Poetry and Folk Belief.* Studia Fennica: Folkloristica, Vol. 13. Helsinki: Finnish Literature Society, pp. 329–342.

Kangaspuro, Markku 2012. Salaista kaupankäyntiä Karjalalla. [Secret Trade of Karelia.] In: Outi Fingerroos & Maunu Häyrynen (eds.) *Takaisin Karjalaan.* [Returning to Karelia.] Helsinki: SKS, pp. 50–72.

Karemaa, Outi 1998. *Vihollisia, vainoojia, syöpäläisiä: Venäläisviha Suomessa 1917–1923.* [Enemies, Oppressors and Vermin: Russophobia in Finland 1917–1923.] Helsinki: Suomen Historiallinen Seura.

Karjalainen: Rajavartijat jo korvaamattomia. [The Border Guards are Invaluable.] Editorial by the chief editor. *Karjalainen* [newspaper], January 4, 2012, p. 2.

Kensinger, Elizabeth A. & Schacter, Daniel L. 2010. Memory and Emotion. In: Michael Lewis & Jeannette M. Haviland-Jones & Lisa Feldman Barret (eds.) *Handbook of Emotions.* Third Edition. New York: The Guilford Press, pp. 601–617.

Kinnunen, Tiina & Jokisipilä, Markku 2012. Shifting Images of "Our Wars": Finnish Memory Culture of World War II. In: Tiina Kinnunen & Ville Kivimäki (eds.) *Finland in World War II: History, Memory, Interpretations.* History of warfare, Vol. 69. Leiden & Boston: Brill, pp. 435–482, doi:10.1163/9789004214330_012.

Kinnunen, Tiina & Kivimäki, Ville (eds.) 2006. *Ihminen sodassa. Suomalaisten kokemuksia talvi- ja jatkosodasta.* [Human in War. Finns' Experiences of the Winter and Continuation Wars.] Helsinki: Minerva.

Klein, Barbro 2006. Introduction. Telling, Doing, Experiencing. Folkloristic Perspectives on Narrative Analysis. In: Annikki Kaivola-Bregenhøj & Barbro Klein & Ulf Pal-

menfelt (eds.) *Narrating, Doing, Experiencing. Nordic Folkloristic Perspectives.* Studia Fennica: Folkloristica, Vol. 16, Helsinki: SKS, FLS, pp. 6–28.

Klemettinen, Pasi 2002. Kurkistuksia karhun kulttuurihistoriaan. [Glimpses into the Cultural History of the Bear.] In: Henni Ilomäki & Outi Lauhakangas (eds.) *Eläin ihmisen mielenmaisemassa.* [Animal in Human Mind.] Helsinki: SKS, pp. 134–173.

Koskela, Hille 1999. *Fear, Control & Space: Geographies of Gender, Fear of Violence, and Video Surveillance.* Publicationes Instituti Geographici Universitas Helsingiensis, A 137. Helsinki: University of Helsinki.

Kosonen, Matti & Pohjonen, Juha 1994. *Isänmaan portinvartijat. Suomen rajojen vartiointi 1918–1994.* [The Gatekeepers of the Fatherland: Finland's Border Guarding in 1918–1994.] Helsinki: Otava.

Lähteenmäki, Maria 2009. *Maailmojen rajalla. Kannaksen rajamaa ja poliittiset murtumat 1911–1944.* [Between the Worlds: Everyday Life and Political Breakdowns in the Finnish-Russian Border Region from 1911 to 1944.] Historiallisia tutkimuksia, Vol. 243. Helsinki: SKS.

Laine, Antti 1999. Finland-Russia, the Border Unites, the Border Divides. In: *Finland. The Northern Experience, New Europe and the Next Millennium.* Europe in the New Millennium. Helsinki: Tammi Publishers, pp. 152–157.

Latvala, Pauliina & Laurén, Kirsi 2012. The Sensitive Interpretation of Emotions: Methodological Perspectives on Studying Meanings in Written Life-Historical Narratives. *The Retrospective Methods Network. RMN Newsletter,* No. 4. Approaching Methodology: A Special Issue of *RMN Newsletter*, University of Helsinki, pp. 126–136.

Luostarinen, Heikki 1986. *Perivihollinen. Suomen oikeistolehdistön Neuvostoliittoa koskeva viholliskuva sodassa 1941–44: tausta ja sisältö.* [The Archenemy: The Image of the Soviet Enemy in Right-Wing Press in 1941–1944: Background and Content.] Tampere: Vastapaino.

Massey, Doreen 1994. *Space, Place and Gender.* Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd.

Massey, Doreen 1995. The conceptualization of place. In: D. Massey & P. Jess (eds.) *A Place in the World? Places, Cultures and Globalization.* The Shape of the World. Explorations in Human Geography. Oxford: The Open University & Oxford University Press, pp. 45–85.

Massumi, Brian 1993. Everywhere You Want to Be: Introduction to Fear. In: Massumi, Brian (ed.) *The Politics of Everyday Fear.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, pp. 3–37.

Meinander, Henrik 2012. Finland and the Great Powers in World War II. Ideologies, Geopolitics, Diplomacy. In: Tiina Kinnunen & Ville Kivimäki (eds.) *Finland in World War II. History, Memory, Interpretations.* History of warfare, Vol. 69. Leiden & Boston: Brill, pp. 49–91, doi:10.1163/9789004214330_003.

Misztal, Barbara A. 2003. *Theories of Social Remembering.* Philadelphia: Open University Press.

Moisio, Sami & Harle, Vilho 2002. *Karhu poliittis-maantieteellisenä naapurina: kansallinen identiteettiprojekti 2000-luvun Suomessa.* [The Bear as a Political Geographical Neighbour: The National Identity Project in Twenty First Century Finland.] Turku: Department of Geography, University of Turku.

Paasi, Anssi 2000. The Finnish-Russian border as a shifting discourse. Boundaries in the world of de- and re-territorialisation. In: Pirkko-Liisa Ahponen & Pirjo Jukarainen (eds.) *Tearing Down the Curtain, Opening the Gates. Northern Boundaries in Change.* University of Jyväskylä: SoPhi, pp. 85–100.

Pain, Rachel & Smith, Susan J. 2008. Fear: Critical Geopolitics and Everyday Life. In: Rachel Pain & Susan J. Smith (eds.) *Fear: Critical Geopolitics and Everyday Life*. Aldershot: Ashgate, pp. 1–19.

Palviainen, Simo 2000. *Suurpedot Pohjois-Karjalassa. Pohjoiskarjalaisten luonnonkäyttäjien kokemuksia suurpedoista. – Large terrestrial carnivores in North Karelia. Experiences of North-Karelian nature-users concerning large terrestrial carnivores.* Regional Council of North Karelia, Vol. 51. Joensuu: Pohjois-Karjalan liitto.

Pickering, Sharon 2006. Border Narratives. From talking security to performing borderlands. In: *Borders, Mobility and Technologies in Control.* Springer, pp. 45–62, doi: 10.1007/1-4020-4899-8_3.

Pohjonen, Juha 2009. *Rajarauhaa Suomen ja Euroopan puolesta. Rajavartiolaitos 1991–2009.* [Peace at Borders – for Finland and Europe: Border Guards in 1991–2009.] Helsinki: Otava.

Portelli, Alessandro 1994. *The Text and the Voice. Writing, Speaking, and Democracy in American Literature.* New York: Columbia University Press.

Portelli, Alessandro 2003. *The Order Has Been Carried Out: History, Memory and Meaning of a Nazi Massacre in Rome.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Portelli, Alessandro 2006. Mikä tekee muistitietotutkimuksesta erityisen? [What Makes Oral History Special?] In: Outi Fingerroos & Riina Haanpää & Anne Heimo & Ulla-Maija Peltonen (eds.) *Muistitietotutkimus. Metodologisia kysymyksiä.* [Oral History Research: Methodological Issues.] Tietolipas, Vol. 214. Helsinki: SKS, pp. 49–64.

Prokkola, Eeva-Kaisa 2009. Unfixing Borderland Identity: Border Performances and Narratives in the Construction of Self. *Journal of Borderlands Studies,* Vol. 24. No. 3, pp. 21–37, doi:10.1080/08865655.2009.9695737.

Rainio, Minna 2009. "It Was So Sacred": The Finnish-Russian Border Imagined and Constructed in the Stories of Border Area Inhabitants. In: Jopi Nyman (ed.) *Post-National Enquiries: Essays on Ethnic and Racial Border Crossings.* Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, pp. 128–146.

Raittila, Pentti 2011. Venäjä kansalaismielipiteissä. [Russia in Civic Thought.] In: Lotta Lounasmeri (ed.) *Näin naapurista: Median ja kansalaisten Venäjä-kuvat.* [From the Neighbourhood: Russia in the Images of Media and Citizens.] Tampere: Vastapaino, pp. 125–170.

Raninen-Siiskonen, Tarja 1999. *Vieraana omalla maalla. Tutkimus karjalaisen siirtoväen muistelukerronnasta*. [As a Stranger on One's Own Ground. Research of the Karelian Occupants' Oral History.] Helsinki: SKS.

Rannikko, Pertti & Hiedanpää, Juha & Pellikka, Jani & Ratamäki, Outi & Härkönen, Sauli & Salmi, Pekka 2011. *Kohtaamisia metsässä. Eläinkiistoista yhteistoimintaan.* [Encounterings in Forest: From the Animal Rows to Cooperation.] Helsinki: Metsäkustannus.

Relph, Edward 1996. Place. In: Ian Douglas & Richard J. Huggett & Mike Robinson (eds.) *Companion Encyclopedia of Geography. The Environment and Humankind.* London & New York: Routledge, pp. 906–921.

Rose, Gillian 1995. Place and identity: A sense of place. In: D. Massey & P. Jess (eds.) *A Place in the World? Places, Cultures and Globalization.* The Shape of the World. Explorations in Human Geography. Oxford: The Open University & Oxford University Press pp. 87–132.

Rosenthal, Gabriele 2007 [2004, doi: 10.4135/9781848608191]. Biographical Research. In: Clive Seale & Giampietro Gobo & Jaber F. Gubrium & David Silverman (eds.) *Qualitative Research Practice.* Concise Paperback Edition. London & Thousand Oaks & New Dehli: Sage, pp. 48–64.

Sarmela, Matti 2006. *The Bear in the Finnish Environment. Discontinuity and Cultural Existence.* Helsinki. http://www.kotikone.fi/matti.sarmela/bear.html, last accessed on November 26, 2012.

Taloussanomat [newspaper]. http://www.taloussanomat.fi/kotimaa/2011/08/21/ess-venalaisten-maakaupat-nousussa/201111653/12, last accessed on November 26, 2012.

Tarkka, Jukka 2012: *Karhun kainalossa. Suomen kylmä sota 1947–1990.* [Under the Arm of the Bear. Finland's Cold War in 1947–1990.] Helsinki: Kustannusosakeyhtiö Otava.

The Finnish Border Guard. http://www.raja.fi, last accessed on November 26, 2012.

Tuan, Yi-fu 1980. *Landscapes of Fear.* Oxford: Blackwell.

Turunen, Kari E. 2004. *Tunne-elämä.* [Emotional Life.] Jyväskylä: Atena-Kustannus Oy.

Vilkuna, Kustaa H.J. 2005. *Viha: Perikato, katkeruus ja kertomus isostavihasta.* [Hate: Armageddon, Bitterness and the Story of the Nordic War.] Helsinki: SKS.

doi:10.7592/FEJF2012.52.kurki

ONE LIFE AND TWO PERSPECTIVES SEPARATED BY THE BORDER
The case of Taisto Huuskonen

Tuulikki Kurki

Abstract: This article discusses Finnish writer Taisto Huuskonen who defected to the Soviet Union in 1949. It examines his biographical and testimonial novel, *The Child of Finland* (Laps' Suomen), which describes Huuskonen's defection and life in the Soviet Union. The focus of the article is to show how Huuskonen constructs 'I', 'we', and 'other' in the novel and how these constructions often produce a complex dilemma of positionality. In the novel, various topographical, symbolical and metaphorical borders are central, and they affect the way that Huuskonen defines his position and agency in relation to 'I', 'we', and 'other'. The article argues that the significance of Huuskonen's novel is that it represents the lives and destinies of thousands of Finns. At the same time the novel serves as a medium by which to process the painful experiences he recounts and the miracle of survival. At the time of its publishing in 1979, the novel *The Child of Finland* was interpreted in the context of the Cold War. Although Huuskonen's purpose was to write a survival story, his story was extensively seen to pronounce the juxtaposition between East and West, which gave it the appearance of a scandal novel vilifying the Soviet Union.

Keywords: defection, Finnish communists, life-story writing, testimonial novel, trauma narration, Soviet Union

MOVEMENT ACROSS THE BORDER

Before the Second World War and especially in the 1920s and 1930s, thousands of workers moved from Finland to Soviet Russia. The most active period of movement was the early 1930s when 15,000 people moved to the Soviet Union (Vettenniemi 2004: 47; Rislakki & Lahti-Argutina 1997: 17–19).The reason for their emigration was mostly political. Some of the political emigrants moved to the Soviet Union because they were inspired by the socialist ideology, and the utopia it maintained of the socialist society. Many others moved because of a sheer necessity to avoid imprisonment in Finland. The Communist Party of Finland, which was founded after the war, in 1918, was an underground movement until 1944. During this period, belonging to the Finnish Communist

Party or participating in its activities provided valid grounds for imprisonment or accusations of treason (Asplund 2011). This made many communists escape across Finland's national border to the Soviet Union. The movement across the national border dwindled in the late 1930s and was almost non-existent by the end of the Second World War. The Cold War period that started after the Second World War and the infamous Iron Curtain that descended on the border, prohibited movement across the border until Perestroika and the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991.

Taisto Huuskonen defected to the Soviet Union with his fiancée Enni during a time when it seemed most unlikely: 1949. The Second World War had ended only five years earlier and due to the Cold War, the Iron Curtain was already descending on the border between East and West. The military alliance NATO was founded in 1949 and drew the United States and Western Europe closer to each other, while the Soviet Union expanded its communist political system in its satellite countries (Gaddis 2007). In these circumstances, Finland tried to maintain diplomatic but neutral relations with both East and West. Finland and the Soviet Union concluded the Finno-Soviet Treaty in 1948 (The Agreement of Friendship, Cooperation, and Mutual Assistance). The purpose of the treaty was to maintain, develop, and strengthen economic and cultural relations between the countries, and defend peace and security according to the principles declared by the United Nations (Finlex 17/1948). Nevertheless, the relationship between Finland and the Soviet Union was strained. The countries had been enemies in the war only a couple of years earlier. During the immediate post-war years, Finland feared a socialist coup and an occupation by the Soviet Union. Despite the forced neutrality and the treaty between Finland and the Soviet Union, and the fact that Finland did not join NATO, the relationship between Finland and the United States remained friendly (Tarkka 1992: 28–29, 34–35).

Taisto and Enni Huuskonen's defection to the Soviet Union was rather unexpected in the post-war atmosphere of Finland and would indicate that Huuskonen had very strong internal motives for this. According to Huuskonen, his reasons for defecting were his great admiration toward socialism and his desire to start a new and better life in the Soviet Union. His other reasons for defecting can only be speculated upon afterwards, although one motive could be Huuskonen's difficulties with Finnish authorities and his consequent imprisonment had he stayed in Finland. Whatever the reasons for defecting, it had very dramatic and unexpected consequences for Taisto and Enni Huuskonen. Due to their illegal entry into the Soviet Union, Taisto and Enni Huuskonen were first condemned to a prison (forced labour) camp and then later to internal exile within the Soviet Union, and so began a stay of twenty-six years in the Soviet Union.

In the Soviet Union, Huuskonen became a writer and published three novels: *Sprouts of Tomorrow* (Huomenen Oraat, 1963), *Land is Missing a Farmer* (Maa kaipaa isäntää, 1968), and *Steel Storm in the Karelian Isthmus* (Teräsmyrsky Kannaksella, 1971). What influenced Huuskonen's decision to become a writer was perhaps his life experiences in the Soviet Union rather than an inner desire to write. After settling in Soviet Karelia in the mid-1950s, writing became the only means to earn a living for Huuskonen. His weakened physical health did not allow him to do physically demanding work. When Huuskonen returned to Finland, his reasons for writing changed. In Finland, writing became a tool for processing his traumatic life experiences in the Soviet Union. Narrating and re-narrating became tools for externalising, processing and interpreting his traumatic life-experiences of the past (see Novak 2006: 106–107). Processing of this trauma resulted in his writing his life story and the story of his survival in the Soviet Union. The final product, *The Child of Finland* (Laps' Suomen), was published in 1979, three years after Taisto and Enni Huuskonen had returned to Finland.

The novel *The Child of Finland* directs the readers' attention to the crossing of national borders, and particularly how crossing the border makes Huuskonen critically study his own identity and loyalty to different ideologies. The concepts 'I', 'we', and 'other' have a central role in the novel, as Huuskonen uses them to define his identity and position in the world. This article focuses on the question of how Huuskonen constructs 'I', 'we', and 'other' through his writing in *The Child of Finland*. In this article, 'I' means the narrated 'I' and the narrating voice of the novel, which are both that of the author, Huuskonen. 'We' is a narrated and sometimes rather implicit category, with whom 'I' forms a sense of solidarity and shares certain values, ideals, and political leaning. The 'other' consists of those who oppose the 'I' and 'we'.

In the novel, 'I', 'we', and 'other' are discursive categories that are redefined continuously in narration. Therefore, the concepts 'I', 'we', and 'other' are not static categories in the novel, but are partially overlapping, and their definition depends upon the side of the border and life experiences that Huuskonen is focusing on. Although the idea of a national border is very central when defining 'I', 'we', and 'other', the symbolic and metaphorical borders seem to be even more significant (see Jaago 2012 in this theme issue).

In this article, Huuskonen's novel is seen as an agent with which the writer can process his traumatic experiences and position himself in the world. The other focus point in this article is to show how Huuskonen's traumatic experiences are integrated into his life-story and the ways they construct his identity. The themes and incidents that Huuskonen has chosen are significant from his point of view and from the point of view of his life-story and identity formation.

By narrating these themes and events, he makes his life-story meaningful and is able to direct his perspective from the past toward the future, which is typical for such a trauma writing process (see Aarelaid-Tart 2006: 31–33).

The formation of the categories of 'I', 'we', and 'other' can be interpreted in the context of Huuskonen's traumatic life-experiences, in the larger context formed by the Cold War and the political and ideological juxtaposition of East and West. In this article, the constructs of 'I', 'we', and 'other' maintained by Huuskonen and the political atmosphere created by the Cold War are proportioned with each other.

In this article, trauma literature and the testimonial novel are dwelt upon to form a background for the discussion of Huuskonen's work. His novel *The Child of Finland* is introduced, and in the subsections, the narrative of Huuskonen's life in the Soviet Union is analysed through the concepts of 'I', 'we', and 'other'. Finally the article discusses the public reception of Huuskonen's novel and its significance in a wider context.

THE CHILD OF FINLAND – TRAUMA LITERATURE AND THE TESTIMONIAL NOVEL

After his return to Finland in 1976, Huuskonen had initially no intention to write about his experiences in the Soviet Union but later changed his mind. One of his motivations to write was to tell the "truth" about life in a socialist society (Huuskonen 1979: 5–6).[1] Meaningful literary contexts in which to discuss Huuskonen's novel are trauma literature and the testimonial novel, which highlight both the personal and the collective aspect of a traumatic experience.

The novel *The Child of Finland* is a work of non-fiction written in the first-person narrative. After publishing it, the novel was defined as a documentary one, based on real life incidents. The back cover of the book introduces it as "a memoir", and "a document" of life in the Soviet Union (Huuskonen 1979). According to Huuskonen, all of the names and dates may not be completely accurate in the novel; however, the "truth" has not been altered in the writing process (ibid.: 5). The question as to whether Huuskonen's novel is truthful or not has not been evaluated in this article. A more important issue than the accuracy of the novel, though, is its focalisation. Taisto Huuskonen and his survival of the prison camp, life in exile as well as in Soviet Karelia are the focus of the narration, which is an adequate requirement for accuracy (for more on focalisation in the testimonial novel, see Vettenniemi 2004: 21–22).

Huuskonen's novel has several features that are typical of trauma literature. Trauma literature is either biographical, fictive literature, or a combination of

these two, where the author discusses his or her personal trauma or a trauma of the group of people that he or she represents (Aarelaid-Tart 2006). Traumatic stress is "caused by life-threatening or self-threatening events that are accompanied by fear, helplessness, or horror" (Resick 2001: 28, cited in Hout 2011: 331). This extreme stress needs externalisation, processing and signification through narrating and re-narrating. Trauma literature can be composed of fragmentary memories and repetitive descriptions of scenes and images connected with the trauma (Weil 2009: 136). Trauma literature can also be an autobiography, where the experiences of the past are already arranged in a form of a narrative that continues from the past to the present. Huuskonen's novel represents a trauma novel that narrates his life-story from the beginning until the end of his traumatic experience in the Soviet Union.

Despite that the novel focuses on Taisto Huuskonen and the lives of his closest circle of acquaintances, the experiences he describes touched the lives of millions of other Soviet citizens. More specifically, his narrative of defecting from Finland to the Soviet Union echoes the lives of tens of thousands of Finnish defectors and their families. Therefore, the novel can also be characterised as a testimonial novel which is typically written in the first person, and whose function is, as Amy Novak states, "a non-fiction account of the narrator's survival and witness to traumatic events and political oppression that affect not simply their own life but that of their community, culture, or nation" (Novak 2006: 107). Therefore, it can be argued that Huuskonen's novel is not just an isolated individual account of one life tragedy, but one which echoes the life-experiences of millions.

THE CHILD OF FINLAND AND MOVING ACROSS THE BORDER

In the novel *The Child of Finland*, Huuskonen's life-story includes three important phases. The first is life in Finland, the second – his life in the Soviet Union, and the third – his return to Finland. The novel focuses mainly on the second phase, which describes his life in the Soviet Union and discusses the people Huuskonen met, together with the various incidents he experienced and witnessed. Huuskonen reflects especially on his thoughts and feelings in the prison camp from 1949 to 1951, and in his exile in the Ural region from 1951 to 1954. The remainder of the novel addresses Huuskonen's life in Soviet Karelia from 1954 to 1976.

The first and the third phases (life in Finland and return to Finland) remain somewhat evasive and referential but are nevertheless important to his life-story. Their significance is revealed as they are understood within the narrative

whole of the novel. The novel begins and ends with a crossing of the national border. The first crossing was from Finland to the Soviet Union, and the second, from the Soviet Union back to Finland. The drama and intensity of his life-story is revealed to the reader only after they understand the circumstances and expectations that Huuskonen had when leaving for and returning from the Soviet Union. Crossing the national border is also a sign for the reader: the national border signals the beginning and end of Huuskonen's trauma. All the phases, whether in Finland or in the Soviet Union, and the crossing of borders topographically or symbolically in one direction or another force Huuskonen to change his perception of himself, 'I', 'we', and 'other'.

HUUSKONEN BECOMES A COMMUNIST IN FINLAND

At the beginning of the novel *The Child of Finland*, Huuskonen describes himself as a Finnish Communist although he cannot recall exactly when he became one. Huuskonen was born in Tampere, in Finland, in 1925. His interest in communism, which culminated in the defection to the Soviet Union, grew gradually. His parents belonged to the working class in Finland in the early twentieth century. During that time, working class members were gaining an awareness of the ideas of socialism and communism. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that the ideas of socialism and communism must not have been strange to Huuskonen as a child.

The reasons that strengthened his interest in communism were the Second World War and the difficulties in returning to ordinary life after the war. Huuskonen was drafted in the last year of the Continuation War in 1944. The war experiences made him think critically about the dominating values and ideals in wartime Finland. Immediately after the Second World War, it was not easy to support communist ideology in Finland due to the prevailing political atmosphere of right wing conservatism. Although the Communist Party became legal in Finland in 1944, communism was not able to change its status of being an anarchist movement. Furthermore, toward the end of the Second World War, the first whiffs of the Cold War were already being felt, which contributed to the ideological drift between the political East and West.

Immediately after the war, Huuskonen worked as a border guard on the south-east border between Finland and the Soviet Union – the very same area through which he would defect to the Soviet Union a couple of years later. Huuskonen also worked in a paper factory in Tampere where he organised an illegal strike and, as a result, lost his job. His transgression in the paper factory was not the only problem he faced. At the end of the 1940s, Huuskonen was

often involved in fights and brawls and had to answer for his actions in court several times. In the novel *The Child of Finland*, Huuskonen suspects that many of the fights he was involved in were pre-arranged attempts to make him break the law. Belonging to the Communist Party was not illegal anymore, but violent behaviour and stealing – which he was accused of as well – could have provided reasons for his frequent arrests. Huuskonen, however, thought that the accusations were nothing but acts of persecution. When considering the fear caused by the socialist revolution and the threat of Soviet occupation during the Second World War, it can be argued that the police especially targeted the members of the Communist Party.

Huuskonen's pro-socialist affinities made it impossible to live an ordinary life, and this led to other problems such as alcohol abuse (Huuskonen 1979: 17–19). The inability to organise his personal life made his hatred towards capitalism grow stronger. Finnish society seemed to be the cause of all his difficulties. He saw the Soviet Union as the ideal state and society where he could start a new and better life. In his autobiography (ibid.: 19), Huuskonen describes that, as his 'faith' in socialism became stronger and stronger, he became more and more estranged from Finland. Finally, the Soviet Union shadowed Finland completely in his thoughts.

Huuskonen's description of life in Finland builds very strong categories of 'I', 'we' and 'other'. The narrating 'I', who is Huuskonen himself, represents the 'other' in relation to the authorities and the majority of the people in Finland. During the post-war years, Finland was mostly agrarian. Even though the working class population strengthened its position during the post-war years and many joined the now legal Communist Party, Huuskonen felt hardly any solidarity with the other members of the working class or members of the Communist Party – he felt that he had no real ideological support from them. Therefore, Huuskonen was very unsatisfied with the Finnish Communist Party. However, he felt solidarity with socialists and communists in the Soviet Union and in the late 1940s, before his defection, the socialists in the Soviet Union represented for Huuskonen the category of 'we', which turned out to be unattainable.

THE BORDER CROSSING THAT CHANGES EVERYTHING

A decisive moment came when, after another fight, the police asked Huuskonen to come for an interview at the local police station. Instead of going to the police station, however, Huuskonen made a radical decision to defect to the Soviet Union. A politically strained atmosphere, problems with the police, and difficul-

ties in finding work – Huuskonen felt the pressure so strongly that he saw a new life in the Soviet Union as the only rational solution to his problems. Enni doubted his decision, but Taisto was determined.

Taisto and Enni defected to the Soviet Union not once but twice. On October 4, 1949, they crossed the national border between Finland and the Soviet Union in the Parikkala region. The national border between Finland and the Soviet Union is over 1,300 kilometres long, and consists mainly of uninhabited wilderness (see Laurén 2012 in this theme issue). It is controlled by the border guard detachment; however, it seems that crossing the border at the time was fairly easy. Taisto and Enni crawled under the barbed wire and entered the border zone of the Soviet side, but in the darkness and pouring rain they got lost. After a while they crawled under another fence of barbed wire only to find that they were back in Finland. After re-organising their plan, a second crossing of the border succeeded.

A few hundred yards over the border, the couple arrived at the cottage of a Russian border guard. They entered the cottage and explained the cause for their unexpected visit. Within minutes, the cottage was filled with Soviet border guards and soldiers. Long interrogations started immediately and the joy of starting a new life rapidly turned into a nightmare. The couple was first interrogated in the border region of Soviet Karelia, then again in the border-town of Sortavala, and finally in the capital of Soviet Karelia, Petrozavodsk. In the latter, in the notorious 'Gray House', where many prisoners had their fates sealed, the interrogations lasted for several months. During this time, Taisto and Enni were frequently interrogated about the reasons for their coming to the Soviet Union. Each time the couple insisted that they just wanted to find work and start a better life in the Soviet Union. The interrogators suspected them of being spies and the outcome of the interrogations was that Taisto and Enni Huuskonen were condemned for illegal entry to the Soviet Union. The last glimmer of hope died when Taisto and Enni were separated from each other and sentenced to prison camps in Kiev for two years. After being released in 1951, they were condemned to exile in Kirov Oblast in the Ural region. Therefore they were not able to settle in Soviet Karelia as they had originally wished.

This defection included several border crossings, not only the national border crossing, but several symbolical and metaphorical ones as well. Most importantly, Huuskonen now personally faced the Soviet authorities and the communist system with which he had felt such affinity when in Finland. When Huuskonen crossed the national border, he crossed a border from his harsh everyday reality in Finland to his dream of socialist utopia. However, once he had crossed the topographical border, his first suspicions of the reality of the communist system emerged. Later on, in the notorious Gray House, the utopia

he had formed was destroyed. This resulted in radical changes in the concepts of 'I', 'we', and 'other'.

Immediately after crossing the national border between Finland and the Soviet Union, Taisto and Enni Huuskonen had to redefine and negotiate their position in relation to East and West, as defined by the Cold War. After crossing the national border, the narrating 'I' became deeply disappointed with the Soviet system and how it treated its citizens. Huuskonen did not recognise the Soviet system and the Soviet authorities as 'we', and they started to represent the 'other' to him. At the same time, Taisto and Enni Huuskonen noticed that they had come to represent the 'other' – the enemy, potential spies, and, finally, criminals for the Soviet authorities.

Huuskonen's feelings of 'otherness' in relation to the Soviet authorities and Soviet citizens continued throughout his time in the prison camp and during exile in Kirov. Huuskonen's life after crossing the Finnish border was determined almost minute by minute by the precise rules and regulations of the new system. Having these rules and regulations been forced upon him increased his feeling of 'otherness' as a foreigner, criminal, prisoner, and exiled person. Huuskonen's dream to become one of the comrades, to belong to a group of 'we' who wanted to build a new socialist union was crushed.

It is self-evident that a prison camp destroying all the signs of individuality, denying the right to be 'I' or rejecting every effort of becoming 'we', undertakes to isolate and alienate a person from any meaningful relationship. In Huuskonen's case, the 'otherness' was created, firstly, by secluding the prisoners from the ordinary society and isolating them in a remote camp. The camp itself was separated from the surrounding landscape by a plank fence and barbed wire, and, furthermore, by a watchtower manned by a guard with a submachine gun placed at each corner of the plank fence. Huuskonen, like the rest of the prisoners, was not allowed to move freely and cross the border of the prison camp, even approaching it too boldly meant an unavoidable death. In Kiev, the topographical border of the prison camp became the most important border that controlled Huuskonen's daily routines and existence. The national border between Finland and the Soviet Union was now only a distant dream, as in his narrative Huuskonen wonders if he was ever going to return to Finland.

Secondly, the prisoners were deprived of their individuality by the prison routines. Huuskonen's physical appearance was changed not only to make him look like a prisoner and similar to everybody else in the prison camp, but also to undress his individuality: his hair was cut off, his personal possessions were taken away, and his clothes were exchanged for prison clothing – for the Soviet system Huuskonen had become simply a faceless prisoner, a number among the 'others'.

Despite the prisoners being made to look alike by their physical appearance, they were still the 'other' to each other. The prisoners had an internal hierarchy, in which each prisoner had to fight for his own status. Huuskonen was under constant observation and questioned by both the guards and other prisoners. He had to constantly defend himself and prove his position in the camp hierarchy. He managed to keep his status in the hierarchy rather well; however, his relationship with most of the other prisoners remained strained. He felt a sense of solidarity only with a few other prisoners who were Finns and with whom Huuskonen created a sense of unbroken unity, which continued even after being released from the prison camp:

> We Finns (except for Tuomas) blended in the best possible way. We spent all our free time together, and talked a lot. Here in faraway Russia, we had formed a small but strong and unbroken group which the other prisoners did not dare to disturb. (Huuskonen 1979: 98.)

In addition to Finns, Enni also belonged to Huuskonen's category of 'we'. He was constantly thinking of her and shared his thoughts with an imaginary Enni. Only occasionally did Huuskonen receive a short message or even a letter through some other prisoners, and this partly imaginary relationship with Enni became one of the few meaningful relationships for Huuskonen during his time in the prison camp.

Taisto and Enni Huuskonen were freed from the prison camp in 1951, after which they were able to live together again. After their release, Taisto and Enni were condemned to exile in the Ural region. In their exile, the routines that enforced their 'otherness' continued, despite the fact that they were considerably free. They had to report to the authorities at certain intervals to make their location known but in the village of exiled people they had to struggle for their living in what was still a rather hostile environment. During this period in the novel, 'we' includes only Taisto and Enni: they can seek support, comfort and solidarity only from each other. However, in the midst of experiencing their 'otherness' together, Taisto and Enni regarded their Finnish nationality as a positive demarcating feature: they were proud of being Finns and tried to seek the company of other Finns. Identifying themselves as Finns became a cornerstone to their identity formation that allowed them to be both 'I' and 'we'.

BECOMING 'OTHER' TO THE SOVIET SOCIETY AND TO HUUSKONEN HIMSELF

In 1953, after Stalin's death, Taisto and Enni Huuskonen were able to move to Soviet Karelia as they had originally wished. However, before this was possible, they had to become Soviet citizens, as non-Soviets were not allowed to settle in Soviet Karelia. Therefore, they had to abandon their Finnish citizenship which had been the most important, stable, and the last remaining factor in defining their identity during their imprisonment and exile.

Symbolically, becoming Soviet citizens meant destroying the last connection that had sustained their identity as 'we' and their solidarity with Finns; however, they had to do this before they could settle permanently in the Soviet Union. Finally, in 1954, the couple was granted their Soviet citizenship and was able to move to Soviet Karelia. Acquiring Soviet citizenship was a key to pursue their dream of a better life; nevertheless, Taisto and Enni Huuskonen were not able to celebrate this change. Instead, they found themselves lost because the change of citizenship had profoundly affected their sense of identity. Other Finns, their friends, became disappointed with their decision. Consequently, Taisto and Enni Huuskonen felt that they were growing apart from them.

Despite the fact that Taisto and Enni were now Soviet citizens, their life in Soviet Karelia was defined by the constant feeling of 'otherness'. Huuskonen himself did not adapt well to the village community in Soviet Karelia. For Huuskonen, 'we' primarily included only himself and Enni. In addition, 'we' included, at least partially, their closest relatives in Finland, with whom they could occasionally keep contact through correspondence. However, when some of the relatives visited Taisto and Enni, they noticed that they had become alienated from each other. During this visit, many symbolical borders and barriers emerged. Taisto and Enni and their relatives did not know anything about each other's lives and they found hardly anything to discuss. What effectively hindered their open communication was fear. Huuskonen feared that he or Enni would reveal something negative about the Soviet Union, and this would cause them further problems with the Soviet authorities. Furthermore, to save his dignity, Huuskonen felt that he had to keep up the façade and not reveal the real difficulties they had faced – he was the one who had insisted on defecting to the Soviet Union. This pretence separated Taisto and Enni from each other and from their relatives even further.

In Soviet Karelia, Taisto Huuskonen became a writer, which significantly changed his identity. In his biography, Huuskonen claims that his access to the Soviet Karelian literary world was made possible because the Finnish language literature in Soviet Karelia (which was the literature of the non-Russian

population) needed more writers, and therefore all the possible writers who could write in the Finnish language were recruited (Huuskonen 1979: 341).[2] In these circumstances, Huuskonen saw his chance, and he started to write, firstly simply to earn his living. At the beginning of his career, he prepared speeches for the Finnish language radio in Petrozavodsk. Later he worked on the editorial boards of the Finnish newspaper *Totuus* (Truth) and the Finnish literary journal *Punalippu* (Red Flag). In the 1960s, he started to write short stories and novels. Becoming a writer changed Huuskonens' perception of himself and resulted in a redefinition of 'I'. As a writer, Huuskonen had to renegotiate his identity and also his belonging to the categories of 'we' and 'other'.

The contradiction that existed between what Huuskonen had experienced and what he had to write was the first situation where Huuskonen had to redefine 'I', 'we' and 'other'. Huuskonen was angered and confused about the Soviet system due to his tragic prison camp and exile experiences. Nevertheless, he had to earn his living by supporting the Soviet system and its ideals and express this in his writing. As a writer, he had to represent the voice of the 'other' against his own views and identity, and this caused a contradiction between 'I' and 'we'. On the other hand, Huuskonen was very intelligent in a sense that he knew that in order to publish and to earn his living he had to follow the conventions of ideologically imbued Socialist Realism, thus Huuskonen needed to silence his critical inner voice 'I', in order to continue his writing.

The second drift that led to renegotiating 'I' and 'we' was the feeling of ambiguity that Huuskonen experienced. Officially in Soviet Karelia, neither the Finnish nationality nor any other was emphasised. Huuskonen represented the 'other' because his inner identity represented the national identity of a Finn. Furthermore, Huuskonen consciously wanted to maintain his 'otherness' so as to maintain his identity. It was his inner 'I' that made him the 'other' in the Soviet society. However, his 'otherness' turned out to be a great advantage for him as a writer. Finnish was his native language, and he mastered it completely. This was a great advantage in Soviet Karelian literary life where Finnish speaking writers were badly needed and only a few were able to publish in Finnish fluently. As such, knowing the Finnish language perhaps aided him in receiving a fairly good reputation and success as a writer.

A third phase which led to Huuskonen's renegotiating 'I' and 'we' was the contradiction between his success as a Soviet writer and his own disillusionment with the ideology of the socialist utopia. In the long run, this further increased his feeling of ambivalence. His contradictive feelings about communism and his literary success had influenced Huuskonen's narration of 'I' as well. The novel *Steel Storm in the Karelian Isthmus* made Huuskonen a full-fledged member of the Soviet Karelian literature, and the Soviet literary institution. Prior to

the novel, Huuskonen had been regarded as an upcoming writer, but after the novel's publication, he became acknowledged. The novel *Steel Storm in the Karelian Isthmus* speaks about the war between Finland and the Soviet Union. The protagonists in the novel are Finnish soldiers; nevertheless, the novel ends in the victory of the Red Army. The patriotic war theme remained important in the Soviet literature of the late twentieth century; yet, the perspective of the Finnish soldiers that Huuskonen showed in the novel was exceptional in the scope of Soviet literature. Therefore, Huuskonen's novel received publicity as far away as Leningrad and Moscow. In addition, a well-known translator, Vladimir Bogatshov, translated the novel into Russian, and the writer Konstantin Simonov willingly wrote the preface for the Russian edition. The novel was also translated into Estonian, and was finally nominated for the State Prize in Literature in Soviet Karelia. What indicates this success further is that in 1971, Huuskonen was unanimously accepted into the Union of Writers of the USSR.

Despite his elevated status, Huuskonen experienced constantly that he did not completely belong to the Soviet Karelian writers' group. One of the reasons was a feeling of guilt. When Huuskonen became a member of the Union of Writers of the USSR, he received access to all the benefits and privileges that the union provided for its members. This certainly made it easier for him to write and strengthened his professional identity as a writer. Consequently, his living conditions improved. The drawback of his success, however, was that while Huuskonen defined himself as a writer, at the same time he felt guilty about the benefits he received as a professional writer. He noticed that as a member of the Writers' Union he had become one of the privileged citizens who set themselves above the others by receiving and accepting benefits and commodities to which ordinary people did not have access. Furthermore, Huuskonen felt that because of his success he was expected to support communism – an ideal in which he no longer believed. In addition to his guilt, success and honours made Huuskonen feel like a prisoner because he realised that he had lost all his hope of independence as a writer (Huuskonen 1979: 292, 324). It seems that for these reasons, his career started to decline fairly rapidly after he wrote his novel *Steel Storm in the Karelian Isthmus*, which remained Huuskonen's last significant novel published in Soviet Karelia.

REDEFINING 'I' AND THE RETURN TO FINLAND

The process of constantly questioning the ideology of communism, which was the basis of re-defining Huuskonen's identity and the narrating 'I', culminated when the national security agency KGB[3] contacted Huuskonen in the 1960s. The

KGB ordered Huuskonen to become an informant. Huuskonen was expected to provide information about those people who were suspected of spying for Germany. Taisto felt that he had no choice. If he had accepted the task, he would have been in danger of becoming completely 'other' from the perspective of 'I' and a representative of everything that he opposed – he would have become 'we' from the perspective of the communist system in Soviet Karelia. If he had rejected the task, he would have maintained his identity of 'I' but become the 'other' in the Soviet system. Becoming the 'other' would have risked his own and Enni's freedom, perhaps even their lives. So, Huuskonen managed to balance between the categories of 'we' and 'other'. He met the people that the KGB had ordered him to meet, but did not ask the questions that he was supposed to ask. Finally, the KGB expelled Huuskonen, because he was obviously not very useful to them. Despite that Huuskonen was afraid of the consequences of his dismissal, he was relieved. He was able to step out from the problematic situation where he was in danger of becoming completely 'other' from the perspective of 'I' and lose the last remaining values and ideals that maintained his sense of identity.

The constant feeling of 'otherness', moral dilemmas of his material and social privileges, and the contradictions caused by the compulsory requirement to promote socialism publicly against his own views caused Huuskonen severe stress and anxiety. However, at the same time, this stress and anxiety made Huuskonen more determined to find his way back to Finland. The final push that aided him in making this decision was the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, held in Helsinki in 1975, which drew together the political leaders of the Eastern and Western blocks. The conference had a significant impact on increasing co-operation and mitigating the Cold War tensions between East and West. Particularly, the relationship between Finland and the Soviet Union became more open and trusting (Kekkonen 1975, Suomen pääpuheenvuoro August 1, 1975; Seppänen 2007: 401–405). Furthermore, the delegates made a decision according to which all the countries signing the final act of the conference would "deal in a positive and humanitarian spirit with the applications of persons who wish to be reunited with the members of their family" (Conference of Co-operation and Security in Europe 1975: 39). This was good news to Taisto and Enni Huuskonen. The successful outcome of the conference convinced Huuskonen that now was the right time to apply for permission to return home.

Before the late 1970s, returning to Finland from the Soviet Union had been very difficult and many applications had been rejected by the Soviet authorities. However, the outcomes of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe made the application process easier. Huuskonen started with it imme-

diately after the conference had ended, on August 1, 1975. In early 1976, Taisto and Enni Huuskonen were able to return to Finland permanently. This time crossing the national border was easy because they travelled by train. However, it was once again mentally stressful. For months in advance, Taisto and Enni had been extremely nervous that something would 'come up' and hinder their return to Finland. Their anxiety peaked in the train when the national border crossing came closer and closer. However, nothing alarming transpired and the train crossed the border with Taisto and Enni Huuskonen safely on board. With the extreme mental stress relieved, Huuskonen fell asleep on the bench.

After their return to Finland, Huuskonen felt that he was back home, but he also felt that he had become alienated from both the Soviet and Finnish ideas of communism and socialism. According to Huuskonen, communism was now a religion, an ecstatic state of mind, which blurred thinking and made people to see each other either as friends or enemies (Huuskonen 1979). Huuskonen was severely disappointed with the political views of Finnish communists, because they 'stubbornly' wanted to maintain an idealistic image of the Soviet socio-political system and society that contradicted strongly with Huuskonen's personal experiences. Taisto and Enni Huuskonen had become 'other' for the Finnish communists as well. One of the party members criticised Huuskonen for returning to Finland. For him Huuskonen's returning indicated his disloyalty to the ideology. Huuskonen was embittered by their refusal to acknowledge his traumatic experiences in the Soviet Union. Finally, at the end of his life-story, Huuskonen noticed that he had become 'other' in relation to what he himself had represented thirty years earlier.

TRAUMA NARRATIVE OR A SCANDAL NOVEL?

When the novel *The Child of Finland* was published, it received much attention both in Finland and in the Soviet Union. In Finland, the novel sold over 50,000 copies, although it was not much promoted due to its explosive subject (Vettenniemi 2004: 126). The book's success, however, was certainly surprising, considering the time of its publication in 1979. From the late 1960s to the early 1980s, Finland experienced a period of *Finlandisation* (Suomettuminen, 1968–1982), a process by which the Soviet Union (the big neighbour) influenced Finland's (the small neighbour) internal politics. The political leadership in Finland had to conform to the demands expressed by Moscow to maintain good relationships with the Soviet Union. Finlandisation meant also the self-censorship of the Finnish media: negative descriptions of the Soviet Union were simply not allowed. However, historian Erkki Vettenniemi (2004: 126) claims

that in the late 1970s, the hegemony of the Finnish intelligentsia, who had fully supported the Soviet Union, crumbled. Therefore, according to Vettenniemi, for example those comments that reported the violations of the human rights in the Soviet Union were able to reach the public even though the Finlandisation period was not yet over. However, this change in hegemony does not explain the novel's success completely. One reason for the novel's success and popularity could have been that ordinary Finns were curious about the Soviet Union as they did not have much knowledge of it. Another reason could be that people were so touched by Huuskonen's dramatic survival story. The reason could also be more political: some Finns may have advocated Huuskonen's novel because he wrote so daringly against the socialist utopia.

In the Soviet Union, however, Huuskonen's novel fell on a different ground and *The Child of Finland* met fierce criticism. High officials in the Union of Writers of the USSR were first to respond. 'From the highest quarter' came an order that the novel must be given "a counter blow". The chairman of the Soviet Karelian Writers' Union, Antti Timonen, was chosen to design and execute it.[4] Timonen's critical article was published in the newspaper *Soviet Karelia* (Neuvosto-Karjala, April 11, 1984) and extracts from Timonen's article were published in the newspaper *Helsinki Times* in Finland (Järjetöntä Neuvostovihaa, *Helsingin Sanomat* April 18, 1984). The message was clear: Huuskonen had vilified the Soviet Union with no justifiable reason. He had propagated hatred against the Soviet Union and communism. Furthermore, it was claimed that Huuskonen himself had caused all of the problems he faced in the Soviet Union by abusing alcohol and being dishonest. Lastly, Timonen claimed that the novel served right-wing conservative (reactionary) ideology in Finland, asking in his text if the Finnish right-wing intellectuals had no other working methods than spreading dirt and rubbish.

Huuskonen, naturally, reacted strongly to these accusations. He wrote an angry response published in a Finnish tabloid, the *Evening News* (Parjattu Huuskonen vastaa neuvostokollegan syytöksiin, *Iltasanomat* April 19, 1984). The debate between Timonen and Huuskonen was rather unprofessional and personally abusive: the writers mainly accused each other of being alcohol abusers and liars. Nevertheless, the debate between Timonen and Huuskonen regarding the novel was not about literature but the different ideas of East and West from the perspective of the Cold War. Timonen and Huuskonen became personifications of the opposition between the political East and West, where no in-between position was possible. In this political turmoil, the significant meaning of the writing of the novel – processing the trauma – was completely overlooked.

The question of why Antti Timonen delivered his 'counter blow' in 1984, five years after the novel was published, is interesting. One reason could be that in 1984, the Soviet Union became a site of a fierce power struggle. Yuri Andropov was stepping down from power and Konstantin Chernenko was elected president for a short period of time. At this time, the signs of Perestroika were already in the air. Furthermore, as Timonen himself suggests, the ideological Cold War confrontation between East and West had intensified, and the communist regimes felt threatened by the Western ideology (Neuvosto-Karjala April 11, 1984). The power struggle inside the Soviet Union and the ideological rivalry on both sides of the Iron Curtain created a political restlessness which needed to be stabilised. The Soviet political leadership wanted to reject any "anti-Soviet" attitudes to regain stability. Therefore, Huuskonen's novel became seen as one of the many Western works, which clearly damaged the Soviet values and ideological foundations of communism. Therefore, the reception of Huuskonen's novel became more of a political than a literary act.

Another reason for Timonen's counter blow could be that the Soviet officials declared Huuskonen a dissident and ideological traitor. Therefore his novel was regarded as deceitful. Despite that Stalin's era had already been criticised by Soviet intellectuals due to Khrushchev's so called secret speech in 1956 and the Communist Party Congress in 1961, in which Khrushchev revealed Stalin's crimes and launched his anti-Stalinist campaign publically, the Soviet prison camp system was not yet open for discussion (Vettenniemi 2004: 16–17; Taubman 2007: 276–293). An example of this act was Alexander Solzhenitsyn's *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich,* first published in 1962. At the time of publishing, the novel enjoyed full support of the political leadership. However, soon after publishing, Khrushchev noted that it had been a mistake to publish Solzhenitsyn's work (Yevtushenko 2008: xi–xx). By the late 1970s, there were fewer novels discussing the Soviet Union's recent history in a critical light, and certainly not novels written by outsiders – non-Soviet writers. The Soviet literary world regarded Huuskonen as a foreign writer who had betrayed not only his loyalties towards the communist ideology but also turned his back on the Soviet Union.

THREE DIFFERENT READINGS

The Child of Finland seems to have three different kinds of readings, which depend on different contexts. The first reading stresses the novel as a personal trauma; the second one emphasises the novel's ideological underpinnings in the

context of the Cold War, and the third one discusses the novel's significance as a border-crossing narrative and as a narrative of collective trauma.

Undoubtedly, *The Child of Finland* is a very private account of a personal trauma, which constructs the ideas of political East and West for the reading audience. In the novel, Huuskonen replays an extremely difficult, mentally painful process where he has to reject his old values and ideals, and redefine his identity again and again in order to find his position in the world in relation to East and West, to socialism, to capitalism and to his closest acquaintances. Such a need to rewrite the trauma and narrator's life-story again and again is typical when processing traumatic experiences (Novak 2006).

The novel leaves an impression that Huuskonen consistently defines himself as the 'other'; the underdog, misfit, or the odd one out. This suggests that the 'otherness' that Huuskonen describes can be understood as his constant need to renegotiate his identity and position. In a way, it can be claimed that traumatic experiences formed the basis for Huuskonen's identity (see Weil 2009: 135). The defection to the Soviet Union, the prison camp, and exile, the constant feeling of 'otherness', dissociation and fear were the feelings that defined Huuskonen's identity. This is shown, for example, at the end of the novel, where Huuskonen does not position himself in the juxtaposed categories of 'we' and 'other' as they could easily be determined as East and West in the Cold War rhetorics. Instead, he allows his position to become ambiguous; the state where the sharp divisions between 'I', 'we' and 'other', as well as East and West, become blurred. His constant need to narrate the trauma and renegotiate his identity is exemplified further in his later novels, and especially in his second biographical novel *Enni's Story* (Ennin Tarina, WSOY, 1984). *Enni's Story* and *The Child of Finland* are very similar novels: they both describe the defection to and life in the Soviet Union; however, this time the narrating 'I' is Enni. When read together, *The Child of Finland* and *Enni's Story* complement each other and form a biography of a couple.

The literary construction of 'I', 'we' and 'other' was important not only for Huuskonen. The novel can be seen in the context of memoir literature that describes political oppression, prison camp experiences and exile in the Soviet Union. These were the experiences of millions of people in the Soviet Union, whose trials transform *The Child of Finland* from a personal survival story to a collective trauma novel. Huuskonen's novel can be seen as one of the first models for trauma novels in Finland that was discussed in public.

In processing and signifying traumas that touch the lives of large groups of people, the role of intellectuals is always pronounced. They provide models, and articulate the claims, interests and desires of the wider public (Eyerman 2010: 3). In Finland, the political atmosphere before the late 1970s and 1980s

did not allow for a public discussion of the fates and experiences of Finnish defectors to the Soviet Union, although some cultural models of processing these traumas about prison camps and exile in the Soviet Union had already been published in the 1920s. Erkki Vettenniemi (2004) has listed 38 novels published in Finland on this subject until 2003. For example, such novels as Kirsti Huurre's *Under the Sickle and the Hammer* (Sirpin ja Moukarin Alla, WSOY, 1942), and Urpo Parvilahti's *Berija's Gardens* (Berijan Tarhat, Otava, 1957) were published already in the 1940s and 1950s. However, these novels were regarded as politically dangerous in Finland and therefore were removed from bookstores during the times of increased tension between Finland and the Soviet Union. Criticising the Soviet Union was politically dangerous and risked the relationship between Finland and the Soviet Union (Ekholm 1996). These literary works due to their explosive subject matter were censored and any discussion of them was suffocated. However, in the late 1970s, the political atmosphere in Finland became more permissive towards such criticism of the Soviet Union and, consequently, the various testimonials of defected Finns and Ingrian Finns who most severely experienced the Soviet oppression were published.

When *The Child of Finland* was published, the high level politicians neither in Finland nor in the Soviet Union accepted it. Therefore, the novel's second reading reflects those larger political discourses on East and West of the time: ideological confrontation between East and West in all spheres of life, vilifying the ideological other and the support of one's 'own' ideology on both sides of the national border between Finland and the Soviet Union. In the context of the Cold War and the rhetorics maintained by it, *The Child of Finland* appeared merely as a scandal novel, whose only purpose was to vilify the Soviet Union. As such, the personal narrative of surviving the trauma was made less significant by this interpretation.

The third meaningful context of reading Huuskonen's *The Child of Finland* has become relevant during the past decade, where the role of topographical borders have changed globally. Due to global changes, literature discussing the traumatic experiences of émigrés and refugees, as well as life in national and cultural borderlands has increased dramatically. In this context, Huuskonen's novel can be read as fiction discussing traumatic experiences at various topographical and symbolic borders (see Langer 2002; Sadowski-Smith 2008). Therefore, Huuskonen's novel can hardly be of any shock value to its readers today. Instead, the novel's value as a survival story and as a means of processing a cultural trauma can shine through to the contemporary readers.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This research was supported by the project *Writing Cultures and Traditions at Borders* (SA131578).

NOTES

[1] One factor that could have hindered his enthusiasm for writing could be the prohibition from telling about his experiences in the prison camp. When the prisoners were released from the prison camp, they had to sign an agreement that they would not tell about their experiences in public. Huuskonen signed the agreement without knowing its contents. The agreement was written in the Russian language which Huuskonen did not then understand and no-one explained the content to him. For these reasons, Huuskonen considered that it did not apply to him (Huuskonen 1979: 131). In addition, the publishing was delayed because Huuskonen did not dare publish the novel until he had regained his Finnish citizenship in 1979.

[2] Finnish-language literature was created for the non-Russian population of Soviet Karelia in the 1920s. It was written by Karelians, Finns, and Ingrian-Finns. During the Soviet era, its existence was supported by the Soviet language and nationality policies.

[3] KGB, the national security agency of the Soviet Union (Komitet gosudarstvennoi bezopasnosti SSSR). The KGB governed the organisations of security, intelligence and the secret police in the Soviet Union from 1954–1991 (Butler 2008: 147, 186). The KGB had a broad network of special departments in all major government institutions, enterprises and factories, and it recruited informers (Organisation of the Committee for State Security, http://www.fas.org/irp/world/russia/kgb/su0514.htm).

[4] Timonen, *Writings* 1975–1990, Source 1075, list 2, item 112.

ARCHIVAL SOURCES

Antti Timonen. *Writings* 1975–1990. Source 1075, list 2, item 112. The National Archive of the Republic of Karelia.

REFERENCES

Aarelaid-Tart, Aili 2006. *Cultural Trauma and Life Stories*. Helsinki: Kikimora Publications.

Asplund, Allan 2011. *Kokemuksia suomalaisilta keskitysleireiltä.* [Experiences from Finnish Concentration Camps.] Helsinki: Like.

Butler, Rupert 2008. *Neuvosto-Venäjän mustat vuodet. Salainen poliisi tsaarinajoista nykypäivään.* [The Black Years of Soviet-Russia. The Secrect Police from the Tsarist Era Until Today.] Helsinki: Minerva.

Conference on Co-operation and Security in Europe 1975. *Final Act*. http://www.osce.org/mc/39501, last accessed on November 20, 2012.

Ekholm, Kai (ed.) 1996. *Kielletyt kirjat.* [Forbidden Books.] Helsinki: Eduskunnan kirjasto.

Eyerman, Ron 2010. *Cultural Trauma: Slavery and the Formation of African American Identity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, doi:10.1525/california/9780520235946.003.0003.

Finlex 17/1948. Sopimus ystävyydestä, yhteistoiminnasta ja keskinäisestä avunannosta Suomen Tasavallan ja Sosialistisen Neuvostotasavaltain Liiton välillä. Finlex – valtion säädöstietopankki. [Agreement of Friendship, Co-operation, and Mutual Assistance between the Republic of Finland and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.] http://www.finlex.fi/fi/sopimukset/sopsteksti/1948/19480017/19480017_2, last accessed on December 15, 2011.

Gaddis, John Lewis 2007. *The Cold War. A New History*. New York: Penguine Books.

Hout, Syrine 2011. Cultural hybridity, trauma, and memory in diasporic anglophones Lebanese fiction. *Journal of Postcolonial Writing*, Vol. 47, No. 3, pp. 330–342, doi:10.1080/17449855.2011.569376.

Huuskonen, Taisto 1979. *Laps' Suomen.* [The Child of Finland.] Helsinki: WSOY.

Huuskonen, Taisto 1984. *Ennin tarina.* [Enni's Story.] Helsinki: WSOY.

Järjetöntä Neuvostovihaa. [Irrational Hatred Towards the Soviet Union.] *Helsingin Sanomat* [newspaper], April 18, 1984.

Kekkonen, Urho 1975. ETYK:n III vaihe. Suomen pääpuheenvuoro. [Third Phase of ETYK. The Main Speech of Finland.] August 1, 1975. Doria, National Library of Finland. Urho Kekkonen's published works. http://www.doria.fi/handle/10024/8380?show=full, last accessed on January 11, 2012.

Langer, Jennifer 2002. *Crossing the Border. Voices of Refugee and Exiled Women*. Nottingham: Five Leaves Publications.

Novak, Amy 2006. "A Marred Testament": Cultural Trauma and Narrative in Danticat's The Farming of Bones. *Arizona Quarterly,* Vol. 62, No. 4, pp. 93–120, doi:10.1353/arq.2006.0027.

Organization of the Committee for State Security. Federation of American Scientists. http://www.fas.org/irp/world/russia/kgb/su0514.htm, last accessed on September 4, 2012.

Parjattu Huuskonen vastaa neuvostokollegan syytöksiin: Timosella on käsky kirjoittaa omiaan. [Blamed Huuskonen Answers the Accusations Presented by the Soviet Colleague: Timonen Was Ordered to Write Untrue Claims.] *Iltasanomat* [newspaper], April 19, 1984.

Resick, Patricia A. 2001. *Stress and Trauma*. London: Psychology Press.

Rislakki, Jukka & Lahti-Argutina, Eila 1997. *Meillä ei kotia täällä. Suomalaisten loikkarien joukkotuho Uralilla 1938.* [We Have No Home Here: Mass Destruction of Finnish Defectors in Urals in 1938.] Helsinki: Otava.

Sadowski-Smith, Claudia 2008. *Border Fictions. Globalization, Empire, and Writing at the Boundaries of the United States*. Charlottesville and London: University of Virginia Press.

Seppänen, Esa 2007. *Itäsuhteiden kolmiodraama. Kekkonen-Brezhnev-Kosygin 1960–1980*. [Triangle Drama of Relationships with East. Kekkonen-Brezhnev-Kosygin 1960–1980.] Helsinki: Ajatus kirjat.

Tarkka, Jukka 1992. *Suomen kylmä sota. Miten viattomuudesta tuli voima.* [Finland's Cold War: How Innocence Became Power.] Helsinki: Otava.

Taubman, William 2007. *Khrushchov – mies ja hänen aikakautensa.* [Khrushchev - Man And His Era.] Helsinki: Art House.

Timonen, Antti 1984. Riehaantunut neuvostovihan lietsoja. [Bewildered Agitator of Hatred Towards the Soviet Union.] *Neuvosto-Karjala* [newspaper], April 11, 1984.

Vettenniemi, Erkki 2004. *Punaisen terrorin todistajat. Neuvostoliitto suomalaisten leirivankien muistelmissa.* [Wittnesses of the Red Terror. Soviet Union as It Is Remembered by Finnish Camp Prisoners.] Helsinki: SKS.

van der Weil, Reina 2009. Trauma as Site of Identity: The Case of Jeanette Winterson and Frida Kahlo. *Women: A Cultural Review*, Vol. 20, No. 2, pp. 135–156, doi: 10.1080/09574040903000795.

Yevtushenko, Yevgeny 2008. Introduction. In: Alexander Solzhenitsyn. *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*. New York: Signet Classics.

doi:10.7592/FEJF2012.52.heith

ETHNICITY, CULTURAL IDENTITY AND BORDERING: A TORNEDALIAN NEGRO

Anne Heith

Abstract: This article examines how experiences of internal colonialism may be expressed in literary writing, through an analysis of Bengt Pohjanen's poem *Rättipäät* (Ragheads). The article discusses the poem and its embedding in a Meänkieli (Tornedalian Finnish) grammar book, *Meänkielen kramatiikki* (Pohjanen & Kenttä 1996). The theme explored is the tensions arising between homogenising modernity in a Swedish nation-building context and the particular situation of the Tornedalian Finnish minority in northern Sweden. Colonial complicity and vernacular cosmopolitanism are key concepts used in describing these tensions. The article proposes that the poem represents a remapping of the 'national' and the 'international' as allegiances are established between the Swedish national minority of the Tornedalians and migrants in European metropolitan centres. Hence the Tornedalians in the northern borderlands are presented as symbolic citizens in new migrant cartographies. This implies that a new myth of belonging is created, which unifies national minorities with metropolitan migrants.

Keywords: Swedish Tornedalians, minority status, Meänkieli, internal colonialism, colonial complicity, vernacular cosmopolitanism

From the vantage point of the political and administrative centre of the Swedish nation-state located in the area of Stockholm, the Tornedalian borderlands up in the north have always been regarded as a marginal and culturally alien territory inhabited by the Sámi people and Tornedalian Finns. The idea of a northern fringe of the nation-state was enhanced after Sweden lost Finland at the conclusion of the 1808–09 war with Russia. The peace treaty resulted in the border of 1809, which separates Sweden and Finland in the Torne Valley. The Tornedalian Finns on both sides of the border rivers consequently became citizens of different states. During the period that followed, there was a fear amongst the Swedish elite of Russian expansionism. Finland, which had become a Russian Grand Duchy, was seen as a space from where potential threats to Swedish sovereignty might emerge (Åselius 1994; Rodell 2009). From a perspective based on the notion of the geographical centre of the Mälardal region as a norm for national culture, the Finno-Ugric peoples of the sparsely populated north constituted a strange element in the national imagined community (cf. Anderson 2006).

Another factor contributing to the 'othering' of the Tornedalians is the compliance between modernisation and cultural homogenisation, which characterises Swedish twentieth century social development (Arvastson 1999). The attribution of 'strangeness' to the Tornedalian Finns in Sweden may be related to their minority status due to Finno-Ugric ethnicity in a Swedish nation-state context, and additionally to the use of a minority language, *Meänkieli*, previously called Tornedalian Finnish, as well as to their customs, culture and mentality. These factors contributed to the construction of the Tornedalians as the 'other' in pedagogies that created distinguishing markers between modernity and progress and its 'other'. During the building of the modern Swedish welfare state, the political elite actively promoted the notion of a modern society as a goal to be realised. In the 1930s, the popular revivalist Korpela movement captured people's minds in the Swedish Torne Valley; however, this led to tragedies when people got rid of all their earthly possessions while waiting for an ark. They firmly believed that an ark would arrive and save them as the world came to an end. National newspaper journalists from the south of Sweden reported the irrationality of the Korpelians (Lundmark 1985). In their reports religious fervour, irrationalism, a marginal northern location and Finno-Ugric ethnicity, together with customs and a culture incompatible with a modern, enlightened society, are highlighted as "the soil where craziness thrives" (Heith 2009a). This exemplifies how conceptual borders were constructed with the effect that the modern community of the Swedish nation-state was distinguished from its peripheral 'others'. This example of the Korpela movement and its role as a marker of difference indicates how local, popular revivalist movements were used to create diacritical borders that distinguished 'us' from 'them'. Another, better-known movement is that of Laestadianism, which has been described as an arena for expressing Finno-Ugric ethnicity, for example among the Kvens of northern Norway (Kristensen 1998; Sundelin 1998).

THE COLONIAL PAST VIEWED FROM AN ANTI- AND POST-COLONIAL PRESENT

This article concentrates on how a history of marginalisation has affected the Swedish Tornedalians through the analysis of a specimen of literary writing, produced by the Swedish Tornedalian cultural mobiliser and author Bengt Pohjanen (b. 1944). One argument of this article is that the strategy, which is being performed in Bengt Pohjanen's poem *Rättipäät*, may be seen as a component of the kind of vernacular cosmopolitanism discussed by Bhabha

(2008: IX-XXV). The analysis is based on a close reading of *Rättipäät*, literally *Ragheads*. 'Internal colonialism', 'othering', 'colonial complicity' and 'vernacular cosmopolitanism' are concepts that are used in order to highlight the ongoing negotiations between the past and the present, which shape Pohjanen's depiction of how the colonial past affects the anti-colonial and post-colonial present. The question that is addressed is how the past is present in contemporary cultural mobilisation and how it is transformed when regarded from within conceptual frameworks critical of a history of culturally homogenising modernity. A theme that is discussed is how the kind of critical positioning exemplified by Bengt Pohjanen contributes to a deconstruction of the narrations of the nation as "the many as one" (cf. Bhabha 2008: 222). This involves the conjuring up of alternative national pedagogies, thus acknowledging the histories and experiences of historical, ethnic and linguistic minorities within the nation-state.

In order to account for processes whereby ethnic minorities have been excluded from the Nordic narratives of the nation, the concept of 'colonial complicity' has been developed by researchers who critically examine connections between race, ethnicity and gender, on the one hand, and notions of a modern, progressive nation, on the other (Keskinen et al. 2009; Vuorela 2009):

> This theoretical approach investigates the fractures in Nordic whiteness discourses where the construction of (exclusive) national identities is built upon a notion of belonging grounded in 'race'/ethnicity and where distinctions, such as the one between 'the nation' and 'the immigrants', are systematically created and reinforced. [. . .] [T]his collection [*Complying with Colonialism: Gender, Race and Ethnicity in the Nordic Region*] explores ways of thinking about the relationship between the welfare state and its gendered and racialised 'others'. (Keskinen et al. 2009: 3–4)

The historical exclusion of the Finno-Ugric Tornedalian minority in Swedish nation-building pedagogies may be seen as one version of colonial complicity whereby a group of people has been excluded because of 'race'/ethnicity. In the Nordic whiteness discourse created in Sweden in the 1930s, race biologists constructed distinctions between the 'racial characters' of the Swedish nation. The most prominent researcher, Herman Lundborg (1868–1943), attracted a great deal of attention both in Sweden and abroad. One of his projects involved creating a typology of the racial characters of the Swedish nation (Zippel 2009). One result of Lundborg's work is *The Racial Characters of the Swedish Nation*, a book with a series of photographs aiming at visually representing the racial characters of the Swedish people.

Figure 1. *Lapp prototype, illustration in Herman Lundborg and F. J. Linders's* The Racial Characters of the Swedish Nation *(1926).*

When viewed with perspectives drawn from Nordic Critical Whiteness studies and the concept of 'colonial complicity', the exclusion and othering of the Sami and Tornedalians in Sweden may be described as a construction of 'others within'. This practice involves a racialisation of Finnish ethnicity inspired by discourses of race biology which construct Finns as being different from the Nordic, 'Aryan' racial type (Kemiläinen 1998; Laskar 2008). By analogy with Said's analysis of how Western attitudes towards the Middle East have been shaped by 'Orientalistic', Eurocentric prejudices and stereotypes, the specific areas where the 'others within' live, may be conceived of as domestic, Nordic Orients (Said 1978; Ekström & Gerholm 2006). One common aspect of the concepts of 'the other within', 'the Nordic Orient', 'internal colonialism' and 'vernacular cosmopolitanism' is that they are based on a recognition of the need to consider the situation 'at home' when mapping colonialism and post-colonialism. This may involve the kind of reshaping of national culture and identity discussed by Bhabha in his exploration of the notion of 'vernacular cosmopolitanism' presented in the preface of the 2008 edition of *The Location of Culture* (Bhabha

2008: IX–XXV). Bhabha draws attention to present-day cultural revision, going on by pointing out that: "Increasingly, 'national' cultures are being produced from the perspective of disenfranchised minorities" (ibid.: 8). This revision is performed by migrant authors and ethnic and linguistic minorities within the nation states. Bhabha's model of the contemporary remapping of national culture involves a critique of both modernity and homogenising nation-building:

> [P]ostcolonial critique bears witness to those countries and communities – in the North and the South, urban and rural – constituted [...] 'otherwise than modernity'. Such cultures of postcolonial *contra-modernity* may be contingent to modernity, discontinuous or in contention with it, resistant to its oppressive, assimilationist technologies; but they also deploy the cultural hybridity of their borderline conditions to 'translate', and therefore, reinscribe, the social imaginary of both metropolis and modernity. (ibid.: 9)

When considering the difference between the temporality of modernity and the present time of remapping, which Bhabha calls 'a revisionary time' (ibid.: 10), a major significance is attached to the role of agency in the form of the creation of affiliations among disempowered groups. Bhabha frequently uses the term 'minorities'.

Pohjanen and Kenttä's Meänkieli grammar book was published in 1996, before Meänkieli was officially acknowledged as a minority language in Sweden. Ever since the 1970s, Bengt Pohjanen has repeatedly highlighted that the Tornedalian Finnish language was stigmatised and marginalised in a Swedish nation-state context. The fourth stanza of the well-known poem *Jag är född utan språk* (I was born without language), first published in 1973, reads:

> I was whipped at school
> into language, clarity
> nationality
> I was whipped to contempt
> for what was mine
> the want of language
> and the border. (author's translation)

This poem has been reprinted a number of times, for example in a Meänkieli grammar book in Swedish by Pohjanen and Eeva Muli, *Meänkieli rätt och lätt. Grammatik i meänkieli* [Meänkieli right and easy: Meänkieli grammar] (Pohjanen & Muli 2005).

The official recognition of Meänkieli as a minority language in Sweden is important for the creation of a positive Tornedalian cultural identity. One aspect of language is that it functions as an ethnic marker, which can be problematic when ethnic minority status has been stigmatising for the minorities in question. When discussing this theme from the vantage point of the Finno-Ugric Kven population in northern Norway, Anna-Riitta Lindgren emphasises that the recognition of the language of a minority is vital for positive identity formation (Lindgren 2003: 111). She makes the point that as the language of the Kven people in Norway was not recognised as an autonomous language, it would always be compared with the norm for Finnish in Finland and found to be inferior. The same argument may be applied to Meänkieli, which in some respects may be described as a Finnish dialect, but which also differs from Finnish in Finland due to influences from Swedish.

A TORNEDALIAN NEGRO: THE USE OF FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE FROM DISCOURSES OF SLAVERY AND RACISM

The Finnish term 'rättipäät' is a pejorative slang word used to denominate 'Arabs'. Literally it means 'ragheads'. The poem *Rättipäät* is one of the texts in Meänkieli reproduced in *Meänkielen kramatiikki* [Meänkieli grammar] by Matti Kenttä and Bengt Pohjanen.[1] On the back of the cover there is a text that comments upon the increase in the use of Meänkieli, previously called Tornedalian Finnish, during the decade before 1996 when the book was published: "Koo on kramatiikki niin oon jo kieli, jolla oon säänöt. Nyt meänkieliki toela kuuluu muitten kielitten roihkan." [When there is a grammar there is also a language that has rules. Now Meänkieli also has its place among other languages.] This statement testifies to the performative quality of the grammar book and its aspiration to consolidate the status of Meänkieli as a language of its own. Meänkieli is shaped by a Swedish-Finnish linguistic continuum where Finnish and Swedish intermingle in the borderscape. The emphasis on Meänkieli as a language of its own may be interpreted as a celebration of the Third Space of enunciation and ambivalences which refute notions of cultural purity (cf. Bhabha 2008: 54–56). *Meänkielen kramatiikki* consists of sections numbered from 1 to 12.22. The content of the sections varies, from the presentation of a historical backdrop, performative negotiations of the status of Meänkieli, the presentation of orthography, vocabulary, phonemes and parts of speech, to specimens of writing in Meänkieli. These specimens are found in section 12 and they range from an example of the seventeenth century peasant poet Keksi's poetry (12.4., p. 140) to contemporary texts by Bengt Pohjanen and

other authors. The poem *Rättipäät*, numbered 12.16, is one of these specimens. The name of the respective authors and the year of publication for the first time are printed below each specimen. *Rättipäät*, for example, was published for the first time in 1987 (Pohjanen & Kenttä 1996: 153).

Rättipäät

Nyt aurinko nousee meile,
yli mailman neekereile.
Rättipäät ja mutakuonot:
ei niil' ole ajat huonot.

Nyt oon tullu meän vuoro,
laulaa vähemistön kuoro,
kaikkialla mailmassa:
Lontonissa, Pajalassa.

Herraskansat, äitipuolet,
niilä vasta suuret huolet,
niilä vanhaa oon jo kieli,
meilä herräämässä mieli.

Net laulunsa oon laulanheet,
jo Dallaksensa elähneet.
Niil' ei ennää kelpaa mikhään,
sanova varsin: s'ole mithään!

Tuokaa nautintoja lissää,
väkivaltaa naisen nissää.
Met niistä rahhaa saama
ko met tätä mailmaa jaama.

But where is our onkel Sam,
arbetskraften den ju försvann.
Tyhjinä oon herrain kassa.
I am coming back now massa!

Toppaamapa laulu tämä,
annan kehotukset nämä:
Emmä anna ennää perhiin,
taistelemma vaikka verhiin.

English translation:[2]

Ragheads

Now the sun rises for us,
over the negroes of the world.
Ragheads and mudfaces;
they don't have bad times.

Now our time has come,
to sing in the choir of minorities,
all over the world:
in London and in Pajala.

Masters, stepmothers,
they indeed are in great trouble,
their language is really old,
our spirit is rising.

They have sung their songs,
and lived their Dallases.
For them nothing is good enough anymore,
they say: it doesn't matter!

Bring more pleasures,
violence and women's teats.[3]
We make money from them
when we divide this world.

But where is our onkel Sam,[4]
arbetskraften den ju försvann.[5]
The masters' cash boxes are empty.
I am coming back now massa!

Let us finish this song,
I present these urgent requests:
We will no longer let go,
we will fight even if it comes to bloodshed.
(translation by Anne Heith)

'RAGHEADS' AND 'MUDFACES': PROVOCATION AND REMAPPING OF NATIONAL COMMUNITY

The title *Rättipäät* is an offensive term that connotes the use of 'Keffiyehs', a headdress fashioned from a piece of cloth. Traditionally this kind of headdress is worn by Arab men. From the vantage point of poetics, *Rättipäät* exemplifies a synecdoche, that is, a rhetorical figure in which a part is substituted for the whole. There is an evident connection between the figurative word, 'rättipäät', and what it designates, namely Arab men wearing 'Keffiyehs'. The effect of a synecdoche as a stylistic phenomenon depends on whether or not it is expected in its context (Preminger & Brogan 1993: 1261). As pejorative language is not the kind of terminology one expects to encounter in a grammar book, the effect is strong, even provocative. There is an analogy to the term in the third line of the first stanza, in which 'rättipäät' is juxtaposed with an equally offensive term 'mutakuonot', literally 'mudfaces', a term used to denote black people. From the perspective of the entire poem, the term 'rättipäät' functions as a metonymy, a figure in which one word is substituted for another on the basis of some material, causal or conceptual relation (ibid.: 783). In the case of the poem, a conceptual relation is established between the 'rättipäät' mentioned in the title as well as the first stanza, and the 'negroes' (neekereile) and 'mudfaces' (mutakuonot) also of the first stanza, the minorities (vähemistön) of the second, and the work-force (arbetskraften) and the lyrical 'I' of the sixth stanza. One thing these categories have in common is that they connote disempowered and marginalised people. In the case of the pronoun 'I', this effect is achieved through identification and self-ascription.[6]

The poem represents hybridity which in Bhabha's words may be described as "a difference 'within', a subject that inhabits the rim of an 'in-between' reality", a "borderline existence" (cf. Bhabha 2008: 19). The subject positions exemplified in the poem are those of the Swedish Tornedalian Finnish ethnic and linguistic minority and those of migrant groups living in metropolitan centres. These categories connote the existence of 'difference within' by refuting notions of cultural purity. The main theme of the poem is that of vernacular cosmopolitanism, as it stages an emerging imagined community of the rural ethnic minority of Swedish Tornedalian Finns and migrants in metropolitan spaces. This exemplifies a new way of conceiving the nation and categories such as belonging and identity.

PERFORMING HYBRIDITY

The term 'rättipäät' involves both a double vision and a performative move, as the pejorative denomination is being appropriated and recoded in a vision of agency and vernacular cosmopolitanism. As mentioned above, *Rättipäät* is printed in a grammar book written in the Meänkieli language. The publication of this book is in itself a performative act which partakes in the remapping of nation and culture. The role of language has always been a major theme, both in the suppression of ethnic and linguistic minorities, in present-day articulations of post-colonial critique and in visions of vernacular cosmopolitanism. The poem consists of seven stanzas of four lines each. Every stanza has a pair of rhyming couplets. *Meänkielen krammatiikki* is a very unconventional grammar book, when compared to mainstream discourses for grammar production. The language is very informal and it reflects the hybrid, 'pidgin' nature of the spoken language of the border zone. The book includes poems and other specimens of literary writing, not generally found in grammar books. Furthermore, *Meänkielen krammatiikki* strongly highlights the theme of internal colonialism (cf. Hechter 1975) from the perspective of the colonised. This is evident, for example, in the poem *Rättipäät*. The title of the poem clearly indicates that the author is concerned with a conscious challenge of notions about political correctness. This is enhanced in the poem itself, where offensive terms are used.

THE DOMESTIC OTHER OF THE WHITE NATION

The term 'negro', which etymologically denotes the colour black, is particularly charged with symbolic meanings, both in colonial and postcolonial discourse. This is related to the role of racial markers in the construction – and deconstruction – of cultural thresholds, which are activated for the purpose of marking ethnic and cultural identities.[7] It is not hard to find examples of the use of racial stereotypes in the construction of Swedish cultural identity. This theme is explored in studies of Orientalism in Sweden (Mattis 2005; Ekström & Gerholm 2006). Terminology such as 'Orientalism in Swedish' and 'The Orient in Sweden' (author's translations), involves an appropriation and adaption of Edward Said's analysis in *Orientalism*, for the purpose of highlighting the existence of Orientalist ideology in Swedish cultural production (cf. Said 1978). Orientalist ideology is manifested, for example, in racial stereotyping. In this context, the role of blond hair and blue eyes in the construction of the ideal Swedish (and Nordic) type has been highlighted in post-colonial critique (Catomeris 2005). However, there are also other vantage points for the analysis of the construc-

tion of 'others', for example, when the roles of class and status are considered. Ekström in particular points out that certain groups within western societies have been singled out as the 'others' for not fitting into the notion of a western ideal: "single-parent mothers, social-welfare cases and various ethnic minorities may often personify the notion of the threat from within" (Ekström 2006: 21, author's translation).

Figure 2. *Girl categorised as a Nordic type in Herman Lundborg and F. J. Linder's* The Racial Characters of the Swedish Nation *(1926).*

Another example where the problematic relationship between Swedish national identity formation and race is at the fore, is a study entitled: *Kan man vara svart och svensk?* (Is it Possible to Be Black and Swedish?) (Jacobsson 1999). The choice of title clearly reflects the role of a symbolic colour-line in the exclusion of groups of people from the imagined Swedish national community. Given this backdrop, the deployment of the term 'negro' in a poem by the Swedish Tornedalian Finnish[8] author Bengt Pohjanen involves a confrontation of a cultural threshold, charged with a history of exclusion and racism.

INCLUSION AND EXCLUSION: ALTERNATIVE IMAGINED COMMUNITIES

The beginning of the first stanza reads: "Now the sun rises for us, / over the negroes of the earth". The status of 'us' in the poem does not include being part of the imagined community of a nation-state. On the contrary, the use of figurative language from the discourses of slavery and racism in spaces where black and Arab people have been subjected to oppression, directs the reader's attention to the historical exclusion and oppression of the Tornedalian Finnish minority. This is one example of how the emotional content of post-colonialism may be expressed through analogy. This does not imply that the situation of the Tornedalian Finnish minority in Sweden has ever been the same as, or even similar to that of slaves in the U.S.A. or colonised people in Africa, Asia, or the Caribbean. Rather, the figurative language of the poem is deployed in order to represent a history of inequality, from the perspective of someone who identifies with people who have been oppressed and marginalised. In this poetic discourse the 'negroes' and the 'ragheads' who are subsumed in the pronoun 'we', function as signifiers of the oppressed. The effect is that a metonymic relationship is established between these categories and the Tornedalian Finns. The pronouns 'we' and 'they' function as representations of exclusionary and inclusionary practices in a transforming space. The pronoun 'we' refers to the Tornedalian Finnish population. Since the year 2000, this population has the official status of being a historical ethnic and linguistic minority in Sweden.

L'UGRITUDE

In a later book on the history of Tornedalian Finnish literature, Pohjanen makes a similar connection by coining the term 'L'Ugritude', which is a combination of the words 'Négritude' and 'Ugric' (Pohjanen & Johansson 2007; Heith 2009b). Paradoxically, the effect of the established relationship is that the categories are represented as different *and* similar at the same time. The use of the 'n-word' and other pejorative terms that are metonymically linked to the category of the Swedish Tornedalian Finns, takes on a specific significance when we take into consideration that the terms are used for the self-definition of an ethnic group. When discussing the construction of ethnic identities, the Norwegian anthropologist Fredrik Barth emphasises that the features "that are taken into account are not the sum of 'objective' differences, but only those that the actors themselves regard as significant" (Barth 1998: 14). In the case of the poem *Rättipäät*, Bengt Pohjanen exemplifies an actor who chooses to high-

light similarities between groups that have been disempowered and oppressed through their exclusion from western modernity along race lines. Being himself a Swedish Tornedalian Finn, this involves a statement about Swedish colonial complicity and social hierarchisation through the establishment of metonymic relationships between 'negroes', 'ragheads', 'mudfaces', and Tornedalian Finns.

"NOW OUR TIME HAS COME"

The post-colonial time and space of the poem are indicated by the fact that it is situated in the present time, which is one of resistance and solidarity. The second stanza reads:

> Now our time has come,
> to sing in the choir of minorities,
> all over the world:
> in London and in Pajala.

In spite of the use of figurative language from discourses of colonialism and racism, the poem expresses not only a post-colonial awareness of oppression on a global level, but also of resistance. Through the introduction of a contemporary urban space, London, which is juxtaposed with the Tornedalian community Pajala in northern Sweden, the space represented becomes that of the present-day globalised world. This reflects the changes of geocultural configurations which have taken place, from the time of homogenising nation-building, to that of present-day globalisation. This new geopolitical configuration provides a backdrop of the poem's vision of the multiethnic, transnational choir. Moreover, this provides a conceptual framework for new notions of identity, which allow for cross-cultural exchange within an emerging post-colonial and globally transnational world. One theme of the poem, illustrated by the second stanza, is the exploration of new options for identity formation, in a space that implies that thresholds bordering the Eurocentric, imagined, racially homogeneous west have been crossed.

LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY

All of the stanzas are in Meänkieli except the sixth one, which is in English (line one and four), Swedish (line two) and Meänkieli (line three). Thus the poem is literally multilingual. The domination of Meänkieli and the inclusion of phrases in Swedish and English may be interpreted as a strategy for signalling that the time has come for Meänkieli to claim 'its place' as a language

on parity with other languages in a globalised, multilingual world. All the lines of the sixth stanza contain linguistic markers either of ethnicity, signs of loss or disempowerment. The first line's 'onkel Sam' exemplifies linguistic hybridisation. The phrase may be interpreted as a metaphor of neo-colonialism. It furthermore draws attention to the globalisation of economy, which is connected with local unemployment, and a dispersal of the work force (line two), and economic deficiency (line three).[9] The question of the first line asks where 'onkel Sam' has gone. This is paralleled by the disappearance of the work-force of the second line ("arbetskraften den ju försvann") and in the third line by 'the masters' empty cash-box ("Tyhjinä on herrain kassa"). Thus, causality is invoked between decisions made by multinational enterprises, a loss of job opportunities and economic stagnation on a local level. These images of relationships between the global economy and local economic stagnation are countered by the fourth line's "I am coming back now massa!", which connotes agency and protest from the part of the dispossessed, represented by the 'I' of the poem. The emotional intensity of the response is emphasised by the exclamation mark and the use of the word 'massa', slang for 'master'. Stylistically the word 'massa' connotes linguistic creolisation and slavery. The poem *Rättipäät* is written in the form of a dramatised speech in which the lyric 'we' expresses an interpretation of the present situation, which is seen as a time of positive change for those minorities subsumed by the pronoun 'we'.

REVITALISATION

Language is an important theme of the poem, not by direct reference but through Pohjanen's deployment of different languages, which involves a statement about the status of Meänkieli. One function of language is that it plays a major role in marking differences in the constructions of cultural identities and for the creation of 'groupness' (Edwards 2009). The importance of establishing a language that is generalised and normalised, a literature of one's own, and institutions for the production of works in the language of a particular ethnic group, are general elements of the post-colonial struggle seen all over the globe (cf. Chatterjee 1993: 9). This is also the case when it comes to Swedish Tornedalian Finnish ethnic mobilisation. One vital element of this process is the production of suitable educational literature which may contribute to the strengthening of the position of the Meänkieli language. This is one backdrop of the Meänkieli grammar books, co-authored by Bengt Pohjanen (Pohjanen & Kenttä 1996; Pohjanen & Muli 2005). Both grammar books contribute to constructing a colonial past and a present where compliances with colonialism

co-exist, and enter into agonistic relationships with anti- and post-colonial, alternative modes for interpretation.

Meänkielen krammatiikki was published by Kaamos, a publishing-house with a Meänkieli profile started by Bengt Pohjanen. It presents the historical background to the specific present-day transnational area Meänmaa (literally 'our land'), which covers parts of Sweden and Finland. One section is entitled *Tsarin viiva*, which means 'the line of the tsar'. The expression refers to the establishment of the border after the war between Sweden and Russia. According to folk legend, the border was the result of a line that the Russian tsar had drawn on a map to indicate where the border should be (Pohjanen & Kenttä 1996: 13). The authors particularly comment upon the shame connected with belonging to the Meänkieli-speaking minority, which resulted in people changing their Finnish names into Swedish ones and choosing to use Swedish instead of Tornedalian Finnish. Language loss is an important theme related to bordering practices whereby attempts have been made to create a homogeneous Swedish culture. Today, all the minority languages of northern Scandinavia are marginalised, stigmatised and endangered as a result of modernisation processes and assimilation politics (Pietikäinen et al. 2010: 6). In Sweden, the Tornedalian Finnish language was considered a 'foreign' language after the border had been established in 1809 (Huss 1999). The sense of cultural inferiority described by Pohjanen and Kenttä reflects a major theme of postcolonial studies, discussed by Hechter as an element of internal colonialism (Hechter 1975: XVII). Still the content of *Meänkielen krammatiikki* reflects a 'decolonised mind' (cf. Smith 2008) as the history of marginalisation is used as a backdrop to a practice that may be described as a combination of post-colonial speaking back, deconstruction and of present-day self-assertion and empowerment. One instance of this is the positioning of the Meänkieli language on an equal footing with the Finnish language, in an illustration that shows the kinship of Finno-Ugric languages in a language tree (Pohjanen & Kenttä 1996:16).

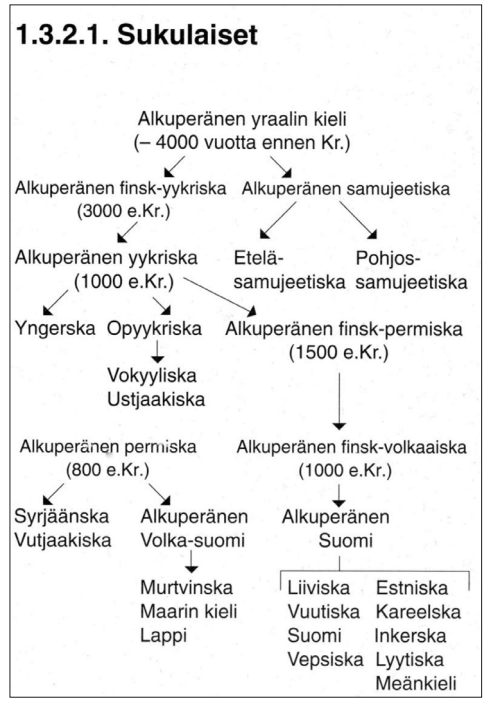


Figure 3. *Illustration from* Meänkielen krammatiikki *that represents Finnish (Suomi) and Meänkieli as equals.*

There is a deliberate reversal of value-coding when Meänkieli is characterised as a "fiini kieli" in a title that reflects the hybrid nature of Meänkieli.[10] This involves a mixture of Finnish and Swedish linguistic elements (ibid.: 17). This practice of mixing is one of the reasons why Tornedalian Finnish has historically been held in low esteem and why notions of cultural inferiority have been connected with Tornedalian culture. In the novel *Populärmusik från Vittula* (Popular Music from Vittula), Mikael Niemi describes the socialisation of schoolchildren into a culture of poverty and exclusion from 'proper' Swedish and Finnish culture when enumerating what the children were taught at school: "We spoke broken Finnish without being Finns, we spoke broken Swedish without being Swedes. We were nothing" (Niemi 2000: 50, author's translation).

RESISTANCE

The theme of the poem *Rättipäät* emphasises the dynamics between prevailing colonialism, represented in the present by discrimination of black and Arab people who have migrated to the hearts of the old empires.[11] The theme furthermore highlights anti-colonial resistance. This present-day resistance implies a claim for groups that have been marginalised due to ethnicity, race or minority status, to become recognised and acknowledged. It must be underlined that the term 'negro' is not deployed pejoratively here. Rather, the use of the term exemplifies a strategy similar to that previously employed by the Négritude movement (Heith 2009b: 49). The members of the movement believed in a strategic use of a common black identity and a shared heritage in the fight against colonial political and cultural domination. Today, notions of race and blackness may be used strategically (cf. Lundahl 2005) in challenging colonising discourses and practices. However, although Pohjanen uses allusions to slavery, race, disempowerment, blackness and resistance, it is important to keep in mind that the poem does not depict black subjectivity in the mode of writing which relates to the African diaspora as experienced by people of African descent.[12] Rather, Pohjanen uses the concept of 'blackness' in the poem metaphorically, for the purpose of establishing metonymic relationships between historically marginalised and racialised groups.

One important aspect of the Négritude movement is that it advocated cultural difference in making a point of being opposed to assimilation with the dominant culture and by reclaiming the word 'negro' as a positive term (Heith 2009b: 49). This strategic dimension is important as a backdrop to the use of the term in the poem *Rättipäät*, where it is used symbolically in the first two lines of the first stanza: "Now the sun rises for us, / over the negroes of the earth".

Here the word 'negro' is used metaphorically to denote suppressed groups and minorities. This is emphasised in the second stanza's mentioning of "the choir of minorities". The sun that rises (first stanza), the choir of minorities (second stanza), the statement "I am coming back now massa!" (sixth stanza) and the final statement "We will not relinquish anymore / we will fight even if it means bloodshed" (last stanza) function as a series of metaphors that point toward a single theme, namely that the time of unity among minorities and protest towards oppressors has come. The poetics of the poem implies that a discourse of slavery and colonial oppression is deployed in order to provide figurative language for the representation of the oppression of the ethnic and linguistic Tornedalian Finnish minority in Sweden. This in itself exemplifies an appropriation and adaption characteristic of post-colonial discourse.

There are many examples of how references to black skin colour are used symbolically in present-day cultural production to denote marginalisation, for example, in urban youth cultures (Heith 2008: 635). One example from Latin American ethnographic studies is provided by David Guss's account of the figure of the 'black' saint San Juan Congo. In this, Guss clearly shows how metaphoric links are established between blackness, on the one hand, and poverty, oppression and marginalisation on the other. When Guss finally gets to see the figure of the saint in real life, he is stunned when he sees the light-skinned figure with Caucasian features and curly blond hair. Eventually he realises that:

> [T]he issues of blackness signified by San Juan Congo were much more profound than simple pigmentation. [...] For the blackness represented here was that of poverty and oppression. It was the economic and social marginalisation that had defined the African condition since the arrival of the first slaves [...]. (Guss 2000: 56)[13]

The pervading positive tone of the poem *Rättipäät* is achieved by its metaphors that connote positive change and solidarity – the sun that rises and the time that has come for the choir of minorities to sing together all over the world. These instances of figurative language represent that change (which implies that oppression and marginalisation have been replaced by agency) is to take place. The metaphor of the singing of the choir of minorities is particularly interesting as it addresses the issue of 'unity in diversity' in the shape of vernacular cosmopolitanism.

Rättipäät is a poem that provides a vision of a positive future for those who have been oppressed by presenting a vision of community and agency.[14] Thus it provides a counter-image to representations of dispossession and disempowerment. The rhetoric of the poem mimics that of popular movements that competed for followers in the Torne Valley and the northern region during

the period in which the modern welfare state evolved. Historically, popular revivalist movements have attracted followers in this region. When the Social Democratic movement began to have an impact on peoples' minds in the 1930s, there was a competition between politically motivated visions for social change and religious visions which were more focused upon eternity and life after death (Lundmark 1985).

LITERARY WRITING AND BECOMING TRANS-CULTURAL

The vision of *Rättipäät*, of empowered minorities joining globally in resistance, may seem romanticised. Certainly it is in stark contrast to those political analyses which have pointed out that there is no essential or necessary ground for political affiliation or alliance between various oppressed groups (cf. Laclau & Mouffe 1985). However, strict political analysis is not the genre of Pohjanen's poem. Rather, it exemplifies literary writing that echoes the rhetorical traditions of local, popular, utopian, visionary discourses. Moreover, there is a link to an anti-colonial, popular, visionary rhetoric, which is formulated in the work of Franz Fanon. In the seminal books *The Wretched of the Earth* and *Black Skin, White Masks*, Fanon advocates popular anti-colonial resistance. As part of this he expresses the notion that people throughout the world, who have been dominated by colonial rule, share collective experiences, and in some sense partake in the same struggle for emancipation and justice (Fanon 1968; Fanon 2000). This theme is also explored in the studies of 'migrant literatures' (Merolla & Ponzanesi 2005). One effect of migration is the re-imagination of space "both in the language of memory and in the political future" (ibid.: 15). This involves that metropolitan cities, such as London, may become part of a wider trans-cultural web, and that writers in the metropolitan cities re-conceptualise themselves by recurring to a trans-cultural consciousness (ibid.). This type of conceptualisation has been appropriated and adapted by Bengt Pohjanen in the poem *Rättipäät*, in which the transgression of symbolic and concrete meanings attached to notions of urban and rural, centre and margin, function as elements of the vision of the choir singing in unison in London and in Pajala. This is a new way of re-conceptualising a trans-cultural consciousness in a present-day transnational space.

ALLEGORY

Rättipäät may be read as an allegory of colonialism. Pohjanen's use of figurative language describes a situation that symbolically refers to various forms of colonialism and oppression (internal colonialism, neo-colonialism, slavery). According to Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, this kind of allegory may function as a counter-discourse as the use of the allegorical form may replace monolithic traditions with a cross-cultural pluralism (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 2009: 7–8). In the poem *Rättipäät* the small Tornedalian town of Pajala and its inhabitants are opened up to a perspective that places them in a globalised post-colonial context. Through this, the poem performs a powerful criticism of internal colonialism in Sweden. When Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin describe the role of allegory in this kind of texts, they highlight the following potential:

> [A] 'post-colonial' allegory contests and disrupts the narrative assumptions of colonialism, such as the inevitability of 'development', of 'progress', of 'civilization', the dominance of the chronological view of history, the Euro-centric view of 'the real'. By reinforcing the fact that 'real' events occupy various horizons of meaning, post-colonial allegory becomes a common strategy of resistance in post-colonial texts. (ibid.: 8)

CONCLUDING REMARKS

In the reading of *Rättipäät* presented in this article, the poem is seen as a performance of Swedish Tornedalian Finnish self-understanding, which implies the proposal of similarities between the Tornedalians and the racialised categories of 'ragheads', 'negroes' and 'mudfaces'. The narrative of the nation plotted in the poem highlights the existence of colonial complicities within a Swedish nation-building context. These may be in the shape of othering and structures that represent a version of internal colonialism. Both kinds of complicities are elements of a national pedagogy, which has excluded and racialised the Tornedalians. Whether this racialisation has the status of being an 'objective' truth, or not, is not a theme of this article. The poem is seen as a specimen of literary writing and, that being the case, its author has the freedom to make whatever statement he wants about the historical situation of the Tornedalian Finns in Sweden and what similarities there may be between various racialised groups on a contemporary global arena. One advantage of the genre of literary writing when it comes to the expression of strong emotions is that a writer of fiction has a freedom that the scientist does not have. This is one reason why literary writing is suited for expressing personal experiences

in an explicitly subjective way. *Rättipäät* depicts a strong emotional response to a Swedish culturally homogenising national pedagogy, which has excluded the Tornedalians. The poem also performs a reversal of value-coding when pejorative, racist terminology is used for self-description and the establishment of affiliations between discriminated groups of people in a global space. This involves a symbolic remapping whereby new allegiances are established between national and global minorities. In this respect *Rättipäät* may be seen as a performance, in-line with the kind of remapping requested by Bhabha:

> [W]e must not fail to see how our own intimate, indigenous landscapes, should be remapped to include those who are its new citizens; or those whose citizenly presence has been annihilated or marginalized. Regional movements of peoples within nation-states, and the financial and cultural impact of migrants upon their 'home' communities and societies, should not be neglected in favor of a celebration of diasporic communities. (Bhabha 2008: XXII)

Bhabha highlights the role of emergent minority communities in processes of symbolic remappings that "revise our sense of symbolic citizenship, our myths of belonging, by identifying ourselves with the starting-points of other national and international histories and geographies" (Bhabha 2008: XX). One proposal of this article is that Pohjanen's representation of the emergent national minority community of the Swedish Tornedalians in *Rättipäät* and its allegiances with international migrants may be seen as a remapping that revises 'our' sense of symbolic citizenship and myths of belonging, by locating the national and international within emerging histories and geographies that provide alternatives to the narratives of homogenising modernity and colonialism.

NOTES

[1] For further information about Meänkieli, see Matti Kenttä and Erling Wande's *Meän kielen sanakirja* [Meänkieli dictionary] (Kenttä & Wande 1992) and Bengt Pohjanen's *Meänkielen iso sanakirja / Storordbok för meänkieli* [A large dictionary of Meänkieli] (Pohjanen 2011).

[2] This translation has been approved by Bengt Pohjanen. In an e-mail correspondence he told me that the poem was written in the context of the seminar *New Writing in a Multicultural Society* arranged by The Royal Swedish Academy of Letters, History and Antiquities (Kungliga Vitterhetsakademien) in 1985. It has been set to music by Torvald Pääjärvi.

[3] Bengt Pohjanen has told me that the motives of this stanza are: view on women, violent movies, money and world view.

[4] This line is in English in the original. The spelling ("onkel") has been kept.

[5] This line is in Swedish in the original.

[6] Of course Pohjanen's use of the pejorative terms "ragheads" and "mudfaces", which are characteristic of racist, xenophobic discourses, may be analysed from a number of vantage points. The aim of this article is not to present a comprehensive analysis of all possible, imaginable dimensions of the use of these terms, but to focus upon the function of the terms in the poem for evoking a history of internal colonialism in Sweden and for proposing alternative transnational, global imagined communities in the spirit of vernacular cosmopolitanism.

[7] The role of the 'color line' in the construction of cultural boundaries is particularly fore-grounded by Foster and Froman in an analysis of thresholds of western culture (Foster & Froman 2002: 6).

[8] 'Swedish' here refers to citizenship, while 'Tornedalian Finnish' refers to ethnic and linguistic positioning within the historical minority of Tornedalian Finns in Sweden.

[9] The reference to "onkel Sam" also carries other connotations, such as the anti-Americanism of certain groups during the 1980s and a critique of global 'Americanisation'. In this context the expression may be interpreted as a metaphor for a dominant superpower that intervenes in various parts of the world without taking responsibility for the consequences of the interventions.

[10] The title "Meänkieli – fiini kieli" [Meänkieli – a fine language] includes the Swedish word 'fin' [fine, good, beautiful] and the Finnish word 'kieli' [language]. The spelling of 'fin' is modified in order to reflect local pronunciation [f*ii*ni] and the Finnish adjective ending is used [fiin*i*].

[11] This is a major theme of *Migrant Cartographies: New Cultural and Literary Spaces in Post-Colonial Europe* (Merolla & Ponzanesi 2005).

[12] For an analysis of Black subjectivity throughout the African diaspora, see Michelle M. Wright's (2004) *Becoming Black: Creating Identity in the African Diaspora*.

[13] Guss also elaborates upon other possible meanings of the denial of the San Juan figure's whiteness, when he draws attention to Venezuela's denial of colour, which implies that a myth of mestizaje has been established. According to this myth the issue of race does not exist in Venezuela (Guss 2000: 56–59). Critical examinations highlight that the myth has resulted in a systematic repression of Indian and African culture and ethnicity. The 'freedom' afforded to people of Indian and African descent in this context of denial, is to deny their racial heritage by becoming 'white', that is, by assimilating and conforming to the dominant culture of European origin.

[14] Generally the word is used pejoratively. Thus Pohjanen performs an appropriation and adaption when he uses the word to denote the community and agency of minorities. This rather romanticised image is common both in popular political and popular revivalist rhetoric. This is true not least of the Swedish context where the Social Democratic Party was connected with various popular movements ('folkrörelser'). Utopian discourse is also common among popular revivalist movements that have emerged in abundance in the north.

REFERENCES

Anderson, Benedict 2006. *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso.

Arvastson, Gösta 1999. Inledning. [Introduction.] In: Gösta Arvastson (ed.) *Järnbur eller frigörelse? Studier i moderniseringen av Sverige.* [Iron Cage or Emancipation? Studies of the Modernisation of Sweden.] Lund: Studentlitteratur, pp. 9–24.

Åselius, Gunnar 1994. *The 'Russian Menace' to Sweden: The Belief System of a Small Power Security Élite in the Age of Imperialism*. Stockholm: Akademitryck AB.

Ashcroft, Bill & Griffiths, Gareth & Tiffin, Helen 2009. *Post-Colonial Studies: The Key Concepts.* London & New York: Routledge.

Barth, Fredrik 1998. Introduction. In: Fredrik Barth (ed.) *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Culture Difference.* Long Grove, Ill.: Waveland Press, pp. 9–37.

Bhabha, Homi K. 2008. *The Location of Culture.* London & New York: Routledge.

Catomeris, Christian 2005. 'Svartmuskiga banditтyper' - svenskarna och det mörka håret. ['Swarthy Bandit Types' – Swedes and Dark Hair.] In: Moa Matthis (ed.) *Orientalism på svenska.* [Orientalism in Swedish.]. Stockholm: Ordfront, pp. 20–55.

Chatterjee, Partha 1993. *The Nation and its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Edwards, John 2009. *Language and Identity: Key Topics in Sociolinguistics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Ekström, Simon 2006. Orienten i Sverige. [The Orient in Sweden.] In: Simon Ekström & Lena Gerholm (eds.) *Orienten i Sverige: Samtida möten och gränssnitt.* [The Orient in Sweden: Contemporary Encounters and Interfaces.] Lund: Studentlitteratur, pp. 11–40.

Ekström, Simon & Lena Gerholm (eds.) 2006. *Orienten i Sverige: Samtida möten och* Gränssnitt. [The Orient in Sweden: Contemporary Meetings and Interfaces.] Lund: Studentlitteratur.

Fanon, Frantz 1968. *The Wretched of the Earth.* New York: Grove Press.

Fanon, Frantz 2000. *Black Skin, White Masks*. New York: Grove Press.

Foster, John Burt & Froman, Wayne J. 2002. *Thresholds of Western Culture: Identity, Postcoloniality, Transnationalism.* New York & London: Continuum.

Guss, David M. 2000. *The Festive State: Race, Ethnicity, and Nationalism as Cultural Performance.* Berkeley & Los Angeles & London: University of California Press.

Hechter, Michael 1975. *Internal Colonialism: The Celtic Fringe in British National Development, 1536–1966.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

Heith, Anne 2008. Invandraren – Främlingen – Negern. Konstruktioner av utanförskap. [The Immigrant – The Stranger – The Negro.] In: Clas Zilliacus & Heidi Grönstrand & Ulrika Gustafsson (eds.) *Borders in Nordic Literature*, Vol. 2. Åbo: Åbo Akademis Förlag, pp. 635–643.

Heith, Anne 2009a. Millenarianism and the Narration of the Nation. Narratives about the Korpela Movement. *Journal of Northern Studies*, No. 1, pp. 13–29.

Heith, Anne 2009b. 'Nils Holgersson Never Saw Us'. A Tornedalian Literary History. In: Heidi Hansson & Cathrine Norberg (eds.) *Cold Matters*, *Northern Studies Monographs*, Vol. 1. Umeå: Umeå University, pp. 209–221.

Huss, Leena 1999. *Reversing Language Shift in the Far North: Linguistic Revitalization in Northern Scandinavia and Finland.* Uppsala: Uppsala University.

Jacobsson, Ingrid 1999. *Kan man vara svart och svensk? Texter om rasism, anti-semitism och Nazism.* [Is it Possible to Be Black and Swedish? Texts about Racism, Anti-Semitism and Nazism.] Stockholm: Natur och Kultur.

Kemiläinen, Aira (1998). *Finns in the Shadow of the 'Aryans': Race Theories and Racism*. Helsinki: Finnish Historical Society.

Kenttä, Matti & Wande, Erling 1992. *Meän kielen sanakirja.* [Dictionary of Meänkieli.] Övertorneå: Kaamos.

Keskinen, Suvi & Tuori, Salla & Irni, Sari & Mulinari, Diana (eds.) 2009. *Complying with Colonialism: Gender, Race and Ethnicity in the Nordic Region*. Farnham & Burlington: Ashgate.

Kristiansen, Roald E. 1998. Laestadianismen som religion for kvenene. [Laestadianism as a Religion for the Kvens.] In: Helge Guttormsen (ed.) *Kvenenes historie og kultur.* [The History and Culture of the Kvens.] Seminarrapport, Nordreisa 19–21 September 1997. Nord-Troms Historielag 1998, pp. 155–166.

Laclau, Ernesto & Mouffe, Chantal 1985. *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy.* London: Verso.

Laskar, Pia 2008. Att pussla med finska kranier. [To Busy Oneself with Finnish Skulls.] In: *Ord & Bild*, No. 2, pp. 142–149.

Lindgren, Anna-Riitta 2003. Språklig emansipasjon eller språkdød blant kvener og tornedalinger? [Linguistic emancipation or language loss among Kvens and Tornedalians?] In: Reidun Mellem (ed.) *Innsyn i kvensk historie, språk og kultur: Seminarrapport, Tromsø, mars 2002.* [A Glimpse into Kven History, Language and Culture.] Norske kveners forbund: Tromsø.

Lundborg, Herman B. & Linders, Frans Josua 1926. *The Racial Characters of the Swedish Nation*. Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksell.

Lundahl, Mikela 2005. *Vad är en neger? Negritude, essentialism, strategi.* [What is a Negro? Négritude, Essentialism, Strategy.] Göteborg: Glänta.

Lundmark, Lennart 1985. *Protest och profetia. Korpela-rörelsen och drömmen om tidens Ände.* [Protest and Prophecy: The Korpelians and the Dream of the End of Time.] Lund: Arkiv förlag.

Mattis, Moa (ed.) 2005. *Orientalism på svenska.* [Orientalism in Swedish.] Stockholm: Ordfront.

Merolla, Daniela & Ponzanesi, Sandra (eds.) 2005. *Migrant Cartographies: New Cultural and Literary Spaces in Post-Colonial Europe*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books.

Niemi, Mikael 2000. *Populärmusik från Vittula.* [Popular Music from Vittula.] Stockholm: Norstedts.

Pietikäinen, Sari & Huss, Leena & Laihiala-Kankainen, Sirkka & Aikio-Puoskari, Ulla & Lane, Pia (eds.) 2010. Regulating Multilingualism in the North Calotte: The Case of Kven, Meänkieli and Sámi Languages. In: *Acta Borealia*, Vol. 27, No. 1, pp. 1–23, doi:10.1080/08003831.2010.486923.

Pohjanen, Bengt 2011. *Meänkielen iso sanakirja.* [A Large Dictionary of Meänkieli.] Överkalix: Barents Publisher.

Pohjanen, Bengt & Johansson, Kirsti 2007. *Den tornedalsfinska litteraturen: Från Kexi till Liksom.* [Tornedalian Finnish Literature from Kexi to Liksom.] Överkalix: Barents Publisher.

Pohjanen, Bengt & Kenttä, Matti 1996. *Meänkielen Kramatiiki.* [Meänkieli Grammar.] Överkalix: Förlaaki Kaamos.

Pohjanen, Bengt & Muli, Eeva 2005. *Meänkieli rätt och lätt. Grammatik i meänkieli.* [Meänkieli Right and Easy: Meänkieli Grammar.] Överkalix: Barents Publisher.

Preminger, Alex & Brogan, T. V. F. (eds.) 1993. *The New Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Rodell, Magnus 2009. Fortifications in the Wilderness. The Making of Swedish-Russian Borderlands around 1900. In: *Journal of Northern Studies*, No. 1, pp. 69–89.

Said, Edward 1978. *Orientalism.* New York: Pantheon Books.

Smith, Linda Tuhiwai 2008. *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*. London & New York: Zed Books Ltd.

Sundelin, Egil 1998. Laestadianismen som arena for kvensk identitet i Nord-Troms og Finnmark. [Laestadianism as Arena for Kven Identity in North-Troms and Finnmark.] In: Helge Guttormsen (ed.) *Kvenenes historie og kultur.* [The History and Culture of the Kvens.] Seminarrapport, Nordreisa 19–21 September 1997. Nord-Troms Historielag 1998, pp. 104–114.

Vallström, Mikael 1999. Att möta andra. Etnologins praktik och reflexivitetens Konsekvenser. [To encounter others: Consequences of the practice and reflexivity of ethnography.] In: Gösta Arvastson (ed.) *Järnbur eller frigörelse? Studier i moderniseringen av Sverige.* [Iron Cage or Emancipation? Studies of the Modernisation of Sweden.] Lund: Studentlitteratur, pp. 133–146.

Vuorela, Ulla 2009. Colonial Complicity: The 'Postcolonial' in a Nordic Context. In: Suvi Keskinen & Salla Tuori & Sari Irni & Diana Mulinari (eds.) *Complying with Colonialism: Gender, Race and Ethnicity in the Nordic Region*. Farnham & Burlington: Ashgate, pp. 19–33.

Wright, Michelle M. 2004. *Becoming Black: Creating Identity in the African Diaspora*. Durham & London: Duke University Press.

Zippel, Katrin 2009. "Learn to see!" Photography in the Service of Race Biology. In: Helmut Müssener & Per Jegebäck (eds.) *Rasen och vetenskapen.* [Race and Science.] Uppsala: Uppsala Multiethnic Papers, pp. 23–59.

doi:10.7592/FEJF2012.52.interview_kurki_lauren

BORDERS AND BORDERLANDS
Interview with Associate Professor Stephen Wolfe

Interviewers Tuulikki Kurki & Kirsi Laurén

Associate Professor of English Literature, Stephen Wolfe, has a prominent position in cultural research on borders and has lead several national and international research projects on borders and borderlands. He has published the article collection *Border Poetics De-limited* (2007) with Johan Schimanski.

Stephen Wolfe in Mekrijärvi Research Station, Ilomantsi.
Photo by Kirsi Laurén 2011.

Together, they co-ordinate the Border Poetics research group at the University of Tromsø.

Stephen Wolfe is currently studying Trans-Atlantic writing in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. His focus is on the border crossings and literary negotiations between writers, genres and the contemporary politics of the period. Professor Wolfe was an invited keynote speaker in the seminar *Theories on Borders* in 2011. The seminar was organized by the research project *Writing Cultures and Traditions at Borders*, and held at the University of Eastern Finland (Mekrijärvi Research Station). After the seminar, we took the opportunity to interview him for the theme issue *Borders and Life-Stories*. The interview was conducted in writing.

INTERVIEW

You have had several research projects that study borders and borderlands. Could you briefly describe them?

Our first grant began in 2010 and runs throughout 2012. It is entitled *Border Aesthetics* and is funded by the KULVER Programme of the Norwegian Research Council. This project investigates how the changing perceptions of borders relate to the shifting practices of aesthetic production and evaluation.

> The project draws upon two guiding observations that must inform any notion of border aesthetics: (a) that aesthetic theories and practices regularly invoke and engage with notions of the border; and (b) that borders are in turn capable of producing aesthetic effects and can themselves be conceived as aesthetic objects. We are perusing these two objectives through theoretical reflections and a sequence of interlocking case-studies that focus on literature, film and video art produced by creative artists either working in, or imagining border regions and the Barents Region in particular (*Border Aesthetics*).[1]

In the process, researchers within the grant explicitly address the question of how

> [---] aesthetic activity participates in the processes by which people relate to the real and conceptual geographies in which they live and through which they move. This focus is both socially engaged and inquisitive about the dynamic ways in which cultural phenomena are ascribed value

> through aesthetic practice. At the same time, it situates the project at the vanguard of current thinking about aesthetics (ibid.).

The concentration on border regions enables the project not only to explore and further develop the relatively new field of migratory aesthetics, but also requires the formulation of what might provisionally be called zonal aesthetics. Indeed, one of our principal goals will be precisely to establish a new 'aesthetics of space' of a kind likely to be required in the study of the divergent groups, objects, values and activities that inhabit and pass through the border zones, and how it might exemplify, negotiate and evaluate such an experience.

The project addresses both territorial and symbolic borders as aesthetic phenomena, asking how these borders acquire value and what values they are assigned. Borders are a well-established field of study in the social sciences, in particular within what is known as 'border studies' in social geography and related fields. Recently, social geographers working with topographical borders have been calling for cultural and narrative perspectives on the way in which borders are perceived by state actors, borderland populations, and border crossers such as migrants. Within literary and cultural studies and also sociology, the border concept is often used for more symbolic types of borders, such as those between cultures, genders or classes. Such symbolic borders contain within them a spatial dimension; they are manifested as spatial borders either within the real, topographical world, or within a mental map, an imaginary geography or a more intimate topology, for instance, of the body. In fact much of my own research is centred on the ways in which racial borders have been constructed both on the bodies of African slaves and also on the enslaved bodies of captive white seamen; on how Barbary Coast pirates ransomed white sailors, taking them as possessions that could be traded, bought, and sold. The white sailors were not 'masters' but slaves themselves and their skin colour was changing with exposure to the desert sun and lack of food and water.

The body is one form of border and it is presented in both its physical and figurative manifestation in the texts I am studying. However, if we turn our focus to national and territorial borders, they are essentially both aesthetic and symbolic phenomena: they are constituted and expressed on the plane of the senses, as in Jacques Rancière's reading of aesthetics as being a "distribution of the sensible".[2]

A number of recent writers on aesthetics also argue that borders have a key role to play in the production of culture; however, we have become aware that aesthetic objects within the field of culture are themselves structured by various kinds of borders. For example, during the Renaissance any number of

maps, paintings, or literary works used borders between a classical past and a modern present; between pagan and Christian; between the civilized and the barbarous. But the presentation of these borders is likewise bordered through compositional division, genre and framing, or in the relationship between the perceiver and the object.

Taking these various kinds of borders – topographic, symbolic and medial – together, our first research project hopes to pin down a complex circulation of the border concept from one discourse or register to another. Any one of the registers – national territory, cultural difference, gender, medial form, and so on – can be mapped onto one of the other registers, in either figurative or symbolic transfers of meaning. It is this kind of circulation that constitutes the historicity of the border concept, i.e., which allows the border concept to change and develop in different cultural and historical contexts.

In our second grant-funded research work, we are operating within the EU Seventh Frame Programme, in a grant entitled *EUBORDERSCAPES*. In this project, the University of Tromsø is heading a work package on borders and cultural production. The grant itself is administered and led by the University of Eastern Finland. The main objective in our work is to analyse

> [---] the ways in which national and European border issues are framed by cultural and literary works and within artistic expression. We are seeking to understand and then demonstrate how artistic expression addresses borders and border crossings (migrants, people living at borders, etc.) and their social consequences (e.g., cultural tensions, cultural hybridisation).[3]

We will be working with other universities in Europe to analyse how contemporary literature, cultural works and informal cultural performances reference borders in terms of identity and belonging, citizenship, cultural hybridisation, and cultural tensions, but also to demonstrate how contemporary national cultural debates about state borders and Europe are often formulated within and against the historical constructions of borders. We also ask what is the significance of national borders within the EU discourse of transnationalism and what historical experiences are used to frame the national and transnational debates. The border or border zone is often also a place of memory – of remembering or forgetting, to the extent that it is perceived as a place, and as such is made up of traces of previous material borders as well as discursive formulations.

The representations of borders provided in novels, short stories, poems, films, plays, videos, artworks, and museums are very often traces in the sense that

they present attempts to hold on to historical figures and figurations within the landscape of the border zone. So, various kinds of border narratives, with their figurative representations of the border, can function as a community of practices. As I have suggested, each border carries within it the archaeology of previous borders and this archaeology can play an active part in the renegotiation of borders if they are opened to new border concepts, narratives, or practices.

You are Associate Professor of English Literature and Culture. How did you become interested in border studies?

I began working in this field in the United States in the 1990s when I was scheduled to teach a course entitled *Imagining Africa, 1700–1900*, with a group of interdisciplinary scholars from anthropology, comparative literature, political science, and English. As we worked together to create a reading list of both articles and books for the course, we found that the way in which we could gain a coherent approach to the material was through asking questions about the presented and represented 'bordering processes' within each of the suggested texts we were reading or within the constructions of African societies. We found that a number of different texts presented the geographical 'borders' of African exploration within a history of colonialism or ethnographic/anthropological history, while the imaginative representation of 'Africa' we had selected could be best discussed geographically, historically or colonially within literary texts by looking very closely at both the uses of traditional literary genres and new forms of medial representation and the framing of the people and history of Africa.

Also, at that time I was spending a great deal of the summer holidays, roaming the tidal estuaries of the Pacific Coast with my family, and found the shifting boundaries of land, coast, and sea a source of study and fascination. I was teaching at a place in which I had been asked to organise a discussion of the future of interdisciplinary studies in the curriculum of a seven-college consortium. Thus the metaphoric and material exploration of natural and created borders was a lead into academic debates about the canon, the uses of evidence, research and teaching methods, and a changed curriculum.

Multidisciplinary approaches are very popular and important in border studies. Each discipline studying borders has its own research history, theories, and concepts, which may either benefit or create challenges for research. How do you see the multidisciplinary co-operation between the various disciplines? What are the challenges and possibilities in these approaches?

Not to put too fine a point on it: I do not know what our research group would do if we did not study the research strategies of our colleagues in political and cultural geography, for example, or in political science. Their work in opening their own fields in Border Studies to the uses of border narratives, and to the changing concepts of the border zone and borderscapes has had very important consequences for our work. In a sense we have stretched the border and the ways in which we can talk about 'bordering' practices and policies so that the border can either fold inward or be directed outward. Also, in political science and history, writers following on from Edward Saïd have opened the discussion of borders and state authority in asking what it is that we are 'walling in' and also 'desiring' to keep out.

For example, to demonstrate how contemporary media and literature address borders and their consequences for everyday life in Europe with regard to citizenship, cultural tension, identity, belonging and cultural hybridisation, we have to study events such as border festivals, and those spaces within cities which are occupied by immigrant communities and often monitored by border guards or state authorities. To differentiate the contemporary responses into and the perceptions of border crossings and border crossers within the context of national cultural debates, we need to use the tools of social linguistics and anthropology. These fields as well as others have investigated how border crossers are represented in European discourses of ethnicity, nationalism, and hybridity. But we also need to locate, historically and culturally, the origins of these discourses to see how they have played out over time. The most challenging element, however, is to analyse the border crossers' perceptions and experiences of Europe in their own cultural narratives: in what ways are cultural identities of the EU being transformed from within Europe as well as from the perceived influx of immigrants from outside Europe.

How do you see the role of cultural research in border studies in general (in Norway, Europe, or globally)? What are its strengths in research?

I want to try and merge this question with the one above to suggest that by using a cultural studies and interdisciplinary approach, border studies have moved toward the spatial turn in a number of disciplines (English, History, Political Science, and Cultural Studies more generally) by engaging more explicitly with the historic, cultural and medial dimensions of specific topographies and imaginary geographies. It has introduced new spatial models from geography and sociology into cultural studies, but most importantly, this spatial turn has seen a rapid transformation of the ways in which border spaces

are being both conceived and analysed in Europe and North America. James Scott, at your conference *Theories on Borders* in August 2011, suggested that we should interrogate "borders as elements of the cultural landscape" and this is what is happening. The medial spaces of history and culture are changing in rhythm with changes in topographical spaces and are also participating in those changes, so the challenge now is to trace creative potentials for new and as yet unknown ways of remembering, imagining and forming the places we live in together with others.

In terms of our own project, we are looking at the relationship between the changing perceptions of borders and the shifting practices of aesthetic production and evaluation by examining not only different border places (the Mediterranean as well as the Barents) but also different border and aesthetic concepts (such as those from the Hellenistic world, the nineteenth century British empire and International Modernisms, as well as more recent formulations). By looking at what might ostensibly seem to be the same border places and the same concepts from different periods of time and from different societal and intellectual traditions, we will be able to understand the role that history plays for the cultures and cultural practices of the relevant border regions. The project also tries to evaluate several of the different lived experiences of groups who have moved across or within border zones. In so doing, it explores a variety of forms of reception theory and, in particular, it will assess the reception of artistic productions that have been produced, focusing both on and about the border. Thus we are making an attempt to address this question: How do changing perceptions of borders relate to the shifting processes of aesthetic practice and evaluation?

Nearly all disciplines in humanities, social sciences, and geography are studying topographical and metaphorical borders in some way at the moment. What do you think are the most important reasons for the popularity of border studies?

I would like to give two responses to this question. First, there is a need to see that not only migratory, refugee, and immigrant populations find themselves caught in the web of the borderscape, but we all bring the border with us into any territory we enter. We have become increasingly aware of the diffusion of the border across other territories such as airports, travel offices, CCTV cameras in our cities, and almost every government office. It is in this space that we come before the law: forced to place ourselves within 'the imagined community' of the nation and disciplined by our internalisation of its laws. We

must relate to established narratives of the state that are enacted at a distance from us, usually in metropolitan centres, and often forcing our decisions into an algorithmic order calculated for 'threat' risk and 'terror' potential. As we resist these dominant narratives, we also live inside them, making us very aware of the provisional nature of the boundaries placed around our communities.

These stretched border zones or borderscapes are not only potential sites of negotiation, but are also constantly being negotiated over. The view that borders are processes – *borderings* – rather than fixed lines is clear, and this includes figurative or imaginative borders, which both surround us and are created for us and by us. We are, as Henk van Houtum (Radboud University Nijmegen & University of Bergamo) has argued, caught between a schizoid desire for and a paranoid fear of borders. Often in these processes, however, a moment of intervention is reached or a space of negotiation is opened. This space is part of the borderscape, and is often far away from the geopolitical national border. It may also be located away from the urban centre but always retains some link to the territorial border, even if at a distance. For the migrant or citizen waiting to cross the border or come before it, this border zone represents the space of the border and leaves us always already before the law.

My second response is that there is a real interest in the ways in which borders, in both the material and figurative sense, intersect with the lives we live today. Whether crossing borders in cyberspace or moving through the edgelands of our cities, both the spaces and places of borders have captured our imaginations, leaving us often betwixt and between. Also, we have created a culture of journeys; the naming of spaces and the impulse to record and recall the spaces and places which haunt the present.

What do you regard as the most relevant research themes and questions in border research at the moment? Are there some themes that could possibly become important in the near future?

1. I think that focused attention will be paid to aesthetic questions in border studies: What kind of genres fit with, or represent the border zones and spatial configurations we have created within the borderscapes of our state and nation?
2. Another possibility is asking how historic changes in topographical perceptions of both North and South intersect with an equally resonant East-West axis in the evaluation of how the cultural inscription of space relates to issues of identity and belonging.

3. Since 9/11, spatial changes in the conduct of warfare have had and will have a major effect on the study of national and international borders in political and cultural contexts.
4. Another question might be: What specific genres fit border zones and other spatial configurations in the borderscape?
5. Will new technologies of textual creation lead to the making of rewritten culture histories using alternative maps as forms of intervention with which to defamiliarise and make more visible the disorientation of the border itself?

How do you see the future of the border studies? Is it a fashion trend that is going to lose its popularity within the following decades, or is it so tightly connected with the global changes at various topographical borders and borderlands that it will further strengthen its position?

My quick response is that I would hope that we are not just a fashionable accessory but a force for investigating the role of material culture in the study of art, cultural and political formations, the discourses of authority, border narratives themselves … the list could go on and on.

Is there something else that you would like to add?

I would like to thank my interviewers and the *Folklore* journal for giving me this opportunity to make people aware of our work. Much of what I have said here echoes with the concepts, phrasing, and the inventive suggestions of the researchers within our research group: at the University of Tromsø, in the three cities in Norway of Bergen, Kirkenes, and Volda; and the five European countries where our European colleagues work: Italy, Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden, and, of course, Finland.

NOTES

[1] Border Aesthetics, Project Description, 1. Unpublished text.

[2] Rancière, Jacques 2004. *The Politics of Aesthetics: The Distribution of the Sensible*. London and New York: Continuum.

[3] EUBORDERSCAPES, Work package description 10, p. 41. Unpublished text.

REVIEW ARTICLES

ASPECTS OF LIMINALITY IN KNUT ERIK JENSEN'S *STELLA POLARIS* (1993)

Revisiting contingent pasts in Stella Polaris *(image courtesy Knut Erik Jensen).*

Introduction

This review article provides an analysis of Knut Erik Jensen's feature film *Stella Polaris* (Norway 1993) and shows how it relates to various forms of liminality. Firstly, I argue that Jensen's film articulates an understanding of Norway's northernmost county of Finnmark as a liminal, rather than marginal location. Secondly, I argue that *Stella Polaris* presents history as a constantly changing contingent product of various and often competing individual memories, negotiated on elusive liminal grounds in-between the past and future, and thirdly, I direct attention to Jensen's peculiar aesthetics which activate the liminal transitory spaces between shots, and between image and sound, in order to get its message across.

Knut Erik Jensen's *Stella Polaris* and liminality as a frame for analysis

Following a long series of documentary movies, *Stella Polaris* was Jensen's first feature film. It can probably be best described as a constellation of memory fragments pertaining to life in a northern Norwegian fishing village over a period of 50 years. It is a peculiar film in many ways, for instance without voice or dialogue; a film that challenges the

audience into a constructive endeavor rather than employing explicit imagery to tie down reimaginative activities. Jensen's film is at once stunningly beautiful although at the same time deeply tragic, and can be seen as emblematic for the county of Finnmark and its most recent history. *Stella Polaris* has received both Norwegian and international film critics' awards.

I will now move on to the theoretical and border-related issues this paper addresses: Liminality in *Stella Polaris*. It seems appropriate to start with a clarification of what 'liminality' is. Liminality is derived from the Latin term *limen* that means 'threshold' (Saunders 2010: 55). This points to the fact that liminality has something to do with transitions, crossings, or locations in-between divided entities. Liminality refers to a 'third space' (Bhabha in Rutherford 1990). This third space not only divides, but has the inherent potential to present a productive, and inherently disruptive and subversive alternative to established frames, and the discrete entities these frames imply.

Liminality refers to a threshold that divides and at the same time interconnects. With necessity, it implies the presence of something on each side of the permeable border that has to be taken into account, and that can possibly be subverted by an alternative constituted by an in-between. In particular, I will look closer at aspects of liminality in Knut Erik Jensen's *Stella Polaris,* focusing on political, temporal, and aesthetic aspects of liminality.

Political liminalities: Finnmark as marginal location or liminal zone

The liminal is often contrasted with the marginal and it has been claimed that the liminal can even replace a concept such as the marginal.[1] I agree with the assertion that these two terms are intimately related, but intend to argue that they serve very distinct analytical purposes that carry different political implications.

Let us consider the county of Finnmark as a marginal zone, or as located on the margins of Norway. This implies that Finnmark is related to an implied centre (such as Oslo) and therefore defined in implicit relation to this centre alone. To be situated on the margins of something means to be located near a border, far away from the centre. At the same time, however, what lies beyond that border remains outside the scope of the concept.

This said, marginality has been (and in my opinion still is) an important concept for a critical analysis of our various present conditions. It allows us, for instance, to focus on whose voices are heard in public discourse, whose life experiences are considered relevant, and whose interests matter in politics. However, to treat Finnmark as a marginal zone excludes any focus on what lies beyond, and in the case of Finnmark's history and the various identities this history has shaped and continues to shape, this *beyond* acquires a high significance that is precisely addressed in the feature films by Knut Erik Jensen.[2] The (usually unaccounted) beyond is the former Soviet Union located on the other side of the border. To include this ultimately constitutive 'other', necessitates a different conceptual focus: Finnmark as a liminal zone of contact and negotiation in-between two entities, rather than a location on the margins of Norway.

A liminal perspective on Finnmark and its history allows for a focus on the various cross-border experiences that are constitutive of the identities of local populations. These range from trading contacts and joint hunting expeditions to a close cooperation against a common enemy during the Second World War. It allows us also to problematise the unequivocal allegiance of the Norwegian state to the USA and NATO (including West Germany) in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War. This allegiance forced many inhabitants of Finnmark to suddenly perceive their former allies and indeed liberators beyond the border as sinister, threatening beings on the verge of overrunning the country. As such, this forced them to embrace their former enemies, the Germans, as close associates.

In including focus on the 'other', liminality allows us to catch sight of various forms of othering that prove constitutive of not only official Norwegian cold war discourse and identities, but indeed of any war discourse. To exclude access to the other beyond the border is a precondition for the justification of warfare and other forms of massive intergroup violence (Pötzsch 2010). As such, liminality allows us to trace individual and local ways of negotiating or avoiding such exclusive political frames. It is precisely the inclusion of a Soviet-Russian beyond in his local, historical perspective that characterises Knut Erik Jensen's films as liminal in a historical and political sense. It is also within this focus on liminality (which includes the often constitutively excluded other) that the most immediate political thrust of his work is to be found.

In Knut Erik Jensen's films, Finnmark is brought to emerge as an independent entity, a third space, an alternative in between two or more opposing structures. The subversive potential of this in-between position is enacted in and through the everyday practices and experiences of its population. *Stella Polaris* articulates these experiences and practices, and thereby questions and undermines the cold war politics of polarity and exclusion, which for a long time narrowly framed the lives of people in the North and elsewhere, and continues to do so in historical discourse.

Temporal liminalities: The pasts and their presences

I have argued that Knut Erik Jensen's films present Finnmark as a liminal zone of contact and negotiation – a third space, rather than a neatly bounded location at the margins of Norway. However, his film *Stella Polaris* does not simply line up a series of allegedly objective historical 'facts' and dramatise these in a linear narrative in order to get his message across. Rather, the director presents contingent reconstructions that are based on fleeting, changing, and inherently erratic individual memories and dreams, rather than so-called historical facts. As a consequence, the past can never be ultimately grasped and this is particularly well executed in *Stella Polaris*. The film does not present the successful unearthing of a particular historical event that can then be objectified as History with a capital 'H', nor can it be seen to authoritatively assert a subversive counter-History.

One of the initial sequences of Jensen's film attests to this particular practice of historiography. The camera follows a young woman dressed in white who walks barefoot through the relicts of a northern Norwegian coastal fishing village. The woman moves slowly and seems startled as if not quite sure where she is or how she got there. The

camera repeatedly follows her gaze through windows without glass into spaces that apparently have been abandoned for years. These shots are intercut with short sequences showing past active life in the same buildings. As the woman approaches a derelict house and looks inside, the camera suddenly captures couples dancing inside. The lens moves into the room and focuses on a woman that resembles the implied onlooker outside. The reverse shot indicating the gaze of the woman inside then reveals the onlooker to be a little girl – the same girl that briefly told the 'sleepwalking' woman to wake up in an earlier scene that initiated the whole sequence. The woman, who constitutes the narrative's main protagonist, appears like a ghostly apparition, rather than a realistic character in a historical reenactment. This way Jensen directs attention to the fleeting nature of the past, the recurrence of which is dependent on the often erratic and contradictory memories and dreamlike recollections of individuals.

Stella Polaris enables a view of the present as being an ultimately liminal zone in-between an elusive past and an ever-changing, contingent future. What we at any point in time believe to be our collective or individual past can and always will be, challenged by new voices and perspectives, emanating from an endless source of past experiences. As such, also our historically constituted identities appear as inherently context-dependent and negotiable. They are constituted in a liminal sphere that is situated in-between past and future. This way these identities acquire an indistinct and almost spectral nature.

Does this imply that everything goes? Can we simply construct the history we want? I would argue against this. Identity constructs are contingent, not arbitrary. This means they can never be ultimately fixed in an objective and true form, but always remain fleeting and constantly changing. At the same time, however, all these collective and individual histories and stories are dependent upon past events, on something that actually happened in one way or another. This 'something' frames what we remember through traces in the landscape, such as ruins, abandoned villages, empty storage buildings, overgrown roads, and traces on human bodies and minds such as scars, memories, or recurrent traumatic flashbacks. These serve as testimonies of a past that ultimately recedes, but also remains present as a frame for articulations concerning it. *Stella Polaris* does not tell us that 'this or that actually happened in precisely that way'. The film shows traces of a past that we have to bring together ourselves. Instead of imaging the past, we are forced to constantly and creatively reimagine it. Therefore the audience becomes an active constituent of the film's meaning rather than a passive consumer. This focus on the constant negotiation of traces of a past in the present makes *Stella Polaris* a liminal film both conceptually and in a temporal sense.

Aesthetic liminalities: The zone between shots and between image and sound

In his films, Knut Erik Jensen develops a peculiar aesthetic that highly values transitions between shots and that actively juxtaposes the visual with the audible – image and sound. It can be argued that this peculiar aesthetic values an in-between and can therefore be termed as a liminal aesthetic.[3]

Those who have seen *Stella Polaris* might have noticed that when watching the film, that sound, music, and image do not always correspond. Often we hear what we have not yet seen, or we see something that does not fit with what we hear. At other occasions, audience expectations regarding transitions between shots are frustrated as, for example, in an early scene of *Stella Polaris* where a long tracking shot follows the walk of a woman through a derelict urban environment. Suddenly, the protagonist turns to the right and disappears from view while the camera continues straight ahead with exactly the same speed and trajectory. This defamiliarisation startles the viewer and demands an active engagement with the textual cues delivered by the film.

By such means as those described above, Jensen achieves an effect of estrangement. The transparency of the cinematic image is successfully challenged and spectators are constantly asked to actively negotiate what may appear to them as contradictory, strange, or illogical. As a result, active searches for meaning are facilitated and a consumerist engagement is prevented. Knut Erik Jensen's spectator does not enter the cinema to relax or forget, but to engage what the director refers to as "audio-visual riddles" that create a form of "fertile confusion" (Pötzsch 2012: 158–159). The spectator is not invited to relax and enjoy spectacular cinematic illusion-making, but is challenged to engage in active and contingent reconstructions on the basis of the cues and indices provided by Jensen's peculiar style. *Stella Polaris* exhibits a liminal aesthetic that treasures the indistinct transitional spaces between shots and between image and sound, and this way invites a reception that corresponds with the political and temporal liminalities characteristic of Jensen's films.

Conclusion

Jensen's first feature film *Stella Polaris* provides a new perspective on Norway's northernmost county Finnmark, its inhabitants, and recent history. In applying a peculiar aesthetic that constantly dislodges dominant ideas or frames for reception with reference to an inherently subversive in-between, his film not only challenges received political understandings and historical imageries, but also the engrained traditions and spectatorial positions conveniently fed and reinforced in and through mainstream filmmaking. As such, *Stella Polaris* questions, challenges, and potentially subverts borders and barriers in political, historical, and aesthetic registers.

Holger Pötzsch

Notes

[1] For a discussion regarding the relationship between 'the marginal' and 'the liminal' see, for instance, Aguirre & Quance & Sutton 2000.

[2] Knut Erik Jensen had worked on similar issues before. In his documentary series *Finnmark melllom øst og vest* [Finnmark between East and West] that aired on Norwegian television in 1986, Jensen presented Norwegian war and post-war history from a distinctly northern point of view. Iversen (2001) writes that in this series Jensen

adopts a "perspective from the margins" (209) and engages in "identity work" that articulates the historical experiences and memories of local inhabitants (208; author's translations). Iversen, however, does not explore possible liminal aspects of Jensen's documentaries. Norwegian original reads "identitetsarbeid" and "utkantperspektiv".

[3] For a different approach to the aesthetics of *Stella Polaris* see Bruun Vaage (2004), who terms the film "a cinematic poem that has been written with sensual means" (8; author's translation). According to her, Jensen's style is particularly well suited to elicit an embodied experience that remains independent of traditional narrative structure, and that therefore invites for an associative production of meaning. Norwegian original reads: "*Stella Polaris* er et filmdikt som er skrevet med sanselige virkemidler".

References

Aguirre, Manuel & Quance, Roberta & Sutton, Phillip C. 2000. *Margins and Thresholds. An Enquiry into the Concept of Liminality in Text Studies*. Madrid: The Gateway Press.

Bruun Vaage, Margrethe 2004. Sansning, tenkning, teknologi: Hvordan fungerer 'Stella Polaris'? [Sensing, Thinking, Technology: How does 'Stella Polaris' Work?] *Norsk Medietidsskrift,* Vol. 11(1), pp. 6–23.

Iversen, Gunnar 2001. "Folkets erfaring: Om Knut Erik Jensens fjernsynserie 'Finnmark mellom øst og vest'. [Experiences of the People: On Knut Erik Jensen's Television Series 'Finnmark between East and West'.] In: Sara Brinch & Gunnar Iversen (eds.) *Virkelighetsbilder: Norsk dokumentarfilm gjennom hundre år.* Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, pp. 203–218.

Pötzsch, Holger 2010. Challenging the Border as Barrier: Liminality in Terrence Malick's 'The Thin Red Line'. *Journal of Borderlands Studies,* Vol. 25(1), pp. 67–80.

Pötzsch, Holger 2012. Film som uløst gate: En samtale med Knut Erik Jensen. [Film as Unresolved Riddle: A Conversation with Knut Erik Jensen.] In: Ingeborg Breines & Viggo Rossvær & Audun Øfsti (eds.) *Virkeligheten sett gjennom kunstnerøyne*. Stamsund: Orkana Akademisk, pp. 144–161.

Rutherford, Jonathan 1990. The Third Space. Interview with Homi Bhabha. In: Jonathan Rutherford (ed.) Identity: Community, Culture, Difference. London: Lawrence and Wishart, pp. 207–221.

Saunders, Timothy 2010. Roman Borders and Contemporary Cultural Criticism. *Journal of Borderlands Studies,* Vol. 25(1), pp. 51–58, doi:10.1080/08865655.2010.9695750.

THE TALE OF FINLAND'S EASTERN BORDER

Review on the movie *Raja 1918*

> *"Societies in fact reconstruct their pasts rather than faithfully record them, and that they do so with the needs of contemporary culture clearly in mind – manipulating the past in order to mold the present," American historian Michael Kammen claims in his* Mystic Chords of Memory (Kammen 1991: 51).

The Declaration of Independence adopted by the Parliament of Finland on 6 December 1917 disrupted 108 years of the Russian sovereign rule in Finland and birthed a new nation. Tragically, less than two months later, the armed struggle between the forces of the Social Democrats, the Reds, and the forces of the non-socialist, the Whites, erupted. To make matters worse, both sides accepted military support from foreign powers: the Reds from Soviet Russia and the Whites from Germany. The armed struggle escalated into a short, vicious civil war which claimed over 36,000 lives (Upton 1980: 123). When the war ended, a newborn nation, Finland, started to construct its first state border in Karelian Isthmus.

Finland, like all nations, has found out that history is a living process, an unfinished business that cannot be but pondered, disputed, and hopefully cherished. The Finnish Civil War has been pondered and disputed for years but to cherish this most traumatic, controversial, and dehumanizing event in the Finnish history is impossible. Over a hundred years ago, Ernst Renan suggested that if nation building had been successfully conducted, the histories around it would disappear, and consequently, were even forgotten in popular consciousness. Perhaps Renan's suggestion offers at least a partial reason why the Civil War still continues to resonate in today's Finland. It appears over and over again as a main or related theme in contemporary fiction, drama, comic books, and films of which the movie, *The Border 1918* (*Raja 1918*, 2006), is one of the most recent examples. The need to repeatedly revert to this tragic event shows that the Finnish Civil War is far from being a completed or catalogued event in the Finnish history.

The purpose of this paper is to analyse how the state border and its constructing function in the movie. The film approaches the border through three distinguished border narratives. The omniscient border narrative is represented by the border, border processes, repercussions of the turmoil and trauma of the civil war, and a pervasive, avenging civil-war-related spirit. The second border narrative is represented by the two protagonists of the movie: Captain von Munch, an acting post-war commandant of

the frontier station and a local, but non-Karelian, village school teacher Miss Maaria Lintu. Their border narratives are intersected by the ones of the supporting characters. Finally, there is the antagonist's point of view represented by Mr. Heikki Kiljunen, now an outlaw, who during the war was one of the most notorious leaders of the Reds. Each one of these points of view is challenged or even destroyed by the 'others' who are either considered to stand in direct opposition to the laws and values of the new Finnish state, such as the members of the Red Guards, the people suspected to be Red sympathizers, or the people who simply do not fulfil the requirements of the Finnish citizenship. The latter group consists of Soviet-Russians, Russians living on the Finnish side of the border, the Jews, and toward the end of the movie, also the Germans. These points of view may first appear very sharply divided ideologically, nationally, socially, linguistically, and culturally but as the film proceeds, they begin to overlap. This overlapping both deconstructs many existing borders and also constructs new ones.

The Border 1918, directed by Lauri Törhönen, is not exactly a civil war movie, but the elements of the war are constantly present. The film begins with grisly fighting scenes and executions and continues to detail the Civil War's painful aftermath of the cultural, social, economic, and political turmoil at Finland's eastern frontier in Karelia. Although the Civil War is officially ended and a settlement has been reached, the volatility of an immediate post-civil war context strongly divides Finland along the political and ethnic lines. When the shooting stops, it does not mean that the first step away from hatred, hostility, and bitterness follows automatically. In addition, diverging visions of how to build the country after becoming independent cripples the nation even further. It is this historically real-life situation that serves as a backdrop to the film's main theme: the establishment of the first Finnish state border between Finland and Soviet Russia in post-civil war period.

The Border 1918 emphasizes the fundamental role of Finland's first state border. For the nation emerging from the trauma of the brutal civil war, the border serves as a focus point of collective consciousness during the transition from violence to peace. For the Finns the state border is an ancient wish that seems to materialize in 1918. The border does not only reassert Finland's legitimacy as a sovereign nation, but also serves as a symbol that helps Finns to imagine their republican nation with national solidarity and identity. While the border serves as a unifying agent, it at the same time divides Finland from Soviet Russia. The Captain sincerely believes that building up the border "will keep the peace", while Miss Lintu is a nation-blind who feels that people all over the world have become tired of the borders and the suffering they cause. Consequently, she strongly believes in that we are moving toward the borderless world and, therefore, in the decline of the nation-state. "Do you believe in your border?" Miss Lintu asks Captain von Munch. The Captain's answer, "I believe in Finland", solidifies an inescapable fact that building the state border is essentially bound up with nation-building. The protagonists' truly opposite viewpoints illustrate two ever-elusive "imagined communities" (Anderson 1983): universal solidarity transcending national borders and nation-state bounded by cohesive state borders.

The national border is going to be established in the area where people had adopted a collective fluid identity. Before the establishing of Finland's first state border, local people's collective consensus of political, economic, social, and cultural cooperation as well as civic tolerance had led to the forming of real cross-community relationships and

multilevel cross-cultural exchanges. Until Finland's independence, these people from different ethnic and language groups had been crossing the alleged border for over 600 years. The film portrays how the transnational regional culture with its fundamental principles of understanding, compromising, and transforming people comes to an end, and the fluid movement of people, capital, and information has to stand aside in favour of the border of the new nation state.

The national border creates a new social and cultural environment as well as a new political geography. The old community had been well established and real, while the new border demands people to accept an alien and abstract idea of the border and its region. It is very difficult for the local people to understand what the border is and how it is supposed to function. As Sergeant-Major Muranen informs the Captain, "a real border has never existed here…not for a thousand years". Therefore, it is incomprehensible why suddenly uncles are not able to cross the bridge and help their nieces with firewood; an elderly eastern orthodox lady is not allowed to enter and visit her family and friends; or cross-border traders cannot go back and forth to conduct their business. The bridge, a simple structure, providing a convenient crossing for people and goods, is suddenly converted into a border checkpoint, and a small muddy river running underneath it is now a national border.

The Captain tries to make the national border more concrete by barring the bridge. New posts, gates and blue paint serve as visible indicators of the official, Finnish national border. The bridge is divided down in the middle, and both sides are guarded by soldiers preventing people from crossing the bridge freely. The Captain also tries to make the border area more Finnish by abolishing bilingual names for streets and places and by replacing bilingual signs in Finnish only. The people's world is suddenly shrinking, and the edge of their new world is the new state border. The peculiar sense of baffling otherness descends on the region, intensifying even further the sense of a diminishing home region and the old way of life. The local people must learn to perceive themselves as members of a nation which is different from the 'other' nation across the bridge. The movie could have addressed more clearly to what extent the Finnish national identity formation, based on oppositional modelling, erodes the local interests, a local sense of place, and a local identity. What the movie portrays very strongly is that the border becomes an adversarial force in the midst of people's lives, interrupting and obstructing violently their daily activities. The border becomes a foul monument which brutally cuts people off from their families and relatives living on different sides of the new state border. The border is feared.

The Captain tries to convince people that the border acts in the interest of the whole nation and population. It guarantees that Finland is able to fulfil its potential, to reach its "greatest achievements – freedom, justice, and fairness". To make this possible, Finland has to protect herself "against barbarians". Therefore, the primary function of the border is to provide security to the nation. To guarantee security, the border must execute control, and this is only possible if border crossings are either heavily controlled or stopped altogether. At this point, the Captain's perception on the border as a protector and its 'clean-cut' function to ensure that "the Russians live on the other side and the Finns on this side" concurs with the War Office and the state's perception. The fear of 'barbarians' justifies the closure of the border as well as the exclusion of

certain groups. It is this perception that translates into stern but confusing and inefficient border policing measures.

When the official state narrative of border security is created and implemented, the rest of the movie concentrates on how it is challenged by other border narratives. These other border narratives focus on the question of identity which is posed by the flow of people who, due to the bloody Bolshevik Revolution in Soviet Russia, try to escape to Finland. Hundreds of people with no identification documents make it impossible for the Captain to enforce the strict state border security requirements. In a sense, Finland has created a system that categorizes people as 'wanted', 'unwanted', or 'enemy'. Wanted can enter; unwanted are to be deported; the enemy must be killed on sight. Yet, the Captain learns that the 'clean-cut' narrative of border security turns into a nightmarish identity of chimera. No matter what policing measures are implemented, they are not able to pinpoint elusive identities which multiply, diversify, negate and assert simultaneously in a single individual. Who are these masses of people who under their hardship try to find a refuge outside the rigidly defined ideologies, unyielding political loyalties, or actions of governments? Who are the Russians living in Finland? Are they Finns or the enemy? Who are the Finns who pass the border control by speaking perfect Finnish? Are they ideologically correct Finns or are they red defectors returning to Finland to start another war? What to do with the bilingual families? What 'infectious diseases' do innocent Jewish children spread? A diverse group of individuals with their mixture of identities presses against the state border with an increasing strength, blurring the lines between friend and foe.

The most heartbreaking cases are the people with no identity, people who are denied their identity, people whose actions define their identity in front of the law. The people with no identity are represented by a man who is hovering in the midst of people, has been deported several times, but who for one reason or another reappears on the Finnish side of the border. He has no name, no identification; nobody claims him or knows him. He cannot speak or write. He just 'hops' around, disturbs no one, and is happy. How he has been able to elude the border patrol repeatedly is a mystery. He is most callously killed for a dare when Lieutenant Suutari proves to his Captain that he has a will and skill to follow through all border security measures. This nameless man's border narrative shows how vulnerable the people with special needs are in political discourse of immigration, and undermines the hopelessness of the people who do not have a state.

The people who are denied their identity are represented by a Finn, Irmeli Ylipää. She has been working as a maid in St. Petersburg but had to escape from the Bolshevists to Finland. As a Finnish citizen, she should have been able to pass without any problems, but because she "had been with soldiers" and "behaved in objectionable ways", Lieutenant Suutari wants to deny her the right to enter Finland. The Captain dismisses the accusations and orders her release. However, Lieutenant Suutari disobeys the order and puts Miss Ylipää in quarantine. She is later killed in a senseless massacre with hundreds of other people. Her border narrative illustrates how morals and double standards embedded in culture reveal the asymmetries of power between genders, and how the imbalance of power affects the processes of social class and gender identity formation on the national level.

Miss Lintu and Doctor Perret represent the border narratives of people who go against all odds when trying to help other people and bring some sense to the raging

madness. Empathy or any kind of compassion is disappearing from the border region. These two are revisionist characters: a 'colourless humanist' and a physician who has taken the Hippocratic Oath. Their philosophical stance conveys both their outrage at social and political injustices as well as their belief in the possibility of transcending them. To accomplish this they must blur the lines between the lawfulness and lawlessness. The laws violate people's basic rights by denying them representation and voice. Therefore, deception is justified. Needless to say that these views get them both killed. Their border narratives bring forth resiliency of the human spirit in the midst of mistrust, violence, and fear. They are loyal to themselves thus defying coercive policies which are increasingly deviating from what is universally accepted as ethical. They share the Captain's vision of Finland's "greatest achievements" for its future – "freedom, justice, and fairness", but they approach this vision by crossing gender, ideological, and national borders instead of enforcing them like the Captain. Accepting the charges against them and seeing them sacrificed in mindless killings forces the Captain to realize that establishing the state border is not enough to nurture his dreams of freedom, justice, and fairness and materialize them in practice. His efforts to represent them in a tangible way by strengthening the border, and by obeying and implementing coercive border policing measures generate a completely opposite situation where no one is safe, and which finally leads to a massacre of unarmed people.

The Captain is a protagonist whose border narrative intervenes with other narratives. His narrative is not cohesive but fragmented. It vacillates between his identity of being a Finnish officer in the White Finland's army and his identity of being a scientist, an explorer who naturally must cross borders. He is an idealist but he is not blinded by it. He knows that Lieutenant Suutari is a pathological killer who wants to use any pretext to degrade or stereotype people according to his own ideological and social standards. The Captain becomes more and more aware of a vivid sense of the degradation of human life when people are reduced to a state of brutal struggle for survival in the quarantine. He recognizes that enemies are not found only amongst the people who are ruthlessly categorized according to their language, ethnicity, and religion, but are also found amongst the faceless, complacent, and ignorant bureaucrats of faraway Helsinki. He fears the German's imperialist ambitions and their increasing influence on Finnish politics. This in turn makes him question the borderline between Finland's independence and Finland's sovereignty. He becomes increasingly suspicious of the principles he serves, but he cannot renounce his duty. Reality does not make sense. The border has created a horrific, incomprehensible otherworldly reality where the stories of human cost and suffering and the multiple realities of the Civil War memory deconstruct the faith in the notion of a homogenous ethnic-nation. A widening gap between his ability to carry out his duty in a principled manner and his willingness to finish what he has started causes him to fall ill.

The last border narrative belongs to an antagonist, Heikki Kiljunen, the Captain's nemesis. He is an epitome of a born survivor; a figure of raw male energy and aggression. Half dead and wanted by the law he still carries his hate, mistrust, and utter contempt for the Finnish government. He has his own form of justice based on the will to survive. His world is a borderless land of the 'grey' where there are no distinctive borders between right and wrong if his personal situation so requires. His border narrative illustrates the opportunity that the border or absence of it offers to an individual who has burnt all

the bridges, literally, behind him. If he wants to survive, he must relinquish his country and his identity. He finds a dead man whose passport he steals and, therefore, is able to start a new life in Soviet Russia.

The film closes with a coda. Ten years after the massacre on the border, the Captain, now a Professor von Munck, and Heikki Kiljunen alias Alexander Muranen meet again in an annual celebration of the Finnish Independence Day. For a second, the years vanish between them and their old identities emerge. It is hard to evaluate what happens during those few seconds, but reflecting on their new identities, the viewer is able to draw some conclusions. The old class and social divisions between them have vanished. Both the Captain and Mr. Kiljunen are successful, affluent, and respected members of their communities. They are both Finns who have come to the same party celebrating the same occasion, so the ideological and national division has disappeared. Instead of border narratives, could they now tell a borderless narrative to the audience? Because there is no apparent shock in their sudden meeting at the party but they rather show indifference towards each other, this could mean that in their new reality everything and nothing has become to mean the same. Both experienced and survived the Civil War and the life on the border that denied them their ability to believe in the value of their own actions and their faith in ideologies they so loyally fought for. Neither of them was able to overturn the forces of evil as they defined them. Whatever they achieved, they achieved it with great cost. Are they now as eager as they still were ten years ago to erect borders between classes, ideologies, nationalities, and individuals? Just when they are about to shake hands, Finland's national anthem begins solemnly to commemorate Finland's tenth birthday. Suddenly, old memories come alive, hands are withdrawn, and both men move back to their own sides of the border.

Saija Kaskinen

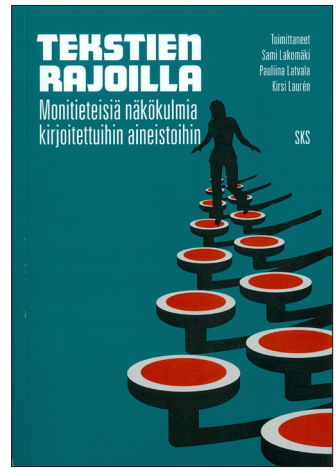
References

Anderson, Benedict 1983. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso.

Kammen, Michael 1991. *Mystic Chords of Memory: The Transformation of Tradition in American Culture*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

Upton, Anthony F. 1980. *The Finnish Revolution 1917–1918*. Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press.

UNRAVELLING THE METHODOLOGICAL MESH OF WRITTEN MATERIALS



LAKOMÄKI, SAMI & LATVALA, PAULIINA & LAURÉN, KIRSI (eds.) 2011: *Tekstien rajoilla: Monitieteisiä näkökulmia kirjoitettuihin aineistoihin*. [Along Textual Borders. Multidisciplinary Perspectives on Written Materials.] Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura. 356 pp.

This article collection brings together researchers from social sciences, history, cultural and folklore studies who work with written materials, ranging from archives to internet discussions. The book offers multiple perspectives on current questions that apply not only to the considered texts but to all socio-cultural studies, such as: What is the relation between the narration and the 'reality'? Who is telling the stories? What kind of audiences are entangled in them? What are the power relations in the research process? Many of the authors reflect especially on the position of a researcher and discuss how this affects the interpretation and thus the results of the study. Such a discussion is well needed and the way the editors have outlined the book has produced an interesting combination of related viewpoints. The collection is divided into four sections with emphasis placed on power relations, body and affectivity, questions of privacy and publicity, and the temporal dimensions of the texts and interpretations. The structure works well and offers intriguing dialogues to the reader. The final article written by Jyrki Pöysä weaves together the strings unravelled by other authors, by considering the interconnection of temporal positions and interpretations.

Look who is reading

In their articles, Hanna Mikkola and Annamari Iranto especially, have turned their focus on the researcher as the reader and the interpreter of the texts. With the methodology of feminist stylistics – or feminist close reading as she terms it – Mikkola looks at the texts of dugout traditions as the production of gendered realities by asking, for instance: can the gendered reader be interpreted from the texts; are the characters gendered, and what do these characters tell us about the gendered world the writer lives in at the moment and in the particular situation that the writing has taken place in. She perceptively reflects her position as a feminist researcher with her own gender values which sometimes conflict with the writers' views on men and women. In addition, Mikkola introduces the methods of her analysis, which in turn renders her study process even more transparent to the reader. I think that this part of the process is still too often neglected in socio-cultural studies, and I would gladly see these essential starting points of feminist research applied in all research. Whilst Mikkola openly discusses the

emotions that the reading of the texts has aroused in her, Annamari Iranto makes such emotions the centre of her discussion.

Iranto's article is an important investigation on how emotions in written material form a dialogue with the researcher's own emotions, and how this ultimately affects whose emotions the researcher is writing about. She considers the methods used in the study of emotions, particularly in the feelings of injustice, by scrutinizing the letters received by Hannu Karpo, a TV-reporter whose program in 1983–2007 concentrated on cases where the Finnish citizens were believed to have been treated unfairly. By introducing a highly emotional example in which a woman is writing on behalf of her husband who through making several bad choices ended up dying, Iranto picks up the visible emotions of the text. Furthermore, she discusses the emotions she herself went through while reading the text and asks how these emotions might be reconstructed into the interpretations and whether the researcher is entitled to make value judgements through her analysis. Finally, Iranto argues that by positioning her/himself and her/his methods clearly, a researcher is permitted to question the values which arise from the material. She also challenges researchers to make unexpected experiments in their analysis, to use resistant reading and to even construct conflicting interpretations.

The ethics of methodological choices

A methodological book is never a good one without considering the ethical questions of research. Authors discuss ethics throughout this book (e.g. Sorainen, Saarikoski, Hynninen) and in particular, Johanna Järvinen-Tassopoulos contributes much to the book with her insight. In her study case of gambling women and their chatting in the forums for addicted gamblers, Järvinen-Tassopoulos emphasises both the question of studying vulnerable people and the responsibilities of the researcher. She argues that whilst listening to the stories and the knowledge of gambling women or any vulnerable people that may empower them, they themselves might also want to keep silence regarding the issue. To break the circle of silence and shame, extra attention must therefore be paid to the trust between the narrators and the researcher. Although the material put on the Internet might sometimes be considered as 'fair game', Järvinen-Tassopoulos underlines the importance of discussing the position of an invisible researcher who 'lurks' within the Internet and occasionally even intrudes upon the forums conversations. She claims that although people who write in online forums usually understand that anyone can read their writings, they do not think their stories will end up as research material. Järvinen-Tassopoulos's article is an excellent starting point for anyone thinking of using internet material as their research data and many of the questions she addresses apply also to the studies conducted 'offline'.

The research process is about making choices

The collection clearly shows how the research process is full of choices made mainly by the researcher, but also by people who have written or otherwise produced material that the researcher is analysing. For example, Piia Metsä-Tokila shows in her article how

the oral history material of former female political prisoners was actually collected by a group of female activists inside the communist party, and consequently the material represents the stories of this group to the exclusion of other women's stories. This starting point, as well as the political goal of these women to make their stories heard, had affected the heavy emphasis on comradeship and the justification of the women's illegal practices that can be determined from the interviews. Overall, the articles particularly demonstrate how much the position of the researcher and methodological choices, like the questions asked and the material framed in the analysis, have an impact upon the research results and sometimes even the lives of others. Therefore, the power relations of the research process, which usually are extremely favourable for the researcher, must always be made open to the readers, so as to enable counter-interpretation.

This book illuminates the situated research process from various different but intersecting angles and is highly recommendable for the students, as well as for the starting and experienced researchers in related fields.

Tiina Suopajärvi

NEWS IN BRIEF

DOCTORAL THESIS ON LITHUANIAN PROVERBS

On June 28, 2012, Dalia Zaikauskienė defended her doctoral thesis *Lietuvių Paremijos XX–XXI a. Sandūroje: tradicija ir inovacija* (Lithuanian Paremias at the Turn of the 20th-21st Centuries: Tradition and Innovation) at the Council of Folklore Studies of Vilnius University.

The research was carried out under the supervision of Dr. Lilija Kudirkienė (Institute of Lithuanian Literature and Folklore), and the opponents were professor Gražina Kazlauskienė (Vytautas Magnus University) and docent Bronė Stundžienė (Institute of Lithuanian Literature and Folklore).

Dalia Zaikauskienė has been working in the research group of paremiology at the Institute of Lithuanian Literature and Folklore since 1997, being one of the compilers and editors of the publication *Lietuvių patarlės ir priežodžiai* (Lithuanian proverbs and proverbial phrases) (I–II, 2000–2008). Her doctoral thesis consists in the systematisation of Lithuanian proverbs and proverbial phrases and the formation of an electronic database.

The following overview is based on the English summary of the doctoral thesis.

Dalia Zaikauskienė is convinced that the proverb or paremia (the term that the author prefers) is a living genre, which is part of contemporary communication just like it was centuries ago. The study embraces both the old layer of paremias and the new paremiological phenomena, i.e., both old and new texts constitute the objects of research. In terms of temporal limits, the empirical material comes from the 20th and 21st centuries. The author aims at describing the relationship between tradition and innovation not as spontaneous and chaotic but rather as systematic, i.e., liable to classification. The main objectives of the research are as follows:

1) Summarise the materials of the modern paremiological research and determine the spheres of usage of Lithuanian paremias;
2) Describe structural, functional and semantic features typical of the contemporary usage of paremias;
3) Compare Lithuanian paremiological phenomena with international data.

The author has repeatedly emphasised that Lithuanian folklorists have only recently started to collect and explore modern culture, focusing on the changes in traditional folklore. Dalia Zaikauskienė maintains that contemporary material should be treated as a continuation of tradition and she also presents her research material as such. To some extent, her research helps to fill in the gap in modern Lithuanian paremiology

caused by disregard of modern culture. The author also hopes that both the accumulated research data and the theoretical insights as well as the peculiarities of modern usage situations and the shifts in the world view should be of interest to sociologists, researchers of culture and psychologists.

Predominantly, the sources of empirical material are periodicals from the past couple of decades as well as other media and also the Internet. To a smaller extent, the research deals with literary texts. The majority of the material has been collected by the author specifically for the purposes of this research. In addition, she has also used voluminous archival material: the card-file catalogue of Lithuanian proverbs and proverbial phrases at the Lithuanian Folklore Archives, the electronic database of Lithuanian proverbs and proverbial phrases (www.aruodai.lt/patarles/), the electronic data archive of the Department of Ethnology and Folkloristics at Kaunas Vytautas Magnus University (http://etnologijadb.vdu.lt), the data collected in 2003–2004 by the students of the Department of Lithuanian Language at Vilnius University, etc. The novel material – anti-paremias – presented as an appendix to the dissertation is also remarkable. In total, 1500 variants of anti-paremias (*antiparemijos*) and 670 variants of new paremias (*naujosios paremijos*) were collected for research purposes.

Dalia Zaikauskienė's dissertation consists of introduction, four chapters, conclusions, bibliography, the list of the author's publications on the dissertation theme and the appendix entitled *Dictionary of Anti-Paremias*. The dissertation presents as hypotheses the following statements:

1) If folklore tradition is considered to be a continuous process, including aspects of change, the usage of paremias at the turn of the 20th/21st centuries should be regarded as a natural part of this process, which has preserved features characteristic of the old usage as well as acquired new features and new means of expression; the main indication of paremias as living folklore is the need of modern man to use them also today;
2) Anti-paremias and new paremias have common features with the traditional ones in form, content and functions;
3) The creation of anti-paremias and the occurrence of new paremias can be regarded as the development processes of proverbs, rather than spontaneous and accidental phenomena;
4) Changes occurring in the corpus of Lithuanian paremias are determined by both internal (development of paremias) and external (social, historical, communicational) factors;
5) The 'incursion' of new paremic formations is part and parcel of the global process.

In the first chapter the author gives an overview of the most important works by foreign paremiologists, which focus on the contemporary usage of paremias. Two aspects of folklore tradition are particularly emphasised in this work: traditionality as the most typical, defining feature of paremia, and tradition as a continuous process comprising aspects of both stability and change. The starting point for the author is the complex notion of traditionality, which comprises the most typical and stable indications of form, artistic image and usage. Innovation is understood as the new expressive means of paremias, new spheres of usage and new features determined by contemporary usage, i.e., new functions and specific modern wording.

The concept of paremia is used by Dalia Zaikauskienė not only to denote proverbs and proverbial phrases, but also in a broader meaning: it comprises situational sayings, formulas of etiquette, phraseological units, aphorisms, maxims and literary quotations. In the first chapter the author introduces all the short sayings constituting the category of paremia, focussing on the three types of paremias within the temporal limits of the 20th and 21st centuries: traditional paremias, anti-paremias (in international terminology anti-proverbs) and new paremias.

As the most popular spheres of functioning, the author mentions common speech and journalism, as well as advertising and various spheres of entertainment. While earlier on, the spread of literary language (textbooks, periodicals) contributed to the dissemination of proverbs, then the contemporary corpus of Lithuanian paremias has been most strongly affected by the mass media. The analysis of the classical repertoire of Lithuanian paremias has highlighted the following tendencies in their development: 1) narrowing or widening of the semantic field; 2) demetaphorisation of the artistic image; 3) appearance of antithetic versions; 4) increase of comic effect; 5) appearance of the extended versions or shortening of the paremias; 6) appearance of contaminations; 7) enhancement of the artistic effect of poetic images by means of phonic organisation of phrases. The author also presents an overview of the functions of Lithuanian traditional paremiological units, claiming that proverbs preserve their typical 'inner' functions (pedagogical, didactic, psychotherapeutic) also while performing in individual situations.

In the second chapter the author describes the usage of popular traditional paremias in the 20th and 21st centuries, hereby distinguishing between two different ways of usage – canonic and creative – and giving descriptions of both. The anti-paremias that are dwelt upon in the third chapter are described by Dalia Zaikauskienė as modifications of traditional proverbs. It is remarkable that until today Lithuanian paremiology has not paid any attention to this kind of texts. In her work the author reveals the international character of this phenomenon, emphasising the influence of other, particularly Russian- and English-speaking cultures, on the contemporary (late 20th and early 21st centuries) corpus of Lithuanian paremias. Dalia Zaikauskienė differentiates between diverse patterns of creating anti-paremias. The author's approach to the different nature of anti-paremic texts is also remarkable: the ones preserving the most general meaning of the basic paremia, with only a few shifts in form, are regarded as variants of the basic paremia, whereas others that are meant to achieve comic effect are called anti-paremic texts. The most popular way of creating Lithuanian anti-paremias is equal lexical substitution (in the case of two-part proverbs) and extending of the traditional paremia by a comment or reference. Today the creativity of the authors of such texts can be encountered mainly on internet websites.

As the third type of paremias, in the fourth chapter, Dalia Zaikauskienė describes the so-called new paremias. The new paremia can be identified by comparison with traditional paremias. These are utterances similar to classical paremias, which have acquired independence and certain stability of contents and form. Part of the new paremias are shorter and simpler by their structure than the traditional ones. Usually they are devoid of artistic image and can rather be understood literally, and have only associative connection with the context in which they are used. Dalia Zaikauskienė determines diverse material as types of new paremias: texts deriving from anti-paremias, translations, slogans, quotations, phrases of established authorship, and utterances similar to traditional

paremias. The author declares that in everyday speech the usage of new paremias is similar to that of traditional ones, yet their functional peculiarities and spheres of usage are more situational. Similar to anti-paremias, this kind of utterances are encountered mainly in the press, internet portals and comments, as well as advertising.

From the final conclusions of Dalia Zaikauskienė's doctoral thesis, the following aspects should be mentioned.

1. Not only classical paremias belonging to the old layer should be regarded as paremias, but also their diverse modifications and the new paremia-like utterances. In modern society oral and written tradition are interrelated, and the spread of paremias is greatly affected by modern technologies. The usage of such texts is unrestricted and creative and largely improvisational, as it is not so much the appropriate use of paremias that is important, but rather their smart and inventive adaptation to language use. Lithuanian paremias of the recent decades are diverse in terms of form, content and origin.
2. Traditional paremias are still abundantly used; yet, their former typical syntactic constructions, grammatical and lexical forms are increasingly replaced by simpler syntax and more contemporary grammar, i.e., they are used in somewhat modified forms and rather in the entertainment sphere or for the purpose of drawing attention.
3. The creation of anti-paremias is an especially remarkable feature of the contemporary usage. Part of them are closely related to traditional paremias, whereas others have acquired a completely independent and different meaning. The majority of Lithuanian anti-paremias have been created by means of lexical substitution.
4. New paremias of various origins have not been regarded as paremias in Lithuanian tradition, nor have they been included in paremic indices; yet, the corpus of Lithuanian paremias has been significantly enriched by loan translations originating mainly from mass culture.
5. The formation of the corpus of Lithuanian paremias has been remarkably influenced by social, economic and cultural changes in society, as well as by linguistic interactions.
6. The innovative transformations in Lithuanian paremias are part and parcel of global processes.

As the author has argued, the accumulated data reflects the current usage of paremias and opens up new perspectives for further broader interdisciplinary research. The global character of innovative linguistic transformations should encourage debates about general social and cultural tendencies, as well as about linguistic and cultural identity.

Anneli Baran

EUROPHRAS 2012 IN MARIBOR, SLOVENIA

The EUROPHRAS conference is organised by the European Society of Phraseology every second year. The conference is the most important international academic event in the field of paremiology. In 2012 it took place on August 27–31 in Maribor, which is the second largest town in Slovenia. The University of Maribor welcomed the conference with over one hundred presentations. The conference theme was *Phraseology and Culture*, with the focus on the cultural, historical, intercultural, semantic and semiotic aspects of phraseology in language communication. The papers were divided into five subthemes: Phraseology and Culture (*In medias res*); Phraseology and Symbol (*Nomen est omen*); Phraseology in Interlingual and Intercultural Contact (*Nosce te ipsum*); Phraseology in Dictionaries and Corpora (*Libri amici, libri magistri*); Phraseology in Language Teaching and Training (*Usus magister est optimus*). The concept of phraseology could be replaced with paremiology as at the conference phraseology was understood rather broadly. The conference programme consisted of plenary sessions, thematic sessions, workshops and book, project and poster presentations. The programme can be found online at http://www.europhrasmaribor.si/, where also the abstracts of the seven plenary sessions are available.

This year the invited speakers were Harald Burger from Zürich (*Kulturelles "Wissen" in der Phraseologie*); the president of the European Society of Phraseology Jarmo Korhonen from Helsinki (*Interdisziplinarität im Dienste der Phraseologieforschung*); Erika Kržišnik from Ljubljana (*Phraseologie als sprachwissenschaftliche Disziplin im slowenischen sprachwissenschaftlichen Raum*); Annelies Häcki Buhofer from Basel (*Kann und soll der Erwerb von Phraseologismen gefördert werden und wenn ja, wie?*); Dmitrij Dobrovol'skij from Moscow (*Kultursemiotik und Phraseologie*); František Čermák from Prague (*Phraseology and Idiomatics: Substance and Vagaries of Views*) and Kathrin Steyer from Mannheim (*Syntagmen – Muster – Schemata. Neue Perspektiven für Phraseologie und Parömiologie*).

Unfortunately, the eighth invited speaker Wolfgang Mieder from Burlington, Vermont, was unable to attend the conference; yet, his abstract is available on the website *("Aller Anfang ist Gefahr." Friedrich Nietzsches sprichwörtliche Aphorismen in* Menschliches, Allzumenschliches). From the participant's and listener's point of view, the plenary papers were not easy to situate in the subthemes of the conference. They predominantly represented the special interest of the speaker or something that the speaker wanted to take up.

As concerns language, merely the variation of languages makes one breathless. The official languages in Maribor were German, English and Slovene. This means that most of the information and official speeches were given in these languages. The official languages of the European Society of Phraseology are German, English, French and Spanish. The research subjects considered even more languages: Russian, Hungarian, Swedish, Polish, Croatian, Italian, Japanese, Estonian, Finnish and others. When you met a group of participants talking to each other, it was at least in two different languages. It was nice to notice that even in an academic atmosphere the most important thing was to understand and to be understood, no matter what language you used and how well you knew the grammar. The fruitful moments in this kind of conferences include papers, plenary sessions and breaks; all of them are needed.

In this conference there were also some book, project and poster presentations. A new feature was the *Dissertation forum*, where the speakers (about ten participants) were doctoral students presenting their ongoing study for their doctoral theses. Although the speakers were still engaged in the process of research, many of the listeners had a notable career in academic life. This forum is supposed to continue in the next meetings. Another notable innovation in the programme was the workshops. There were five altogether: two were mainly in German (*Extraktion der festen und usuellen Wortverbindungen aus Korpora; Phraseodidaktik*) and three in English (*The Influence of English on the Phraseology of European Languages; Formulaic Constructions in Dialogue; Cognitive and Linguistic Economy*). More information about the themes of the workshops is to be found on the websites of EUROPHRAS. Both of these innovations, the dissertation forum and workshops, present models for action that could be worth following in the future also in other conferences. For the participants the dissertation forum was a possibility to have a glance at the future doctoral theses as well as to learn something about the interests of young researchers. For the doctoral students this was a valuable possibility to actively participate in an international conference. The workshops offered an opportunity to participate in the discussions more than only with ordinary paper presentations. Every now and then the conversation changed direction and even some new ideas emerged from old subjects. This was possible because in the programme a four hour session was reserved for the workshops.

In 2012 Maribor is one of the European Capitals of Culture, which could be seen all over the town and its surroundings. Visitors had many opportunities to see, feel, listen and taste the various cultural elements of Slovenian life. Although the conference days were long and fully packed, the last day offered an opportunity to get acquainted with both the culture and agriculture of Slovenia.

The next EUROPHRAS conference will take place in two years' time in Sousse, Tunisia. In the meantime, an international conference participated by the EUROPHRAS society, *Phraseology in Multilingual Society*, will convene at Kazan Federal University in August 2013 (http://kazan2013.wix.com/europhras).

Liisa Granbom-Herranen

BOOK REVIEW

ASPECTS OF SIGNED NAMES

Liina Paales. *Kurtide nimepärimuse aspekte: puudelisuse ja kurdiksolemise folkloristlik uurimus*. [Aspects of Deaf name lore: A folkloristic study of disability and Deafhood.] Dissertationes Folkloristicae Universitatis Tartuensis 17, Tartu: Tartu Ülikooli Kirjastus 2011. 208 pp.

On August 30, 2011, Liina Paales defended her doctoral degree Kurtide nimepärimuse aspekte: puudelisuse ja kurdiksolemise folkloristik uurimus (Aspects of Deaf name lore: A folkloristic study of disability and Deafhood) at the Department of Estonian and Comparative Folklore of the Institute of Cultural Research and Fine Arts, University of Tartu. An overview of the thesis is given on the basis of the published version.

Whereas the naming elements of a language, such as appellatives, are used to combine similar objects, events or activities together into the same class, proper names are used to differentiate similar kinds of entities, such as people or places, from each other. In more simple terms: the appellative *table* referring to 'a one-, three- or more legged surface' will remain the same, be the entity curved- or straight-legged, or whether its surface is made of wood, metal or glass of any shape. But on the basis of a mere proper name we cannot find out what *Clinton* or *Mary* looks like, nor can we know who in a group of persons might be Mary, except that we know that *Mary* refers to the female sex. In these examples of proper names used in English-speaking cultures the linguistic elements have nothing else in common except that they refer to people (male or female) or geographic locations. (Yes, there are places called Clinton and Mary!)

However, we as rare and minority language researchers claim that proper names may have intension, i.e., they contain relevant semantic information which can be analysed. Countless experienced researchers of indigenous cultures and languages have described such names in their research. Perhaps the most widely known examples come from the personal names of the indigenous peoples of the American and African continents, such as *Áwákaasomaahkaa* 'Running-Antelope' (Lombard 2011), or *Angula* / *Nangula* '(a boy / a girl) born in the morning' (Saarelma-Maunumaa 2003). Sign languages are also included amongst the group of languages that have a descriptive name reserve. Unfortunately, the dominant western-oriented linguistics and onomastics rarely take into account these non-canonical languages in their theories, and the evidence they offer is not considered sufficiently weighty to question the well-established scientific views.

Liina Paales's thesis *Aspects of Deaf Name Lore* provides linguistic and cultural evidence contrary to the canons of onomastic theories, since also in Estonian Sign Language (ESL) most of the personal and toponymic names are associated with an external context, which is also evident in the sign. In a person's name this signifying element could tell us something about the individual's outward appearance at the moment the name was given, for example, the hairstyle or use of spectacles, or the appearance of visible birthmarks. Thus in ESL a person could have such names as CURLY or EYE-GLASSES or PIGMENT-ON-THE-HEAD. It is important to note, however, that sign

language names are not – as outsiders often assume – nicknames or additions to the official spoken language first and family names or place names; they are rather a fundamental part of the idiomatic phrasing of sign language in all registers.

Sign Language can also include into the name something about the person's non-visible background. For example, people keen on fishing or running may be given the name FISHER or RUNNER, but the name can also tell us about the family context, even in a quite obtuse manner (e.g. POOR). Similar place name examples in ESL would be, for example, the sign for the fishing town *Kallaste* that denotes 'a hat with an upturned brim like that of a fisherman' and the sign for 'orthodox' referring to the place *Pechory / Petseri,* where a monastery is situated. The sign may also have something to do with the name of the entity in spoken language (e.g. SEA < Meri, 'Sea').Those names which cannot be directly translated into sign language are often paralleled by other, similarly written words in the dominant language as is the case with the place name KNEE for the town *Põlva* (cf. *põlv* 'knee'). According to Paales this strategy is very common when producing names in ESL (and it is utmost productive even in Finnish Sign Language; cf. Rainò 2006).

Language community members almost always know or have an intuition about to what the name refers. Paales states that the discussion of naming conventions and informing about them is an integral part of sign language storytelling tradition (it also exists amongst the Blackfoot Indian tribes; cf. Lombard 2011). In her articles Paales cites different versions of etymologies for names that she has collected. However, she does not differentiate between first- and second-hand knowledge of the person referring to the proper names used, that is, whether the knowledge of the name has come from the name bearers or from other members of the sign language community (consisting of approx.1500 people in Estonia). Rather than presenting all interpretations of the names as etymologically equal, Paales should have considered or brought out this very basic problem in onomastics connected to folk etymology or at least she could have described in detail the interface between name-lore and folk etymology.

Although the constraint of description, and *metonymic* description in particular, set basic linguistic rules for the formation of proper nouns in sign language, only the bearer's knowledge of the origin of his/her own name can be relied on. Other people's understanding of the origin of the name is mostly based on guessing or second-hand information – and therefore 'lore', unless they themselves have participated in the name-giving process. It should also be noted that metonymy only works in one direction. For example, the squinting of an eye may give rise to a sign for a proper noun, where *the index finger touches the cheek below the eye*. But any proper noun sign produced near the eye may refer to the function of the sense organ itself as well as to other elements close to the eye, such as a birth mark or visible scar at the time of name giving, which may no longer be seen. However, the users of sign language are not always aware of this one-way-metonymy (Rainò 2004), and therefore, may regard the conclusions drawn from the names accurate. But a scientist should be more prudent.

The signs for proper nouns are an essential part of language skills and knowledge of the deaf culture and its narrative tradition. This shared knowledge of language speakers connected to nomenclature and name lore (even though it is not always true), provides Paales with the working platform through which she is approaching her research material. Adapting Ben-Amos (2009), Paales examines the names *as folkloristic text frag-*

ments, an aspect which offers her also an escape route not to face the problem regarding folk etymologies. Nevertheless, choosing this innovative approach, she has aroused refreshed interest towards onomastics within sign languages studies. This perspective also offers onomasticians a fresh opportunity to investigate names as discursive units with new tools, and perceive the linguistic and cultural context related to the names within a wider framework. This approach could even provide the folkloristic name-lore its own place in onomastic research rather than brushing it into the background.

Liina's name sign.

However, as a researcher of nomenclature in ESL, Paales does not – at least with this dissertation – get much deeper than other onomasticians who have been more strictly bound to linguistic or onomastic frameworks. Despite her unusual research perspective, her conclusions are nevertheless almost identical with previous studies in most sign languages: she states that even in ESL there are arbitrary and descriptive names and, for example, the latter can be further divided into sub-categories according to descriptive features in more detail (physical appearance, behaviour or origins of the name bearer, etc.). In one of her latest articles included in her dissertation "Name Signs for Hearing People" (Folklore 47/2011), which describes the variety of names assigned to people outside the realm of the sign language users, she is still not able to reach further than a scattered catalogue of the people to whom the name signs are given. These disorganised categories include the following: People related to the deaf community (teachers of deaf schools, sign language interpreters, deaf culture and sign language researchers, hearing children of deaf parents); Athletes, singers, actors; Religious name signs; Estonian and Finnish public officials; Russian and German heads of state; Presidents of France and the United States, and Leaders of other countries. (For some reason, Paales wanted to describe the 'supreme heads of state' through six different categories!)

The latter category of statesmen is always resounding, since even the less pleasant aspects are raised as the topic of naming speech – and name-lore. For example, in French Sign Language, the meaning of 'splayed teeth' refers to Mitterand, and in other signed languages expressions meaning 'pointy ~ big ~ red nose ~ ear' are associated with Presidents Halonen, Putin, Yeltsin and Sárkoszy. Nevertheless, in this article as well as in the summary of her doctoral thesis, Paales eventually manages to connect, very briefly though, the fragmented pieces of her research. She considers the role of name signs, in respect to the title of her work, from within the community and raises the following as one of her main hypothesis: It is through the use of name signs and telling stories connected to these that a sense of belongingness is created within the community of language users. Simultaneously the sarcastic hidden messages carried in the nomenclature for hearing people deal with the feelings that the members of the minority language attach to the representatives of the majority.

Paales's dissertation offers something to ponder even for a wider reading audience than us, mere researchers. Familiarising ourselves with the sign languages in our region and the nomenclature embedded in these languages, we would all get a whole new perspective on ourselves, our environment, and even to our own language.

> Have you ever noticed which head of state is missing his thumb? (*Yeltsin*)
>
> And who was the mighty person adorned by a wart on his nose? (*Kruchev*)
>
> And which island in Estonia – despite its flat surface – is called "bumpy"? (*Muhu! (<"muhk")*)

Päivi Rainò
Senior Lecturer, Ph.D.
University of Applied Sciences Humak, Helsinki

References

Ben-Amos, Dan 2009. *Kommunikatsioon ja folkloor*. [Communication and Folklore.] Sator 9. Tartu: EKM Teaduskirjastus.

Lombard, Carol 2011. The Sociocultural Significance of *Niitsitapi* Personal Names: An Ethnographic Analysis. *Names: A Journal of Onomastics*. Vol. 59, No. 1, pp. 42–51, http://dx.doi.org/10.1179/002777311X12942225544714.

Paales, Liina 2011. Name Signs for Hearing People. *Folklore,* Vol. 47*,* pp. 43–76. http://www.folklore.ee/folklore/vol47/paales.pdf, last accessed on 10 October 2012.

Rainò, Päivi 2004. *Henkilöviittomien synty ja kehitys suomalaisessa viittomakieliyhteisössä.* [The Emergence and Development of the Name Sign System in the Community of Sign Language Users in Finland.] Academic Dissertation. Department of General Linguistics, University of Helsinki. Deaf Studies in Finland 2 [CD-ROM]. Helsinki: Finnish Association of the Deaf.

Rainò, Päivi 2006. Voiko paikannimistöä ohjailla? [Place Names and the Regulations Given by Board of Finnish Sign Language.] In: Karin Hoyer & Monica Londen & Jan-Ola Östman (eds.) *Teckenspråk: Sociala och Historiska perspektiv. Teckenspråkstudier TS 2*. Helsingfors: Nordica, Institutionen för nordiska språk och nordisk litteratur, University of Helsinki, pp. 107–128.

Saarelma-Maunumaa, Minna 2003. *Edhina ekogidho – Names as links: The Encounter Between African and European Anthroponymic Systems among the Ambo People in Namibia*. Academic Dissertation. Department of Finnish, University of Helsinki. http://ethesis.helsinki.fi/julkaisut/hum/suome/vk/saarelma-maunumaa/edhinaek.pdf, last accessed on 10 October 2012.

OUR AUTHORS

Tuulikki Kurki, Adjunct Professor, is a Senior Researcher (Cultural Studies) at the Karelian Institute, University of Eastern Finland. Her research interests are Finnish-language literature in Soviet and post-Soviet Karelia, and amateur writers and ethnographers in Finland and literature in national borderlands. She is the responsible leader of the research project *Writing Cultures and Traditions at Borders*, funded by the Academy of Finland 2010–2013.

tuulikki.kurki@uef.fi

Kirsi Laurén, Adjunct Professor, is a university lecturer (Folklore Studies) at the School of Humanities, University of Eastern Finland. Her current research focuses on everyday life at borders and the research is part of the *Writing Cultures and Traditions at Borders* Finnish Academy project. Her fields of interest include also environmental culture and methodological issues of written narratives.

kirsi.lauren@uef.fi

Tiiu Jaago is Associate Professor of folklore research at the University of Tartu, Estonia. Her fields of interest are problems of understanding time and history in folklore (popular narrated histories, family histories, etc.), social context of the folk song tradition, and the history of folklore studies in Estonia.

tiiu.jaago@ut.ee

Anne Heith is Associate Professor of comparative literature at the Department of Culture and Media Studies, Umeå University. She is currently a guest researcher at the Hugo Valentin Centre, Uppsala University. From May 2008 to September 2011 she was a researcher in Border Poetics at Tromsö University, working with the project *Tornedalian Textual Landscapes*. Her research interests include: ethnicity and literature; minorities, migration and aesthetics; critical whiteness studies.

anne.heith@valentin.uu.se; anne.heith@littvet.umu.se

Holger Pötzch, PhD, works at the Department of Culture and Literature at Tromsø University (UiT) where he is associated with the *Border Culture* and *DOMINO* research groups. Pötzsch's field of research includes discourse theory, cognitive film theory, war film and memory, war and the media, and the discursive construction of borders and boundaries in, and through, cultural expressions. He currently works on a project that focuses on liminal aspects in the work of Norwegian filmmaker Knut Erik Jensen.

holger.potzsch@uit.no

Saija Kaskinen, PhD, is a teacher of ESP (English for Specific Purposes) and EAP (English for Academic Purposes) at the Language Centre and a project researcher at the Karelian Institute, University of Eastern Finland. Her main fields of interest are comparative literature and cultural studies, border discourses, identity formation and writing cultures on the border.

saija.kaskinen@uef.fi

Tiina Suopajärvi, PhD**,** is a research fellow at the Department of Computer Science and Engineering, University of Oulu, Finland. Her main research interests are anthropology of new technologies and anthropology of place/space, feminist technoscience and social studies of gerontechnology. She has specialised in ethnographic research methods and lately conducted fieldwork among the ageing citizens of Oulu.

tiina.suopajarvi@oulu.fi

Stephen Wolfe is Assistant Professor at the Department of Culture and Literature at the University of Tromsø. Stephen Wolfe is currently studying Trans-Atlantic writing in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. His focus is on the border crossings and literary negotiations between writers, genres and the contemporary politics of the period. He has led several national and international research projects on borders and borderlands and published an article collection *Border Poetics De-limited* (2007) with Johan Schimanski. Together, they co-ordinate the *Border Poetics* research group at the University of Tromsø.

stephen.wolfe@uit.no