

Karelia in Flux

Shifting discourses in Soviet literature and
contemporary opinion

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Tiivistelmä – Referat – Abstract <p>Karelia has numerous questions regarding to whom its soul belongs with accompanying loyalties, identities and senses of belonging. Underlying assumptions may affect personal, political or business perceptions. Through explorations in discourse through selections of memory, ontology and reality we examine the necessity to rethink perceptions about Russian and Finnish relations as seen in the Karelian borderlands. Further, addressing how Karelia is constructed in Soviet literature and more contemporary opinion.</p> <p>Discourse from two periods of time is digested to reflect on the nature of knowing, remembering, learning and realizing. I include Soviet novels from 1940s to the 1980s about Karelia and newspaper letters to the editor and editorials from 2000 to 2015 to serve as gauges of perceptions and time periods. The discourse is examined for patterns and evidence of perceptions. The examined discourses suggest there is a disconnection between knowing and experiencing. Evidence is seen through government steering committees in Soviet literature and in memory and political exposure in popular opinion. Communicative acts in Soviet literature and published opinion pieces show how Karelian discourse can be affected. By addressing these perceptions we create opportunities to develop more realistic knowledge to aid in personal, political or business relations.</p>			
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CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

Largely the Karelian language and the Karelian Question in politics has remained marginal in debate but frequent topic of discourse. Common discourses cover approaches of memory, economic or political movement and language and ethnicity. Northern Karelia as a region and north-eastern border region of Finland have existed for some time with relatively unclear border boundaries. Contemporary Finland to the south has had clearer geographical boundaries. For example, Vyborg under the Swedish Empire became Viipuri as it was returned to Finland in 1812 has a naturally distinct boundary of the Rajajoki.¹ Northern Karelia, however has no distinguishable geographic features to draw a naturally visible border. Because of this border, or lack thereof, questions of identities, sense, loyalties and belonging are already present.² The Karelian question, in terms of whose soul does Karelia belong to, is met with personal emotion through memory or politics though no longer much political action. The Karelian situation leaves clear signs of cultural symbols and activities i.e., the Karelian flag which is recognized by the Russian Federation but has no official status. Other previously identifiable ethnic identifiers such as traditional clothes and traditional cuisine are no longer held significant to contemporary research as identifiers of ethnicity.³

Balanced and objective approaches to political, economic or personal interactions call for rethinking perceptions about Russian and Finnish relations concerning Karelia. Through explorations in discourse via memory, ontology and reality this study addresses the Karelian discourses. This study addresses how the manifested contemporary image of Karelia is constructed in literature and opinion through discourses.

1.1 DESCRIBING KARELIA

What is Karelia? For the purpose of this study it is as described below, I am defining my geographic boundaries of "Karelia" which I refer to based on linguistic categorization to cover regions from Lake Ladoga to Lake Onega and the White Sea of Russia and in Finland roughly from Lappeenranta north through Joensuu to Nurmes/Lieksa. Soviet Karelia is relevant to this study representing an historic geographical place made up of mini studies consisting of developing border relations, as well as discourse and language policies. Studies of developing border relations, discourse and language policies are all necessary to form a wholesome picture

¹ literally translated as "border river" from Finnish

² Kurki 2013, s. 97.

³ Klementyev, Kovaleva, and Zamyatin, 2012, 7.

explaining Karelia's lack of emergence as an independently voiced authority. Karelia represents a blend of influences and serves as a focal point of decisions made by authorities far away from Karelia. The resulting space in which Karelian discourse occupies is represented in Soviet literature reflecting veiled opinions of the authors. Contemporarily Karelian discourse is still surfaces in editorials, opinion pieces and letters to the editor. Common issues deal with the Karelian identity and how it has been treated in literature previously and more recently echoes in popular opinion through politicians or personal opinions.

1.2 HISTORICAL CONTEXT

During the October Revolution in Russia and Finnish Independence beginning in 1917, two new states and accompanying new political systems and ideologies led to increase in hostilities in defining the search of new national unities.⁴ The result was perhaps the most dramatic and influential time for the Karelian Republic in its formulation. Meanwhile, Finland and Russia were undergoing significant political organizations at the same with with a brand new independence for Finland and a rebirth for Russia.

As seen in a developing Soviet Union, questions of identity continued to be an ideological problem for Bolshevik leadership. In restricting and focusing on soviet ideology sign of religion and nationality were seen as enemies of the developing ideologies.⁵ No surprise then for a gradual decrease of the peripheral power and communal goals were implemented. Popular rhetoric in the developing Soviet Union had to do with parts of the Communist Manifesto and was no accident the Manifesto was worded as such, "Proletariats of the world, unite!" This uniting call of proletariats around the world being led by capitalism, specifically resonating to those without any country. However clear the view seemed it was however complicated. Lenin's analysis attributing exploitation to nations, and proletariats of oppressed and oppressing nations needed to be reconciled.⁶ Agreeing on national unity meant strengthening ties of the far-spread Russian people and promoting the centrist goals of the Soviet Union from Moscow.

The Soviet Union collapsed and once again Russia was reborn. The end of the Soviet period allowed to once again questioning religion and nationality within Russia. One highlight of allowable public discourse was represented by the notable Soviet critic and writer Aleksander

⁴ Kokkonen 2012, 34.

⁵ Luukkanen 2000, 51.

⁶ Vihavainen 2000, 75.

Solzhenitsyn who was commended by former Russian President Boris Yeltsin on his government-criticizing publication, "How to Rebuild Russia".⁷ The 1990s also introduced a national revivalist attitude and spreading ideas with educated city dwellers in Karelia identifying with a separate people, language and culture than overly prevalent by Russian standards. This led to a somewhat misleading collective self-identity because statistics of families claiming to use Karelian at home even though it is known that it is not to be true.⁸ Census results from 1989 show just 40.8% of 18,420 Finns in Karelia consider Karelian their natural language and that 95% of Karelians also speak Russian.⁹ Compared to 2002 census information of 53,000 Karelian speakers in Russia there were 35,000 in the Karelian Republic and 12,000 in the Tver region of Russia closer to Moscow.

In May 1989, conference on Karelian with representatives from all languages and communities took place and interest surfaced around defining a common language. Capturing a representative moment of 2001, Karelian language was taught grades one-through-nine and plenty of materials existed for further education.¹⁰ Paul Austin cites Eugene Holman, an American Linguist in Finland depicting the situation:

"Languages which co-exist in a bilingual speech community are never sociolinguistically equal (...) They involve not only a reinforcement, but also a redefinition of those aspects of national identity which are symbolized by the necessity to use one as oppose tot the other language in specific types of speech situations."¹¹

In 2002, the Duma of the Russian Federation passed a bill requiring all official languages of Russia to be in Cyrillic (the Karelian language is written in Latin characters).¹² Again, this made all previous efforts for an official language obsolete leaving official elements of the Karelian identity in question and confronted with problems. Increase in Russianness in education left less ambiguity in forming separate identities and again highlighted two issues: The creation of a singular common language, and the survival of the Karelian people (as an ethnic identity).¹³ Since 2002, there has been a decrease in Karelian language students while the language is only

⁷ Luukkanen 2000, 55.

⁸ Klementyev, Kovaleva, and Zamyatin 2012, 5.

⁹ Austin 1992, 33.

¹⁰ Austin 2009, 67.

¹¹ Austin Ibid., 73.

¹² Ibid., 68.

¹³ Ibid., 109.

occasionally used in mass media such as radio broadcasts and literature with broadcast time in Karelian being limited to 50 minutes per week.

1.3 APPROACH

My methodical approach is through examination of discourse. I refer to discourse as a form of social action and interaction therefore representing ideological expression and reproduction in social interaction. Discourse can have many nebulous meanings, which can take an entire discussion, for the sake of this topic I refer to discourse as a communicative event, i.e. text or talk with a number of social actors, generally involving a speaker or writer and a listener or reader taking part in specific setting such as a time or place.

In this study, I pay attention to how influence and persuasion are constructed in text. Specifically, I am concerned with discourse on a level of ideological and social practices, which are crucial in form of ideologies in social reproduction. I use discourse as a lens to see how ideological discourses are used, how they work, and how they are created, changed and reproduced on a popular level.

Discourse, or beliefs or ideologies expressed through communicative events, are examined with three lenses I created to digest the information. Three recurring lenses I discuss highlight the interconnectedness in my analysis. My so-called *triangle of discourse* revolves around memory, ontology and reality.¹⁵ I return to these lenses and regard them as rough categories to describe the content of my findings in literature and popular opinion.

How does memory appear in discourse? Memory can be fragmented and selective, especially those of childhood memories. Regarding memories of Karelia, childrens' childhood memories should be made of building blocks representing sunny summers, children's primary schools, and backyards while adult memories may perceive bitterness of communal drawbacks, financial strain, civil war and confrontation.¹⁶ Border studies of scientific data and data of reminisced memories do not match while the results ignore each other. A combination of assumed memories in reality would leave modern day travelers looking back at crumbling housing remains of a non-existent Karelia, which is not the case.

¹⁵ Three words I chose that roughly represent three recurring categories in discourse both past and present. I find the words by themselves quite interesting from a linguistic perspective, but the purpose of this investigation is for the words to be a helpful tool in describing discursive properties.

¹⁶ Lähtenmäki 2007, 155.

My second lens is viewed through ontology, by which I refer to the nature of being and existing as expressed in ideologies prevalent in discourse produced on macro and micro levels. In particular, I am interested in what we are exposed to or conditioned to and how that is repeated in communicative events. The third lens of the triangle is viewed through realistic implications on a personal level. I refer to reality as the distorted relation between knowing and being. Particularly being, realizing or existing expressed in discourse with the knowledge that somehow some kind of distortion may exist between knowing and being.

Physical reality reveals certain discourse scenery while personal responses reveal a more volatile human space. Ultimately there is an undeniably reciprocal relationship between the people and the border which cannot be ignored or forgotten, where we can learn from both first-hand experience and memory. These two combined together and reflection upon serve as a medium for these voices if we chose to listen.¹⁷

1.4 PREVIOUS RESEARCH

I examine Karelia largely from a Finnish perspective as it was a feasible approach for the scope of this project. Partially due to the imbalance of literature written on the subject of Karelia, my continued aim is to maintain a broad view to balance perspectives, however a larger endeavor would include further research collected from additional Russian sources to formulate an even more balanced perspective. Much research and discussion has been done regarding border areas and identity or hybrid identities along border regions throughout the world and certainly with focus on Karelia as well. One such focus has been on Karelia as a real place that is relevant economically or as an imaginary place that only exists in historical books and personal memories.

Karelia as an economic border area demonstrates its importance. Borders serve as bridges where cultural cooperation begins according to Indian-English critical theorist Homi K. Bhabha. In textual discourse Karelia ideology has been passed on and unintentionally and engrained into both Finnish and Russian cultures thus affecting relations and perspectives. An example revealing an underlying Finnish perspective is a widely recognized poem by Uuno Kailas, "On the Border", 1931, in which a young and independent Finland is portrayed. The poem begins:

Like a chasm runs the border (*Raija railona aukeaa*)

¹⁷ Kaskinen 2014, 1202.

In front, Asia, the East (*Edessä Aasia, Itä*)

Behind, Europe, the West (*Takana Länttä ja Eurooppaa*)

Like a sentry, I stand guard. (*varjelen, vartija, sitä.*)¹⁸

Elements involving nationalism and development in the Soviet Union also manifested in Karelia. The Karelian Republic served as an example of the efforts of nationalism and development in the Soviet Union primarily for four different reasons: Finland had influence on its own establishment with Finnish political nationalism and the defeat of Bolshevik-sympathising Red Finns effecting Karelia; 1905-06 and later World War I awakened political nationalism in Karelia and the White Sea Region; and after World War I in particular the Murmansk to Saint Petersburg railroad corridor made the Karelia region important to Russia in imperial protection as a border defence for Saint Petersburg – and in a Russian perspective Karelia has always belonged to Russia because of this; becoming part of Finland, Karelia was represented by small groups of Red Finns who did not represent the interests of the majority of the Soviet population.¹⁹ Ultimately the creation and existence of Soviet Karelia was subject to policies consistently made by outsiders. Antti Laine describes the Karelia region in terms of research:

As a study region, Russian Karelia represents a peripheral border republic. A look at the relationship between this border republic and the seat of center power (Moscow) reveals the pressure conflicts brought further by policies that aimed at homogenizing the nation. The case of Karelia also falls under the shadow of Leningrad, which links northwestern Russia to the core of central power.²⁰

While the Uno Kailas poem is repeated through generations, the ideology is passed on etched through discourse depicting an at risk small country next to a large threatening shadow of Russia.²¹ This representation describes a Finnish ideology of the 1920s and 1930s instead of being updated with fresher perspectives.

Discourse about Karelia mirrors the influence of the Karelian language throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Soviet Karelian was built around foundations by Dmitry Bubrikh resulting in a two-pronged task was for creating a new Karelian language.²³ Firstly, creation or consolidation of a literary Karelian language was necessary. Secondly, the implementation and dissemination of the language needed to be achieved. The second task proved to be the most

¹⁸ "Uno Kailas," accessed on 12.10.2015, <http://www.alternativefinland.com/uuno-kailas/>.

¹⁹ Laine 2002, 9.

²⁰ Laine 2002, 10-11.

²¹ Lähtenmäki 2007, 146.

²³ Ironically, Bubrikh was not spared from this *korenisatsiia* and was sentenced to death in 1938, eventually released after several months. Austin, *Karelian Phoenix*, 50.

difficult task in hindering the implementation of an official Soviet Karelian language. Soviet NKVD (People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs, or KGB precursor) reports described lack of textbooks and reliance on Bubrikh's students, many of whom were arrested on suspected charges.²⁴

During the Finnish occupation of Karelian ASSR, Finnish was the official language effectively launching a *dekarelization* or *refinnicization* campaign. Again, previous efforts to unify languages of the Karelian region were dismissed and Cyrillic was no longer a requirement. By January 5, 1942 Finnish language was restored as the language of instruction with Finland and Soviet Karelian independence no longer seen as a threat to Soviet prosperity.²⁵ Ultimately, the Finnish efforts of *dekarelization* and *refinnicization* were failures from a language perspective, reverting back to Finnish and a latin alphabet as the official language dismissing any progress towards a unifying language that had been made in Cyrillic. Policies beginning in 1937 proved unrealistic due to considerable differences and relatively few Finns in the decision-making process, many of whom regarded Karelia as an extension of Finnish culture.²⁶

In 1932 Bubrikh proposed simple morphology meant to enrich syntax based on Karelian Proper consisting of its 12 grammatical cases. However, the six locative cases represented in Finnish were reduced to a non-typical and confusing three cases uncharacteristic of any dialect previously. Cyrillic script also poorly represented the sounds of Karelian with many newly added Russian words. Karelians themselves could no longer understand the new official language leaving little long term necessity and desire to continue the new Karelian adaptation, and perhaps contributing to the restoration of the Finnish language again in 1940 after the failed experiment of Soviet Karelian.²⁷ Finnish language lost official status in Karelia in 1955 leaving Russian as the only language to express and form identity in literature under the USSR. These discourses also shape the public representation of national borderlands, natural environment, cultures and people.²⁸

²⁴ *Narodnyy Komissariat Vnutrennikh Del*, People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs. Austin, *Karelian Phoenix*, 53.

²⁵ Verigin 2012, 122.

²⁶ Austin 1992, 34.

²⁷ Pedagogical texts were also confusing with some sentences consisting of Russian words and structure and some with no Russian present at all. Austin 1992, 24-25.

²⁸ Kurki 2013, 101.

For the first time since the 1950s, *Perestroika* and *glasnost* of the 1980s allowed efforts again to unify Karelia with a common language under crumbling social identity of the Soviet Union. A quest for finding their new Karelian identity was necessary. Georgi Kert, Russian linguist noted, “When languages disappear, a culture and people disappear at the same time.”²⁹ The decision to use the Latin alphabet again instead of Cyrillic had again made all Cyrillic publications obsolete. In the Karelian ASSR, Finnish language was clearly not necessary way of life any longer becoming effectively a cultural relic while opening of the border and increased contact influenced understanding of identity and further construction of it.³⁰ Another switch in the Karelian language from Cyrillic to Latin characters did not help the stabilization of language representation.

²⁹ Austin 2009, 61.

³⁰ Kurki2013, 105.

CHAPTER 2 - METHODS

My approach is to highlight discourse from historic and contemporary sources digested through lenses of memory, ontology and reality. Here I lay out my methodological approach to discourses in Soviet literature and Finnish contemporary opinion. In my analysis I apply an approach through discourse concerning the nature of knowing, remembering, learning and realizing.

Acknowledging discourse of hybrid identities at national borders and cultural borderlands opens access to a multidisciplinary approach.³¹ Additionally, accepting the importance of regional identity and how it is constructed we can use it as a measure to challenge tradition boundaries perhaps too narrow for contemporary *de-territorialization*.³² Geographer Anssi Paasi describes *region* and *identity* as new magic words for developing economy through culture where identity causes ongoing problems for policymakers and politicians.³³ Paasi's *Spatial Narrative Theory* suggests people express a sense of place through stories about who they are while the identity builders of a place or regions draw public representations to market them.³⁴

My sample material represents two periods of time, novels published in the Soviet Union and popular opinion and editorials focusing on the years between 2000 and 2015. Three novels and a volume of poems and short stories written about Karelia from the Soviet Union. They cover a range of years from 1940s until the 1980s including Nikolai Jaakkola's *Ira* from 1947, Antti Timonen's two novels, *Tiny White Bird* published 1961 and *We Karelians* published 1971. I use selections by poet and writer Jaakko Rugojev from *Volume One of Rugojev's Selected Works in Two Volumes* published 1988.

I use newspaper articles published 2000 to 2015 from Editorial and Letters to the Editor in Finland's largest daily newspaper, the Helsingin Sanomat. To add perspective beyond what I am limited to within my own allotted research scope I include samples from four other published materials regarding narratives regarding Karelia through memory, opinion, and reality respectively. *Fear in Border Narratives* 2012 by Kirsi Laruén consisting of interviews regarding narrative through memories, *No News Is Good News?* 2015 by Jussi Laine and *Representations of Karelian and Karelian language in Karelian and Russian Local Newspapers* 2015 by Outi

³¹ See Anzaldúa 1987 and Bhabha 1994 for hybrid identity established at borderlands

³² Paasi 1998.

³³ Paasi 2009.

³⁴ Paasi 2002.

Tánczos regarding opinion in Finnish and Russian Newspapers and *If Borders Could Tell* 2014 by Saija Kaskinen consisting of interviews regarding narrative through reality of experience.

My aim with this additional sampling is to transcend my own limitations as only one person and to include interviews and studies that cross the border of language more freely than I am able to in the moments of this project. My second goal is to measure the validity and reliability of my own findings and analysis.

2.1 DISCOURSE

I refer to discourse as a number of social actors involving a speaker or writer and a listener or reader taking part in specific setting such as a time or place. I focus on how influence and persuasion are constructed in text. Specifically, I am concerned with discourse on a level of ideological and social practices, which are crucial forms of ideologies in social reproduction. I use discourse as a lens to see what ideologies actually look like, how they work, and how they are created, changed and reproduced after transformations through discourse.

I address discourse and ideologies expressed through discourse as a view into wider beliefs, patterns, explanations and popular opinion. As a standard, I use a definition by Teun A. van Dijk defining discourse as a combination of socially displayed text or speech and to its abstract grammatical structures. An approach through discourse combines influences of linguistic, cognitive, social, and cultural aspects of text and talk to shape a resulting socio-political perspective.³⁵

As a foundation this study accepts discourse regarding language and communication as an influential role in the process of reproduction, while also acknowledging the importance of ideologies and their influential role in reproduction and expression.³⁶ Accepting the role of ideology in discourse as, *basis of social representations shared by members of a group* we can focus on the reproductions in discourse therefore enabling an association with socially shared ideas, expanding to cover systems of self-serving, mythical or otherwise deceptive ideas defined in contract with the true ideas of *our* history, science, culture or institution.

³⁵ van Dijk 1998, 193-194.

³⁶ van Dijk *Ibid.*, 191.

2.2 FROM LITERATURE

Referring to arguments by German philosopher Jürgen Kocka, literary comparison helps to identify questions and to clarify profiles of single cases. Promoting learning through encouraging experimentation Kocka argues it is possible to identify questions and problems that might otherwise be ignored, forgotten or missed. Describing comparison helps clarify issues by contrasting them with others as exemplified by the German notion of, *Sonderweg*, or American idea of *Exceptionalism*. Analytically Kocka lays out the claim that comparison is crucial for testing hypothesis while *asking and answering casual questions*. In conclusion of his comparative approach, Kocka refers to the German word *Verfremdung*, meaning disassociation or distancing oneself from *one's own history* and as a positive tool for objective results.

Kocka cites three methodological reasons that make comparison difficult to use, describing the first reason stemming from large amounts of sources make it dependent it on secondary literature which may be difficult to find. Comparison also presupposes that each unit can be separated from the others in a way that can then be compared thus *breaking, cutting and interrupting the flows of narration*. Additionally, the problem of comparing totalities as a problem due to the impossibility of selecting certain respects to compare, thus somewhat picking and choosing where to mend the pieces back together. The era of increased globalization of the 1990s revealed comparison approaches in a new light as a way to explore and express historical problems. Kocka characterizes movement and new stress on what he calls, *Verflechtungsgeschichte* and *Beziehungsgeschichte*, or history of interconnections and history of connected relationships, both changing the boundaries and applying tension to Comparative approaches. Interest in transnational approaches to history have supplied, according to Kocka, approaches to intercultural and international comparisons as well as methods such as studies and interpretation of postcolonial methods favoring *entangled ideas*, where history of one unit is being taken as two units in a so-called *histoire croisée*.³⁷

My aim is to keep the web of entanglement as limited as possible to one simple combination of interconnections, or *Zusammenhang* of *Verflechtungen*. An example of similar methods conducted was conducted by Philip Ther applying Kocka's comparative approach. Ther used Kocka's methods and analyzed differences and similarities of opera houses in Germany and East-Central Europe while paying attention to the perceived influences of one another.³⁸

³⁷ Kocka 2003, 39-44

³⁸ Ther 2002.

2.3 FROM OPINION

Significance of ideological narratives in discourse is represented by Teun van Dijk's principles of ideological reproduction regarding either the presence or the absence of information. The ideological communication strategy is made up of the following parts.

1. Express/emphasize information that is positive about us
2. Express/emphasize information that is negative about Them
3. Suppress/de-emphasize information that is positive about Them
4. Suppress/de-emphasize information that is negative about Us

Dijk's resulting so-called, *ideological square* plays a role in broader self-representation either positive or negative. Thus, opinions expressed in discourse have implications for groups or social issues and a multi-disciplinary approach is necessary to account for nature, structures and functions of ideology.³⁹

Methodological foundation is constructed accepting discourse in public opinion as a measure of social importance. For example, such methods have also been employed by Karin Wahl-Jorgensen, citing Jurgen Habermas regarding discourse ethics and the public sphere. Habermas claims the consensus among citizens is something that is arrived at together through debate and discussion. Wahl-Jorgensen accepts public opinion justified further by Charles Towne, editor for the Hartford Courant, as giving further credit to the opinion and editorial pages, *the letter page should allow society its right to provide and hold a mirror on its own*.⁴⁰

Popular opinion acts as a mirror reflecting cultural and societal influences by marketing actors consisting of both historic framing in some form along with contemporary experience or representation. One Karelian corpus, and further concerning the Finnish-Russian border discourses, illustrates a situation that is determined by the geopolitics of memory where due to the lack of personal experience, such imagination on which the Finnish identity was built was largely based on myths and stereotypes.⁴¹

My content analysis seeks to qualitatively examine the discourse scenery of Karelia and the inherent Finnish and Russian *Verflechtungen*, or interconnections revolving around memory, ontology and reality. I examine discourse regarding Karelia in the past and contemporarily in

³⁹ van Dijk 1998, 267.

⁴⁰ Wahl-Jorgensen 1999, 56.

⁴¹ Laine 2015, 96.

popular opinion to question how it is constructed and how that aids molding contemporary perceptions. Ultimately, I look at how these interconnections affect knowing and realizing regarding Karelia in discourse.

CHAPTER 3 - RESULTS

The question remains regarding the discourse landscape of Karelia; is it portrayed differently in Soviet literature than in contemporary opinion built from exposure to literature in addition to political or economic influences in general popular discourse. My material begins in discourse observations in Soviet literature regarding Karelia as foundations for memory. My approach continues through discourse relating to perception and what we perceive to be real in more contemporary popular opinion. The findings presented in this section suggests that there is some connection or disconnection between perceiving and knowing or experiencing. These results seem to be consistent with other research which found connections in studies of discourse through memory, ontology and reality in Karelia.

Nikolai Jaakkola published the novel *Ira* in 1947, the story title and also name of the protagonist. The novel is about a Karelian woman, Ira, during World War Two who is forced to leave Karelia and contemplate her role in society while characterizing the importance of Karelia by what it means to her. The first important plot point occurs at the development of the Continuation War when Ira is forced to leave her homeland thus starting a reflection on her connection with society. Throughout her task of finding her role in society and obligatory adventure, a recurring reference in the novel describes a single birch tree. In the beginning of the novel the birch tree is described to stand tall and represents the position of the elder in the community, older than everyone else and watching over her village. At the end of the story, the birch tree returns but with a somber description; the tree is damaged and almost dead following the events of the Second World War. In a bittersweet sense Ira has renewed hope about the future.

Antti Timonen's, *The Tiny White Bird* story revolves around Mirja, a young woman from Karelia and a tiny white-winged bird. Mirja is interested in the bird because from the bird's perspective the border means nothing and the bird can go anywhere it wishes to fly whether or not there is a line drawn on the ground. Timonen uses discourse regarding the border using the Kemijoki River to describe a dividing line full of similarities alluding to the claim that the really the same are people living on different side of the border.

Through the wilderness, rocks, peat lands and lakes runs a line that is not always visible but it is marked with a wide red line on the world maps. It is the national border. There are numerous national borders on the world map. The borders go along seas, steppes and snow covered mountain peaks, they cut railways and are invisible barriers to gigantic ocean liners and airplanes. History knows numerous

cases when those borders have been moved in one direction or the other, but all these occasions have been preceded by blood and tears, shed by nations ... These borders separate two different worlds, two different life orders and ways of life, two different pasts and futures in the lives of individuals and nations. The divide between the two Kemijoki rivers is a national border exactly like that.⁴²

The nature of being by the border changes while reflecting social attitudes while it continues to represent official restricting guidelines simultaneously.

From the 1960s to the 1970s interest increased in personal histories and ethnic backgrounds coinciding with the *Thaw* that started under Soviet Secretary Nikita Khrushchev.⁴³ Antti Timonen's novel, *We Karelians* published in 1971 in Finnish language is set during the onset of the Russian Civil War and what would become Finnish Independence. The protagonist of the story is Vasselei, is a man who goes through the process of finding out what his self-identity means within his daily life and where he should in roles of society.

We Karelians, starts with Vasselei's friend Miitrei, murdering his brother and disguising himself as a Bolshevik to evade capture in an escalating wartime environment. Vasselei's loyalty changes each time he crosses the Karelian border into Finland and ultimately Vasselei chooses to cross to the Russian side and surrender to the Reds. However, when he finds an officer it turns out to be his friend Miitrei, now a Second Lieutenant with the White Army.

Васселей поглядел на винтовку. Да, сколько человек нашли смерть от его руки. Но только о двух последних выстрелах Васселей не жалел. Отец говорил: «Выбрось ты ее...» Васселей поднялся и швырнул винтовку в снег. Слышно было, как она стукнулась о дерево. С вершины посыпался снег.

Vasselei looked at the rifle. Yes, how many people found death from his hand. Only about the last two shots Vassel did not regret. My father said: "Throw it away ..."
Vasselei got up and threw his rifle into the snow. You could hear it bumping against the tree. Snow fell down from the treetop.

⁴² Timonen 1963, 24-25. English translation appearing in Kurki 2014.

⁴³ *Thaw* refers to the 1950s to 1960s when repression and censorship were relaxed in Khrushchev's period of de-Stalinization

С дороги скрип лыж. Идут! Вассилей и не думал прятаться. Пусть берут его. Сопротивляться он не будет да и оружия-то у него нет. Чтобы его заметили, он зажег папиросу.

The snow crunched on the road ahead. Here they come! Vasselei did not bother to hide himself. He would not resist and he was unarmed. He lit a cigarette to be noticed.

-Эй, кто там сидит?

"Что за наваждение? Голос вроде как Мийтрея».

Васселей был готов ко всему, но умирать от руки Мийтрея он не хотел.

Hey, who sits there?

"Is this a delusion? Your voice sounds like Miitrei's."

Vassilei was prepared for everything, but he did not want to die at the hands of Miitrei.

Васселей встал и спросил:

-А ты кто?

-Я прапорщик освободительной армии. Вы чего, собираетесь красным в плен? Идите сюда! Что-о? Вассилей?!

Vasselei stood and asked:

-Who are you?

-I am an officer of the Liberation Army. What are you doing here, do you want to be capture by the Reds? What is...Vasselei?!

«Мийтрей – прапорщик белой армии?!» Васселея охватило бешенство. В какую-то долю секунды перед ним пронеслось все, что было. Не помня себя от гнева, он хватил нож и, проваливаясь в глубоком снегу, бросился к Мийтрею.

"Miitrei – officer of the White Army?" Vasselei was furious.

In a split second everything from hissed past caught up with him. He was overtaken by anger and grabbed the knife he ran into the deep snow hurling himself towards Miitrei.

Мийтрей ждал его с револьвером в руке.

В глухом лесу треснул выстрел, другой, третий. Как всегда, Мийтрей выстрелил трижды. Бил не торопясь, наверняка.

Miitrei waited for him with a revolver in his hand.

A shot rang out in the forest. As always, Miitrei shot three times. He was certain not to rush.

Васселей остановился. На мгновение замер, словно раздумывая, упасть ему или нет, потом медленно-медленно стал опускаться, словно выбирая место, куда удобней лечь.

Vasselei stopped. For a moment he froze, as if hesitating, to die here and now and by the bullets of that man, then slowly began to sink, as if choosing a place where it would be more convenient to lie down.

Примешь ли меня, земля карельская?

Облачком взметнулся сухой снег, неслышно осыпаясь не тело Васселея.

Will you take me, Karelian land?

A cloud of dry snow puffed and hid Vasselei's body without a sound.⁴⁴

3.1 OPINION DISCOURSE

Discourse published in opinion articles establishes a window into ideologies and beliefs revealing images of Finland firmly connected to Karelian roots and is reflected in popular opinion in multiple published venues from 2000 to 2015. One submission in *the Helsingin Sanomat* claims it is impossible to be Finnish without Karelian roots continuing that Finland has been cut off from land that inspired central Finnish national figures such as Elias Lönnrot, painter Akseli Gallen-

⁴⁴ Timonen 1984. 420-21. Translation is in my own words.

Kallela, and composer Jean Sibelius.⁴⁵ Disillusion of the Soviet Union opened new options and is reflected in discourse, as the *Helsingin Sanomat* explores options of either getting back, revisiting or brimming with hopeful and optimistic views due to the new possibilities. However, admitting return of the land as improbable for the future and instead focusing on something that can be changed and recognizing the benefit that both countries can impact economic and cultural traditions on both sides of the border.⁴⁶

Following the election of Russian President Vladimir Putin in 2000, a fresh opinion appears regarding Finnish attitude towards Russia regarding a young country with only its second president. The author reminds readers that, *Russia should not be overlooked* and that *Finland is wise to keep in mind that the ruler in Russia has changed*.⁴⁷ A letter to the editor in 2002 acknowledges an ingrained attitude towards Russia regarding a belief that as the world was changing with the times, Russia would remain unchanged. The message concludes with a hopeful and optimistic note regarding the change of presidency in Russia and possibility for change in the future, even regarding a possibility of raising issues concerning the land and movement in Karelia once again. Demonstrating optimistic thinking, the author writes, *Russia is an integral part of Europe and will continue to further refine its place with Europe with possibilities to further stimulate the Karelian economy*.⁴⁸

Published in 2008, the *Helsingin Sanomat* featured an editorial praising Finnish President Martti Ahtisaari for publicly reviving the Karelian issue on a global level while using terms like *theft of Karelia*, however Ahtisaari cited any chance of returned land as a possible breach to agreement of international law.⁴⁹ A 2007 letter to the editor refers to *a return of your misery* and cites the regular topic of the suffering of war evacuees as lopsided when coverage of economic refugees is a regularly omitted topic.⁵⁰ However, the article continued, reality of traditional and cultural values might be different and there was a need to recognize the history of refugee Karelians in the 20th century. Twentieth century Karelian refugees face situations in Finland not so different from refugees entering outside of Finland except for the fact that they moved into Finnish homes instead of refugee centers.⁵¹

⁴⁵ Opinion, *Helsingin Sanomat*, January 12, 1991.

⁴⁶ Jyrki Loima, Letter to the Editor, *Helsingin Sanomat*, October 09, 2004.

⁴⁷ Editorial, *Helsingin Sanomat*, June 11, 2000.

⁴⁸ Max Jakobsen, Letter to the Editor, *Helsingin Sanomat*, June 12, 2002.

⁴⁹ Editorial, *Helsingin Sanomat*, December 16, 2008.

⁵⁰ Opinion, *Helsingin Sanomat*, May 22, 2007.

⁵¹ Opinion, *Helsingin Sanomat*, December 8, 2005.

At the University of Eastern Finland in Joensuu, researcher and professor Maria Lähteenmäki raised issue of **skewed images** in public opinion that may play false games with memory. Fragmented and selective memories are to blame when they produce building blocks of memory which do not match up with scientific border studies, instead ignoring omitting the validity of the other half. Lähteenmäki's reasoning is that *children have memories of sunny summer of their childhood, primary schools, and their home yard*. The arguments in memories of adults which include talk about communal drawbacks, financial strain, civil war, etc. do not fit suitably as childhood memories and therefore do not fit in the same context. Admitting researchers downplay war-experience and related memories of children, Lähteenmäki claims approaches of science and memory to not match together to give a coherent picture of reality on the border.⁵² In reply to Lähteenmäki, Ulla Savolainen, a folkore researcher at the University of Helsinki responded that psychologically each memory is worth remembering within in its own circumstances. However, Savolainen added these memories may not be historically accurate but they remain valuable towards an overall insight and are valuable to interdisciplinary perspectives.⁵³

Contemporary discourse of Russia as an enemy continued even at upper levels. Finnish Foreign Minister Jyri Häkämies regarded growth of Russian unpredictability as a major threat to Finnish security, voiced in a 2007 speech. In the speech, Häkämies singled out Finland's most important foreign policy as, *Venäjä, Venäjä, Venäjä!* Russia, Russia, Russia! Thus, Häkämies publicly announced Finland's security challenges during a conference at Washington D.C.'s Center for Strategic and International Studies. Helsingin Sanomat editor Erkki Pennanen provided a response to the declaration saying that Häkämies' statement is a product of military thinking and steps back to look at reality citing that Nordic countries are actually Russia's best neighbors.⁵⁴

An editorial from 2014 provided a reaction to Russia's geopolitical actions in the infraction into Ukraine. Using the connection which President Putin cited in a speech with Russia's historic connection to Crimean Peninsula as part of Holy Russia and mother of Russian formation, the Helsingin Sanomat staff writer compared Finland's connection to Karelia regarding a similar

⁵² Maria Lähteenmäki, Letter to the Editor, *Helsingin Sanomat*, August 4, 2008.

⁵³ Ulla Savolainen, Letter to the Editor, *Helsingin Sanomat*, August 8, 2008.

⁵⁴ Editorial, *Helsingin Sanomat*, June 19, 2007.

mother-like role in the formation of Finland. The tone appears to be rather satirical in the end, claiming *within readings of history imagination makes up the only boundaries*.⁵⁵

Acknowledging difficulties in adjusting to cultural differences is more recently highlighted in 2015. Differences in cultural traditions when Karelian families moved to different parts of Finland are noted, as settlement in Ostrobothnia made different traditions easier to notice.⁵⁶

3.2 PERCEPTION

What is a border? Is it real or imaginary and does it create perspectives or is it shaped by attitudes? Personal memories shadow discourse of beliefs from society showing real issues which affect personal lives in the border region. Saija Kaskinen examines discourse perspectives of personal memories. Random interviews from 32 people reveal the most commonly used nouns when ascribing a descriptive name to the Karelian border. The interviews were taken from participants in North and South Karelia as well as Seattle, Washington and Vancouver, Canada.⁵⁷

Seeping war wounds characterize the experience of war. A respondent described a vivid memory with *Finnish trains crossing the border loaded with riches just vanish in thin air*.⁵⁸ **Police presence** plays on the memories of war and an absolute dividing line by the border. *Aili, and 82 year old woman from Parikkala recalls almost whispering when they talked around the border like it was a police presence they were worried about*.⁵⁹ Police presence is regarded positively as a **protector**. Uuno Kailas' poem, *On the Border* is recited completely by 8 people during the interviews thus reinforcing a perspective of ontological reality that emphasizes the reality and confrontational nature along with self-awareness. This attitude is repeated in the Finnish politics with the so-called Paasikivi-Kekkonen line, which Paasikivi underlined the position of Finland to the Soviet Union.⁶⁰

Finland's problem, relating to its foreign policy is our relations with the Soviet Union. Everything else is politically secondary to this. [...] Finland must avoid anti-Soviet and hostile politics toward

⁵⁵ Editorial, *Helsingin Sanomat*, December 8, 2014.

⁵⁶ Opinion, *Helsingin Sanomat*, December 10, 2015.

⁵⁷ Kaskinen 2014, 1183-1205. Levels of nouns are attached by Kaskinen and I include quotes from sections, however the opinions I attach are my own unless otherwise noted.

⁵⁸ Kaskinen 2014, 1188.

⁵⁹ Kaskinen *ibid.*, 1190.

⁶⁰ Named for two Finnish Presidents, Juho Paasikivi in office 1946-1956 and Urho Kekkonen 1956-1982. Thus named for claiming neutrality was the only way for Finland to survive as a sovereign nation.

the Soviet Union. [...] We must strive for this regardless of all the disappointments we have already and will have to endure still.”⁶¹

The same sentiment was voiced by an interviewee who described the border as, *a tightrope on which the Finns had to dance without any safety net*.⁶² Relations with the border as a **neighbor** are reflected in a more neutral tone. **Wailing wall** is used in descriptions of the past. An example, in visiting his childhood Karelian home that now sits in Russia, Frank’s father fondly looks back on a memory of visiting Karelia but the question remains about where or when he is looking back to.

Dad visited Finland about ten years ago. He comes from Karelia, I don’t know the name of the place, but it is now on the Russian side of the Border. He really had wanted to see this place for years [...] You know Dad is a tough guy (chuckles) ... he has that *sisu* ... see, being a real Finn and all (more chuckles). But a few years back he told me that he had cried like a baby when he had visited their old homestead back in Karelia. It wasn’t the old home that made him cry; he didn’t remember it actually. It was that darn Border and everything it entails. ⁶³

Does Frank’s father really visit Russia or does he visit his memory of Finland? To bring back these memories he essentially reverses chronological time in a way that make it possible to see his Karelia as it was during his childhood and noticing less of the reality that exists in front of him. Another perception of the border crossing comes from Liisa, a 40 year-old Finn living in Seattle, who talks about her son crossing the border from Helsinki to Saint Petersburg – an act that she would never have thought possible when she lived in Finland and she describes the event as her son entering a world completely unknown to here as he crossed the border.⁶⁴ From Liisa’s comment it seems that she had never remotely considered crossing the border for whatever reason.

Additional data comes from an examination of social constructions through discourse taken from opinion columns appearing in 1990-2010 regarding improving Russia’s geopolitical image collected from the Helsingin Sanomat. To this study, newspaper represents a product of the culture they come from we can use them as a measure of popular opinion. The topics that are most popular in the editorial and opinion sections are understandably the topics that impact the

⁶¹ Paasikivi 1985 from Kaskinen 2014, 1194.

⁶² Kaskinen 2014, 1194.

⁶³ Kaskinen 2014, 1198.

⁶⁴ Kaskinen 2014, 1200.

daily lives of people the most, most frequent foreign topics in the Helsingin Sanomat regularly concern Sweden and Russia.⁶⁵

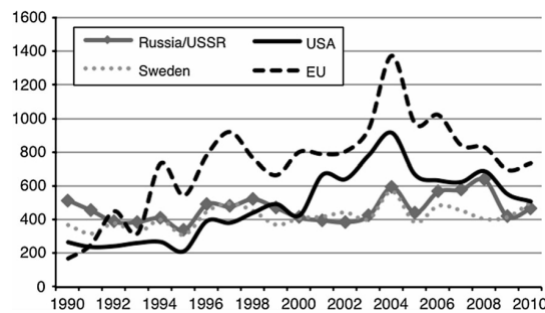


Fig. 3 Russia in Helsingin Sanomat opinion pieces 1990–2010⁶⁶

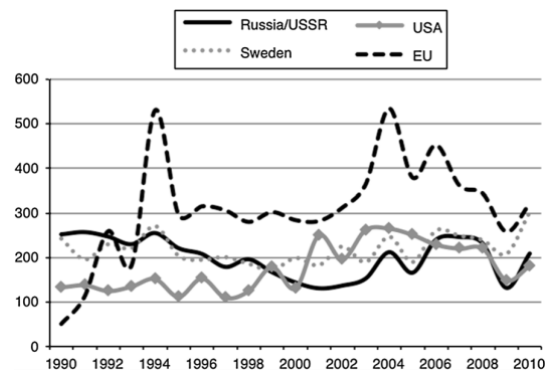


Fig. 4 Russia in Helsingin Sanomat letters section 1990–2010⁶⁷

Prime Minister of Finland Esko Aho described the risk of chaos in Russia as raising the risks to Finland out of a geographical perspective. And another entry open border between Finland and Russia... would be roughly the same as the cession of Finnish territory".⁶⁸ In 1994, a piece writes about drunk Finns and their opinions.

When drunk, Finns oppose Russkies, Swedish speaking Finns, baseball, modern art, opera, the government, agricultural subsidies, men who read poetry and obnoxious regulars. When drunk, they can also to some extent love these very same things.⁶⁹

Concern about geographic location is brought up in worries of nuclear waste drifting into Finland or affecting Finland through polluted Baltic Sea waters. While the position of Finland as a bridge builder following becoming a member of European Union in 1995 under Martti Ahtisaari 1994-

⁶⁵ Laine 2015.

⁶⁶ Laine 2015, 101.

⁶⁷ Laine 2015, 101.

⁶⁸ L 8.7.1992, 101.

⁶⁹ L 18.5.1994. Laine 2015, 101.

2000, descriptions of a sort of Russophobia were present in the opinion sections, characterized as a type of national trait that could not be encountered anywhere else nor explained to an outsider. Some articles addressed the matters and tried to uncover the underlying cause.

As long as infants in Finland receive their first drops of Russophobia already from breast milk, and as long as our politicians refuse to publicly acknowledge the commonly known and felt mistrust towards the Russian people, without even attempting to rectify the situation, the foundation of our good-neighborliness and entire security policy is as if built on a swamp... Distrust between the Finns and our neighbor in the east should be permanently removed by rectifying the wrongdoings of history. This must be done—it is a necessity—even if would be painful.⁷⁰

Though the official rhetoric of Finland was friendlier to Russia, perhaps because of a strong position as a trading partner. And perhaps following the style set from the 1948 Treaty of Friendship remaining true to the friendlier side of public relations.

Former 'friends' have disappeared, new partners, such as the IMF, set requirements, schedules, and criticize the usual Russian way of life. There is only one exception: Finland. Out of all the Russia's neighbors only the Finns, those Chukhnas, slightly simple and sluggish, have continued along the former friendship policy line. When all the other bordering countries began to step back, in Finland talks about gateways and regaining lost markets began. And the presidents went to sauna.⁷¹

The end of the 1990s saw a growing stability in Russian markets becoming more attractive to Finnish businesses and entrepreneurs. Causes against environmental protection issues and uses of "pure ignorance" or "laziness" were made worse by characterizing Russia as a superpower unwilling to accept help and crooked tendencies. Ordinary Finns wrote about irritations of Russia, such as wildfire smoke drifting over the border into Finland from the east. Finns going across the border to visit Russia were characterized as orderly tourists, while the Russian visitors crossing into Finland were characterized by chaos and lack of order.

In some case the border is characterized as a practical object than anything else. Examples referred to the border as powerless to stop acts of nature such as obliging to let the sand grouse

⁷⁰ L 27.8.1995. Laine Ibid., 103.

⁷¹ L 23.1.1998. 103

over the border, while failing to stop Colorado bark beetles and grasshoppers along with the worse heat waves, taking on more of a string-like character than actual border.

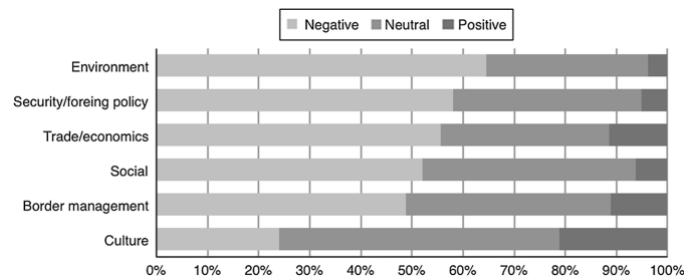


FIG. Sector versus tone 1 ⁷²

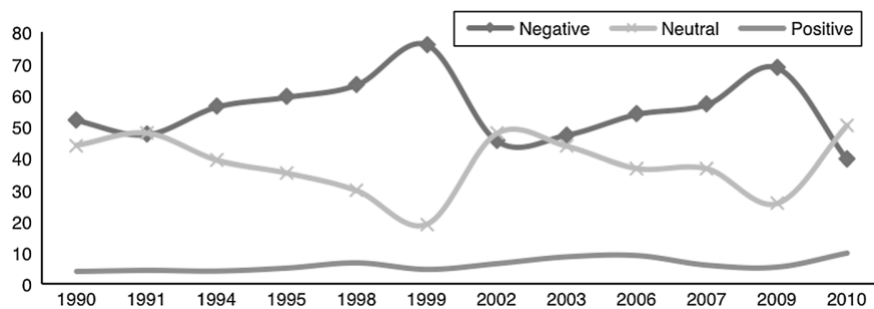


FIG. Distribution of tones 1990–2010, % of total. ⁷³

Perception about cultural interaction, however offered friendlier opinions and less negative classifications. In a study of 2,383 articles during this ten year period between 1990 and 2000, only 171 are positive, with 21% of those relating to cultural interactions and perceptions.

CHAPTER 4 - DISCUSSION

My objective is to provide an examination of communicative events in text. The role of fiction can be understood through historical discourse in terms of ideologies within this examination. These discourse narratives in Soviet literature were constructed in close connection with Moscow and approved by the appropriate officials. Therefore, one discourse I pay attention to regards how the border is represented throughout the Soviet Union. Discourse concerning Karelia in Soviet literature from the 1940s to the 1970s went through a series of changes from a strict representation of the border separating East from West to something more ambiguous

⁷² Laine 2015, 107.

⁷³ Laine 2015, 107.

that also reflected changes that were occurring within Karelia. This ownership of place represents positions of power that are in turn established through verbal struggle.⁷⁴

Each Soviet novel shares a similar set of key features. The mode of describing realistic influences from Moscow is comparable to describing local influences held dear to the characters. In contrast to unrestricted literature from different countries at the same time period, it is very difficult to express negative opinions of the Soviet Union without some kind of guiding hand steering toward a certain direction. Soviet writers are called upon to be *engineers of human souls* helping to produce the image of the *New Soviet Man*.⁷⁵ Antti Timonen's home town of Kivijärvi is represented in *Tiny White Bird* as the model for the story's location in fictitious and mythical Pirttijärvi. Another case appears in Timonen's *We Karelians*, where throughout the story the timeline depicts the history and psychological growth of the image of the Soviet Man.⁷⁶

Reading texts published under the guiding arm of the Soviet Union can be comparable to reading mythical texts. By 1932, Soviet literary moderators included approved textual illustrations of the Soviet Union in the Soviet novel. In 1932 the term Social Realism (SR) was coined, referring to officially sponsored Soviet Literature with the main function being to promote Marxist-Leninist ideology.⁷⁷ SR is described often lamenting a part of pre-revolutionary tradition in turn deploring brutal methods in which literature has been emasculated and writers silenced. In a way it is two-dimensional in regards to positive heroes or protagonists of the stories. SR elements include an involved hero on a quest for impersonality and a struggle to become one with their Marxist-Leninist role in society. The lack of irony draws it apart from the much of western literature and the stories consistently result in strong closings with mandatory happy or constructively conclusive endings that appear repeatedly.⁷⁸ Additionally, SR is described as a way to mask or hide reality in writing about literary discourse:

In reality, the standard of living fell below that of 1928. Bread was rationed, the basic goods of mass consumption were accessible only to those who enjoyed special privileges . . . while millions of peasants died of hunger. Socialist realism was created in order to hide this reality, to construct a beautiful illusion and present it as the truth. . . . The task of the writer or artist consisted in creating

⁷⁴ Relating to van Dijk 1998 and the relevance of interconnectedness of ideology and discourse

⁷⁵ *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, s. v. "Russian literature", accessed January 26, 2016, <http://global.britannica.com/art/Russian-literature/Post-Revolutionary-literature>.

⁷⁶ Kurki 2007.

⁷⁷ Clark 1981.

⁷⁸ Morson 1979, 121-133.

such illusions, in depicting reality, not as it is, but as it will be under socialism; moreover, the future was described as if it already existed.

Characteristics of the Soviet novel invariably are a ritualized event. They repeat the master plot from story to story with common themes. The master plot repeats telling a story of a modest character, usually from the working class, soldier, or administrative figure faced with some challenges, going through trials and tribulations transforming into a positive hero by the end of the story. Phases of their life resemble progress of Marxism and Leninism ending in as a hero reflecting the positive climax of communism.⁷⁹

Hence SR became a reality of sorts in this literary sense. This nature of being is also reflected in Stalin's political and cultural regime during the same time period.

In later years the familiar SR plot saw some minor changes. For example, with the introduction of Stalin's First Five-Year Plan, the little man in the world concept changed to reflect a dissatisfaction with the system with protagonists becoming superheroes designed to inspire greatness. The symbolic family represented the Soviet reality with Stalin representing a fatherly figure calling to his *sons* for greater attachment to the symbolic family and its core. The little men were no longer characters replaced by big men showcasing their feats and accomplishments. Partially, this resembles the past of both Lenin and Stalin who lost their fathers at early ages, while more universally representing a child without a father and the search for a place in society. This agrees with the greater master plot of great Soviet socialism, which promotes a solution for all orphans to find a place in society and family within the *great family* of the Soviet Union.⁸⁰

Since the influence of Belinsky previously, the traditional role of Russian literature had been to provide forum for the most advanced ideas and to witness gross realities that were not admitted to or acknowledged in official sources.⁸¹ Following guidelines of the publishing reviewers in Moscow meant voices were tweaked or other messages now included were not written by the author. If a writer wanted a novel published they must take into account the proper language, syntax, ordering of events all aligning with the approved master plot that was controlled by the

⁷⁹ Petrov 2011, 873-892 from Rosenthal 2000.

⁸⁰ Clark 1981 129-135.

⁸¹ Vissarion Belinsky lived 1811 to 1848 often recognized for criticizing Western tendency.

official state organization, GlavLit.⁸² Themes of the master plot of 1940s changed to emphasize love - helping aid the hero in their quest. Utilizing common themes in stories such as boy gets tractor and boy gets girl. During the thaw in the 1950s post-Stalin atmosphere, a greater need for human welfare surfaced and issues concerning previous deportations were addressed. Late in the 1950s a heroic revival appeared in the master plot reflecting a reaction against the machine. For example, literature talked of hero's tale but described times of floundering or rocky progress as signs of modernity.⁸³

Examining the Soviet novel during political moderation reveals recurring types of novels and a visible framework for literature discourse. Types of novels fall under one of the categories of sort: historical novel, worthy intelligence, war or revolution, villain or spy novel, or something written specifically about the West. Recurring discourse includes roads to consciousness and challenges beginning from task to completion. Production of novels written during Stalin's time show very clear steps. Novels begin with a prologue where there is some kind of separation between the protagonist and their environment that reveals a task that they must accept in order to reach their equilibrium or accepted state of being. The tasks often include transitions and trials that are ultimately overcome reaching a climax of fulfillment and incorporation into a greater family of sorts, and finale including an exuberant celebration.⁸⁴

Constructing Karelian discourse in novels has multiple references and cultural descriptions that are maintained throughout the novel which results in repetition of ideological discourses with *a guiding hand from Moscow* including efforts to create and maintain images of the Soviet Man. These narratives are embedded in documentary and propaganda texts for the use of programming the reading audience and harnessing ideological influence as well as political promotion and propaganda use.⁸⁵

The Soviet discourse in novels involves images of construction and progress. For example, a hero from a city or village is moved by train, car, or motorcycle representing tools of modernization. The protagonists must then accept the task and proceed through struggle before solving their given problem. Another discourse example involving Karelia starts with a local hero arriving in

⁸² Clark 1981, 12. GlavLit is the short form for the General Directorate for the Protection of State Secrets in the Press under the Council of Ministers of the USSR (Главное управление по охране государственных тайн в печати при СМ СССР)

⁸³ Clark 1981, 199-232.

⁸⁴ Clark 1981, 255-260.

⁸⁵ Kurki 2010, 86.

Petrozavodsk by train from Saint Petersburg bringing along his sources of modernization to increase the production of *kolkhoz*.⁸⁶ The same discourses are present in Soviet Karelian newspapers in the late 1940s and 1950s, with headlines including, *Let us change our Petrozavodsk into an even more booming city* and *Let our capital become better and more beautiful than ever*.⁸⁷

Despite a purpose to highlight achievements of Soviet Karelia, works including Jaakko Rugojev's 1964 *Scenes of Soviet Karelia*, use repeated discourses common in Soviet literature used in attempts to construct discourse around Soviet idea represented by separation identities eventually leaving their individual identity behind voluntarily and collectively forming the Soviet Union. The resulting image of the 1960s *Soviet Man* is a modern man looking back at his culture and roots while reveling in the conveniences of Soviet reality.⁸⁸ Soviet Karelia thus fits into the chronology of the representing party in the Soviet periphery with idealized Soviet culture at the center. Writer Jaakko Rugojev often depicts Karelia as part of a periphery and common backwoods discourse themes such as high illiteracy evoking a similar periphery and center narrative.

4.1 LITERATURE COMPARISON

These findings, while preliminary, suggest there is a connection between knowing and existing recognizable through discourse. These findings show that Soviet Karelia is described by the representing party as a Soviet periphery with a controlling Soviet culture at the center. Constructing Karelia in novels is a credible topic often discussed through cultural descriptions and maintains novel results in repetition of ideological discourse with *a guiding hand from Moscow* including efforts to create and maintain images of the Soviet Man. These discourses are embedded in documentary and propaganda texts for the use of programming the reading audience and harnessing ideological influence as well as political promotion and propaganda use.⁸⁹ For example, Rugojev often depicts Karelia as part of the periphery and common backwoods themes with high illiteracy evoking a similar periphery and center discourse. In Jaakola's *Ira*, the damaged birch and the new twig represent a loud signal for the non-Russian discourse that cannot be destroyed. This interpretation is different from that of Soviet critics. The

⁸⁶ Petrozavodsk is the capital of Russian Karelia and also known for its factories and production under Peter the Great.

⁸⁷ Kurki 2010, 97.

⁸⁸ Kurki 2010, 86-108.

⁸⁹ Kurki 2010, 86.

metaphor was criticized and accused for being overly transparent while deemed failed attempt to represent the ever forward-looking Soviet ambitions.⁹⁰

Border zone as a place where real people are and their real lives reflects real attitudes. As writing represents an avenue for expression of ideas and beliefs one may not feel safe to discuss in person there is a balance between too opinionated and no signs of disagreement at all. *Pieni valkosiipi*, *Tiny White Bird*, by Antti Timonen published in 1961 releases a different set of reactions. *Tiny White Bird* reflects a more lenient attitude of talking about previously more sensitive attitudes such. The novel alludes to issues of the border remaining vague and avoiding specific names. Both the name, *Mirja* and the white bird have characteristics which are remnants of symbols of peace – the white bird reasonably symbolizing a white dove peace offering. Timonen characterizes the border as an unnecessary line separating Karelians from Karelia and not as two separate nations. The border narrative then creates a distinct spirit of the times capturing the nature of being on the border in the late 1950s. This interpretation differs slightly from my other two novels, during different times of Soviet censorship. Instead of veiled critiques of the Soviet authority this discourse reflects positive impressions from people living at the border.

Antti Tiimonen's, *We Karelians*, has a theme only thinly veiled from the start. Set during the Civil War and a multitude of discourses lead to the reasonable fact that the story is really about Karelia at the beginning of this superficial separation of lands and what it means to be Karelian. Miitrei and Vasselei echo comparisons of us and them referring to Karelians and Russians split during the Civil War on Red and White sides. Otherness is a common theme, partially in descriptions of Finland and Finns where differences between Karelians or Russians are pointed out numerous times. The ultimate demise of the protagonist begins with questioning where his identities lay, and he views his choice as necessary to choose between living in Finland or being sent to Siberia. The border here represents a narrative of a death zone, compared to an evolving boundary between Red and White factions.

The border itself reveals a discourse open to suggestion and influences of the author. It appears more ambiguous than in Soviet literature before. The role of the border evolved to be a dividing

⁹⁰ For more see Raisa Miroļjubova 1950. Kurki 2014, 1098-1105.

presence where originally there was none like a map of changing consciousness of the people and how their everyday lives change.⁹¹

4.2 DISCOURSE IN OPINION

The observed correlation between knowing and experiencing or realizing may have been influenced by historic discourse affecting ideology. Between 2010 and 2015, reference to the *lost country* still appears in an account by self-described third generation refugee largely from the memories of their parents. Though they admit they have no first-hand experience the memories have been passed down to them the resulting message is ambiguous ending on regarding ability to buy land on both sides of the border regardless of nationality concluding, *Keep it then, keep but embrace it - pitääkää siis, pitääkää, mutta pitääkää hyvänä.*⁹² In contrast, first-hand experience resulted in a project by photographer Jaakko Heikkilä. Heikkilä observed joy and happiness through songs and poetry as well as very little difference of the *human mind* on both sides of the border after spending parts of two years on a photography project. In an interview Heikkilä described, “They have been running both here and there. That has changed them” - *Sen läpi on aina juostu sinne tai tänne. Se on sitten muokannut ihmisiä.* Where in similar times Putin recently referred to Karelia as a place of disfunction, or like a sack of potatoes. Heikkilä’s contemporary attitude and project inspires a different attitude; instead the spirit of the people on either side of the border are much the same. That different mental approach seems to make the difference, the editorial writer concluding, *That seems to be okay – Taitaa olla ihan hyvä niin.*⁹³

Is it true then that memory is often represented as a utopia in recollection of persons looking back on their homeland? A kind of represented utopia alludes to a missing piece or a changed reality based on personal experiences. Life in the Karelian borderlands shows discourse of fear of the eastern border where personal collective ideas of place are not just static, but also change with the language representation, stereotypes and imagination. A study of 36 people, two-thirds of whom were born before World War Two, revealed appeal to sentiments and fearful emotions were present in their narratives. With emotions present in a changing society and attitude of sitting on the periphery of Finland’s influence with the threat of an evolving Russian neighbor a stone’s throw away, the discourses playfully appeal to various sentiments which are often made up largely of fearful emotions. Fringe areas that are sparsely populated stand out

⁹¹ Kurki 2014, 1095-1121.

⁹² Saska Saarikoski, Letter to the Editor, *Helsingin Sanomat*, September 30, 2012.

⁹³ Editorial, *Helsingin Sanomat*, March 22, 2014.

from urban counterparts in the sense that they have issues regarding predators or animals that are more present during their everyday lives as they may have wolves or bears enter the yards. However, the fear of the eastern borderland and border issues are more commonly represented in discourse due to the proximity and individual experiences that shape their memory. Returning to the question of what does the discourse mean, the definition is constantly changing as the discourse in narratives and connections to the border change over time just like the nouns change in descriptions of the border. Dream construction on the border is still an ongoing process which leaves a conclusion open-ended and leaves us in a circulatory route.

What are the politicians trying to sell? Some kind of fairy tale? The border allows cautious procession instead of a full leap for some. The discourse in narratives from much of this generation regarding memory, were born before World War Two and have been shaped by personal experiences and perceived realities of history they have experienced first-hand living by the border. Real or false, the narrative they hold show Russians still representing something alien, not completely known or readily trustworthy.⁹⁴ While this credits a certain attitude towards the other side of the Karelian border, it also is made of larger movements in world politics that affected their lives. The reality of their lives then is made from their memories of turmoil in the Karelian region.

In this case study the presumption is that personalized perspectives overshadow the facts which are characterized by the us versus them dichotomy. Chronicling opinion pieces after 1990 show this representation. Multiple entries talk about us versus them in ways that reinforce to the stereotypes further. A tendency which inhibits people from critically evaluating the opinions that they hold is reinforced in language expression through open forums. While attitudes have logical base from historical events they are often out of date and incorrect due to adding to a biased ideological discourse and the fact that today's Finland may lack an understanding of Russia.⁹⁵ Social construction of space shows how these narratives in discourse evolve.⁹⁶

In 1917, Russia as the former mother country turned into an enemy triggering emotion of mythical struggle between good and evil and for reasonable political reasons the hatred was at its peak in 1918 until 1944. Efforts were consciously overemphasized for political reasons that played into a couple factors such as the young Finnish nation-state finding its correct place

⁹⁴ Laurén 2012, 39-62.

⁹⁵ Laine 2015, 93.

⁹⁶ Relating to van Dijk 1998 and connection between discourse and ideologies

among nations and secondly to unify against a common threat. The difference was regarded not only a border but difference between cultures such as Pagans and Christians, progress from de-progress, and an imaginary line between Europe and Asia.⁹⁷ The stronger the underlying myth, the easier it is for the author and reader to arrive at the same conclusions. Regardless of the truth behind the public opinion, the entries consistently reinforce the differences between the two nations re-engaging the characteristics of differences between *us* and *them*.

With respect to the present research question of how is discourse constructed for the contemporary image of Karelia, these results demonstrate an existing perception based on exposure to ideologies. Existing in a progression of ideological mindsets can condition perception, such as common self-identifying images brought up in discourse. Latent construction of beliefs appearing in discourse can be represented by iconography left unemphasized in contemporary discussions. Take the example and what it means regarding the construction of Russian symbolism. Three distinct features recur in mythical images of nation building; images of god, the body, and of violence. More importantly myths may function as models or examples, experienced as being static where the symbols are a sign that point to a place.⁹⁸ Following these rules the border of Russia is thus guarded by its own national emblem, depicted by the double-headed eagle.



<https://russianreport.files.wordpress.com/2009/08/double-headed-eagle.gif?w=620>

⁹⁷ Laine 2015, 96.

⁹⁸ Hellberg-Hirn 1998, 9.



<http://www.russianembassy.org/page/russian-state-seal>

The double-headed eagle can be dissected in a way that explains details that makes up the whole image. Saint George is represented in the middle of the emblem and represents the protector of Moscow from any threat and renown as holy warrior. The split eagle itself represents some kind of polarization with Moscow sitting comfortably in the in middle striking the balance between the center and the periphery that Russia represents. The first version dates back to 1577 where conquered territories were represented within the wings. The contemporary emblem has wings are shaped in such a fashion that they represent both the periphery and a protecting level around the heart of Moscow. The orb and the scepter show signs of Russia's imperial past, which still holds quite an important role in its imagery.⁹⁹ Contemporary Russian philosopher, Dmitrii Likhachev is well recognized for his remark about Russia being a prisoner of its own territory; *Rossiia - uznitsa*.¹⁰⁰

National mythology of Russia is devoted to the Russian *commonplaces* and comprised of cultural clichés, recurrent narratives that are perceived natural but have been naturalized while parts of history, politics and literary origins have been forgotten, disguised or left out.¹⁰¹ These narratives were created by well-known nineteenth century Slavophiles such as Ivan Kireevskii and Aleksei Khomiakov strengthening Russia's cause and building on a flourishing of nationalism. Some of the common terms that surfaced during that time included *dukhovnost'*, *dobrota*, *darovitost'*, *svobodoliubie* meaning *spirituality*, *kindness*, *talent*, *love for freedom* respectively. The symbol of the *troika* also represents centrifugal movement necessary to stay upright and movement of freedom or escape. The popularity of the Fabergé egg in Russian culture represents a larger meaning tied to the egg which represents centripetal contraction that is seamlessly closed and in a safe place.¹⁰²

⁹⁹ Hellberg-Hirn 1998, 16-34.

¹⁰⁰ Dmitrii Likhachev lived from 1906-1999.

¹⁰¹ Boym 1994.

¹⁰² Hellberg-Hirn 1998, 168.

This ambiguity strongly represents Russian national self-stereotype, like two sides of the same coin in a commonly known Russian phrase, *Rossia – sphinx*, Russia is like a sphinx and *Utot Rossii ne ponyat'*, she cannot be comprehended.¹⁰³ Similar discourse regarding Russia as a kind of enigma or animal is repeated in three common poems nearly every school student is familiar with by the time they reach university age.

I love my native land, but mine's a strange love, truly,
 And baffles reason. Neither glory bought
 With blood, nor, I record it duly,
 A calm to proud faith wed, nor exploits brought
 To life in tales and myths and out in the dim past taken
 Within my heart a glad response awaken.
 And yet I love, not knowing why they please,
 Her rolling steppes, at once so chill and soundless,
 Her wind-swept, rustling grove and forests boundless,
 Her streams, by vernal floods made night as broad as seas...
 Reclining in a cart and for a warm bed sighing,
 I love to bump along a country road at night
 And meet with drowsy eye, the shadowed dark defying,
 Of cheerless villages the lonely, trembling lights.¹⁰⁴

Themes often recur in text reappearing in several different forms and variations refer to the favorite memories of the land as well as offering a confusing reference to the country. Some entries refer to both the good and evil properties of the country.

Native land, fair land of mine!
 Horses in freedom run,
 The eagles shriek in the wide sky,
 The wolf howls in the pain.

Hail to thee, motherland, all hail!
 Hail to thy shaggy woods,

¹⁰³ Hellberg-Hirn 1998, 231.

¹⁰⁴ Lermontov 1841; tr. by Irina Zheleznova.

The whistling of thy nightingales,
The wind, the steppe, the clouds!¹⁰⁵

Another refers to the popular Russian sphinx metaphor giving credit to the country for beautiful homeland while referring to a shape-shifting or ambiguous core at the same time.

O Ancient World, before your culture dies,
Whilst failing life within you breathes and sinks,
Pause and be wise, as Oedipus was wise,
And solve the age-old riddle of the Sphinx.

That Sphinx is Russia. Grieving and exulting,
And weeping black and bloody tears enough,
She stares at you, adoring and insulting,
With love that turns to hate, and hate – to love.¹⁰⁶

If the Russian self-image cannot be understood in domestic discourse, how can anyone claim to understand her perfectly on a wider note?

4.3 IN PERSPECTIVE

On a personal level lenses aimed toward discourse relating to regional identity aim to answer the question, “Where do I belong?” As research following lines of spatial narrative theory suggests people express a sense of place of who they are through stories about where they are, we must be aware where those stories come from and who they are influenced by.¹⁰⁷

Following an argument from series of articles by philosopher Frank Jackson published in 1982 titled, *What Mary Didn't Know*, I offer one option for how to proceed in framing what we perceive and how that may affect what we know or believe. The core rests on the premise of the following argument; Mary is trapped in a black and white room where she learns everything there is to know about the physical nature of the world. However, Mary does not know everything there is to know, because when she leaves the black and white room she cannot know what it is like to see the color red. This is something she will learn only when she leaves the black and white room.¹⁰⁸ Therefore, what we believe about Karelia in terms of Finnish and Russian relations to be true may change when we have first-hand experience living and

¹⁰⁵ Tolstoi 1856; tr. by Avril Pyman.

¹⁰⁶ Blok 1918; tr. by Alex Mliler.

¹⁰⁷ Paasi 2009.

¹⁰⁸ Perry 2001, 15-20.

interacting in the Karelian region itself. Especially in a wider context of what it means to be Finnish or Russian in the Karelian border region. Not that everything is we know is wrong or misguided, but that we should question how inclusive the image we are looking at is. Following the knowledge growth of Mary trapped in a black and white room then, we should look at the room in color and not only in black and white.

Jackson's initial statement has been criticized based on assumptions including alleged *confused and oversimplification of knowledge*.

The problem, as I diagnose it, is that Mary's new knowledge cannot be identified with the subject matter content of the statement with which she expresses it, nor with the subject matter content of the thought which she thinks it. Mary's new epistemic state, the one she expresses with "This is what it is like to see red," is of a certain type. States of this type are true only if the aspect of the brain states to which their possessors attend is the aspect of brain states that normal people have in normal conditions when they see red. That is the reflexive content of her thought, and that is her new knowledge.¹⁰⁹

Frank Jackson's *Mary Argument* continues similar lines of thought as French philosopher René Descartes dualism regarding connection between mind and body known by the common statement, *I think, therefore I am*. Philosopher John Perry contemporarily evolves Jackson's initial premise claiming Mary does learn something by learning what it is like to see red.¹¹⁰ Although seeing red is not something Mary could pick up from the books she read even though they included all the physical facts about color and vision she still learns new information. By learning something new then, we do so by coming to know or believe a fact that we did not know or believe previously.

Looking at the relationship between knowing and existing then questions how large of a field we claim to perceive and what we have been exposed to through discourse, ideologies and political or personal memories. By accepting outward reality, we can accept that our perception is strongly affected by ordering of creativity and physicality. Thus, we can accept that concepts shape the way we perceive and understand the world we are able to recognize factors that alter our perception. For example:

¹⁰⁹ Perry 2001, 22.

¹¹⁰ Perry 2001, 20-23.

Many readers, I suspect, will take the title of this book as suggesting that women, fire, and dangerous things have something in common – say, that women are fiery and dangerous...the title of this book was inspired by the Australian aboriginal language Dyirbal, which has a category, *balan*, that actually includes women, fire, and dangerous things. It also includes birds that are *not* dangerous, as well as exceptional animals, such as the platypus, bandicoot, and echidna. ...Every time we see something as a *kind* of thing, for example, a tree, we are categorizing.¹¹¹

Through this train of thought in *experientialism*, interactions rely heavily on personal sets of experiences and through our experience of our world, culture is already present in our very experience itself.

No matter how *unnaturally* constructed in Soviet Karelian literature then, SR should not be regarded as completely inorganic because the policies that changed were coming from people and their needs, which represents dependence between myth and ritual.¹¹² This connection between myth and ritual and spirit of the times, or *Zeitgeist*, represents origins based in reality, from real needs occurring naturally or produced through the hands of political engineers.

Numerous studies have been carried out regarding a sense of place with relations between Russia and its western neighbors. One study has been done approaching border-drawing practices that characterize everyday life in the state. Referred to as geopolitics, it revolves around the relation between one's place and other places involving feelings of (in)security and (dis)advantage and/or ideas about collective mission or foreign policy strategy. The term originated by Gertjan Dijkink though received much scrutiny and was re-imagined later by Gearóid Tuathail and John O'Loughlin among others.¹¹³ Dijkink's work inspired Vladimir Kolossov and John O'Loughlin to study how ordinary people feel about their country in which they found historical impressions to be important, however they conclude imaginations and orientations are often fluid and susceptible to how world events are framed by mass media.¹¹⁴

What does reality tell us about the contemporary relationship of Karelia as it occupies part of Finnish and Russian space? Relying on the impact of how we perceive that which surrounds us old attitudes are repeated or recycled in current discourse. For an example, let us back away

¹¹¹ Lakoff 1990, 5.

¹¹² Clark 1981, 253.

¹¹³ For more see Dijkink 1996, Tuathail 2003 which both resemble Edward Said 1993 concept of imaginary geography

¹¹⁴ O'Loughlin, Tuathail and Kolossov 2006, 150.

from Karelia for a moment to look at the Finland-Russia relationship objectively as a relationship between a small state and a superpower. Discourse of the each neighboring country appears both in attitudes of politicians and popular opinion. Before citing discourse that is decidedly anti-Russian, I must note the relationship and discourse has not always been negative. Contemporary times reflect tensions of the twentieth century more than numerous cooperative and unanimous historic agreements. For example, the Treaty of Friendship in 1948, as well as Cooperation and Mutual Assistance Treaty between Finland and the Soviet Union created a camaraderie that extended the Soviet Union elites' trust of Finland on a level of trade and cooperation due to historically rooted pragmatism. The Friendship Treaty was renewed in 1955, 1970 and 1983 which also allowed the Soviet Union to interfere with domestic issues in Finland representing more of a peaceful co-existence

4.4 PROCEEDING FORWARD

To arrive with suggestions for balancing Karelian discourse relating to knowledge and perception, some kind of understanding of current political situation should be achieved. One explanation of the development of critical Russian geopolitics post-Soviet Union uses a Protean description to explain Russia's more current politics.¹¹⁵ Description embodies the protagonist Proteus, who in Greek mythology lived in the ocean as sea-shepherd of sorts, and could turn into any shape he wanted to when it suited him.¹¹⁶ Another explanation points towards New Eurasianism attitude present in Russia should be reasonably explained in terms of changes disguises on foreign policy and for convenient moral justifications amid a time of changes. From this perspective, dealing with the West should be driven by a kind of pragmatism neither adhering exactly to the rules of the West nor opposing them. A metaphor is then provided through which to understand Russia's more recent developments and for understanding Vladimir Putin's appeal, described as "wearing a western mask for western leaders and domestic westernizers, or *zapadniki*, but changing to a Russian mask of 'great power' for different domestic constituencies."¹¹⁷

One suggestion is to increase positive person-to-person interactions. Up until 2013 trade relations have been mending since the 1998 Russian financial collapse. However, Russia retained

¹¹⁵ Building on the 1999 paper of Graham Smith comparing Russia's geocentric shift towards Eurasianism.

¹¹⁶ *Britannica Academic*, s. v. "Proteus," accessed April 04, 2016, <http://academic.eb.com/EBchecked/topic/480043/Proteus>.

¹¹⁷ O'Loughlin and Kolossov 2005, 322-335: 323.

its place in the concentration of Finnish foreign policy, Laine cites an example from a speech by Finnish Minister of Defense used as recently as 2007.

As stated by the former Minister of Defence Jyri Häkämies (National Coalition Party) in his (in-)famous speech given at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington on September 6, 2007, the three main security challenges for Finland are “Russia, Russia, and Russia.”¹¹⁸

This represents a Finnish discourse in debates regarding Russia that remains non-linear and has lasted for more than two decades could use updating.¹¹⁹ Adhering to principles of normalizing relations would improve neighborly relations and increase positive people-to-people interactions.

One improvement can be made through strengthening Karelia’s relationship with its own language. One study finds attitudes reveal generally low prestige regarding the Karelian language and are blamed on low literacy levels in Karelian. The study focuses on measurements of revitalization from two Karelian newspapers and two Russian newspapers. The Karelian language is stereotypically categorized and underrepresented, while usually discourse focuses on the problems instead of solutions. One problem noting that all Russian Karelian speakers are bilingual and also able to turn to the Russian language sources for news.

The Karelian newspapers focus more on individuals while the Russian newspapers refer to Karelians mainly in regards to institutions where Karelian language and culture is regarded as something historic, stable and rooted in the past.

The activities took place in the Karelian room furnished in the village house of culture. The club members have the plan of activities up to the end of the academic year, and the whole program is designed for three years. During this time, the children learn much about the history of their native village, area and republic.¹²⁰

Measuring the relationship between majority and minority does not supply much additional information, as in the Karelian newspaper generally there is little reference to international collaboration. In both newspapers, mention of Finns representing nothing but positive impressions. Karelian papers are vague when addressing, *them*, where it is often left out or ambiguous the Russian newspapers do not hold back on criticism, including injustices of Stalin.

¹¹⁸ Laine 2013, 73.

¹¹⁹ Laine 2013, 65-78.

¹²⁰ Tánchez 2015, 100.

In terms of future options, the Karelian newspapers concentrate on language planning but largely lack a broader aim or the power of an audience in expanding their cause but do not lay blame on lack of resources or any other culprit. The Russian newspapers regularly oversimplify the problem which ignores the actual problems, such as instability or lack of common ethnic identity.¹²¹

¹²¹ Tánczos 2015, 91-110.

CHAPTER 5 - CONCLUSION

5.1 MULTIPLE IMAGES

Discourse in Soviet literature and more contemporary popular opinion contribute to how we perceive the contemporary Karelian situation. Looking at how discourse affects or is affected by memory, ontology through symbolism reveals a kind of distortion to how we perceive reality. Soviet literature has been steered different direction by national governing committees while popular opinion can be the product of bias in discourse carried out through politics, historical family memory and continued through common symbolism. Socially displayed text or talk in these cases reveals a sometimes distorted relation with reality. In Finland an often repeated reference to Russia as an enemy and skewed images from memory vaults call for further interdisciplinary perspectives.

Peering through lenses of memory, ontology and reality we can see the landscape of discourse in a more wholesome frame and rethink assumptions that may affect personal, political or business relations. Soviet literature revolving Karelia talks about love for the Karelian land but carries overt or subversive messages of a decidedly Soviet collective society. Popular opinion carries perceptions of reality from a lifetime of exposure to discourse in text or talk or symbolism, offering some kind of distortion. In the same sense that when Mary left the black and white room and saw red she learned something new from the actual experience, we can step outside our perceptions and relations. These findings contribute several ways to our understanding of discourse in Karelia and provide a basis for further research of knowledge and perception.

5.2 RETHINKING PERCEPTIONS

Addressing our perceptions, we are able to further balance and build the relations between knowledge and reality if we chose to do so. Improvements can be made for business relations, diplomatic or political relations as well as to improve popular opinion. A tool in diplomacy described by former U.S. Secretary of State, Madeline Albright, is to listen to what the other side is saying, and from that make a better and more informed opinion. Unless you can understand what is motivating the other person it is difficult to solve a particular problem, that you must put yourself in the other person's shoes.¹²² Like Mary alone in her black and white room with

¹²² Albright 2010.

only second hand knowledge of the color red, a personal experience offers more to learn from than only expertise through reading alone.

Political relations are deteriorating with Russia and the West as they were fifteen years ago and as they were thirty years ago. Trying to understand the character of the current world and how it affects current Karelian, or Finnish-Russian relations, is a necessary step in transitions. Beginning with an understanding of the Russian-Finnish relations is a foundation for understanding the Karelian question through discourse. Political relations largely dominate the news headlines today focusing on fear or negative connotations. Instead of focusing only on the negative we can focus on improvements in discourse.

An approach to balancing perceptions about Russian President Vladimir Putin is one example towards understanding contemporary Russian relations. Thomas Graham, a former U.S. Foreign Service diplomat, and former senior advisor to the U.S. National Security Council on Russian matters calls for a more objective and constructive approach saying, “We can focus on our fears, stress the threats and focus on our vulnerabilities. Or we can play to our hopes, stress the opportunities, and focus on our strengths.”¹²³ Thomas Graham ends a 2001 letter to the Russian Newspaper, *Nezavisimaia Gazeta*, asking a question that is still relevant in today’s political realm.

Does Russia have sufficient confidence in its own strength to enter a constructive dialogue with the United States, or will doubts about its abilities and injured pride lead it to seek ways to work against the United States? But I would add a second question now: Does the United States have sufficient confidence in its own strength and optimism about its future to engage in a constructive dialogue with Russia, or do the doubts growing from a less than successful foreign policy and injured pride lead it to see Russia as a source of its problems rather than as a potential partner?¹²⁴

Smith’s Proteus metaphor apt way of understanding Putin’s domestic appeal, wearing a western mask to western leaders and domestic Westernizers *zapadniki*, but changing to a ‘great power’ Russian mask for different domestic constituencies.¹²⁵

¹²³ Graham, 2007, 83.

¹²⁴ Graham, 2007, 83.

¹²⁵ O’Loughlin, et al., 2005, 323.

Understanding the Karelian question as a border representing characters with multiple personalities shaped by constantly shifting realities allows for new research questions. Acknowledging that knowledge is not simply accumulated but gained through personal experiences I do not aim to change, but to challenge popular assumptions about the realities of the border through the Karelian example. The questions raised by this study could be further used to look at discourse in Karelia regarding a range of issues from economic perception to travel and tourism. These would be bountiful areas for further research and work.

5.3 FINAL WORDS

How is the discourse of Karelia constructed in Soviet literature and contemporary opinion? The aim of the present research was to examine the relation between knowledge and reality or perception of Karelia through text or talk communicative acts. The Karelian question takes many forms, and this is one example of an approach to understanding and progressing with issues relevant to Finnish-Russian relations regarding the Karelian border area. Ventures into selections of memory, ontology and reality aid an examination into the relation between knowledge and reality.

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