

**SKETCHES TOWARDS
A THEORY OF SHAMANISM:
ASSOCIATING THE BELIEF SYSTEM OF THE
PIM RIVER KHANTIES WITH THE WESTERN
WORLD VIEW**

ANZORI BARKALAJA

DISSERTATIONES FOLKLORISTICAE UNIVERSITATIS TARTUENSIS

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TARTU UNIVERSITY
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Department of Literature and Folklore of the University of Tartu

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Opponents: professor Anna-Leena Siikala (The University of Helsinki)
professor Mihály Hoppál (Hungarian Academy of Sciences)

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	9
SUMMARY in Estonian	29
PUBLICATIONS	39
1. "Chameleons" of Siberia: Identity and Survival Strategies of an Eastern Khanty Family	41
2. On the Aspects of Space in the Khanty World Outlook	65
3. Continuing Tradition: Changing Spirit Dolls at the Pim River Khanty ...	77
4. On the Sacrificial Ritual of the Pim River Khanty in December 1995	87
5. On the Sacrificial Rituals of the Pim River Khanties: Part Two	101
6. The Influence of Environment on the Identity of Pim River Khanties	119
7. On Some Forms of Gaming/ Simulation from the Anthropological 133Point of View	133
8. Shamanism as Information Design	157

LIST OF PUBLICATIONS

1. The Abandoned World: On Changing Outlook of Young Khanty in Pim and Tromagan Regions, Brought about by Russian Colonialism. *Contemporary Folklore. Changing Tradition and Word View of Youth*. Ed. by Mare Kõiva. Tartu 1996, pp. 51–60.
2. A Continuing Tradition: the Changing of Spirit Dolls by the Pym River Khantys. *Studies in Folklore and Popular Religion. vol. 1*. Ed. by Ülo Valk. Department of Estonian and Comparative Folklore, University of Tartu. Tartu 1996, pp. 125–132.
3. Ruumiküsimuse aspektidest hantide ilmavaates. *Pro Folkloristica V, Maa ja ilm*. Tartu, 1997, pp. 16–26.
4. Shamanismist, *LEE*. Eesti Rahva Muuseumi Sõprade Selts, Tartu 1997.
5. On the Sacrificial Rituals of the Pim River Khanty, *Pro Ethnologia 5, Arctic Studies 1*. Ed. by Art Leete. Estonian National Museum. Tartu 1998, pp. 57–68.
6. “Chameleons” of Siberia: Identity and Survival Strategies of an Eastern Khanty Family. *Studies in Folklore and Popular Religion, vol. 3*. Ed. by Ülo Valk. Department of Estonian and Comparative Folklore, University of Tartu. Tartu 1999, pp. 51–72.
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8. Olemasolu pühast õigustusest: mängud 10 teesiga. *Pro Folkloristica VI, Lohetapja*. Tartu 1999, pp. 24–33.
9. Ortodoksisuus, taisteleva ateismi ja hantien kansanusko. *Uskonto ja identiteetti: Suomalais-ugrialaisten kokemuksia ja vaihteita Venäjällä ja Neuvostoliitossa*. Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seuran Toimituksia 741. Toim. Teuvo Laitila, Tuija Saarinen. SKS, Helsinki 1999, pp. 67–81.
10. Müüdi iseloomust maailma kirjeldamise viisina: väike võsaraiumine handi mütoloogia maastikel. *Uurimusi müüdist ja maagiast*. Koostanud Peet Lepik. Tallinna Pedagoogikaulikool, Tallinn 2001.
11. The Influence of Environment on the Identity of Pim River Khanties. *Pro Ethnologia 11. Cultural Identity of Arctic Peoples. Arctic Studies 5*. Ed. by Art Leete. Estonian National Museum, Tartu 2001, pp. 77–88.
12. On Some Forms of Gaming/Simulation from the Anthropological Point of View. *Bridging the Information and Knowledge Societies. Proceedings, International Simulation and Gaming Association, 31st Annual Conference*. Ed. by Leen Rahn. Tartu University Press, 2001, pp. 95–115.

13. Some Personal Notes About the Fieldwork (On the Examples of the Eastern Khantys. *Rethinking Ethnology and Folkloristics*. Ed by Pille Runnel. Vanavaravedaja 6, Tartu NEFA Rühm, 2001, pp. 144–158.
14. Art Leete, Liivo Niglas, Anzori Barkalaja. Põhjaõder arktilises kultuuris. Eesti Rahva Muuseum. Tartu 2001.

INTRODUCTION

As an introduction to the present collection, I would like to offer a short survey of the impacts and events which led me to the study of West Siberian traditional culture and the phenomenon of shamanism.

It would be impressive to state *post factum* that the decisive motivating force was the fact that in academic circles, Siberia is regarded as the birthplace of classical shamanism and that the choice of the region rested upon the best academic traditions in folklorist, ethnological, and anthropological research. Further weight could be added by a description of preceding purposeful study of scientific literature. There is no doubt that the initial stages of research work would appear more serious if they included an episode with the travel books by K. F. Karjalainen or an inspiring impact to study Khanty religion and world outlook gained from his “Jugralaisten uskonto”, that discusses Khanty religion. Certainly the scientific value of research motivation would look higher if the desire to establish a personal fieldwork relation with the culture of the Khanty and the Mansi had arisen from a study of the works of M. A. Castrén, V. Chernetsov, Z. Sokolova, V. Kulemzin and N. Lukina. Further dignity could be gained by reliance on the traditions of a school of thought founded on the works of Edgar Saar and Kaljo Põllu — leaders of Estonian ethnographic expeditions — as well as on the documentaries of Lennart Meri and Aleksander Kuik, which come close to visual anthropology.

Worthy foundations for an interest in shamanism would be provided by the works of Mircea Eliade, Anna-Leena Siikala, Mihály Hoppál, Ake Hultkrantz, and Vladimir Basilov, as well as by the studies of Vilmos Dioszegi and of V. Chernetsov, V. Kulemzin, N. Lukina, mentioned above, and others.

In reality, however, the research began by mere accident, and gained further impetus later from a tendency to search clearer answers to personal problems and indeterminations.

Everything started from Tatyana Gogoleva's and Tatyana Moldova's visit to Tartu University in the year 1991, where they held a lecture introducing Khanty and Mansi culture and invited those who were interested to West Siberia, to establish direct contact with them. Yet certainly the most significant impact came from the emotionally impressive contact with the Pim river Khanty during the first period of fieldwork in the summer of 1991. Since, however, before the expedition we got practically no preparation whatever in the methods of fieldwork or in specific theories concerning Siberian peoples, our first anthropological method for collecting fieldwork data happened to be the method of *radical participation*, recommended by Michael Harner and currently claiming steadily growing support. In these days, of course, we were not even aware yet

of the existence of such a method. During the first stages of conscious study of the relevant scientific literature it seemed to me that the prevailing method for gathering information is *participant observation* as outlined by Malinowski, combined with open-ended interviews. Neither was I able to discern between the *emic* and *etic* character of information gathering. All that came later. In my choice of methods and ways of interpreting them I departed basically from the dangers that beset data collection and processing.

Thomas Schweizer discerns two basic challenges in the methodological debate of anthropology: “(1) At the ethnographic, more observational level, we must consider how to produce valid descriptions of the Other (person, culture, society). (2) At a more theoretical level of anthropological synthesis, we must answer the question of how to compare ethnographic cases across time and space and how to arrive at valid theoretical generalizations” (1998:42).

The first danger thus lurks in the fact that in the course of fieldwork, the ethnologist, anthropologist or folklorist usually studies some “Other”. This can easily lead to what Bulgakova (2001) has described as “hermeneutic temptation” — a situation where one generation after the other sets out to research some ethnic group, first studying the previously published methodology and literature, and under their influence, developing a prejudiced approach¹ (Barkalaja 2001). Thus, the fieldwork yields precisely the kind of results foreseen by the researcher. This kind of attitude can develop quite unconsciously, simply because previous reading “encodes” the researcher to pay attention to the same issues that had fascinated his or her predecessors. At the same time, a substantial share of the actual material may drop out of focus and can be brought to attention only accidentally. The resulting description will not reflect so much the phenomena valued by the researched as those valued by the researchers. In scientific studies, it is common to rely on the predecessors’ authority and on tradition. Yet in the study of the Arctic peoples, both the distortion of the obtained results as described above, and blatant plagiarism can be observed (see Leete 1999, 2000, 2001).

Thus, the presumptions and expectations present in acquired attitudes have a bearing on observation statements. Yet they need have no truth value and cannot form a solid foundation on which to construct laws and theories (Chalmers 1998: 58–59). Moreover, Art Leete in his article “Are There Specific Fieldwork Methods?” has expressed the opinion that “./../ fieldwork as a research method is totally senseless”² (2001: 132).

¹ In most cases, the approach is developed unwittingly, because the researcher has lost the ability to think of or to perceive the world in any other terms (see Barkalaja, 1999: 24–25).

² Of course, A. Leete does not mean that fieldwork as such is senseless. He is arguing that work in the research field is done by way of so-called intuitive leaps.

So far, the situation has been very much like S. Lourdasamy, a specialist of Indian culture, very figuratively described in his lecture “Indian Folklore” delivered in the University of Tartu in spring 1998: “German researchers study Indian folklore through German folklore, English researchers study Indian folklore through English folklore, American researchers study Indian folklore through American folklore, and I am absolutely certain that if Estonian researchers come to study Indian folklore, they will do it through Estonian folklore”. No doubt that this statement is valid also about the Khanty religion and folklore. All this brings us to a situation where the main task of a modern researcher should not any more be the labelling of the researched culture according to his/her visions or theories. The task of the researcher is to translate the sign system and the message of the culture into the language of his/her own culture. Thus, the research of foreign cultures today reverts to translation problems. Translation is possible only if the translator is in the borderland between the cultures. Thus, we can equate the term “culture” with that of the “semiosphere”. The model, introduced by Juri Lotman to describe semiosphere as a whole, can be used with individual cultures, as they are also semiotic spheres in nature (Lotman 1992: 2021–2022). The function of border is also applicable to them. All translation mechanisms that serve for foreign contacts belong to the semiosphere border structure. (Ibid.: 2023, 2025). Consequently, in order to describe a culture or part of it as precisely as possible, it will not be enough to observe it from the outside or to systematize it. Moreover, one of the necessary conditions for the researcher is, on the one hand, to put him/herself on the border of his/her own cultural area and on the other hand he/she has to try to get to the borderland of the studied culture. In an ideal situation, these borderline lands overlap. At the same time, it is essential to remember that being on the borderline does not enable the building up of a very sophisticated sign system (Barkalaja 2001a: 154–155).

As a way out of the situation where “traditional anthropological (ethnographical) description has failed to penetrate as far as the problem complex of the understanding of cultural phenomena, while general semiotics has, for its

According to him, the ethnographic (or anthropological) data is first presented and then, to support the data, explanations and interpretations are invented afterwards.

The real issue is that fieldwork is not a method, even though at one time it was regarded as such in contrast to the “armchair method”. Fieldwork does not guarantee the methodological validity of the data simply because these are presented as deriving from “primary sources” (as a matter of fact, Bulgakova’s doctoral dissertation demonstrates that in the field of shamanic studies, the researcher’s “primary information” will turn out to be “secondary” or usually even “tertiary” (2001)). Rather, it could be said that fieldwork can provide a suitable environment for attuning the researcher to understand (*verstehen*) the research material. In the interest of methodological clarity, A. Leete suggests that “besides all useful outcome, fieldwork together with methods are also a convention -- an agreement between researchers about aspects of the recognition of knowledge” (2001: 141).

part, overrun it”, Mihály Hoppál suggests a hermeneutic method in ethno-semiotics under the name of *ethnohermeneutics* (1992: 148–150). This requires the researcher to develop a new state of consciousness which would support a level of his identity shared with the collective identity (or mentality) of the studied culture and thus enable radical participation.

The world outlook expressed in methods takes on particular significance in the theoretical interpretation and analysis of fieldwork results. The issues currently in vogue in the home culture may leave their mark on the understanding obtained of the researched culture — as pointed out in an illustrative example by Jeremy Narby (1998: 10–18).

The problem itself is much older: ever since Max Weber, it has been recognized that a researcher’s “wishful thinking” — born by his religious, political or other dogmas — has a “truth-distorting impact” on his description of “reality”. According to Thomas Schweizer’s summary interpretation, Weber maintains “(1) that normative and factual statements are different; and (2) that moral commitments that aren’t rationally controlled can distort one’s analysis”, and suggests that normative and factual statements should be analytically differentiated in order to capture the truth (1998: 53). For me, the question is about drawing the line between a normative ethics and a factual reality. Schweizer casts doubt on the reality of the facts of a *realistic* background theory, while accepting — as a supporter of radical constructivism — the logic of methodological procedures, and observation as a way of checking the validity of hypotheses (idem: 55). Yet if we agree with the neurobiological studies implying that man’s rational decisions spring directly from emotional grounds (Damasio 1994), which also form the basis of moral and ethical decisions, we will be unable to give any answer to one of anthropology’s fundamental debates — that on the relationship between truth and relativism. Therefore I have in the present work avoided any interpretation of the nature of “true reality” (e.g. who or what are the creatures whom the Khanty call *hlunk* — that is, spirits or gods) and focused rather on obtaining an overview of the mechanisms generating the cognitive maps based on that reality.

As the basic flow of thought that informs my data processing I have chosen to use the comparative method, even though it was abandoned in the mainstream of (American) anthropology in the middle of the 20th century (Dundes 1996: 108), simultaneously with shamanism — to accept the dicta of the undisputed authority in the field of religion studies, Clifford Geertz (1966: 39). May be the reasons of my choices lie in my folklorist education and the fact stated by Alan Dundes that the folklorists have never got rid of their obsession with the comparative method, since the Finnish historico-geographical method and the Aarne-Thompson typology inevitably keep influencing researchers (Dundes 1996: 118). Nevertheless, the methodology I use bears no semblance to the “Finnish historico-geographical” method; rather, I have used comparison on the

various levels of man as a phenomenon (interdisciplinary comparison); shamanism as a phenomenon (comparison of different theoretical conceptions), and shamanhood as a phenomenon (comparison of data pertaining to different traditions). In my fieldwork, I have also used comparison — based on the time factor — of the answers of the same informant to the same questions, or on analysis of his discussions of the same issues, at different times, as well as comparison of the reports offered by different informants about the same events. These comparisons, however, have been more of a research tool than an aim in itself.

The present dissertation consists of a collection of articles published during my doctoral studies and based on a synthesis of information collected during my fieldwork, and gleaned from the relevant literature read. Since no culture can be described in its entirety, I have highlighted such features of the Eastern Khanty cultural landscape as can be, in my view, associated with my own home culture — that is, a hybrid construction (in Bakhtin's sense³) of the Balto-Finnic traditional and the Occidental urban cultures. If connections were found, I used applicability of the obtained knowledge in my own home culture as a basis of selection for theoretical development. This was done with full respect for the culture whose representatives have offered me valuable experience and taught me to train my attention on significant aspects of human beings as such and culture as such.

Since, on the one hand, new discussions are continually adding to the mass of literature in my research area, and on the other hand, important scientific treatments reach the Estonian scientific landscape only over a considerable time gap, it is one of the tasks of the present introduction to delineate and comment on the threads of thought binding together the separate articles in the light of new materials which kept adding up throughout the study period.

The collection itself can broadly be divided into two parts: the articles forming its first part are, in their majority, inspired by fieldwork and thus on the descriptive ethnological side, focusing on the presentation of some particular phenomenon. The theoretical summaries are relatively small in proportion and

³ Mikhail Bakhtin: "We call hybrid construction any utterance that belongs, by its grammatical (syntactic) and compositional features, to a single speaker, but that actually contains intermingled within it two utterances, two manners of speaking, two styles, two "languages", two semantic and axiological horizons." These two voices, Bakhtin reminds us, can only be social, not individual. (Todorov 1995: 73).

However, I do not think that the concept of "hybrid" is most fortunate here, since in biology (and particularly in botany), a hybrid signifies a completely new, fully separate and final organism, which combines the characteristic features of both original organisms. A better term for describing the particular cultural situation might be the concept of "bouquet".

deal with rather specific problems. The second part consists of two largely theoretical articles in which I attempt to sketch the development trends of the different aspects of shamanism as a phenomenon, as well as their usability in Occidental culture. Here I have followed Alan Dundes's call not to stop at the descriptive recording or mapping of materials, but also to try and find practicable nuances of the meaning of these materials in order to enrich our understandings enabling to conceive of the world⁴ (see Dundes 1996: 117–122). As Dundes pointed out, the load of materials written about anthropology has grown to rather formidable proportions. A more systematic study of these materials would take a couple of decades, which is why we must on the present occasion limit ourselves to mere digging of “test pits”.

The first article, ““Chameleons” of Siberia: Identity and Survival Strategies of an Eastern Khanty Family” (1999) discusses the family tradition of Semyon Pesikov, who lives in the Lyamin river basin (neighbouring on the Pim river basin, in the Surgut region of the Khanty-Mansiisk autonomous district). Since shamanhood⁵ is one of the central pillars supporting the Khanty world outlook and culture, this family's tradition also centres around a shamanic lineage which, however, goes back to and draws its authority from the Orthodox saint Saint Nicholas. The first part of the article casts some light on the history of the attempts to christianise the Khanty, thus providing a necessary context to the discussion and setting the concrete facts into a broader cultural perspective.

In the second part, I move on to the treatment of the family tradition's various expressions both on the memic and on the behavioural levels. In the framework of the present collection, it is important to highlight the phenomenon of so-called double religion, where two sign systems for describing the world exist side by side in a person's consciousness. This assumes the existence of at least two (meta)levels of cognition (in addition to the complex of changed states of consciousness characteristic of Khanty shamanhood). The movement between the two levels of consciousness as expressed on the plane of spoken texts and behaviour can be described as syncretic.

The motivating force that led to the adoption of a double religion in the given family tradition was breach of taboo in the traditional system, bringing

⁴ The playful — and thus loaded with additional information — message of this sentence is relatively uncomfortable to translate from Estonian into English because of the fact described by Thomas Schweizer in his presentation of the term *empathic understanding*, to convey the sense of the German verb *verstehen*, in explaining the method of hermeneutical interpretation (1998: 56–62). The more or less adequate Estonian translation of *verstehen*, *mõistmine*, is in a relationship with the word *aru saamine* (understanding) similar to that suggested by Rappaport between the words *believing* and *accepting*.

⁵ On the difference between shamanhood and shamanism, see Bulgakova 2001, or “Shamanism as Information Design” in the present collection.

about, as an attempt to escape the lethal consequences, the expansion of the family's "effective operating space" through embracing a new world outlook and a source of (spiritual) energy⁶ supported by it. Yet, according to the tradition, in the male line only one man of each generation could escape death — a situation confirmed by observable facts. The connection between processes of consciousness and physical processes has been pointed out by Roy Rappaport: "the location, within human organic processes, of the boundary between the domains of the physical and the meaningful is not well known but cannot be a sharp one". This necessarily leads us to ask about the phenomenon's generative mechanisms. Sticking to the idea that shamanism is tightly connected to the "sacred" even in daily life, and that ritual behaviour also claims a connection with the "sacred", we will have to observe together with Rappaport that "it is significant that the ritual acts initiating attempts to achieve organic effects are often simple and easy to observe, but the subsequent neural and hormonal processes directly producing the effects are not" (2001: 113). Damasio's "somatic-marker hypothesis" (1994: 165–243) may offer a description of the missing link, or at least an explanation of how and through what channels can the world of the senses influence a person's physical existence, if we reserve the right not to agree with his interpretation of the exclusively self-absorbed physiological character of consciousness and personality.

Yet the material to be studied is not limited to contaminations of the Khanty traditional and the Russian Orthodox worlds. There are data which demonstrate that the mechanism which had once proven successful was later on used again by at least one member of the family, who moved to an urban environment and became "Russian". Here we can observe connections, on the one hand, with the clear difference between a "Khanty world", where shamans can work, and a "Russian world", where they cannot, as set forth by Yegor Kanterov (a Khanty living in the Pim river basin). On the other hand, we can recognise an analogy with the practice common to a number of cultures, of giving a seriously ill person a new name, so that "the disease wouldn't recognise him".

The second article, "Ruumi küsimuse aspektidest hantide ilmavaates" ("On the Aspects of Space in the Khanty World Outlook"), is basically carried by the idea that a person may inhabit numerous states of consciousness simultaneously, some of which may, in the eyes of the Western formal logic, stand in stark conflict with each other. The article was published in 1997 in the collection "Maa ja ilm", Pro Folkloristika V, but has been translated and included without alterations in order to outline the evolution of ideas on that issue, even though new data collected over the years would have enabled its substantial enlargement. The conception of *legend reality* as an influence that may shape world perception has been thoroughly discussed by Linda Dégh,

⁶ My one-time intuitive hypothesis gains support from the connection between information and power, referred to quite unambiguously by Rappaport (2001: 50–51).

demonstrating that this is not merely a phenomenon of traditional oral culture but has retained its efficiency also in the modern world; parallels from the Finnish tradition are drawn by Anna-Leena Siikala (1994).

The article sets out from a piece of information obtained during fieldwork, about a young Pim basin Khanty's shamanic dream vision which located the "lower world" towards the south, in contrast to the generally presumed Khanty world pattern where it is the "upper world" that is situated in the south, whereas the "lower world" should be in the north.⁷ A closer study of the matter leads to the question why does the directional sacred location of the "upper world" in the horizontal space model of the Khanty culture area vary from the south among the Northern Khanty to the east and south among the Eastern Khanty.

One way for explaining the phenomenon would be to ascribe to the Khanty a Platonically idealistic world model, according to which the concrete rivers existing in the material world are materialisations of the ideal heavenly "World River". This view seems to be born out by text samples about the effects of the Heavenly Reindeer's (see Lukina 1990: 66–69, 297; Barkalaja 1999: 64) or the Heavenly Pike's fate on the constitution of earthly reindeers and pikes in Khanty folklore, as well as by comparative material from the Selkup. Another explanation is provided by some examples (in that article, the informant who simultaneously recognises two mutually exclusive south directions; in articles discussed below, instances of multiple identities) which hint that there may be a possibility of several different levels of consciousness operating simultaneously in a person's cognitive process. The idea is also confirmed by Anna-Leena Siikala's observation that "another prominent feature of folk belief and mythology is the multiplicity of parallel images and ideas" (2000: 137).

The article "Continuing Tradition: Changing Spirit Dolls at the Pym River Khanty" (1996) discusses the Kanterov family⁸ that, in the context of the traditional culture, was located in a marginal area but — thanks to deeply felt environmental changes in the region — started, in terms of Lotman's semiosphere theory, to move vigorously from the border areas of the social hierarchy towards the centre.

The first half of the article presents an overview of the Eastern Khanties' conception of the spirits (*hlunk*) and the sacred dolls enabling their contact with the material world. Here I would like to highlight the fact that the Khanty perceive no clear and discrete boundary between the worlds of spirits and of humans, which may provide the mechanism that allows the Khanties' mental

⁷ According to the relevant literature, the same pattern should be characteristic of the Uralic and North Eurasian peoples in general (Siikala 2000: 132–34).

⁸ In the article, each name is represented by its initial letter, since at the time I was not as yet authorised to reveal to the public the origins of this family. The situation was made understandable by the repressive politics exercised towards the Khanty by representatives (of the authorities) of the Russian colonial culture.

world to exercise an influence on their physical world — a fact proved by the series of accidents that befell the elder son who refused to accept his designated role as keeper of the sacred dolls (and was generally reluctant to observe traditions). I have used the same material later, in theoretical discussions of the connections between identity and environment.

The articles “On the Sacrificial Ritual of the Pim River Khanty in December 1995” (1997) and “On the Sacrificial Rituals of the Pim River Khanties: Part Two” (1999a) make up a logical whole and follow through concrete events the shift of the Kanterov family’s social positions, against the backdrop of the general cultural landscape.

One of the markers my informers have pointed out is the number of people present at the joint offerings (*jyyr*) held by the family. This is parallel to Roy Rappaport’s observation, according to which, “/.../ ritual display illustrates a more widespread phenomenon, the digital representation of analogic properties or process”. According to him, the number of pigs sacrificed during a ritual, for instance, is a measurable analogue for counting the digital value of the sacrifice bringer’s social status (2001: 86–88). In a similar manner, the number of people who participated in the *jyyr* held by the Kanterov family demonstrates their social position in the Pim River Khanty society.

Another interesting aspect is related to what Rappaport would call the canonical and self-referential part of the sacrificial ritual (2001:21). If there has occurred loss of know-how concerning the canonical invariants — as is the case with the Pim River Khanty who have suffered a culture shock — attempts are made to compensate for it with the self-referential part, as we could see at the given *jyyr* in the way how sacrifice was given to the lower gods. Also, interpretations of events will then depend to a great extent on the interpreter’s personal attitudes, comprising subjective evaluations which may run quite contrary to each other.

The article “The Influence of Environment on the Identity of Pim River Khanties” (2001) discusses various factors on different levels which exercise an influence on the Khanties’ identity. Environment is connected to their way of life; the sacred sites providing the scene for part of the life-style — the rituals — are themselves part of the environment. My data indicate that these factors have direct influence on the survival of different identity levels, thus illustrating by examples of the urban Khanty, Rappaport’s abstract concept of ritual (see 2001: 24), where he lists the technical details of identity: “*I will argue that the performance of more or less invariant sequences of formal acts and utterances not entirely encoded by the performers logically entails the establishment of convention, the sealing of social contract, the construction of the integrated conventional orders we shall call Logoi /---/, the investment of whatever it encodes with morality, the construction of time and eternity; the*

representation of paradigm of creation, the generation of the concept of the sacred and the sanctification of conventional order, the generation of the theories of occult, the evocation of numinous experience, the awareness of the divine, the grasp of the holy, and the construction of orders of meaning transcending the semantic. (ibid: 27).

An important message having broader implications for shamanhood as the central pillar of the Khanty world view is the role of the sacred sites and the rituals performed there in buttressing the levels of traditional identity. Roy Rappaport has emphasised the role of the canon's fixed and delimited invariants in channelling the self-expression of an individual's private self. As he puts it, "without canon, ritual's self-referential messages would be meaningless or even non-existent as such" (Rappaport 2001: 106). Self-reference and self-reflection are necessary components of identity. It is rituals propped up by traditions that enable the urban Khanty to preserve their ethnic identity and help, in the given case, to avoid *russification* and the extinction of traditional world view otherwise brought about by acculturation.

Hoppál has emphasised the influence of a participatory relationship with environment on the shaping of identity, and pointed out that besides behavioural participation, this relationship is "marked at once by dependence and protective custodianship (which is often expressed in the form of myths, local legends, and natural guardian spirits)". "In this context," as Hoppál puts it, "tradition means the continuous reproduction of the consciousness of identity and the searching out, for remembrance, of the symbols of identification" (1992: 146). And in that context, in its turn, the symbols' functional ability will be revealed to operate as triggers releasing attunement to states of consciousness (and also identity) intraculturally connected to them, together with the resulting behavioural expressions. Various elements of ritual activity may also operate as such triggers. An example to illustrate this would be the ritual yawning⁹ in order to let the "helping spirits" enter (see Hoppál 1998: 129–130, referring to Hultkrantz 1979: 49).

The mechanism periodically regenerating the urban Khanties' traditional ethnic identity through rituals performed in their home village is described by Roy Rappaport as a general characteristic of rituals: "It is probable that in *most* rituals participants transmit information concerning their own current states to *others*, but in *all* rituals they transmit such information to *themselves*. Participation in ritual, *l---l* is not only informative but self-informative" (2001: 104). Thus the identity-generating and regenerating nature of ritual is made explicit.

⁹ Do we not have here a utilisation of some mechanism of somatic feedback (see Damasio's somatic-marker hypothesis below) which seems to be very strongly operating in the "contagious" spread of yawning and sleepiness, in order to bring about a culturally encoded sleep-like state of consciousness?

The first of the two mainly theoretical articles, “On Some Forms of Gaming/Simulation from the Anthropological Point of View” (2001b), focuses on the structure of the shamanic ritual and its comparison to that of simulation. The second element in the comparison is the close connection between emotions and decision-making — important characteristics of both shamanic ritual and simulations — arising from the peculiarities of human nervous system. In shamanic rituals, significant role is played by information obtained in *altered states of consciousness* (ASC) and instructions for behaviour derived from it and enabling to overcome various crises. Likewise, the aim of various simulation games is prevention or overcoming of crises. Lotman has drawn attention to the fact that in game situations, the state of consciousness differs from a person’s normal state. Since the “ordinary” and “changed” states of consciousness are differently identified in different cultural conventions, I have, in that article, implicitly treated all states of consciousness as alternative ones. I have pointed out two ways for using the ASC concept in practice. One of them is to develop practical pedagogy by introducing, through dramatisations, emotions into the learning process. The role of emotions in remembering experiences and shaping decision-making strategies should also be taken into account in drawing up official school curricula. The introduction of *ethnohermeneutic* studies in this area would enable to create a connection with the methods developed in traditional cultures for teaching the young to act in the cultural space on the basis of an understanding, which is directly linked to the shaping of their identities. In any case, this research direction is interesting and at the same time necessary, keeping in mind the need to maintain cultural diversity in the circumstances of economic globalisation.

The second practical purpose would be the description of the depth mechanisms of drug addiction and development of drug-prevention strategies based on it. Drug addiction can be regarded as a way of consuming changed states of consciousness (even in case of drugs causing physical dependence). At least two motivating forces can be discerned here. First, addiction may be caused by a clear-cut reflex to escape from a world that causes too much stress. As concerns the second possible cause, we should not underestimate the role of positive dissatisfaction or stress in decision-making. In consumption-oriented Western culture, the emotional tension necessary for this is made available by the effect, created through the somatic-marker mechanism, of taking chemical stimulators, e.g. cocaine or amphetamine derivatives. Thus one solution could be the developing of techniques enabling to achieve altered states of consciousness which must be cheaper and more easily available than the chemical drugs. That would enable to banish the use of chemical drugs from the set of a person’s needs by providing an alternative competing mechanism. An important issue here is the influence of traditions on achieving specific states of consciousness, yet it will hardly be possible in the post-modern eclectic cultural space unless the international power centres decide to reorient their ideological

operating vectors from the course of cultural unification that accompanies economic globalisation to the course of preserving cultural diversity.

The article "Shamanism as Information Design" will be printed in the collection of the International Society for Shamanistic Research (ISSR) to be published in spring, 2002, and is based on the paper read at the conference "Shamanism in Interdisciplinary Context" held in Viljandi Cultural College in August, 2001. In this article, I view the current situation of the conception of shamanism and try to formulate some generalising notions over the ever growing maze of descriptive approaches, returning with this aim, in the light of new information, to the definition of shamanism suggested in 1978 by Anna-Leena Siikala. Thus, the aim of the article is not to present a comprehensive overview of the current state of research in this area (for this, see e.g. Siikala and Hoppál 1998; shorter discussions by Balzer 1996; Hoppál 2000: 143–168), but to weigh the possibilities for re-describing the meta-description offered by a school of thought. An important extension I would like to point out here is the complementing of the shaman's role-taking function with the function of role-giving to members of his society. In situations of crisis, there is often no solution in the consciousness of the person undergoing the crisis. The solution decision is directly dependent not only on emotions, but also on the codes underlying the identity (and the world outlook generated by it). For instance, in a crisis caused by psychosomatic illness, the shaman ritually endows the patient with a new identity, an awareness of the world excluding the illness.

In the same way, the shaman in his role as a mediator offers new identities to members of his society, as we can see in the case I describe in my articles "On the Sacrificial Ritual of the Pim River Khanty in December 1995", and "On the Sacrificial Rituals of the Pim River Khanties: Part Two", where shamanic ritual was used to find out who should become the new keeper of the *hlunk* of the "lord of wind and weather" (or, according to another version, of the god of the Pim river), since the previous keeper had died and the issue of finding him a successor had caused negative tensions in the society. During later "conversational questioning" with informant, I learned that through the shaman's mediation, the god had appointed the as yet unborn son of man participating in the sacrifice to be the keeper of his sacred dolls. At the time of the ritual, the man was still unmarried, and people were amused by the "divine providence" which fated the man to move from his former home on the upper reaches of the Pim river further downstream, wed a wife there and assist into the world the future "master" of the dolls. On this occasion, the role-giving process directly concerned two members of the society, who were allotted the roles of father and son, respectively. The mechanism operating here is described by Roy Rappaport: "Dubbing, we have observed, does not tell a youth to be a knight, nor does it tell him how to be a knight. It makes him a knight (*my emphasis* — A. B.) (2001: 114).

The second issue here is the broadening of the techniques of ecstasy with a discussion of the techniques of emotion control. The operating mechanism here,

in my view, should be the shaman's innate ability for creating free associations. The conception of free associations has been used in psycho-analysis in order to cast light on the processes of the sub-conscious, as well as in psychology and semiotics in order to study creativity (Mikita 2000). I tend to see this phenomenon as an ability to move unimpededly from one state of consciousness to another, which is made possible by a broad diapason and depth of the ability to experience emotions. At the same time, however, the stronger the emotions a person is capable of experiencing and the greater the freedom of his associations, the greater is his lability in any given state of consciousness. This explains why shamans have been compared to madmen or mention been made of schizophrenia. The same mechanism allows to explain an individual's mental disorders during the so-called "shamanic illness" and the psycho-somatic symptoms that appear in that condition. The innate lability, both emotional and concerning the maintaining of states of consciousness, can be stabilised with culturally evolved methods which help to set the shaman's mind into dynamic equilibrium, ranging through the scale of the states of consciousness recognised as necessary in any given culture.

An important point here is that since shamans are humans, the same mechanisms can be presumed to operate also in "normal" people. The phenomena and their interconnections (that is, the order) of the world are evaluated (noticed, acknowledged) according to different codes in different states of consciousness. It is possible that, as a result of cultural processes, certain codes may come to be recognised as universally valid and "normal", and the world that corresponds to such reading is acknowledged as the reality. Actually, various alternative orders are possible (Rappaport 2001: 17), only one of which is acclaimed as "real" by the "chosen ones".¹⁰

In the third place, I would like to point out a more radical reviewing of the concept of *altered states of consciousness*. The differentiation between a "normal" and a "altered" state of consciousness valid in 1978 is certainly out of date. Since the dividing line between "normal" and "abnormal" is purely arbitrary and differs in different cultures, we can — employing the "human condition" as a basis of comparison — speak merely about a continuum of different states of consciousness in human personality. Emotional aptitude is an important mechanism for generating these states.¹¹ Alternative states of consciousness

¹⁰ Rappaport maintains that the nature of religion is to fabricate the Word — the True Word — on which is founded the truth of symbols and conventions (idem: 21). Since world views lean on identities, the "sacred truth" or the "True Word" is brought to one's justification — in other words, we see the working of religion's characteristic feature, to fabricate sacred justification to one's existence and to the established world order.

¹¹ Sometimes we find ourselves in a state where colours seem brighter and smells stronger — we perceive and cognize the world differently. Usually this state is connected with enhanced emotionality, a "Sunday" feeling different from the ordinary state

enable an individual to perceive reality in different ways and to semiotically charge his psychic landscape with important additional information on the connections underlying the indescribable chaos of reality. Here, too, a comment by Mihály Hoppál is apt: “Here is the principle of alternativity, the fact of alteration — the fact that any pair of the elements may gain alternative significance and form a structural space which may be charged with information” (1992: 144).

As for the fourth point — the question of ritual as a mode of communication — I would leave its defining to Roy Rappaport, since in the article itself I did not arrive at a formulation to define this important boundary line: “/.../ there are those in which transmitters achieve effects by informing – representing forms to, transmitting form to, injecting form into, more simply transmitting messages to, receivers. In this view, which is in accord with certain developments in linguistic philosophy over the past few decades and anthropology as well as information and communication theory and cybernetics, communication includes not only simple “saying”, but also the sorts of “doing”, in which the efficacious principle is informative rather than powerful” (2001: 50–51). Rappaport is pushing the logic of his argument towards the phenomenon signified in Estonian by the word *vägi* — power. In her book “Suomalainen šamanismi”, Anna-Leena Siikala has discussed the etymology of the word *väki*, demonstrating that in the Finns’ traditional world view it stood both for power as such and for the bearers of this power (cf. *sotaväki* — an army) (Siikala 1994: 89, 172–174, 181–184, 295). Rappaport’s argument is analogous, moving on from the formula “power = men x resources x organisation” to the formulation that “power is product of matter and energy” and still further to the statement, “authority is to be defined in terms of information”. From that, he derives his conclusion: to be powerful also means to be informed, to be learned, sanctified, etc. (see also Siikala 1994: 178, 291–295). The Khanty describe a shaman’s power with the Russian word *gipnoz*, explaining that “it is something like the shaman’s energy inside his body. Of those who have no shamanic power, it is said that “his body is clean, he has nothing inside his body”” (Yegor Kanterov’s comment on the loss of shamanic power in his family). On these grounds, we could certainly look for parallels with the Chinese and Japanese concepts of *qi* or *ki*.

The fifth point is associated with data presented in Tatyana Bulgakova’s dissertation (2001) and demonstrating that each shaman has an individual mental world – *djorgil* – which is different in different persons. Therefore, Bul-

of mind. Sometimes, on the contrary, everything around us seems faded except the one object that captures all our senses. In that case, too, the reasons lie in a powerful emotional charge. (Let’s just think about the moment of falling in love. And the opposite state — depression with its power to reduce the world to insignificance — arises from a strong emotional charge.) These observations demonstrate that the existence of emotions is an important and necessary precondition for different perceptions of the world.

gakova warns against excessive generalisation of individual reports onto the Nanai world outlook in general. At the same time, these personal worlds can be related to the Nanai world view in general, in a way similar to the relation between the Khanty person chants (which are strictly individual and differ one from another) or the Saami *joik*'s and the general type of person chants. Anyone who has once heard a chant of these types will immediately recognise the genre, even though individual chants within the type are different. Again I am happy to quote a more general description of this relationship from Roy Rappaport: "The subjective metrics or languages of private systems are concerned with the organic and psychic; the phenomena to which they refer are many, varied and often unknown to or hidden from those experiencing them. They may include all emotional statements, wishes, drives and goals, needs, desires, etc. "Primary process thinking" which is characterized by imagery, allusion, analogy, metaphor, metonymy and symbolism, rather than verbal formulation, from which there is an absence of negative, conditional, or qualifying conjunctions and which is highly charged emotionally /---/ has a prominent, perhaps even dominant place in private systems, or at least in some of the subsystems of private systems.

The metrics or languages of public systems, in contrast, refer to social, economic, demographic and political events, entities or processes: statuses and roles; birth rates and death rates; fission and fusion; social and cultural differentiation and homogeneity. Such systems "are about" the maintenance and transformation of social orders or perhaps about persistence of associations of organisms whose interactions are governed in accordance with the conventions of social orders. "Secondary process thought", conscious, rational, largely verbal and obeying the laws of syntax and logic /---/ dominates in the ordering of public systems" (Rappaport 2001: 99).

Briefly, I have also touched upon the issue of connections between myth and shamanism, but in this area I have limited myself to merely pointing out a few aspects hinting at the necessity for comparative studies in the field of psychology of perceptions. Combining these studies through a semiotic approach to myth (see, e.g., Hoppál 2000), through ritual (e.g. Rappaport 2001), or through a conception of mentality as an expression of collective identity (e.g. Siikala 2000¹²), with the results of structuralist comparison (see Dumézil 2001; Puhvel 1996), may offer interesting and motivating communities of information to human thinking.

¹² Although I do keep entertaining doubts as to the truth value and sensibility of taking on the task of reconstructing the so-called proto-Uralic mythology (referred to by Siikala through the works of Napolskikh). Dumézil in his rather convincing comparative study has laid the foundations for discussing Indo-European mentality, but even he never claimed to pursue the aim of reconstructing a proto-Indo-Iranian world view. On the contrary, he states that " /---/ a living, dramatised reconstruction of the language and culture of the common ancestors is impossible /---/" (2001: 9).

By way of conclusion, I would like to sketch the hypothetical space in which I move and which I map in all the articles.

The founding theses for this sketch are the following:

1. We are surrounded by a chaos of reality where, in order to get our bearing, we must make decisions as to the value and meaning of the various phenomena that form parts of that chaos. Various creation myths describe the chaos in different metaphors, but the act of creation can quite universally be described as the constitution of an ordered world by means of imbuing the chaos with meaning and naming its component parts (Rappaport 2001: 155–164). Since a person's ability to receive information is limited in his ordinary mental state, he must necessarily use the "Occam's razor" to slash less relevant information from the information essential for his survival. This is done selectively, departing from certain patterns, modelling systems (Lotman 1990), codes, matrices of thought (Hoppál 1992: 143), discourses (Anttonen 1993(1); Volt 1997), mental models or mentalities (Siikala 1994: 25), etc. Thus he constructs a world which he tends to regard as objective reality, because that is how things appear to him. In actual fact, however, he obtains a model which in the perception process replaces the reality in his consciousness (Lotman 1990: 8) or, to put it in Heidegger's words, "becoming is the appearance of Being" (Heidegger 1996: 126–152). According to Clifford Geertz's view, people continually construct patterns of their situations with the help of cultural symbol systems, which enable them to direct and order their behaviour. Culture can be regarded as "an historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which, men communicate, perpetuate and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life" (Geertz 1966: 3; see also V. Anttonen 1996: 20–21). Yet, precisely because of the "Occam's razor", it is clear that a person cannot really speak about "objective reality" but only fall back on a good faith that his conception of it is more or less adequate, and support that faith with various ritual activities. The world as envisioned in different cultures thus constitutes a *system of beliefs*, as Hoppál understands it (1998: 130–131; 2000: 36–60), a term comprising both religions and systems like positivism, atheism, etc.
2. The source of the phenomenon called the "sacred" also falls beyond the limits set to human perception. Within the borders of profane daily world are scattered "sacred enclosures" also marked with boundaries. In the present work I do not discuss the topic of the sacred because I have not as yet been able to formulate a clear understanding of this matter, not even with the help of Veikko Anttonen (1996) or Roy Rappaport (2001). One thing that seems to be certain is that there exists a mechanism by means of which people sanctify their faith in the established world order with the help of the dogmatically sacred authority, whether personalised or not, of the "reality" external to them.

3. In any culture where it is found, shamanhood is a system of beliefs which allots to the shaman the role of intrasocial maintenance and regeneration of that system. "Shamans as mediators create order and reestablish balance within their groups such that their role is socially embedded in their cultures" (Hoppál 1998:129). At the same time it is possible to find parallels between different cultures (even such as do not include shamanhood as their central supporting institution) both as to their *systems of beliefs* and as to their different ways of perceiving reality and ordering cognitive landscapes arising from the common human condition. Shamans as persons able to travel between "this" world and "that", who keep consciously working in the border areas and who, in the Western sense of "normal" existence, constantly inhabit the extremes, may offer valuable insights helping to understand the existence and acting of human beings as such. The extremes set the essence of things into clearer light. It seems that the task of shamanism as a meta-description may well be precisely to focus attention to these borderline cases and areas, without forgetting their connections with other realms of human activity.

In post-modern thinking, different conceptions can not be measured against the yardstick of "objectivity" and judged more or less "right" according to that. Yet I would not like to put up with the mere meta-theory of "anything goes" as held up by the post-modern methodology (Schweizer 1998: 49), nor to limit myself to the focus on mere methods as seen in radical constructivism (ibid:50), but would like to add to them the idea of the disjunctive association between different world descriptions as a tangent on the reality which it is impossible to describe in its entirety. This is the principle employed in the composition of the present collection.

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ŠAMANISMITEORIA ARENGUVISANDEID: PIMI JÕE HANTIDE USUNDISÜSTEEMI SEOSTEST LÄÄNEMAISE MAAILMAPILDIGA

Kokkuvõte

Väitekirja eesmärgiks on interdistsiplinaarse mõttekeskkonna loomine, kus oleks võimalik luua seoseid psühholoogia, antropoloogia, pedagoogika, semiootika jms. fundamentaaluringute tulemuste vahel. Ühendavaks pinnaks olen vastavalt senisele õppe- ja uurimistöele valinud šamanismiteooria, mille võimalikele arengusuundadele katsungi töös tähelepanu juhtida.

Šamanismiuuringud on paratamatult religiooniloo ja selle kaudu antropoloogia osa. Antropoloogia valdkonnas kerkivad aeg-ajalt esile tulised välitöö metodoloogia alased debatil. Sellepärast olen artikleid omavahel seostava eessõna esimese poole pühendanud välitööde ohupiirkondadele. Thomas Schweizer eritleb kaks peamist väljakutset antropoloogia metodoloogilises debatis: "(1) Etnograafilisel, [olemuslikult] rohkem vaatlustasandil, peame me otsustama, kuidas tekitada tõepäraseid kirjeldusi Teisest (isikust, kultuurist, ühiskonnast). (2) Enam teoreetilisel, antropoloogilise sünteesi tasandil, peame me vastama, kuidas võrrelda üksikjuhtumeid läbi aja ning ruumi ja kuidas jõuda tõeväärtuslike teoreetiliste üldistusteni".

Seega peitub esimene oht tõsiasjas, et etnoloog, antropoloog või folklorist uurib välitöödel enamasti kedagi "teist". Väga lihtsalt võib välja kujuneda vene etnoloogi Tatajana Bulgakova poolt "hermeneutilise kiusatusena" nimetatud olukord, kus põlvkond põlvkonna järel minnakse mingit rahvast uurima eelarvamusliku hoiakuga, millele häälestumine toimub ilmunud metodoloogia ning kirjanduse kriitikavabal läbitöötamisel. Sel viisil saadakse välitöödel just sellised uurimistulemused, mida uurija on eeldanud. Vastav hoiak võib tekkida täiesti märkamatu, loetud aines "kodeerib" pöörama tähelepanu samadele küsimustele, mis eelkäijaidki on köitnud. Tähelepanuta võib jääda suur osa materjalist, mis võib seetõttu esile tulla ainult juhuse kaudu. Uurimistöö käigus saadud pilt ei pruugi peegeldada mitte uuritavate, vaid hoopis uurijate endi väärtustatud nähtusi. Teaduses toetutakse tihtipeale eelkäijate autoriteedile ja traditsioonile. Põhja rahvaste uurimises aga võib täheldada nii eespool kirjeldatud pildi moonutamist kui ka lihtsalt eelkäijate pealt mahakirjutamist.

Seega, omandatud hoiakutes esinevad eeldused ja ootused mõjutavad vaatlusotsustusi. Need aga ei pruugi üldse olla tõeväärtuslikud ega saa moodustada kindlat aluspõhja, millele üles ehitada seadusi ja teooriaid. Veelgi enam, oma artiklis "Kas on olemas spetsiifilisi välitööde meetodeid?" on Art

Leete väljendanud arvamust, et välitöö uurimismeetodina on olemuse poolest totaalselt sisutühi.¹³

Väljapääsuna olukorras, kus “traditsiooniline antropoloogiline (etnograafiline) kirjeldus on ebaõnnestunud kultuuri fenomeni tervikliku mõistmise haaramisel, sellal kui üldine semiootika omalt poolt “jookseb sellest üle””, pakub Mihály Hoppál etnosemiootika vallas välja hermeneutilise meetodi *etnohermeneutika* nime all. See eeldab uurijalt uue teadvusseisundi kujundamist, millele toetuks temas uuritava kultuuri ühisidentiteediga (või teisisõnu, mentaalsusega) seostuv identiteedikiht, mis teekski võimalikuks välitöömeetodi, mida Michael Harner on nimetanud *radikaalseks osaluseks*.

Eriti oluliseks muutub meetodites väljenduv maailmavaade välitööde tulemuste teoreetilisel interpreteerimisel ja analüüsil. Kodukultuuris moes olevad teemad võivad mõjutada pilti uuritavast kultuurist, nagu on konsanstateeriva näitena toonud Jeremy Narby.

Probleem ise on vanem — Max Weberist alates nähakse uurijapoolse religioossetest, poliitilistest või muudest dogmadest kantud soovkujutelmaliku mõtlemise “tõde moonutavat mõju” “reaalsuse” kirjeldamisel. Thomas Schweizeri kokkuvõtvas tõlgenduses on Max Weber seisukohal, et “(1) on erinevus normatiivsete ja faktiliste lähtekohtade vahel; ja (2) et moraalsed ettekirjutused, mis pole ratsionaalselt kontrollitavad, segavad analüüsi [protsessi]” ning soovivad tõe tabamiseks normatiivseid ja faktilisi seisukohti analüütiliselt eristada. Küsimus kerkib uurija jaoks normatiivse *ethics*’i ja faktilise tegelikkuse eritlemisel. Schweizer seab kahtluse alla realistliku *background*-teooria faktide reaalsuse, aktsepteerides samal ajal radikaalse konstruktivismi pooldajana metodoloogiliste protseduuride loogikat ja vaatlust hüpoteeside valiidsuse kontrollimisel. Antropoloogia üks alusvaidlustest realismi, relativismi ja tõe vahekordade teemal ei saa aga vastust, kui me nõustume neurobioloogia vallas tehtud uuringutega, mis lubavad oletada, et inimese ratsionaalselt tehtud otsustejadad on kantud otseselt emotsioonidest, mis on aga ka moraalil ja eetikal põhinevate otsuste alus. Sellepärast olen oma siinses töös distantseerunud igasugusest interpretatsioonist “tõese reaalsuse” olemuse teemal (näiteks kes või mis on need olendid, keda handid nimetavad *hlunkideks* — vaimudeks või jumalateks) ning keskendunud rohkem ülevaate saamisele sellel reaalsusel põhinevate kognitiivsete kaartide tekkemehhanismidest.

¹³ Muidugi ei taha A. Leete väita, et välitööd kui sellised on mõttetud. Küsimus on selles, et välitööd ei ole meetod, kuigi omal ajal neid teadvustati sellisena vastukaaluks “tugitoolimeetodile”. Välitööd ei taga metodoloogilisi andmete valiidsust ainult sellepärast, et nad on esitatud “esimesest allikast” pärinevana (näiteks Tatjana Bulgakova doktoridissertatsioon nanai šamaanlusest näitab, et šamaanluse vallas osutub uurija “esmane info” hoopis “teiseseks” ja tavaliselt isegi “kolmandaseks”). Pigem võiks välitööd olla sobivaks keskkonnaks uurija häälestamiseks uuritava ainese mõistmisele (*verstehen*).

Metodoloogia pinnalt olen ma valinud oma infomenetluse alushoovuseks *võrdleva meetodi*, hoolimata sellest, et see hüljati (Ameerika) antropoloogia peavoolus 20. sajandi keskel nagu šamanismgi, kui toetuda näiteks valdkonna vastuvaidlematu autoriteedi Clifford Geertzi väljaütlemistele. Võib-olla on põhjuseks minu folkloristlik haridus ning Alan Dundesi konstanteeritud tõik, et folkloristid pole kunagi üle saanud võrdleva meetodi painest, kuivõrd soome ajaloolis-geograafiline meetod ning Aarne-Thompsoni tüübikataloog mõjutavad paratamatult ja jätkuvalt uurijate meeli. Siiski ei ole minu kasutatud metodoloogias mitte mingit seost “soome ajaloolis-geograafilise” meetodiga, vaid võrdlust olen teostanud inimese kui nähtuse (interdistiplinaarne võrdlus), šamanismi kui nähtuse (erinevate käsitluste võrdlus) ning šamaanluse kui nähtuse (eri traditsioone käsitlevate andmete võrdlus) tasandil. Välitöises tegevuses olen rakendanud ka ajafaktorile rajatud võrdlust sama informandi vastuste suhtes samadele küsimustele või samal teemal arutlemiste analüüsil, samuti olen võrrelnud erinevate informantide teateid samade sündmuste kohta. Samas on need võrdlusread olnud pigem abitegevuseks, mitte eesmärgiks omaette.

Käesolev väitekirjandus koosneb põhiosas doktoriõpingute jooksul avaldatud artiklite valikust, mis tugineb välitöödel korjatud materjalide ning loetud kirjanduse sünteesile. Kuivõrd ühtegi kultuuri ei saa kirjeldada täielikult, on idahantide kultuuriruumist esile toodud need jooned, mis minu meelest võivad seostuda minu päritolukultuuriga, s.o. läänemeresoome traditsionaalse kultuuri ja õhtumaise linnakultuuri hübriidse konstruktsiooniga. Seoste puhul on teoreetilise edasiarenduse valiku aluseks saanud teadmiste rakendatavus minu päritolukultuuris. Seda teen ma täielikus respektis ja austuses selle kultuuri suhtes, kelle esindajad on mulle edasi andnud väärtuslikku kogemust ja õpetanud pöörama tähelepanu inimese kui sellise ning kultuuri kui sellise oluliste tahkude kohta.

Kogumiku enda võib jagada laias laastus kaheks: esimese osa moodustavad artiklid on valdavalt välitööde materjalidest inspireeritult deskriptiivselt etnoloogilise raskuspunktiga ning on keskendunud mingile konkreetsele nähtusele. Teoreetilise kokkuvõtte osakaal on mahult väiksem ning selle probleemipüstitus kitsam. Teise osa moodustavad kaks valdavalt teoreetilise iseloomuga artiklit, milles proovin visandada šamanismi kui nähtuse erinevate aspektide arenguhooni ning nende kasutatavust õhtumaises kultuuris. Siin olen juhindunud Alan Dundesi üleskutsest mitte piirduda materjali deskriptiivse ülestähendamise või kaardistamisega, vaid lisaks katsuda leida uuritava materjali tähenduse kasutamiskõlblikke momente maailma mõistmist puudutavate arusaamade rikastamisel. Nagu Dundes märkis, on antropoloogilises kirjanduses kogunenud materjalikihtide koorem paisunud väga rängaks. Sellest süstemaatilise läbinärimine kipub nõudma oma parkümmet aastat, sestap tuleb käesoleval juhul piirduda arheoloogide kombel “kontrollšurfide” läbikaevamisega.

Esimene artikkel, “Siberi “kameeleonid”: Ühe idahandi perekonna identiteet ja toimetulekustrateegiad”, (1999) käsitleb Ljamini jõgikonnas (Pimi naaber-

jõgikond Surguti rajoonis Hantõ-Mansiiski autonoomses ringkonnas) asuva Semjon Pesikovi perekonnatraditsiooni. Kuivõrd šamaanlus on handi maailmavaate ja kultuuri keskseid tugisambaid, toetub ka selle pere traditsioon šamaani-liinile, mis aga on alguse ja kandejõu saanud õigeusu pühakult Pühalt Nikolailt. Artikli esimene osa heidab valgust hantide ristiustamiskatsete ajaloole, andes sellega teemakäsitlusele vajaliku konteksti, mõistmaks konkreetset teavet laiemas kultuuriväljas.

Teises osas vaatlen juba peretraditsiooni mitmesuguseid väljundeid nii meemilisel kui käitumuslikul tasandil. Käesoleva kogumiku valguses on oluline välja tuua nn. kaksik- või topeltusu nähtust, kus inimese teadvuses eksisteerib paralleelselt kaks märgisüsteemi maailma kirjeldamiseks. See eeldab vähemalt kahte teadvustamise (meta)tasandi olemasolu (lisaks handi šamaanluses eksisteerivale teadvuse muutunud seisundite kompleksile). Teadvuse kahe tasandi vahelise liikumise väljundit kõneteksti ning käitumuslikul tasandil saab kirjeldada sünkretistlikena. Motiveeriva jõuna topeltusu tekkimisel antud perekonnatraditsioonis oli tabu rikkumine traditsioonilises süsteemis, kus reaktsioonina letaalse lõpuga tagajärje vastu laienes suguvõsa “efektiivne toimimiseruum” uue maailmavaate ja sellest kantud (vaimse) energiallika võrra. Surmast pääses traditsiooni järgi meesliini pidi siiski ainult üks mees põlvkonnast, mida võibki andmete järgi jälgida. Teadvuseprotsesside ja füüsiliste protsesside seost on märkinud Roy Rappoport: “the location, within human organic processes, of the boundary between the domains of the physical and the meaningful is not well known but cannot be a sharp one”. See tekitab paratamatult küsimusi nähtuse toimemehhanismide kohta. Kui hoida kinni mõttelõngast, et šamaanlus on seotud tihedalt “pühaga” ka igapäevaelus ja samuti on “pühaga” seotud rituaalne käitumine, siis peame ühes Rappoportiga nentima, et on lihtne vaadelda rituaalsel tegevusel saavutatavate orgaaniliste muutuste efekti, samas kui neid efekte põhjustavate närvi- või hormonaalsete protsesside tasandil pole toimetede leidmine üldse kerge. Antonio Damasio pakutud emotsioonide ja teadvuse tekkimise mudel “somaatilise markeri hüpoteesi” näol võib anda puuduva lüli kirjelduse või vähemalt seletuse, mis moodi võib meeleline maailm mõjutada inimese füüsilist eksistentsi tema närvisüsteemi kaudu, kui jätta endale õigus mitte kaasa minna tema interpretatsiooniga teadvuse ja personaalsuse eranditult endassesulgunud füsioloogilisest iseloomust.

Samas ei piirdu uurimismaterjal ainult handi traditsionaalse maailma ja vene õigeusu maailma kontaminatsioonidega. Korra toiminud mehhanismi on andmete põhjal kasutanud vähemal üks suguvõsa esindaja, siirdudes linnakeskonda “venelaseks”. Siinkohal jooksevad seoseniidid ühelt poolt Jegor Kante- rovi (Pimi jõgikonnas elav hant) esitatud selge eristamisega “handi maailmaks”, kus šamaanid toimivad, ja “vene maailmaks”, kus nad toimida ei saa. Teise seosena võime näha mitmes kultuuris omast praktikat panna raskelt haigetele uus nimi, et “haigus ei tunneks teda ära”.

Teine artikkel, "Ruumi küsimuse aspektidest hantide ilmavaates" (1997), esindab sisuliselt mõtet, mille järgi inimestel võib olla korraga mitu teadvuse- seisundit, millest mõned võivad läänemaise formaalloomika kohaselt üksteisele risti vastu käia. Artikli teemaarendus algab konkreetsest välitöödel saadud materjalist, kus noore Pimi jõgikonna handi šamanistliku sisuga unenäo- nägemuses asub "alumine ilm" lõunas, vastupidi hantidele üldiselt omistatud maailmamallile, kus lõunas asub "ülemine ilm" ning "alumine ilm" jääb hoopis põhja. Asjaolu lähem uurimine kergitab üles küsimuse, miks hantide kultuuri- areaalis horisontaalse ruumimudeli puhul "ülemise ilma" sihiline püha suund varieerub põhjahantide lõunasuunalisest, idahantide ida- ja põhjasuunaliseni.

Üheks võimaluseks nähtust seletada võib olla hantidele platonlikult idealist-liku maailmamudeli omistamine, mille järgi konkreetse materjaalses maailmas eksisteerivad jõed on ideaalse, taevase "Maailmajõe" materialisatsioonid. Seda mõttekäiku näivad toetavat ka tekstinäited Taevase Põdra või Taevase Haugi saatuse mõjudest maiste põtrade või haugide kehaehitusele handi folklooris, samuti võrdlev materjal sõlkuppide juurest. Teise aspektina räägivad mõned näited (käesolevas artiklis kahte üksteist välistavat lõunasuunda ühel ajal tunnistav informaator, allpool käsitletavates artiklites nähtavad mitmikidenti- teedi näited jne.), et on võimalik ka lihtsalt mitme erineva teadvusetasandi üheaegne toimimine inimese teadvustusprotsessis. Seda mõtet toetab ka Anna- Leena Siikala tõdemusega, et "another prominent feature of folk belief and mythology is the multiplicity of parallel images and ideas".

Artikkel "Jätkuv traditsioon: Vaimunukkude vahetamine Pimi jõe hantide juures" (1996) käsitleb Kanterovide perekonda, mis asetses traditsionaalse kultuuri kontekstis marginaalsel alal, kuid mis tugevate keskkonna muutuste tõttu piirkonnas alustas jõulist sotsiaalses hierarhias liikumist piirialalt keskuse suunas Lotmani semiosfääriteooria mõistes.

Artikli esimeses pooles on esitatud ülevaade idahantide nägemusest haldjate (*hlunk*) ja nende materiaalse maailmaga kontakteerumiseks pühitsetud nukkude kohta. Siinkohal tõstaksin esile, et hantide nägemuses puudub haldjate ning inimeste vahel selge ja diskreetne piir, mis võib olla hantide füüsilise maailma mõjutamise mehhanismiks mentaalse maailma poolt, nagu pühade nukkude hoidjaks määramise (ja üldse traditsioonidest kinnipidamise) vastu tõrkunud perepojaga juhtunud õnnetuste seeria näol näha võime. Antud materjali olen kasutanud ka hiljem identiteedi ja keskkonna vaheliste seoste teemalisel teoreetilisel arutlemisel.

Artiklid "Pimi jõe hantide ohverdusrituaalist 1995. aasta detsembris" (1997) ja "Pimi jõe hantide ohverdusrituaalidest: Teine osa" (1999) moodustavad loogilise terviku ning esitavad konkreetsete sündmuste taustal Pimi jõel asuva Kanterovide perekonna sotsiaalsete positsioonide liikumist üldise kultuuripildi taustal.

Ühe markerina on minu informandid ise välja toonud perekonna korraldatud ühisohverdustel (*jyyr*) osalenud inimeste arvu, konkreetsemalt Kanterovide perekonna korraldatud *jyyril* osalenute arvu nende sotsiaalse positsiooni näitajana Pimi jõe hantide ühiskonnas.

Teine huvitav aspekt on seotud ohverdusrituaali kanoonilise ja ennast-määratleva osaga Rappoporti mõistes. Kui kanooniliste invariantide osas toimub kultuurilise oskusteabe kadu, nagu kultuurišoki läbi elanud Pimi jõe hantide puhul näha võime, siis proovitakse seda otsuste tegemisel kompenseerida isikukeskse (võib ütelda, et egoistliku) enesemääratlemise pinnalt, nagu võime veenduda korraldatud *jyyril* alumistele jumalatele ohverdamise puhul. Ka sündmuste tõlgendused sõltuvad siis suuresti tõlgendaja personaalsetest subjektiivset hinnangut sisaldavatest hoiakutest, mis võivad olla üksteisega otseses vastuolus.

Artikkel “Keskonna mõju Pimi jõe hantide identiteedile” (2001) käsitleb mitut erineva tasandi mõjurit hantide identiteedile. Keskonnaga on seotud eluviis; keskkonna komponendiks on pühapaigad, mille olemasoluga on seotud eluviisi komponent — rituaalid. Materjal näitab, et need mõjurid avaldavad erinevate identiteeditasandite püsimisel otsest mõju, illustreerides linnahantide näidetel Rappoporti abstraheritud rituaalikäsitlust.

Oluline sõnum, mis haakub laiemalt šamaanluse kui handi maailmapildi kandva sambaga, on pühapaikade ja seal sooritatavate rituaalide mõju traditsioonidele tugineva identiteeditasandi ülalhoidmisele. Enesereferents ja -refleksioon on ühed identiteedi tarvilikest komponentidest. Traditsioonidele toetuvad rituaalid hoiavadki alles näiteks linnahantide handi-identiteeti ning hoiavad konkreetsel juhul ära akulturatsiooniga kaasneva venestumise ning pärimusliku maailma hääbumise.

Selles kontekstis tuleb esile sümbolite toimeline omadus olla päästikuks protsessidele, kus vallandavad vastavate sümbolitega kultuurisiseses seoses olevatele (ka identiteedi-) teadvusseisunditele häälustumise koos eelnevast tuleneva käitumusliku väljundiga. Sellega on sõnastatud rituaali identiteeti-loov — taasloov omadus.

Valdavalt teoreetilise suunilusega artiklitest esimene, “Mõnedest mängumudel-duse vormidest antropoloogi pilguga” (2001), keskendub šamaanirituaali struktuurile ning selle võrdlusele simulatsiooni struktuuriga. Teine võrdlusalus on inimese närvisüsteemi iseärasustest tulenev tihe seos emotsioonide ja otsuste vastuvõtmise vahel, mis nii šamaanirituaali kui ka simulatsiooni puhul on olulised karakteristikud. Šamaanirituaalis on olulisel kohal *teadvuse muutunud seisundites* (TMS) saadav informatsioon ja selle põhjal saadud käitumisjuhised mitmesugusteks kriisiületamiseks. Ka mitmete simulatsioonimängude eesmärk on kas kriiside ennetamine või ületamine. Lotman on pööranud tähelepanu mänguseisundi erinevusele inimese tavaseisundist. Teadvuse muutunud seisun-

ditena olen ma selles artiklis vaikimisi käsitletud igasugust teadvuse seisundit, kuivõrd “tavalist” ja “muutunud” teadvuse seisundit teadvustatakse eri kultuuride sisestes kokkulepetes erinevalt.

Artiklis olen toonud kaks võimalust TMS kontseptsiooni rakendamiseks praktikas. Üheks võimaluseks on pedagoogilise tegevuse täiendamine emotsioonide sissetoomisega õppeprotsessi dramatisatsiooni kaudu. Emotsioonide osa kogemuse talletamisel ja otsustusstrateegiate väljakujunemisel tuleks arvestada ka ametlike kooliprogrammide täitmisel. Etnohermeneutilise uurimuse toomine valdkonda aitaks omakorda tekitada seose traditsionaalsetes kultuurides väljakujunenud oma järelkasvule kultuuriruumis toimimise õpetamise meetoditega mõistmise kaudu, mis on ju seotud otseselt nende identiteedi kujundamisega. Igal juhul on see suund huvipakkuv ja samas vajalik majandusliku globaliseerumise oludes kultuurieripära säilitamise vajadust silmas pidades.

Teiseks suunaks oleks narkomaania süvamehhanismi kirjeldus ning sellest tulenevate narkoennetuse tegevuskavade väljatöötamine. Narkomaaniat saab käsitleda kui TMS tarbimist (ka füüsilist sõltuvust tekitavate ainete puhul). Selles võib täheldada vähemalt kahte narkomaaniale ajendavat momenti. Ühe puhul on tegemist puhtakujulise pagemisrefleksiga liigset stressi tekitavast maailmast. Teise momendi juures ei saa alahinnata positiivse rahutuse või stressi rolli otsuste vastuvõtmisel. Vajaliku emotsionaalse pinge saavutamine materiaalsele tarbimisele orienteeritud õhtumaises kultuuris on tehtud võimalikuks keemiliste stimulaatorite, nagu kokaiini, amfetamiini derivaatide jms. manustamisel saadud efektile “*somaatilise markeri*”-mehhanismi kaudu. Seega saab ühe lahendusena välja töötada kultuuripärandil põhinevaid või loovuse avamisele orienteeritud TMSi võimaldavaid tehnikaid, mille kättesaadavus tuleb teha odavamaks kui keemilised narkootikumid. Sellega on võimalik keemilise narkokasutuse väljatõrjumine inimese vajaduste nišist konkureeriva mehhanismi kaudu. Oluline moment on traditsioonide mõju konkreetsetele teadvuseseisundite saavutamise tehnikatele, kuid mis postmodernses eklektilises kultuuriruumis vaevalt võimalikuks osutub, kui rahvusvahelised võimukeskused ei otsusta muuta oma ideoloogia toimimisvektorit majandusliku globaliseerumisega kaasnevalt kultuuriliselt unifikatsiooniliselt kultuurilise mitmekesisuse säilitamise poole.

Artiklis “Šamanism kui infodisain” vaatlen ma šamanismi kontseptsiooni hetkeolukorda ning katsun järjest kuhjuvate deskriptiivsete lähenemiste segadikku vedada mõned üldistavad jooned, naastes šamanismi Anna-Leena Siikala poolse 1978. aasta määratluse juurde uute teadmiste valguses. Artikli eesmärgiks pole seega valdkonnauuringute ülevaatlik hetkejäädvustus, vaid koolkondliku metakirjelduse taaskirjeldamise võimaluste viseerimine.

Olulise laiendina nimetatud määratluses mainiksin esiteks šamaani rollivõtmise (*role-taking*) funktsiooni laiendamist rolli (või identiteedi) andmise (*role-giving, identity-giving*) funktsiooniga sootsiumikaaslastele. Kriisisituatsioonis on tihti tegemist lahenduse puudumisega kriisis viibija teadvuses.

Lahendusotsus sõltub otseselt lisaks emotsioonidele ka identiteeti kandvatest koodidest (sellest tulenevalt maailmavaatest).

Teine moment on ekstaasitehnika laiendamine emotsioonide ohjamise tehnika käsitlusega. Toimiva mehhanismina näeksin ma šamaani kaasasündinud vabade seoste loomise võimet. Vabade seoste kontseptsiooni on kasutatud psühhoanalüüsis alateadvuse protsesside väljaselgitamiseks, samuti loovuse uurimisel psühholoogias ja semiootikas. Mina näeksin selles võimes omadust liikuda võimalikult takistusteta ühest teadvuseseisundist teise, mida võimaldab lai emotsioonide läbielamise võime lai diapason ja sügavus. Samas, mida tugevamateks emotsioonideks on inimene võimeline ning mida vabamaid assotsiatsioone ta suudab luua, seda labiilsem on tema võime püsida kindlates teadvuseseisundites. Sellega saab seletada, miks šamaane on võrreldud hullumeelsetega ning viidatud skisofreeniale. Sama mehhanismiga saab seletada inimese meelehäireid nn. šamaanihaiguse ajal ning selles oleks esilekerkivaid psühhosomaatilisi haigusnähte. Kaasasündinud emotsionaalset ja teadvuse seisundite hoidmise labiilsust saab stabiliseerida kultuuriliselt väljakujunenud meetoditega, mis viivad šamaani meele dünaamilisse tasakaalu kultuuris vajalikeks väljakujundatud teadvuseseisundite lõikes.

Oluline võrdlusalus on tõik, et kuivõrd šamaanid on inimesed, saab samu mehhanisme oletada ka "normaalsete" inimeste juures. Erinevates teadvuseseisundites väärtustatakse (pannakse tähele, teadvustatakse) maailma nähtusi ning nende seoseid (st. korda) erinevate koodide alusel. On võimalik, et mõned koodid tunnistatakse kultuuriprotsesside tagajärjel "üldnormaalseteks" ja nendest kantud maailma teadvustatakse reaalsusena. Tegelikult on võimalikud erinevad alternatiivsed korrad, millest "väljavalitud" tunnistavad ainult ühte "tõelist".

Kolmanda momendina tooksin välja *teadvuse muutunud seisundite* (TMS) kontseptsiooni radikaalsema redigeerimise. 1978. aastal kehtiv jaotus "normaalse" ja "muutunud" teadvuseseisundi eristamise meetodikana on kahtlemata aegunud. Kuna "normaalse" ja "hällbelise" jaotamine on puhtalt kokkuleppeline ja kultuuriti erinev, siis inimeseks olemist võrdlusaluseks võttes saame rääkida pelgalt erinevate teadvuseseisundite pidevspektrist inimese olemuses. Emotsionaalne võimekus on oluline mootor nende seisundite genereerimiseks. Alternatiivsed teadvuseseisundid võimaldavad inimesel tajuda reaalsust erinevalt ning pingestada semiootiliselt oma psüühilist maastikku olulise lisainformatsiooniga reaalsuse kirjeldamatus kaoses peituvate seoste kohta.

Põgusalt olen puudutanud ka müüdi ja šamanismi seoste temaatikat, kuid siin olen piirdunud ainult mõne aspekti äramärgimisega tajupsühholoogia-suunaliste võrdlevate uurimuste vajalikkusele viitamiseks. Nende uurimuste omavaheline kombineerimine müüdile semiootilise lähenemise, rituaali kaudu või mentaalsuse kui ühisidentiteedi väljundi kaudu seostumise, strukturalistliku võrdluse tulemustega võib anda inimõtlejatele huvitavaid motiveerivaid infokooslusi.

Lõpetuseks joonistaksin välja hüpoteetilise ruumi, mille sees ma liigun ja mida ma kaardistan kõikide artiklite lõikes.

Alusteesid ruumi väljajoonistamiseks on järgmised.

1. Meid ümbritseb reaalsuse kaos, milles orienteerumiseks peab inimene tegema väärtust ja tähendust omistavaid otsuseid selle kaose erinevate nähtuste suhtes. Seda kaost on kirjeldatud mitmetes loomismüütides erinevate metafooridena, kuid loomisakti võib läbivalt kirjeldada korrastatud maailma tekitamisega tähendusega täitmise ja nimetamise kaudu. Kuna info vastuvõtmise võime on inimesel tavaseisundis ikkagi piiritletud, peab ta kasutama paratamatult "Occami habemenoa" lõiget eraldamaks talle elutähtsat infot vähem tähtsast. Seda teeb ta valikuliselt, lähtudes kindlastest skeemidest, modelleerivatest süsteemidest, koodidest, mõtlemise maatriksitest, diskursustest, mentaalsetest mudelitest elik mentaliteetidest jms. Nii konstrueerib ta maailma, mida kaldub pidama objektiivseks reaalsuseks, sest talle paistab sedaviisi. Tegelikult saab ta mudeli, mis asendab reaalsust tema teadvuses tunnetusprotsessi käigus. Clifford Geertzi arusaama järgi loovad inimesed enda kultuuri sümbolisüsteemide abil pidevalt oma olukorrast mudeleid, mis võimaldavad neil suunata ja korraldada oma käitumist. Kultuuri võib käsitleda ajalooliselt edasikanduva mudelina, mis avaldub sümbolite kaudu edastuvate käsitluste süsteemina. Nende mudelite abil inimesed kommunikeeruvad, talletavad ja arendavad teadmisi ning hoiakuid oma elust. Samas on just tänu Occami lõikele selge, et inimene ei saa tegelikult rääkida "objektiivsest reaalsusest", me saame vaid toetuda heale usule, et meie arusaam sellest on enam-vähem adekvaatne ning erinevate rituaalsete tegevustega oma usku tugevdada. Erinevates kultuurides nähtud maailm moodustab seega *uskumuste süsteemi* Hoppáli mõistes, mille alla kuuluvad mõisteliselt näiteks nii religioonid kui ka positivism, ateism *etc.*
2. Väljapoole inimmeele seatud piiri jääb ka "pühaduse" nähtuse allikas. Profaanse igapäevamaailma sisse on mahutatud ka "pühad alad", mis on samuti piiriga märgitud. Siinses töös ei puuduta ma pühaduse teemat, sest ei saa veel kõigest piisavalt ammendavalt aru, ka mitte Veikko Anttoneni või Roy Rappaporti abil. Selge tundub vast mehhanismi olemasolu, mille abil inimesed pühitsevad oma usku kehtiva maailmakorra suhtes väljaspool neid oleva "reaalsuse" dogmaatilisel püha autoriteedi abil, olgu see siis personaliseeritud või mitte.
3. Mis tahes kultuuris esinev šamaanlus on uskumuste süsteem, kus šamaanidel on täita selle süsteemi sootsiumisise ülalpidamise ja taasgenereerimise roll. Samas on võimalik tõmmata paralleele erinevate kultuuride (ka selliste, mis ei sisalda peamise kandva institutsioonina šamaane) vahel nii *uskumuste süsteemi* pinnalt kui ka erinevate reaalsuse teadvustamiste ja kognitiivsete maastike korraldamiste vahel inimeseks olemise pinnalt. Šamaanid kui "selle" ja "tolle" maailma vahel liikujad, teadlikult piiri peal tegutsejad ning lääneliku "normaalse" olemise suhtes äärmustes viibijad võivad anda kasulikke kogemusi inimese kui säärase olemise ja tegutsemise mõistmiseks ning

rakendamiseks. Äärmused toovad asjade olemuse selgemini välja. Tundub, et šamanismi kui metakirjelduse roll on koondada tähelepanu just neile ääre- ehk piirijuhtumitele ja -aladele, unustamata seoseid muude inimtegevuse valdkondadega.

Erinevaid kontseptsioone ei saa postmodernses mõtlemises tunnistada objektiivsuse mõõdupuul üksteisest "õigemaks" või "ebaõigemaks". Samas ei tahaks ma leppida vaid "anything goes"-metateooriaga, mida postmodernne metodoloogia endas kätkeb ega piirduda radikaalse konstruktivismi pelga metodika- kesksusega, vaid lisaks juurde idee erinevate maailmakirjelduste disjunktiivsest seostatusest täielikuna kirjeldamatu reaalsuse puutujatena. Samal põhimõttel on ülesse ehitatud ka käesolev kogumik.

ARTICLES

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"Chameleons" of Siberia: Identity and Survival Strategies of an Eastern Khanty Family

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The aim of the present paper is to describe an Eastern Khanty family tradition which can legitimately be characterised as syncretic. In that tradition, the Khanty world outlook and Russian Orthodox faith are tightly interwoven; or rather, it could be said that what we see here are "threads of Orthodox religion woven into the torn fabric of Khanty religion". However, to gain a better understanding of the phenomenon, we should begin with a survey of its context.

The first contact between Russians and "Yugrans" is dated at 1032 (Scheglov 1993: 16). Undoubtedly, there had been earlier contacts, too. After all, the first written reports deal mostly with military campaigns and tax-collecting expeditions. It seems natural that there must also have been different kinds of contact. For instance, there are reports of trade relations, of bartering metal weapons for furs with the "Yugrans" (Scheglov 1993: 17; Balzer 1978: 44).

The location and origins of the "Yugrans" have given rise to heated debates among researchers. The chronicles place them farther to the north and west from their present habitat, thus populating also the Western slopes of the Ural mountains. It seems likely that the Ostiaks (an old name for the Khanty) simply retreated from the oncoming invaders (Scheglov 1993: 15–16). Parallels can be found here with the similar behaviour of the Saami, under similar circumstances. The retreating strategy has been employed by the Khanty later, too, particularly by the Southern Khanty (Balzer 1978: 50–51).

Apparently the Ob-Ugrians first encountered Orthodox mission work through the Zyryans. These contacts were not to conclude happily: two Permian bishops, Gerasim and Pitirim, were

driven away by the Voguls (the Mansi). At the same time, the Ob-Ugrians' fight for freedom commenced, since in Siberia, mission work and conquest have habitually proceeded side by side (Bazanov 1936: 14). In about the 1450s, the Mansi prince Asyka gained renown in the fight against invaders (Karjalainen 1918: 10–11).

In 1587, the first Siberian monastery, that of Znamensk, was founded in Tobolsk. A number of other monasteries followed; the latter were soon transformed into agricultural colonies (Scheglov 1993: 45–46). In 1590, the Tsar issued an ukase ushering in the era of the official colonisation of Siberia. From that year onwards, political prisoners began to be exiled from Russia to Siberia. By way of a curiosity it deserves mentioning that the copper bell of the town of Uglich which had been rung upon the murder of Tsarevich Dmitri, was exiled into Siberia in 1593 (Scheglov 1993: 46–47). At about the same time, it became official policy to christianise the Khanty and Mansi princes. The Grand Duke of Moscow registered to the "converted" princes their lands and gave them gifts. They also received a salary of money and food, occasionally even slaves. The common people regarded such apostatizers with distrust and they did not have much influence, the more so that they usually lived in towns (Karjalainen 1918: 11; Balzer 1978: 55). Generally the converts were somehow associated with treachery.¹

In 1621, the first Archbishop of "Siberia and Tobolsk", Kiprian Starorusenkov arrived in Siberia to lay foundation to the christianization of the Siberian peoples and also erect some monasteries (Scheglov 1993: 63). Yet his activities were not particularly successful, what with the lack of state support. Even worse – the "pops" (Orthodox priests) were forbidden to mix with the native population in order that the interests of the state should not suffer. The basic differences of opinion occurred in the field of the fur tax (so-called *yasak*), but also in the distribution of other tax

¹ According to Scheglov (1993: 50) the first report of an Ostiak's (Khanty's) baptism comes from the year of 1598: "But the Ostiaks of Narym, lead by prince Basarga, conspired together, but their conspiracy was revealed through the denunciation of one from amongst them. And ten of the conspirators, including Basarga, were hanged, and others were whipped with a knout, but the denouncer, the Ostiak Mikita Osipov, was baptized and recruited a Cossack."

items. Also, the baptized natives were as a rule freed of *yasak*, which again lessened the Crown revenues. All this combined to prevent any practical success in the "saving of souls" until the year of 1700 (Karjalainen 1918: 11; Bazanov 1935: 14–15).

An ideological change began with Peter the Great, under whom pragmatic approach to state affairs, including religion, became dominant. Before him, the ascetic and mystical trends stressing the importance of the soul prevailed in the Church all through the Empire. During Peter's reign, the stress was gradually shifted to power (Zamaleyev, Ovchinnikova 1991: 4–5, 189–190). From a meditative Madonna-focused religion the Russian Orthodox faith developed into a rather more aggressive ideology centring on Jesus Christ.

In 1702, Filofei Leshinsky, later honoured as "the Enlightener of Siberia" was appointed Metropolitan of Tobolsk. Filofei is said to have baptized 40 000 heathens and founded 37 churches. In order to reinforce the impact of Christianity, Filofei took Khanty children to schools where they were taught Russian literary language and given a Christian education. The converts to Christianity were, moreover, offered various advantages and even given clothes by the state (Scheglov 1993: 104). Concerning these data, Scheglov refers to Novitski who is, however, severely criticised for falsifying them by Karjalainen (Karjalainen 1918: 15).

Yet missionary work did not prove as simple as that. The monks sent out to the regions of Beryozovo and Surgut were presently forced to turn back home since the local Khanty tended to act out their annoyance (Karjalainen 1918: 12). In 1710 according to Karjalainen, 1714 according to Scheglov, a new campaign of christianization began with the Tsar's ukase on "the destruction of the kumirs and kumireses of the Voguls, Ostiaks and Yakuts and the baptizing of those peoples" (Karjalainen 1918: 12; Scheglov 1993: 112). Under such orders, the extensive baptizing of the Khanty and Mansi commenced: in 1714 the Voguls of Pelym and Northern Ostiaks were baptized, in 1715 it was the turn of the Konda Voguls, in 1716 the Surgut Ostiaks and in 1717 the populace of the Narym

region were baptized.² The Southern Khanty showed particularly fierce resistance since part of them had already received Muslim influences. Eventually, however, they surrendered to christianization unconditionally in fear of military aggression (Karjalainen 1918: 12–13; Bazanov 1936: 16–17). Referring to Muller and Ogrisko, Balzer reports that the tensions between missionaries and natives grew to the extreme, causing the missionaries to use soldiery in their work, whereas the Khanty appealed to higher authorities (Balzer 1978: 430–431). The efficacy of such mission work was demonstrated by the results of the inspection made by Archbishop Yevgeni Kazantsev on the Irtysh and Ob rivers and in the regions of Beryozovo and Surgut in the years 1826 and 1829. He reports that the so-called “baptized” Ostiaks knew nothing about the elementary truths of Christianity – what is worse, they had not even heard the name of Jesus Christ (Bazanov 1936: 32, Scheglov 1993: 104). The reception given to missionaries by the Konda Mansi is illustrated by the story narrated by Anna Konkova, a Konda Mansi, which she had heard from her parents:

“Then the blackcoats came into the village. The village people were summoned, all and sundry were called together. The blackcoats preach: “You must worship God.” All the old men nod agreement: “Of course we worship our gods.” The blackcoats continue: “You mustn’t forget the God.” The old men nod again: “Of course, we never forget our gods.” Then the blackcoats collected three kopecks from everyone and went on. Everybody was content.”

(Anna Konkova. Khanty-Mansiisk, 1991)

The natives’ actual attitudes towards the reception of Christianity are reflected in the reports of the Tobolsk bishop Varlaam to the Synod from the years 1769–1788. With the accession of Yekaterina II, the government’s religious policies underwent a change and the natives’ forceful christianization was brought to an end. The former Bishop Pavel was called back from the Tobolsk diocese and replaced with Bishop Varlaam. According to the latter,

² According to Bazanov, the mission trips of Filofei Leshinsky took place as follows: in 1712 to the Ostiaks of Beryozovo, in 1714 again to Beryozovo and Pelym, in 1715 to the River Konda, in 1716 up along the River Ob to the Khanty of Surgut, in 1726 to Obdorsk (Bazanov 1936: 16).

30 persons were baptized in the Tobolsk district in 1770, 78 in 1771, 80 in 1772 and so forth, the majority of the converts being Tartars, not the Khanty, Mansi or Nenets (Bazanov 1936: 28). Of the Northern Khanty, there are reports indicating that they were indeed formally baptized, but actually remained heathen. The reasons for accepting baptism were mostly pragmatic: for instance, a new white shirt was presented on the occasion which it was good to offer in sacrifice to Mir-Vante-Xo (also known as Mir-Susne-Xum, Postayankt-iki and so forth) (Balzer 1978: 435–436). I obtained similar data in the course of my own field-work. The Khanty of the River Pim, falling into the region of Surgut, were baptized in the church of Tundrino. There, ten metres of white cloth were given to each convert. However, the Khanty themselves claim that christianization was nevertheless carried out by force. (< Yegor Kanterov, Pim, 1995).

The idea of the forceful christianization of West Siberia's native population was not easily given up. A few examples: in 1832, when a special mission to the region of Obdorsk was announced, it caused such agitation amongst the natives that they prepared to flee into the tundra, having previous experiences of similar undertakings. The local government, however, was unnerved by those news since the escapade of the taxable populace into regions difficult to penetrate would have hampered the collection of *yasak*. Thus, the Governor of Tobolsk, Muravyov, appealed to the Synod, begging it to cancel the mission and describing eloquently how the danger of forceful baptism "turns the otherwise peace-loving and good-natured tribes into suspicious and resentful savages, who according to their own reports are prepared to retire into the woods and the tundra, to the East and the North, upon the slightest danger of being forced to receive baptism". The mission was called off, but proclaimed again three years later, when the methods employed thereby indeed caused disturbances among the native population. The strife culminated in the failed campaign of the Nenets aimed at taking the town of Obdorsk, burning its church and slaying the whole Russian population (Bazanov 1936: 33–34).

In the 1880s, missionary activities mainly centred around the mission schools. Additional funds were found for those, and whereas in 1881 there were 229 schools in Siberia, by the year 1896

the number had already grown to 2 251. In addition to spreading the Christian faith among the natives, the schools were also responsible for the Russification of the people. Yet the statistics prove that the proportion of the native children attending such schools was exceptionally low and the results of the "schooling" even poorer (Bazanov 1936: 55–62). The missionaries' efforts at summoning the children to schools were met with fierce resistance. At some places, for instance in Obdorsk, a solution was sought by the attempt at forcefully collecting orphans to the schools. Nevertheless, children were given up to schools only in the most desperate emergency when no other solution could be found (*ibid.*: 76–79).

The Church's christianization policies came to an abrupt end with the bolshevist coup of 1917. Christianity itself became the object of repressions in Russia, which meant that one factor exerting its influence on the Khanty world outlook was replaced with another – Christian ideology with the communist one flaunting atheism and scientific methods as part of its foundations.

All in all it can be said that the Russian Orthodox Church never gained its ends in the christianization of the Khanty. It seems that a more influential role in the emergence of syncretist manifestations was taken by the denizen Russians, the *Sibiryaks* – a fact referred to also by M. Balzer (1978: 325–327).³ Only in the close interaction of two cultures, along the borderline separating them does the translation process from one semiotic system into another become possible, i.e. there emerge links between the elements of the two cultures. This is demonstrated by the fact that neither among the Northern nor the Eastern Khanty can we trace any essential intermingling of the two religions. In their case, the manifestations

³ In her doctoral thesis, Balzer has described not only the impact of Russian culture and the Orthodox faith on the native peoples of Siberia, but also the reverse process – the influences of the local culture on the denizen Russians (Balzer 1978: 332–396). In her treatment of the elements connecting the two world views, however, she seems to presuppose that what we have here are elements of the original Russian paganism surviving under the veil of Orthodoxy. Yet here we should also take into account the possibility that many of the characters of the "superstition" may have their roots in the substratum of Finno-Ugric beliefs mingled with the Russian adstratum and forming the "second wave of paganism" already within a well-structured Christian system. In that case, the picture would become far more elaborate and ill-definable.

of syncretism are confined to the surface like a chameleon's blots of pigmentation changing in accord with its environment.

"We have Christian faith, we've always had it," the old Khanty Semyon Pesikov claimed soon after the sacrifice to the goddess of Kazym and the god of Lyamin. Such statements may easily lead the researcher to think in terms employed for peoples with a similar fate, for instance the Setu of Estonia. In relevant literature, they are described as having a "double faith" or "semi-faith", where the old and new world views have fused and intermingled (Stepanov, Proskurin 1993: 9). Studying the contacts between the Mansi religion and the Christian faith, Ismo Pellikka speaks about acculturation and acceptance of the new faith (Pellikka 1991: 53-54); however, I am not sure that he is justified in drawing such bold conclusions concerning the Ob-Ugrians as a whole. Semyon Pesikov from the Lyamin river made an intriguing statement, saying that the gods are the same for everyone, only the Russians worship them in their own fashion. The same idea seems to have been shared by the Mansi (Lintrop 1997); yet we cannot ascribe all the coincidences of content or detail to the unilateral influence exerted by Orthodoxy. Balzer discerned a number of phenomena among the denizen Russians of Siberia which led her to adopt the term "Khantization", since many of their customs and religious attitudes were similar to those of the Khanty (Balzer 1978: 332-405). We may conjecture that prolonged contacts with the Siberian Russians enabled the Ob-Ugrians to detect features in their religious life which felt familiar, and to conclude on those grounds that the Siberian Khanty and the Russians shared one and the same religion. Nevertheless, my experience has shown that claims like that are exceptional rather than widespread views among the Khanty.

As I have had occasion to point out before, the fusing of elements of Orthodoxy with those of the Khanty traditional religion can be observed in various parts of Western Siberia. Among the Southern Khanty on the Yugan river, for instance, there is evidence primarily of the incorporation of the Virgin Mother and a few saints, like St. Nicholas the Miracle-worker and St. Ilya, into the traditional Khanty world view. The widest spread phenomena are the

identification of *Kaltash-anki* with the Virgin Mary and of *Sorni-iki* (identical with the Mansi *Mir-susne-Xum*) with Christ or with St. Nicholas the Miracle-worker (Karjalainen 1918: 250–251, 259; Lintrop 1997). The same kind of identifications have taken place among the Mansi, as pointed out by Kannisto (Pellikka 1991: 51). Karjalainen, however, discerns also other features in *Mir-susne-Xum*, namely strong influences from the description of St. George (Karjalainen 1918: 259). Oddly enough I have not been able to detect any great popularity of St. George among the Khanty, even though many of his attributes coincide with those of Sorni-iki. Instead of him, St. Nicholas the Miracle-worker who enjoys great popularity all over Siberia and has even been raised into divine honour by many native peoples there, has occupied that place (Balzer 1978: 407–408).

Occasionally, Christ also figures in the religious views of the Khanty, under the name of “Russian God”. Semyon Pesikov even had the following story to tell:

“Once upon a time, the Russian God, Christ, wanted to see how his children were living. So he came down to the earth from his heavenly home. But on the earth, he fell into the hands of robbers, they took him and nailed him onto a cross and threw him onto a garbage heap. Flung some garbage on top of him and walked away. Some time later, a little pig came out into the yard. Goes up to the garbage heap, grouts around in the garbage, all of a sudden notices: *Nu, holera* (Russian for ‘cholera’ – here an interjection meaning something like ‘Damn it!’), they’ve come and killed the Russian God! And ran away in great fear. Aha. Next a chicken came out. Goes up to the garbage heap, rakes there, all of a sudden notices: Christ is lying under the garbage. Began to cackle in a loud voice. The mistress of the house comes out, wonders: What’s that chicken cackling for over there? All of a sudden notices: Oh, the Russian God is killed! Called out to everybody. They came, picked Christ up, washed him clean and set him onto the church altar. There he stayed for three days, then went up to heaven. Aha.”

(< Semyon Pesikov, Lyamin, 1993)

According to Semyon’s explanations, the “Russian God” lives on the third floor of the upper world together with the Tartar god.

There, too, lives the elder brother of the "Khanty God"⁴ whom the latter must obey:

"The Russian god is weak, the Khanty god is powerful. But the Russian god is the Khanty god's elder brother. Therefore the Khanty god must do as the Russian god bids. The Khanty god is young, sometimes he goes roaming, doesn't look after the Khanty, doesn't do his duty. Aha. Then the Khanty gets no fish, gets no game, the family goes hungry. The Khanty invokes his god – to no avail, the Khanty god is occupied with something else. Then the Khanty appeals to the Russian god, offers him sacrifices, complains of the younger brother. The Russian god calls his younger brother and scolds him: "Why have you forgotten your duties, why don't you look down upon the Khanty. He is hungry now, poor thing, no meat, no fish. Now you go immediately and help the Khanty!" The Khanty god looks: "*Nu, holera*, the Khanty really goes hungry." Runs off at once, sets things to the rights. The Khanty gets food again, brings sacrifice to them both."

(Lyamin, 1993)

Such pragmatic approach is further illustrated by a Saami example to the contrary. As late as the beginning of the 20th century, a Saami is reported to have sacrificed a reindeer to the spirits after he had fruitlessly sought help from the Christian god (Kjellström 1987: 24).

The evidence on the identification of *As-iki*⁵ with St. Peter is rather fragmentary. The latter is mentioned in that context by Karjalainen (Karjalainen 1918: 261), but no traces of him can be found nowadays. Another biblical name, St. Ilya (Elijah), figures in Semyon Pesikov's reports as equivalent to the Old Man of the Salym river.⁶ Apparently, the connection is caused by the association of St. Ilya with thunder and lightning among Russians. Elsewhere in the

⁴ When I asked by way of specifying whether the "Khanty god" was the main god of the heaven, Numi-Torum, I was answered in the negative. By the Khanty god, Semyon here meant the latter's youngest son Sorni-iki.

⁵ God of the Ob river, among other functions portions out fish coming from the sea to gods of other rivers.

⁶ In the Khanty religious system, *Salym-iki* is the god of lightning and thunder ruling over seven bird-shaped thunders. Each of the latter had his own name and it is said that knowledgeable old men could even differentiate between them by sound.

Surgut region – on the rivers Pim, Lyamin and Tromagan – Ilya is not known. Perhaps the connection constitutes an “heirloom” brought along from the Yugan river.

Widespread among the Eastern Khanty is the custom of hanging icons – or rather, their reproductions – onto the back walls of their huts and houses, often side by side with a bear’s head. The adoption of Russian Orthodox icons has been noted among the Khanty of other regions, too (Balzer 1978: 52), indicating that the phenomenon has a broader foundation. The attitude towards the icons, however, varies greatly from one region to the other. In some families, it is said about the icon or crucifix that it is just a habit taken over from the parents. On the middle run of the Ai-Pim river the head of a family explained that the icon was good on those occasions when local gods failed; also, it was said to keep malevolent spirits at bay while there was nobody home. If a house contains neither an icon nor a bear’s head, one shouldn’t enter at once after prolonged absence, but must first walk clockwise around the house and knock at the walls with an axe to drive away the spirits.

All sorts of oddities may arise in connection with icons. In one hut, I saw a photograph of a bear attached to the northern wall. When asked whether this was an icon, the master of the house responded, laughing, that it indeed was: “there must always be a *mishka* (‘bear’ in Russian) in the house”. In another hut, my companion Indrek Raudsepp saw a New Year card featuring Father Frost with a Christmas tree on his shoulder. It had been placed into an icon frame and hung into the Holy Corner. Unfortunately I could not find out whom was Father Frost supposed to represent.

Among the close neighbours of the Northern Khanty, the Nenets, the following incident is known concerning the icon of St. Nicholas, which characterises pretty well the attitude of West Siberian native peoples to the new gods. A researcher saw the icon of an old Nenets. He asked: “What’s that?” – “The Russian god Nikolka.” – “Where did you get it?” – “Bought in Obdorsk.” When asked: “What do you need it for?”, the old Nenets answered: “Well, I don’t really need it at all, only my reindeer like it very much, it’s for them that I keep it.” (Yevladov 1992: 110)

In order to understand better the penetration of Christianity into the Khanty cultural room it would be interesting to survey a similar process among the Russians. The latter were officially christianised in the year 988. Baptism was forced on each and everyone; where need arose, swords were resorted to. Namely, in that very year the Grand Duke of Kiev, Vladimir Svyatoslav, accepted baptism and also proclaimed Christianity official religion; naturally his subjects had to follow suit (Zamaleyev, Ovchinnikova 1991: 6). The new religion was needed in order to consolidate the Russian society under one authority (ibid: 11).

For the common people, however, it only meant having to accept baptism, at first. For a long time the traditional beliefs survived until finally a "double religion" evolved, wherein it was difficult to discern which elements were prevalent (ibid.: 17). The Christian god and saints were received into the tradition of popular religion where they gradually came to be identified with the old gods (Tolstaya 1990: 157–159). Thus, it took a long while before Christianity could finally suppress the old heathen religion. Undoubtedly, the shift of accent within Russian Christianity itself had its role to play here. Namely, the worshipping of Christ was supplanted, in Russia, by a Madonna cult (Zamaleyev, Ovchinnikova 1991: 20). Only later, with the transfer of the capital to Moscow, the ideological focus shifted back on Christ.

The popularity of the Virgin Mother was greatly enhanced by the coincidence of her role with those of the old Slavic goddesses. The same can be observed among the Khanty and Mansi. The Virgin Mother of Orthodoxy is here identified with *Kaltash-imi* (Balzer 1978: 397; Lintrop 1997). An important role in the shaping of this view was played by icons, which the Khanty see as representing *Kaltash-imi* together with *Sorni*.⁷ *Kaltash-imi* also seems to be the goddess that gave rise to the legends of the "Golden Dame" which for a long time captivated the fantasy of Siberian adventurers and made their way even into Europe.

⁷ *Sorni* is the Khanty word for 'golden' and is used as an epithet characterizing the heavenly family in general. Therefore, it must always be specified through context which divinity is actually referred to.

Semyon Pesikov offered a peculiar explanation of the figures depicted in the icons. In his winter hut, he has two reproductions of the icon of the Virgin Mother differing only in size. I asked him who was depicted there. He said that the bigger one depicted *Kaltash*, the smaller one – the goddess of Kazym (Lyamin, 1994).

Semyon Pesikov indeed represents a very interesting tradition. Shamanic power was granted to his family by St. Nicholas who thus saved the family from extinction which threatened them as a result of offending the local divinity. Breach of a taboo, “sin”, often brings along illness or death (Balzer 1978: 239–241). Two traditions have been handed down in the family, one for women, the other for men. I would present here the version taken down from Semyon Pesikov:

“Once upon a time there lived a man. He went a-hunting into the forest together with his wife and son. But in the forest he fell ill and died. Seeing his father lie dead, the little boy all of a sudden spoke up: “Father, you are dead now. Lie in peace, do not pursue nor harass us. You live in one world now, we live in another.” His mother listened in wonder, amazed that her son should speak so wisely at so early an age. On their way back home, they felt very tired and sat down under a birch-tree. The son was really exhausted and fell asleep, at once. Mother stayed awake, uneasy about the fate of her son. Then she decided to dedicate her son to St. Nicholas. She raised her voice towards the heaven and invoked Nicholas to look upon her son. Thereupon, a noise was heard from the heaven, as if a horse with a rider had galloped past. That was a good sign, denoting that Nicholas had heard her.

As they got back to the village, they could see nobody moving about. They looked into one hut – nobody; peered into another – not a soul. In the third hut, they saw someone they knew, but he called out: “Begone, make yourselves scarce, quick; the Mistress of the Wood has put a curse on us; otherwise you, too, will perish through it!” The woman and her son did not go away but began to help the sick. Then they also heard what had happened while they were away in the woods.

A hunter from their family had gone to the wood, a-hunting. Sees: a sable runs, a silver chain around its neck. He raised his gun and shot the sable. But when he brought his kill home, his mother was deeply worried to see it. She told him to take the sable back to the wood immediately, but the son coveted the skin of the animal.

So he secretly skinned the sable and threw its body into the garbage hole, but the skin he hid under his bed. At night, somebody walked around the village and called: "Doggie, doggie, doggie!" All night the calling was heard. In the morning, the mother again told her son to take the sable back to the wood, but still the son remained obstinate. Next night again somebody walked around the village and called the dog. On the third morning, the mother again warned the son to take the sable back to the wood. The boy did not listen. On the third night again the calling was heard. But at daybreak, a woman's voice called from the forest: "Why did you, wicked people, take away my pet dog and do not give him back?! Now you must all die!" Then a whistle sounded from the forest, and the sable's body came out of the garbage hole and its skin came out from under the bed. In the yard they met, the body crept back into the skin and the sable was whole and ran away into the forest. After that, the people of that family began to die.

When the boy heard about that, he prayed to Nicholas for help. Nicholas heard him and forbade the forest spirit to kill the people. The forest fee heard him and said: "My power can not overcome Nicholas's. But this little I can do: only one male child will remain alive in your family in each generation. So be it!" Said thus and went away back into the wood. After that, indeed, only one man has remained living in our family in each generation. He inherits the shamanic power. But the power grows less with each generation. And all other men meet their death. My grandfather was a very powerful shaman; my father was less powerful. As for me? Oh, what's there to be told about me..."

(Semyon Pesikov, Lyamin, 1992).

In the version told to women, the episode about praying to St. Nicholas seems to be omitted. At any rate, I didn't hear it in the versions of Semyon's two daughters, who also spoke about their family tradition. At the same time it could be felt that they were aware of the shamanic lineage in the family. Perhaps we have here an attitude similar to that which forbade women to be in contact with various holy phenomena,⁸ e.g. holy objects, holy places and also holy narratives. This kind of taboo has been observed by

⁸ An exception was often made for girls before their menstruation began, and for old women who had passed menopause.

several researchers (Karjalainen 1918: 190, Balzer 1978: 111) and I have written down a story like that from the upper course of the river Pim, where women were forbidden to listen to the second, holy part of a folk tale. One of them, however, broke the rule, hid herself behind the tent wall and remained listening. As the last words of the tale were uttered, she dropped down dead.

In the family tradition described above, the coincidence of several details reveals how Nicholas the Miracle-worker has been identified with *Sorni-iki*. The following story also demonstrates that Semyon regards Nicholas and *Sorni-iki* as fused into one:

"I was watching the starry sky with Semyon. Semyon showed me the ski track of Nicholas (our Milky Way) and the reindeer of heaven (our Ursa Major). The belt of Orion he interpreted as Nicholas's sabre which he had dropped in the zeal of his pursuit, whereas the Pleiades were his pouch, also lost in hurry. According to the myth, the reindeer of heaven originally sported six legs and could therefore run so fast that no hunter was able to catch it. Then Nicholas undertook to catch the reindeer, himself. Hunted him all over the sky, dropped his pouch and sabre scabbard, but finally caught the reindeer and chopped two of its legs off. From that time on, reindeer have only four legs and are thus slow enough for hunters to catch them."

(Lyamin, field notes 1993)

Later, I heard fragments of the same story from the other Khanty of the Pim river, but the protagonist in their version was *Sorni-iki*. In Semyon's world view, *Sorni-iki* and Nicholas have been fused into one. Once he even claimed that Nicholas was a "Khanty god". Elsewhere, too, I found implications of the coincidence of the two persons. The main seat of worship of *Sorni-iki* or *Mir-susne-Xum*, for instance, is located on the confluence of the rivers Ob and Irtys near Khanty-Mansiisk (there are similar data from the Khanty of Tegi (Balzer 1978: 169). On the same spot, according to Semyon, there once stood a statue of Nicholas which the Christian missionaries made a futile attempt to destroy:

"Nicholas had a huge bronze statue near Khanty-Mansiisk. All the people of the neighbourhood came to him to offer sacrifices. The black-coats grew envious of him and complained to Moscow. The Tsar ruled that the statue be destroyed. Then the blackcoats came

and set fire to [Nicholas'] statue, but the statue would not burn. Then they tried to drown him, but the statue would not drown but remained floating on the water. Finally they pushed the statue floating downstream and went home happily. But presently they discovered the statue standing again on its place. Aha... The blackcoats then sent another letter to Moscow, to the Tsar. Then the Tsar ordered that the statue be sent to Moscow.

One night the Tsar went into his bedroom to go to sleep; all of a sudden he felt an alien presence there. He wanted to call in the guards, but a man's voice said: 'Don't call the guards if you want to stay alive.' So the Tsar kept quiet and the man continued: 'Why did you invite me here?' The Tsar retorted: 'I have not invited anyone!' - 'Yes, you did, I am Nicholas' the man continued: 'your life is at stake, there is a plot against you.' The Tsar did not believe him, but Nicholas showed him a tunnel dug under his bedroom and filled with gun-powder. Then the Tsar called in the guards and cast the conspirators into dungeon. Then he thanked Nicholas and promised to cause him no further inconvenience. The Tsar also gave him a huge silver tray and then Nicholas came back to his place."

(< Semyon Pesikov, Lyamin, field notes 1993)

Mir-susne-Xum had a shrine near Khanty-Mansiisk. A legend tells how *Mir-susne-Xum* got a birch with golden leaves from his father and planted it near the confluence of the Ob and the Irtysh. That birch has been interpreted as the "World Tree" connecting different worlds (Balzer 1978: 169-170).

As for family history, Semyon's father Pavel Pesikov came to the Lyamin region from Ugut on the Yugan river. He and his brother left home in order to escape the curse put on the family. In the Yugan river basin, the Pesikovs became extinct since the surviving male family members escaped the region. Pavel Pesikov's brother married a Russian and went to live in town. Nothing is known about his children.

Semyon Pesikov was born on 15 May, 1928. He begot four daughters and a son, who died at an early age. Semyon also had a brother who died after an unsuccessful attempt at using *Amanita* and left no children. Semyon's brother had tried forcefully to gain shamanic power, since their father, a powerful shaman according to

all accounts, refused to bequeath his shamanic power to him.⁹ Thus, Semyon is the last male representative of his family.

Semyon's story about the "Khanty god" and the "Russian god" was presented above, by way of an example. Karjalainen describes a similar case, of a Khanty agreeing to his son being christened in the name of Nicholas, should Nicholas but give him a plentiful catch of game and fish (Karjalainen 1918: 47). Karjalainen suggests explanations referring to reindeer and human sacrifices, but I rather tend to think that we have here a case of giving the child under the "Russian" god's protection. In earlier days a Khanty god was found who "turned his head towards the child"; with the advent of Christianity, however, it sometimes happened that foreign protectors were found for the child. As a result of that, the person was partially lost for his parents' world system. Semyon's youngest daughter, for instance, was given under St. Ilya's protection in childhood and later married a Ukrainian. Her children no longer speak Khanty and are practically lost for the Khanty world. The eldest daughter went under the "Russian god's" protection and in adulthood, she purposefully went to town to lead a "Russian life". The protector of the third daughter was Mother Earth – *Myg-imi*. At first she married a Latvian. Her children live in Latvia and identify themselves with Latvians. Later she got divorced, returned to Khantyland and married a Khanty. From that marriage, she has no children.

In the chapter concerned with Christianization, M. Balzer concludes that the Khanty usually turned to Christianity when there was some benefit to be hoped of it (Balzer 1978: 438). But a more profound appeal to the foreign power is possible, too, namely when some unsurpassable misery threatens within the native system. During such crises people are usually indeed more receptive to foreign influences – a phenomenon successfully exploited by sectarian missionaries in the Western society. Best of all, such new influences can penetrate the peripheral areas of society where

⁹ The Khanty believe that shamanic power can be acquired in various ways, among them by bequeathing or handing the power on to another person. According to Semyon Pesikov, the power grows less in the latter case, unless it be strengthened with personal power or additional power be gained from the gods.

people repressed for some reason are searching for new sources of energy. As a matter of fact, such new sources also constitute a benefit. In the traditional Khanty society, social status and the division into centre and periphery have been connected with owning shamanic power (Barkalaja 1997: 66).¹⁰ Also connected with that is survival, both individual and of families, since shamanic power enables to come to terms with gods and spirits. This idea, being widespread among the Khanty, has also exercised considerable influence on their practical choices.

Indirect testimony to this fact can be found in a Southern Khanty's confession quoted in the notes of Karjalainen: "The Ostiaks neglected their old gods, no longer held them in honour nor brought them offerings, but they failed to win over the Russian gods and that's why the Ostiaks are dying" (Karjalainen 1983: 21–22). Among the Khanty, it has generally been the shamans who bore the burden of maintaining culture and vitality of the society. Therefore they fell under the strongest repressions from Russians, e.g. in the aftermath of the Kazym War (Leete 1996: 392–405), constituting the social force which prevented the assimilation of the Khanty with "the Soviet people". In various regions where the authorities were easily able to reach the Khanty communities and thus had a certain control over them, the Khanty stopped practising their rituals and gave up the attributes associated with them. A Khanty woman from the Little Ob region, from the village of Korvozye, told about how she had had shamanic power but had been deprived of it by her grandfather, a shaman himself, so that the child might have an easier life to lead.

"/.../At the age of eleven, I began to suffer from headaches. I lost consciousness several times a day, sometimes even at school, during the classes. Also, my nose bled frequently. While I was unconscious, I kept seeing little spirits all around me who kept shouting at me at the top of their voices. I was afraid of them, terribly afraid. My grandfather was a very powerful shaman. So was my father, but not quite as powerful as grandpa. Grandpa said I should become a shaman, then the "dolls" (my quotes, A.B.)

¹⁰ Here I should like to differentiate between social status and prosperity. According to Yegor Kanterov, my informer from the Pim river, the shamans were often very poor and yet wielded social authority.

would let me alone. But grandpa thought it would be dangerous for me to become a shaman, the Russians were persecuting them all the time. So he told me he would take away my headaches. Then we went into our old village. Grandpa made a fire. He seated me right next to the fire. Then he warmed up his drum over the fire and beat it. Then he rubbed my head with his drum three times, clockwise. After he had rubbed it three times, it didn't ache any more. Then he took a stretch of cloth, new cloth. He tore it into eight strips and threw the strips into the fire. The strips rose into the heavens. After that my head no longer ached, but I had lost my shamanic power, too. Grandpa said I wouldn't need it. Now I'm not able to shamanize. But I know quite a lot about how it was done. One could also shamanize in a dark room. /.../"

(Little Ob river, Korvozye village, field notes 1993)

The Khanty of that village also gave up celebrating most of their rituals, practising mostly only burial rites. Social identity, however, is retained through general rites (Mol 1978: 191) and having common sacred places. If a person no longer has a sacred site, he usually loses orientation in ethical values and his social activity destabilises, loses its constructive character. Socially, he becomes declassed. That process can be observed in the Russinskiye village, Surgut region. As we saw above, repressions against the traditional faith took place under the Tsars, too, and it can be guessed that many Khanty, particularly the Southern ones, gave up their old religion as a result of that; this is also reflected in Karjalainen's note.

The syncretic features of the Pesikovs' personal orientation system were in a sense forced upon them, since the family had broken a taboo. Total annihilation could be evaded either by leaving behind the old social order or by finding a more powerful protector in the sacred sphere. Over the years, some of the male family members chose the first alternative, moving to town and becoming "Russians". At least the Pim river Khanty make a difference between the "Khanty world" and the "Russian world", as I learned in response to my question, why the Khanty do not use their shamanic power to defy the Russians. I was told then that a shaman might exercise power over another Khanty, but not over a Russian, because Russians came from a different world.

The circumstance of finding a more powerful protector is asserted by the family tradition; however, the protection remained relatively restricted. Whether this fact can be associated with the relatively restricted position held by Christian saints in the world view of the Southern Khanty (North of the River Ob the Khanty of the Surgut district have never recognised St. Nicholas nor St. Ilya as "Khanty gods") remains, in the lack of relevant information, a mere hypothesis. At the same time, there are no data arguing against the presumption that even though the Southern Khanty had already identified St. Nicholas and St. Ilya with Sorni-iki and Salym-iki, respectively, the rather recently established position of those saints did not allow for any considerable expansion in the Khanty subconscious system of world evaluation. Yet precisely the novelty of the St. Nicholas/ Sorni-iki personage in the Khanty traditional world view could have been the distinctive feature enabling him to save taboo-breakers. Referring to Mol's definition of religion as sacralization of identity, Gopalan stresses the priority of the sacralization process before its end result (Gopalan 1978: 124). Like art, religion can also be regarded as a secondary modelling system where the process of creating a symbol system and interpreting reality through it is central (cf. Lotman 1990: 9). Advancing from those grounds we can sketch the following hypothetical outline: 1) in order to escape the punishment for breaking a taboo one must abstract himself from the realm where the punishment might take effect; 2) this can be accomplished through a change in identity and in thinking; 3) the changed identity must be justified through sacralization; 4) supporting their traditional culture, the Khanty refrain from devising a new religion and incorporate instead into their world view a *bricoleur* – an "almost"¹¹ alien power represented by the contamination of Sorni-iki/ St. Nicholas.

¹¹ By saying "almost" I want to refer to a situation described by J. Lotman: seeing a striped dressing-gown hanging over a chair, the playing child does not fear it as if it were alive nor feel safe as though it were a stuffed tiger, but suspects it, *almost fears*, because the play situation allows his imagination and thinking to play.

According to Lotman, playing is one of the most important ways of adjusting to different situations and learning different types of behaviour. Playing constitutes the realization of a specific – "playful" – mode of behaviour. Lotman places it between practical and conditioned behaviour, assuming that play enables both behaviours to be realized at

Thus, the old world outlook is retained, for all practical purposes, and the "hole" in its fabric "patched up" with elements borrowed from another religion. The identity accordingly remains "a border-line case", enabling to mediate structured energy or information from one "world" into another, in the present case from the Orthodox world into that of the Khanty religion. As a result of the repression of Orthodoxy by Soviet authorities, the influx of fresh energy was dammed and the Pesikov family entered yet another crisis which, so far as the present data can suggest, they have not been able to overcome: the male line has come to an end and thus the bearers of the name and the shamanic tradition are dying out. The extinction of the family's shamanic lineage can be interpreted as a reaction to negative changes in the environment. Psychology has provided examples of somatic changes taking place as a result of convinced belief – e.g. a blister appearing on skin touched with a pencil if the person was convinced that he would be touched with red-hot metal. Such conviction may develop also in the subconscious, for example in hypnosis. Autosuggestion should also be considered in this connection. We may conjecture that the Pesikov family escaped the fatal punishment entailed by the breach

once (Lotman 1990: 12–13). Nevertheless it would seem that the formal analysis of the play phenomenon overlooks the *magical* aspect of play. To exemplify an infringement on the twofold nature of game in favour of practical behaviour, Lotman quotes an extract from Pushkin's notes. After the Pugachov uprising, children playing the "Pugachov mutiny" divided themselves into two camps: the "policemen" and the "rebels". The game developed into a serious enmity and one of the boys very nearly hanged another (Lotman 1990: 14). At the Khanty ritual bear festival (Russian *medvezhiye igrishe* – 'the bear game'), however, the participant embodying a certain personage actually *is* that personage, that is, the player acts during the game in a changed state of consciousness. Thus it is no wonder that the "policeman" in his wrath should try to hang the "rebel". The stress is here shifted into the realm of sacralization and profanation; a good example of the latter is offered by various simulation games.

I regard play as an important means of overcoming crises, since the successful solution of critical situations is closely connected with the ability to take decisions. The latter, again, is associated with emotional capability (Damasio 1994), which in its turn stands in close interconnection with playfulness. In Pentikäinen's conclusion, *affektio* is one of the aspects of faith (Pentikäinen 1986: 15).

During the Ob-Ugrians' bear festival, shifts of meaning and interpretation are generated through play: the killing of the bear is transformed through play into inviting him to visit and sending him back home, that is, to the forest, later on. Here we may observe a shift in the relationship between bear and man, accompanying its sacralization.

of taboo by means of turning their mind and attention towards the Orthodox faith. After the events of 1917, however, they found themselves in a dead end since the source of the sacralization of their identity and accordingly also of the holy justification of their existence dried up. As they proved unable to find a new source, that is, to think in a new way within the framework of the old symbol system, the spiritual equivalent of the second law of thermodynamics began to operate. The Russian poet B. Grebenchikov has written: "*Kazhdyi umryet toi smertyu katoruyu pridumayet sam*" – "Each dies the death he can think up for himself". We can only agree with him, adding the extension: "Each lives the life he can think up for himself".

Translated by Triinu Pakk

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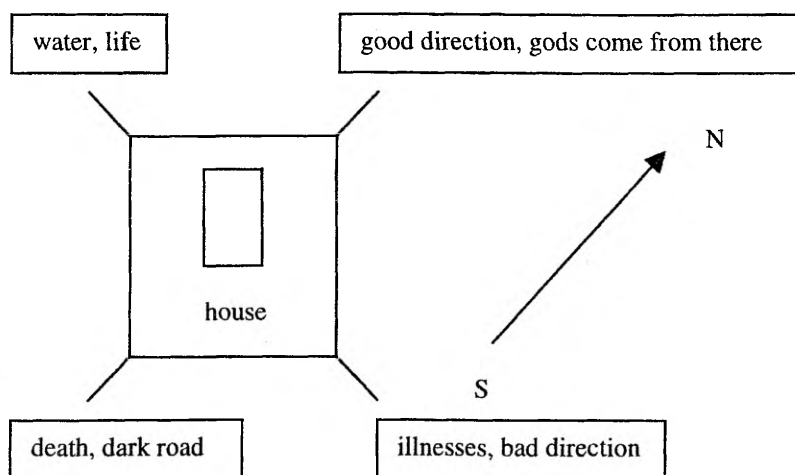
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On the Aspects of Space in the Khanty World Outlook
Transl. from “Ruumiküsimuse aspektidest hantide ilmavaates.”
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ON THE ASPECTS CONCERNING THE QUESTION OF SPACE IN THE KHANTY WORLD VIEW

The subject of directions was brought to my attention through the material that I had gathered during my expedition in the summer of 1997 concerning the so-called shamanic disease that a young Khanty Ilya Kanterov was suffering from. My main informant was Ilya Kanterov's neighbor, Anna Petrovna Nimperova, due to the fact that the man himself was not inclined towards contact at the time. The disease had begun soon after a communal sacrifice of the Pim Khanties at the end of December, 1996. Ilya was bothered by spirits who forbade him to go out at night and attacked him if he did not obey their command. Ilya did not mention anything to anyone about the first visit from the spirits, but soon after that he became very sick because the spirits had attacked him and demanded that he should tell about his experience to the neighbors. The interesting part of the story was how Ilya could no longer put up with the situation and made an attempt to escape. However, this story contained much evaluative information concerning directions, and more specific questions enabled me to draw up the following graph:



In his vision, Ilya took a road leading towards the south. There was a woman sitting by the road who would not let Ilya go further and demanded a passport. When Ilya had presented his passport, the woman checked his name from the list but could not find his name there. She told him to go back because no person whose name is not on the list can pass through. This incident is similar to the information from Gondatti concerning the North Khanties who believe that the heavenly god gives a list of those destined for death to the god of the underworld. The god of the underworld will drive the souls to the underworld according to the list (Kulemzin 1984: 126). Karjalainen, also drawing upon the tradition of the North Khanties, writes that the heavenly god does not keep account of the souls himself, but instructs his personal secretary to do so (Karjalainen 1918: 37). Other sources, however, state that it is the wife of Num-Torum, Kaltesh, who

keeps account of the person's life and even has her own account book for this purpose (Schmidt 1989: 223). This belief is widespread also among the Pim Khanties.

According to established conception, the shaman's state during the ritual is characterized by concepts such as *trance*, *ecstasy* and *possession*, commonly termed as *altered states of consciousness*. The experience gained in this state largely depends upon one's cultural background (Siikala, Hoppál 1998: 26–27). According to A. Lintrop, the shaman's visions and conception of the world can be considered as belonging to what is termed the *legend reality*. The subconsciousness of the shaman generates creatures whose representations are formed in accordance to the formal requirements of the traditional worldview as it has come down through the songs and stories of older generations (Lintrop 1995: 62, 155–156; Lintrop 1996: 63–64). We can suppose, therefore, that the events and descriptions of space within these visions conform to the same mechanism.

The legend as a genre, as it can be observed, reflects folk belief that reiterates the beliefs of the community and its value judgements. Using the psychological perspective G. Isler has suggested that the legend fulfils a deeply religious function, because of its having been formed from the combination of personal experience, elements of folk belief and subconscious archetypes (Tangherlini 1990: 379–380). Eliade, likewise, has stressed the shaman's ability to open the door to the 'other world' through personal experience. In fact the distinction he makes between North-Asian ordinary mortals and shamans rests solely upon this ability. What serves as a cosmological ideogram in the worldview of an ordinary person, becomes for the shaman the settings for mystical travels, which actually makes it possible to have real communication between the three parts of the world (Eliade 1974: 265).

The definition of faith according to Spiro and Geertz lets us conclude that religion is a system of orientation that condones the right action (Spiro 1986: 63; Geertz 1986: 93). We need not enter the debate as to whether shamanism is a religion or not, right now it is enough to only note the fact that shamanism as a phenomenon is related to beliefs, and as such functions as a system of orientation that secures the adequate action¹ for the Khanty people. In order to navigate in a space², one must create a certain web of orientation that fixes the elements into points of operation. These points are invested with various values and as such comprise the space we perceive around us, or also can serve as the model of the world that becomes substituted in our consciousness as the actual reality in all of its endlessness of potential manifestations (Lotman 1990: 8). The elements of space that have not been invested with any value are overlooked and are thus left outside the model. In other words, they do not exist for the conscious mind. The stories heard from grandparents and great-grandparents, encourage the future shaman to attribute value to the phenomena outside of our 'physical world' so in the

¹ An excellent example here would be the Kanterov family living by the Pim river who, as a result of the shaman war, lost their shamanistic abilities whereupon the operational strategy based upon these abilities did not work any more (Barkalaja 1996: 128–129).

² The notion of space, in this paper, is not used to denote only physical space in a narrow sense, but also comprises any environment in which being takes place (see Heidegger 1996: 30–34). For a human being, the attribution (appropriation) of values is a necessary prerequisite for being, which does not of course mean that phenomena without value would be non-existent, but rather are non-being (*ibid.* 88). This means that they do not exist for a person who has not attributed any value to the given phenomenon. For another, the same phenomenon can perfectly exist insofar as he/she attributes some value to it.

process, the *reality of legends* becomes a natural component of the world for the shaman.

If we proceed from the fact that shamans' visions depend upon the traditional worldview to a great degree, then the visions of Ilya Kanterov as described above should theoretically have a larger context in the form of beliefs. But let us compare this view to other similar data.

Literature pertaining to Ob-Ugrians does not include works that specifically treat directions and their significance. The sporadic data that there is lacks systematization and is often contradictory. There is some information that indirectly concerns directions e.g. information related to graves, funerary customs, sacred buildings and the construction of dwelling houses. Since the household management of Ob-Ugrians and their way of life largely reflects their idea of the cosmic world order (Gemujev 1990: 3, 28–29, 218–219), we can use this data to improve our understanding of these aspects of the Khanty and Mansi world view that are of interest to us.

Khanty and Mansi houses usually have a definite orientation in relation to directions. Thus the houses of the North Khanties living in Shuryshkary region of the Nenets Yamal autonomous area are situated along the north-south axis, with the door opening towards the north (Malin 1982: 139). According to data from Lepekhin and Pallas, the South Mansi had their doors open towards north or east (Sokolova 1963: 206). Ahlquist, on the other hand, claims that the doorway always faces south (*ibid.*). Many researchers are of the opinion that there is no overall orientation, and that the houses are situated according to the rivers, with the door opening towards the river (*ibid.*). The doors of the houses of Pim Khanties are directed towards south. Likewise, the doors of the *chums* of the Khanties living by the upper course of the rivers Pim and Tromyugan face south.

Normally there is a sacred corner or shelf in the house, just opposite the doorway, where sacred dolls or other items with sacred meaning are placed (Karjalainen 1918: 144–146, Gemujev 1990: 24). This sacred corner in the house faces the direction that is associated with the upper world; thus in the case of Mansi and North Khanties, it is in the south, whereas in the case of the Pim and Tromyugan Khanties, who are Eastern Khanties, it is in the north. Likewise, I have observed that the sacred barns and sleds next to the Lyamin river and in the upper course of the Pim and Tromyugan rivers are located in the direction of north from the perspective of the house or *chum*. Prayers and sacrifices are directed towards the north. At the same time, Gemujev refers to the data from the Russian ethnographer Sorokin from the year 1873 according to which the sacred structures of Mansi are built so that they could be approached only from north, whereas the apparatus related to prayers and sacrifices was placed in the southern section of the *chum*. His material also includes a Mansi informant's claim that the gods are always worshipped while facing south (Gemujev 1990: 27). According to Karjalainen, on the other hand, Khanties in the south pray towards the sunrise (Karjalainen 1918: 445). Unfortunately, Karjalainen does not specify the exact source of this information.

The orientation of the graves is extremely varied, and many researchers have attempted in vain to systematize it. Thus in some areas it is told that the dead must be placed with their feet towards the north so that it will be easier for him/her to find the way. In other regions, the dead are placed with their head towards the north because this is how the person would be if he/she were travelling towards the north. The information from Yugan is more valuable. The graves are situated according to the old river bed there as the dead are believed to be moving along with the current (Kulemzin 1984:

143). It seems that this explanation accounts for the practice of Ob-Ugrians as well as of other Siberian peoples such as Nenets and Selkups to bury their dead in boats (Karjalainen 1918: 66–67; Gratskova 1979: 254, 256, 259). A boat-shaped coffin was used among the North Khanties and Vakh region Khanties, among the North and Pelym Mansis (Sokolova 1980: 131), and the Lyapin and Sosva Mansis who situated graves with the head facing the north since it was believed that the lower world could be found in the north (Sokolova 1971: 235). Kazym Khanties were also familiar with the practice of burying their dead in boats (Balzer 1978: 286). The dead in the Pim region are entombed with the head facing the south i.e. with the current of the river, but it is also explained that since people sleep with their head facing north, the dead must lie in the opposite direction because in the underworld everything is turned upside down. In the upper course of the Tromyugan river the dead are also buried in this way (Kulemzin 1984: 143–144). Next to the Vakh river the dead are buried with their head facing east, according to one reference, due to the evil spirits in the west who carry people and their souls away. The east, on the other hand, is a good direction because a general life-giver Anki-Pugos lives there (Kulemzin 1989: 144). Sokolova, however, has documented that next to the Vakh river the coffin was placed with the head facing north-west (Sokolova 1971: 232). Next to the river Salom the dead are buried along the east-west axis so that the dead “could see the sunrise” (Kotov 1993: 88). Near Vezhakary by the Ob river, the dead were buried with their head facing the east, or towards the river (Sokolova 1978: 234). In the Shuoshkaro region among the North Khanties the graves are mostly situated with the head facing the north or north-east, whereas the *ura*-barns, where the dolls of those who have died from unnatural causes are contained, face the north as well as the east, and some even face the west (Zolk 1982: 157–161). Unfortunately, there is no background information concerning those *ura*-barns that would help explain this apparent irregularity. Karjalainen’s material perhaps includes some hints as does the reference Balzer makes to Holmberg and Patkanov, according to whom the souls of those who had met a violent death (those killed in the battlefield or torn up by animals) went straight to the upper world (Karjalainen 1918: 126–127; Balzer 1978: 318). This means that these souls followed the direction opposite to that of the regular dead and consequently, some *ura*-barns could likewise have been situated in view of an upper world orientation.

In Sokolova’s interpretation, the graves were first situated along the north-south axis, whereas it is not specified in exactly which regions the dead were directed with their head towards north and in which regions the head faced south. Later on the dead were said to be buried along the east-west axis, whereas again, both axes of burying directions are mentioned without any specific detail as for the directions in specific regions (Sokolova 1980: 137). Kulemzin has justly remarked that each case of the position of the dead in the graves deserves a special attention. Despite the observed tendency to bury the dead according to the direction of the current of the river, the Ob river changes its direction and thus, we must take into consideration certain regional peculiarities (Kulemzin 1989: 144).

True enough, the orientation of houses, sacred places and graves in respect to directions is varied. However, the main conditions would become simpler if we could focus on the directions following the perspective of Khanties themselves. According to information from Kulemzin, originally Khanties had only two directions — north and south. East and west were brought into usage later, “for Russians”. Upon the translation of the directions it turns out that North (*il*) means in translation “the lower direction”,

and south can mean either “day” or “sky” (*nom*), or sometimes “the opposite direction” (*melek telek*). Names can differ depending upon the region. Also of interest is the information relating that in the Agan region the name “lower below” denotes west, whereas in the Tromyugan region it denotes east. Near the Vakh river north is signified by the word “cold land”, and south by the word “warm land”. The names of east and west are translated as “the-sun-is-rising-gods-direction” and “the-sun-is-setting-gods-direction” (Kulemzin 1989. 171–172). One way of interpreting these names is as ‘the direction of the gods of the sunrise’ or in other words, “the direction of the gods of the upper world and as the direction of the gods of the sunset” or in other words the direction of the gods of the lower world. In light of this interpretation, the east-west axis assumes far greater importance than the north-south axis. Near the Salym river, the word *num* (‘upper’, ‘higher’) is used in order to denote an eastern direction (Kotov 1993: 88).

One colorful incident refers to the relativity of the conception of directions among Ob-Ugrians. The Russian researcher Gemuyev once visited a Mansi sacred place and asked his guide which direction South was. The guide pointed toward the *ura*-barn that contained the spirit dolls. Gemuyev checked the direction with his compass and found that South was in a completely different direction. The guide was not disturbed and stated: “South is also that way.” (Gemuyev 1990: 27).

Insufficient as this information is, it can still be observed that there are some obscure outlines of certain groupings. One group of direction orientations is based upon the north-south orientation in which north signifies the lower direction and is oriented towards the situation of the lower world, whereas south signifies the upper direction and points towards the upper world. Northern Khanties (Karjalainen 1918:123, Schmidt 1989: 191, Balzer 1978: 316) and Mansis (Gemuyev 1990: 27) belong to this group. Since the upper world is situated towards the south, prayers take place when facing south. The Lyamin, Pim and Tromyugan Khanties pray towards the north. Similarly, the sacred corners or walls in houses, and sacred barns and sleds are situated towards the north. The dead are buried with their heads facing south. The whole picture is completely opposite. The third group mentioned here seems to attribute greater importance to the east-west axis. This information comes mainly from the Vakh river region and also partly from the Agan river region. Information can be added according to which the Alexandrov Khanty living in the same region have stated that the shaman must go and consult the devil to find out the result of a hunt. He must go to where the sun sets (Kulemzin 1984: 99–100).

Let us compare these groups with the map of West Siberia. The Ob river flows mainly along the east-west direction in the areas inhabited by Khanties and Mansis. Near Belogoria it then turns towards a south-north direction.

The main places of worship among Mansi and North Khanties stretch along the region beginning from Khanty Mansiisk and end around the mouth of the Ob river where the realm of the dead or the lower world is located. Near Khanty Mansiisk there is a place of worship called “Man looking at people” (*Mir-Susne-Hum*). Eva Schmidt has described the journey of the soul of the dead along the Ob river in which it first turns toward Kaltesh (*Kaltõsonõ* settlement), then if no help is forthcoming from there, it moves on to the “Man looking at people” in Belogoryie, and in cases when no help is forthcoming from there, the last hope resides in the “Old man of the sacred town” in Vezhakary. The latter god is an important one for the Northern Khanties and Mansies and his hypostasis is a bear and a mouse, and his dwelling place is the most important

Kulemzin, Pim Khanties denote north with the word “below” and south with the word “day” (Kulemzin 1984: 171). This again causes problems for the European mind that strives for logic and clarity.

The river Vakh runs along the east-west direction. The names of these directions are also associated with gods. Thus they sacrally possess a greater degree of value than the directions of north and south. At this point it is worth remembering assertions according to which the devil³ lives down the current towards the west, whereas the most important goddess of the region, the life-giver Anki-Pugos, has her home in the east, against the current of the river.

As a stray philosophical thought, it occurs to me that for Khanties the Ob river is not the real World River, but rather its earthly manifestation in the platonic spirit, being just one among the many. This applies to other peoples besides the Ob-Ugrians. As an example, A. Lintrop’s “The Shaman Book” contains a Selkup drawing in which the artist has consider the river of his tribe, the Cedar Nutcracker, as being the World River. It is very likely that had the artist been a member of the Eagle tribe, he would have depicted the Eagle river as the world river. This is also suggested by Lintrop (Lintrop 1995: 65). By the same token, the tree from which a chip was taken for the hub of the shaman’s drum, was considered as the cosmic World Tree, or the Centre of the World (Eliade 1974: 168–169). The “centre” is not fixed, but can occur in any sacred spot (*ibid.* 259–260).

The archetype of the world river can influence the value scheme of the Pim, Tromyugan and Lyamin River Khanites by the principle that since the upper world is located on the upper course of the World River, then followingly, the upper world is located towards the direction of the sacrally most important river⁴ in the region. The same model can be valid among the Vakh River Khanties, but their upper world is situated where our east is. When we think of the attitude of the Mansi guide towards the points of the compass and other analogous cases⁵, we can then hypothesize that the

³ The devil was clearly a figure of the underworld. The name of the devil here obviously occurs as a Russian translation equivalent of some Khanty god or spirit of the underworld as used by the Khanty informant. Another name of the Ob-Ugrian gods or spirits utilized by Russians or used in Russian translation, was *saitan* (Karjalainen 1918: 136), but this was used in somewhat broader sense.

⁴ The sacral centres by the Ob are important in a vast area that comprises the common cultural space of Mansis and North Khanties. The latter are united by the common sacred places as well as phratrial systems where the division was made between *por* and *mos* phratrias. The totem of the *por* phratría was a bear, its the most important religious centre was Vezhakary and most important protector was *Jem-vot-iki*. The *mos* phratría was protected by *Kaltash-Anki* and *Sorni-Anki* (among Mansis was protector also *Mir-susne-hum*, her son). The animal hypostases of the gods were a hare and a goose respectively, the religious centre was Belogorye (Sokolova 1983: 10, 20, 106, 108).

Eastern Khanties have more *syr*s (their equivalent of the phratria) than just the two. It also seems that for them the main places of worship of North Khanties do not have any practical value. The sacral life of the Eastern Khanties is rather connected with their home river and its god.

⁵ Among the Surgut Khanties likewise their suggested directions do not coincide with the points on the compass. A usual practice is that the location of the houses or sacred barns or sleds varies within the northeastern-northwestern perimetres. Sometimes they can be situated outside this compass. Lintrop draws attention to the fact the Estonian word “ilmakaar” is quite vague in regard to the compass points, denoting a region on the horizon and not a straight direction.

Khanties' treatment of space as far as the directions are concerned, is more mythological than utilitarian. A. Leete also suggests this possibility (Leete 1996: 221).

In light of the above, the vision of Ilya Kanterov seems to be quite reliable in relation to *the legend reality*. The initial contradiction with what is considered as the common Ob-Ugrian worldview, according to which the upper world is in the south and the lower world is in the north, can be explained as a local system of orientation that proceeds from the direction of the Pim's current.

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A Continuing Tradition: the Changing of Spirit Dolls by the Pym River Khantys¹

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The word *hlunk* as used by the Khantys (*Ostyaks*) denotes both gods, or spirits, and the sacred dolls made for them. It should be noted that the Khantys do not view *hlunks* and people as different by their nature, since the concept of a human being embraces the body as well as several souls inhabiting it. In other words, a human being is treated as a whole. The line between *hlunks* and people becomes vaguer still in myths relating of olden times. The ancient forefathers – heroes of songs (*ar yah* – ‘people of songs’ in Khanty) and *hlunks* are closely related (Kulemzin 1984: 50). Although such merging is characteristic of myths, in the recent past *hlunks* were believed to live in the vicinity of the Khantys. Sometimes people met for example wood*hlunks* and had various relationships, including sexual, with them; sometimes they even cohabited with them for longer periods. Similar tales are known by the Mansis, a close kin folk of the Khantys (Gemuyev, Sagalayev & Solovyov 1989: 140). There are data in the relevant literature about guardian spirits of some Mansi villages who are supposed to be the distant forebears of the villagers (*ibid.*: 142-143). Furthermore, for the Khantys and Mansis, the relationship between people and *hlunks* is mutually balanced: both of them are invisible to each other (Kulemzin 1984: 47).

On the Lyamin, the tributary of the Pym, the “invisible people”, as *hlunks* are also known, had a colony where they lived together in families. It was in connection with the space flight of the first female astro-

¹This article is to a great extent based on the author's fieldwork in Surgut district, Siberia.

naut Valentina Tereshkova that a large number of *hlunks* emigrated to the higher spheres of heaven. They do not like women to walk over their heads, especially during pregnancy and the menses. There are still places on the banks of the Lyamin river which are considered to be so holy that people cannot live there. In olden times, this did not hold for the whole length of the river. It was only after the so-called Kazym war at the beginning of the 1930s that the refugee Khantys from Kazym settled there; some settlements were also built by Russian colonists. It is said that nowadays only an inferior kind of *hlunks* can be encountered there along with spirits from the underworld from whom people cannot expect anything good.

The Khantys have multifarious spirits and gods whose diversity makes it hard to draw up a clear-cut classification, although attempted by various researchers (Kulemzin 1984: 43-47). The sacred dolls are not made for each one of them but only for those who are of immediate use in everyday life. The sacred dolls are kept and offerings are brought to them in sacrificial groves (Gemuyev, Sagalayev & Solovyov 1989: 7-8; 68-71) as with other Finno-Ugrians; the Khantys who have preserved their nomadic lifestyle keep them in sacred storehouses and nartas. The sacred narta is then kept ten to fifteen steps north of the Khantys' conical tent with its nose towards the south. Those who live in log cabins sometimes have their sacred storehouse in the same place, but in most cases it is built at a separate location in the woods.

There are different kinds of *hlunks* with regard to both their powers and domains of activity. Some dolls are used only once as for example the doll of the fire spirit which is burnt at the end of the sacrificial ritual; others are preserved through people's whole lifetime, as the dolls of married women which they get before their wedding from their homefolk. Most of the *hlunks*, however, are replaced every seven years.

Yet the Khantys seem to have a systematic pattern of how they handle their sacred dolls. The following is an outline based on a concrete family living in the Pym river region.

The Pym Khantys live in families along different rivers; related families prefer to settle on the same river. If a son has moved elsewhere because of a quarrel or for other reasons, he has three years to return to the home river; after this the way home will be closed. The local *hlunks* will see to it that the return will not be painless. This happened for

example in the Kanterovs' family where the youngest son had had a quarrel with his father. After his father's death he returned to his native river but could not lead a normal life: his house was haunted, his dog was struck dead by lightning, the health of his family and especially that of his wife deteriorated badly.

The sons who have grown up and have their own families usually settle upstream at some distance from their parents' home. Every family has its own *hlunks* for various purposes, mostly connected with the household. Apart from that, there are *hlunks* common to entire clan, in the very least the doll of the *hlunk* of the river on the bank of which the family resides. The Kanterovs keep their *hlunks* in the sacred storehouse together with the objects offered to them. The storehouse has its keeper who is also the most important man of the clan although he need not be the eldest. He takes care of the storehouse and dolls and distributes the offerings at common sacrifices, where a peculiar social levelling takes place between families of unequal standing with respect to their wealth. Each family brings as many offerings (food, textile, reindeers, money, etc.) as they consider necessary and affordable. In the course of the offering, the food is distributed equally, so that poorer families receive more than they brought to the *hlunk*. The same holds for clothing: if there are so many clothes in the storehouse that it cannot accommodate the dolls, then the storehouse keeper divides these on behalf of the *hlunks* between the families participating at the next ceremony.

When a girl marries out of the family, the storehouse keeper makes her a doll of a chip cut from the tree in the holy grove. The tree itself is left to grow. This *hlunk* will protect the girl in her new home. But not all wives have the doll. For example Voloksi's mother Galina does not have the *hlunk* because a shaman had told her that she cannot have one or else she would go to the other world.

If the river's spirit is of a more powerful kind, he has a special sacrificial storehouse at a sacred place connected with him where the *hlunk* then resides with his assistants. These are usually the *hlunks* of bigger rivers such as the old man of the Ob As-iki, Kasym-imi of the Kazym and others. The god of the Pym has a special storehouse, too, the keepers of which all come from one family. All the Khantys living in the Pym basin take their offerings to that storehouse. The time of offering is set by the storehouse keeper who is advised by the *hlunks*. As it can

be seen, this system is similar to that of the *hlunks* of smaller rivers with the additional involvement of extra-clan families. In the case of greater gods, the Khantys from other rivers also join the offering since the power of these gods is said to reach far. The general idea is that the power of *hlunks* connected with rivers spreads to the areas where a particular river draws its water from. This also serves as a basis for ranking *hlunks*. Thus As-iki is considered more powerful than Pym-iki, the Pym being a tributary to the Ob. It should be mentioned, however, that it is not just because of the Pym flowing into the Ob that As-iki is more powerful than Pym-iki. Let us recall the rule according to which the young people moved upstream when the time came for them to leave their parents' house. Likewise, as myth has it, upon division of land the younger and weaker gods got their plots upstream. There are exceptions, too: for example goddess Kasym-imi of the Kazym river was said to have been so powerful as to have given a battering to her father, the highest god Numi-Torum. For that her father made her lame, and all women living by the Kazym are said to limp to a greater or lesser extent.

When the old keeper passes away, the spirits choose a new one. Sometimes they also change the keeper earlier, either for some instance of trespassing or another reason. The person who is chosen as the new keeper will know it from a shaman. The above mentioned family does not have a shaman; they have "empty bodies" without shamanic power. Not having a shaman is considered a substantial drawback which the family of each son tries to make up for in their own fashion. In Jakov's family for example the tradition is observed rather strictly and passed on to the children. Chiefly, it is seen to by the mother of the family, Galina, who comes from a local "aristocratic" lineage. The world-view of the second brother, Aiser, is a peculiar mix of old beliefs and modern scientific outlook. As he himself says, he has strong faith in science and only believes the stories told by the old folks when they have proved true for him. He sets a great store on medicine for when medicine came around, powerful shamans disappeared.

The family has a legend about how the Kanterovs lost their shamanic powers. Namely, a forebear of theirs had quarrelled with the forebear of another family. Strong men both of them, they began to shaman on one another. Shamaning bad to another person is known as "shamaning backwards" or "eating backwards" by the Pym Khantys. The one who

has engaged in "shamaning backwards" cannot heal, or "shaman forwards", anymore; if he can, his magic powers suffer considerable decline. The shamans of the recent past and present are said to squander themselves with such in-fighting, leaving people with very few "usable" shamans.

The shaman of the other family won. He played the Khanty zither, the *narkis-juh*, and cast a deadening spell on his foe. As if this was not enough, he then proceeded to deprive the whole family of shamanic powers and on top of that, confined a special *hlunk* into a deep hole in the river who entered the stomachs of the male descendants of the enemy's family and ate its way upwards. When the spirit reached the heart, the new-born baby died. The loser's family was in dire straits and had to consult another shaman for a huge fee. The counsel was to sacrifice a dog on each such occasion, the spirit would then accept the dog instead of the boy. Even now the spirit is said to affect the family's male babies. As we can see here, other sound-producing instruments besides the drum are also used in shamaning (Lukina 1980: 56; Barkalaja 1995: 53-54). The fewer instruments the shaman needs, the stronger he is considered to be (Barkalaja 1995: 59).

The above-mentioned family-line of the Kanterovs has got an extremely large number of *hlunks*. They themselves explain it with the fact that one of their forefathers had a weak spot for *hlunks*. To the question of how one acquires a *hlunk*, Aiser replied that this can happen in different ways. Some of them are inherited, others appear to people in their dreams together with instructions on how their bodies are to be made. Sometimes a Khanty endowed with special abilities can pick up *hlunks* while wandering in the woods. This was what their *hlunk*-loving forefather had done. He made a doll on the spot and took it home. But the latter then turned out to be no good in the household and the man took the *hlunk* back to the woods. According to the second brother, Jakov, their forefather had been so powerful a shaman as to foresee the fate of their line wherefore he procured a host of *hlunks* by way of compensation. The *hlunks* are believed to help people without shamanic powers more than shamans who have to rely more on their own power.

In March and August 1995 when I visited the Khantys of the Pym, the Kanterovs were busy with changing their dolls. The ritual coin-

cided with the death of the head of the family and the keeper of the sacred storehouse. For a while after his father's death the dolls were taken care of by Aiser but according to the local shaman, the *hlunks* had chosen his nephew Voloksi. Although Aiser insisted that the shaman make the *hlunks* go to him, the shaman said he had no power to do so. Voloksi was greatly surprised at being chosen as the keeper since he had attended a boarding school and hence was quite alienated from his forebears' spiritual life. It was also highly unusual for the *hlunks* to pick a man as young as 23 years. Normally, the keepers of sacred dolls are about 30-40 years old.

As suggested by the shaman, the changing of the dolls began with building a new sacred storehouse. It is not always necessary but on that particular occasion the *hlunks* demanded it. The new storehouse was built in the same holy grove, a little northwards from the old one. While building the storehouse the family made a mistake which they became aware of only later. At first, Voloksi got several warnings. Thus on a perfectly windless day, a whirlwind sprang up suddenly on the lake and nearly overturned his small boat and drowned him. Voloksi said that he drew no conclusions from that since he was no shaman and there were no shamans in his family either. Jakov, Voloksi's father, confirmed it, saying that a shaman would have immediately understood the sign. Finally, a twig pierced Voloksi's eye while he was walking down the heath and he was taken to hospital. His father accidentally met an old man who was a shaman and who explained the matter to him. There was no one who could have told the old man about the Kanterovs' family replacing their sacred dolls or about Voloksi being chosen as their keeper. Still, he had explained the whole matter and its causes to the father in great detail. Jakov regarded the fact that the old man had used no accessories in his shamaning and "seen" things as they were as a particularly noteworthy achievement. The shaman explained that the reason for the accident was that the family did not know that they should have sacrificed a reindeer in order to make the storehouse acceptable for the *hlunks*. When the figures of the two higher *hlunks* were replaced, the family offered a reindeer to each of them, but they had forgotten to sacrifice for the storehouse. Having no shaman in the family, they had to learn from their own mistakes and seek help from outside. This is how the Khantys interpreted the story. I would refrain from any further interpretation here.

The Kanterovs have six chief *hlunks* and a few assistants. This year two sacred dolls were changed as there were not enough reindeers for sacrifice. The *hlunks* were asked to wait a year until the situation improves. The dolls of different material are replaced differently. The wooden ones are taken to the sacred place and the old doll is put against a tree. The person delivering the dolls to the new keeper, in this case Aiser, hands the doll over to its new keeper with appropriate words. The new keeper cuts a chip from the tree with his axe, and the eyes and the mouth are notched into it on the spot. Thus the spirit can enter the doll.² The old doll is left on the roots of the tree and the new one is brought home. There it is finished, polished and clothed. Then it is taken to the sacred storehouse and the family offers a reindeer and some cloth to it. From then on, the doll will stay in the storehouse.

This is how the figures of Numi-Torum and the god of the home river of the family were changed. The leaden figure of the master of the underworld, Kul-iki, and a serpent-shaped *hlunk* (who they were unwilling to speak about directly, but I was left with the impression that it was the same creature that was harming the male babies of their lineage) as well as a leaden reindeer-shaped *hlunk* who will secure good luck in reindeer-hunting are waiting for their turn. The reindeer-*hlunk* is a fairly widespread figure among the Pym Khantys. I have seen one doll cut out of aluminium. The same ritual of handing the doll over takes place with leaden figures, too, and a new one is cast immediately.

As it has been said above, it is very rare that such a young Khanty becomes the keeper of *hlunks*, especially if unlike his uncle he has displayed no interest nor wish to become one. At the same time, this particular case as well as the emergence of young shamans in the recent past testifies to the fact that the tradition still continues to live despite the Russian destructive colonial policy. The younger Khantys who have distanced from the world outlook and way of life of their parents by having had to live in boarding schools often take to drink and die early.

²I recall an event where a member of our group had given the daughter of the family a balloon as a present and was drawing a face on it. The mother noticed it while the first eye was being drawn and made a modest remark that the eyes should be drawn cautiously because a spirit would enter the balloon which would become a *hlunk* and this might bring misfortune.

Due to the colonial policy the number of adult Khantys has also decreased, mostly because of alcoholism and accidents caused by it. Viewed in this light, the shifting of the burden of responsibility on the shoulders of the young Khantys who have preserved the traditional way of life, and thus also the potential for re-emergence of the traditional world view, is not surprising.

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On the Sacrificial Ritual of the Pim River Khanty in December 1995

Anzori Barkalaja

The Khanty are a Finno-Ugric people inhabiting the basin of the river Ob in Western Siberia. They subsist mainly on hunting and fishing; north of the river Kazym, they also rear reindeer. Agreements between representatives of oil industry and Khanty land owners ensure that some families derive part of their income from compensations for drilling contracts. The Khanty could roughly be divided into three groups – the Northern, the Eastern, and the Southern Khanty, differentiated from each other by their language, life style and details of world outlook. The present paper rests mostly on data obtained from the Eastern Khanty, more specifically from the inhabitants of the basins of the Pim and the Lyamin.

The Khanty attach great importance to offering sacrifices to their gods and local spirits, since good luck in hunting and fishing – and accordingly, the survival of the people – is thought to depend on the favour of gods. Despite the shaman-hunting campaign (Leete 1996), sacrificial rituals (Khanty *poryi*) have been kept up till our days. Thus, for instance, the Khanty of the Pim, Lyamin and Tromagan basins never fail to dispatch the soul of each slaughtered reindeer to some deity through sacrifice. The sacrifice can be offered by members of one family or it may be brought by several neighbouring families. In the latter case, the number of reindeer offered up is usually larger. Sometimes, all the Khanty of a given district also bring a joint offering (Karjalainen 1918: 428–430). On such occasions, the first recipient of the offering is usually the god or goddess of the corresponding river, who must then pass on to their rightful owners the souls of the reindeer meant for superior gods.

In December 1995, after a pause of several years, a joint offering was brought by the Khanty of the Pim basin. According to the local informants, the best time for bringing large-scale sacrifices (Khanty *juur*) is during the last waxing or full moon of the year. Karjalainen quotes examples from all over Western Siberia about the greatest sacrifices being brought either in the autumn or in spring. The Khanty of the Tromagan River, next to the Pim, offered their most important sacrifices in November or December. Here we must also keep in mind that the Khanty sacrifices do not fall on fixed calendrical dates but do have terminal deadlines (Karjalainen 1918: 433–435). The Khanty consider it inauspicious to bring sacrifices while the moon is waning; neither is it fit to give offerings while the snow is melting.¹ As to the time of day, different authors hold different opinions (Karjalainen 1918: 435); the Khanty of the Pim River bring sacrifices at daytime, preferably while the sun is still rising, that is, before noon. As the informer put it: morning favours all kinds of beginnings, “while the sun is rising, all things thrive; then it’s also good to give offerings, they have effect”.

The initiator of the sacrifice was Fedya K.² who heard spirits tell him in a dream that he was to call the people together or else he would be taken ill. The site of the offering was to be either at Yegor Kanterov’s or N. Vostokin’s place, who dwelt near by. It is interesting to note here that the Kanterov and Vostokin families are closely connected through a shamanic war waged between

¹ One of the informants told me how her husband had fallen ill and been taken to the hospital while the snow was already melting, so he was in no position to arrange for an offering. Then the informant had pledged to the god the reindeer she had brought to the marriage as her dowry, had “marked them off” for the god, as it were. After she had taken the pledge, her husband’s health improved considerably. She also said that she had been afraid her husband might get angry with her for promising to give up her beautiful reindeer, but after all she didn’t mean to live with her reindeer, it was her husband that she wanted. Some authors have also described cases where reindeer sacrifices were not brought in summer but were postponed till winter (Sokolova 1980: 139); or where it was promised to bring offerings at some future date, upon the fulfilment of certain conditions by the god (Karjalainen 1918: 432–433).

² I have not agreement with some Khantys to publish their full names. In these cases names are marked by initials.

their ancestors, which ended only as the head of the Vostokin family deprived the Kanterovs of shamanic power (Barkalaja 1996). Eventually, however, the relations between the two families have normalized and, due to their new survival strategy, the Kanterovs are even better off than the Vostokins who have lost their dominant role in that neighbourhood. Unable to compete with the other families in the traditional way, relying on shamanism, the Kanterovs became more receptive to changes. As a result of the invasion of oil industry, the environment of the Khanty underwent a considerable change to which the Kanterovs responded faster and more openly.

Fedya K. first called on Yegor Kanterov to tell him of the dream; together they went to N. Vostokin in order to discuss it. There it was settled that the elder of the sacrifice should be Yegor Kanterov. Early investigators reported that only a shaman could be in charge of sacrifices; nevertheless, already Karjalainen demonstrated that it wasn't always the case and pointed out the role of *tonx-urt* ('spirit master') who directs and performs the sacrificial ceremony (Karjalainen 1918: 440–442, 573–574). The *hlunk* (the Khanty word for genii, spirits, gods) had appointed Yegor's nephew Valeri to be the keeper of the sacred dolls of the Kanterov family, but after the death of Yegor's father who was their former keeper, Yegor temporarily acted as the head of the family since the ceremony of exchanging and handing over the dolls was not yet completed (Barkalaja 1996).

The neighbouring Khanty were informed of the sacrifice in the old traditional way, using message sticks. For that purpose, three sticks were made,³ each bearing twenty one notches. The sticks were sent out in three different directions and handed over to the neighbours together with the message; the neighbours, in their turn, carried them on to their neighbours; at the end of each day, one notch was whittled off from the sticks. Thus, the next recipient of the message could keep count of the days left till the offering. The head of the last family to receive the stick brought it along to

³ The informer said that either three or seven such sticks were to be made, depending on the god.

the site of the sacrifice. Similar sticks have been used to mark off the days of mourning after a burial and the feasts given in memory of the dead (Sokolova 1980: 140), as well as the songs sung at the bear-festival. The sticks notched at the bear-festival are stored in sacrificial storehouses. The custom of making such counting sticks seems to be spread throughout the Khanty culture area; numerous sticks of this kind, both from the Northern and the Eastern Khanty, are stored in the treasury of the Estonian National Museum.

Joint offerings, as well as the sacrificial storehouses of gods, also serve a specific purpose, namely the social redistribution of goods. In the course of the sacrifices, a wealth of material riches – meat, cloth, and money – is amassed. The valuables left over from direct sacrifice are distributed equally between all participants as a gift from the god to whom the sacrifice was offered. Also, the keeper of the effigy of the corresponding deity, acting as representative of the god or goddess, may hand out to the participants cloth and money from his sacrificial storehouse, particularly when the storehouse is beginning to get full. Sometimes the money collected in the storehouse is spent to buy sacrificial animals if there are none available in the given area. As a rule, each family brings as rich an offering as it can afford. Thus the rich bring more than they get back at the redistribution, whereas the poor get back more than they brought. The primary aim of the sacrificial rituals being communion with the god or goddess, the rich do not mind that state of affairs, especially since the redistributed goods are regarded as belonging already to the corresponding god or goddess.

According to the informer, offerings were given to all gods lest anyone (i.e. any god) take offence. The number of reindeer coming short, some gods were given three meters of cloth. The cloth was tied around the necks of the sacrificial reindeer. In the lack of reindeer for an “upper” god, white cloth was tied to a tree for him; for “lower” or underworld spirits, black cloth was spread on the ground.

The informer did not describe the actual sacrifice of the reindeer on the assumption that I was already acquainted with it. Therefore, I should like to describe a sacrifice brought in the same area a year before, in March 1994, where I was fortunate enough

to participate, myself. The reindeer was brought to stand with its head pointing to the north, white cloth wrapped around its neck. Each participant who desired to placate the god to whom the reindeer was offered, tied banknotes or coins to that cloth. After that, the reindeer was felled with an axe-blow over the back of its head. If the reindeer dropped to its right side, it was considered an auspicious sign; if it fell to the left, an inauspicious omen. That may explain why the men holding the reindeer assisted at the fall, taking care that the animal drop to the right. Next, it was stabbed in the heart with a long knife and turned around once, clockwise. At the same time, the elder of the sacrifice started off with the prayer, invoking in a loud voice the god to whom the reindeer was offered. The others lined up behind the elder, swaying their bodies. From time to time, following the example of the invoker, they turned around once, clockwise, and then went on swaying. If the legs of the reindeer jerked during the prayer, this, too, was taken for a good sign denoting that the animal was already running towards the herd of the god. At the end of the prayer, the lasso (Khanty *njuur*) that had been used for tethering the animal was flung onto a tree north of the sacrificial site; if it remained hanging in the tree, participants in the sacrifice could expect good luck in hunting and fishing all through the coming year. Then the reindeer was turned onto its back and skinned. Its blood was received into a pail; after cleansing, the stomach was put there, too. Its heart, tongue and part of the meat was immediately boiled, laid out on a dish and set before the images of the gods together with a glass of vodka. Then another prayer was intoned and all the participants drank vodka together, the glass going round clockwise. Each participant was also allotted a piece of the heart and the tongue.

A more detailed survey of different reports concerning the sacrifices can be found in Karjalainen (Karjalainen 1918: 428–498).

Parts of the tongue and the heart were portioned out to the participants at the joint sacrifice of the Pim River Khanty in December 1995 too, the only difference being that women were forbidden to eat of the heart and tongue of the reindeer dedicated to the supreme god, Numi-Torum. The meat of the sacrificed

animals was also distributed between the participants. Women were forbidden to step onto the spot splattered with the blood of the sacrificed animals; violation of this rule would have tainted the offender with a heavy sin. The evening was given to feasting, merry-making and story-telling. A shamanic seance took place, too, to find out the gods' attitude towards the sacrifice. For that end, one of the renowned local shamans ate amanita while another beat the shaman's drum (Khanty *kuijyp*), but to no avail. The shaman showed no signs of intoxication. People waited all night long, the shaman who had eaten the mushrooms said the mushroom spirits might possess someone else. The informer speculated that perhaps the young shaman had warded the spirits off, heading them towards the old drummer, but obviously the latter didn't want to shamanize, either. Eventually, one of the participants began to show symptoms of intoxication, but this time the rest of the company forbade him to shamanize. Then the spirits tried to take possession of another participant, but he did not "give himself up", did not want to shamanize. The old men scolded him, telling him to stop hiding and sit at the drum, but notwithstanding he walked out into the cold night. Nobody dared to take the responsibility for shamanizing. The bickering went on for about two hours. Finally, however, the shaman who had eaten the mushrooms sat at the drum and "the spirits took to him". He beat the drum for some time, then began to pronounce on what life would be like and whether the gods (Khanty *hlunk*) "turned their faces to the *poryi*".⁴ He said the gods had looked at the sacrifice, which was a good sign. The shaman's words had been very garbled, the informer could understand but little of what he said, but those in the know had understood more. Thus the shaman kept alternately beating the drum and speaking, as the spirit of the mushroom (Khanty *pong*) went between him and Torum-Ati (another name for Numi-Torum). Here, *pong* is the intermediary between the shaman and the god, communicating by turns the questions and the answers. The informer did not keep count of

⁴ The expression signifies the attention and goodwill of gods. If a god "turns his face away from someone or something", it signifies his disgrace and, accordingly, ill luck.

how many times *pong* went to the heavens and came back. When it was asked who would live long and who would die, the answer came that one of the participants sitting in the ring would not see the next snow. And indeed the Khanty Timofei Golovanov had died before next snow fell.

In the basins of the Vasyugan and the Irtysh, however, unlike the rite described above, the spirit of the shaman himself goes to travel after eating *pong* (Karjalainen 1918: 586, 591). He also records cases where it was not the shaman who sang at the ritual, but the mushroom spirit, or the shaman merely repeated the songs sung to him by the spirits of the mushroom (Karjalainen 1918: 568, 586).

It was a great honour to the Kanterov family to be elected elder of the sacrificial ceremonies, particularly because most of the Pim River Khanty had responded to the invitation and more than two hundred people were present. As a rule, any Khanty has the right to perform a sacrifice. It is enough for him to dream of some god or other telling him to perform a sacrifice. Nevertheless, the number of people coming to participate greatly depends on the social status of the inviter. In days gone by, after defeat in the shamanic war and the resulting loss of shamanic power, the Kanterovs had been poor and socially inferior of other families. Successful adaptation to the invasion of oil industry and the fortunate circumstance that oil was found only on the outer fringes of their family lands, combined to make them in a few years the leading family of the area. Naturally, the shrewdness of the present head of the family, Yegor Kanterov, and his peculiar world outlook comprising elements of scientific thinking have played an important role, too.

It is also interesting to follow the aftermath of a sacrifice. Thus, for instance, one of the Khanty, I. K., “went off his head” after the shamanic ritual. Judging by the descriptions, it was a typical seizure of the shamanic disease discussed also in professional literature (Eliade 1974: 20–21, 33–35; Siikala 1977: 312; Lintrop 1995: 19–26). I. K. began to be harassed by spirits forbidding him to walk abroad at night and attacking him upon breach of this ban.

When the spirits first visited him, I. K. kept it in secret; but presently he began to feel very ill because the spirits persecuted him and demanded that he inform his neighbours of his experiences. I. K. found the situation intolerable and tried to escape. A path led to the south; he began to walk along it. He met a woman sitting by the path. They engaged in the following dialogue:

The Woman: Where are you going?

I. K.: Along the path; I've nowhere else to go.

The Woman: Don't go, I must first inspect your documents! Got a passport?

I. K. showed her his passport. The woman consulted a list but could not find his name.

Thereupon the woman told I. K. to go back: If your name is not on the list you cannot pass. The episode recalls Gondatti's account of the Northern Khanty who maintain that the sky god provides the god of underworld with a list of those doomed to die, and the latter refers to it when selecting the souls to be herded to his realm (Kulemzin 1984: 126). Again relating to the Northern Khanty, Karjalainen writes that the sky god does not keep count of the souls himself but has trusted with this job his private secretary, who compiles the list according to his instructions (Karjalainen 1918: 37). Other sources quote evidence that among the Northern Khanty, the life span of men is measured out by Numi-Torum's wife Kaltesh, who keeps a book of records for this purpose (Schmidt 1989: 223). A similar belief prevails among the Pim River Khanty. By August 1997, the informer was not yet fully convinced whether I. K. would become a shaman or go mad and die.

As another follow-up of the sacrifice, I learned that people were suffering from the scabies and running noses, the disease spreading from north to south. One of the informers, J.N., who had not been present at the sacrifice, himself, argued that it was caused by the stupidity of the performers of the sacrifice and mistakes resulting from that:

Usually, offerings must be given to all gods at a jyyr; but they gave offerings to the gods of sickness, too. Now they've been ill for

a whole year. The lower gods of sickness must be exempted, otherwise they will rejoice and want to return the gift. But what else can they give, only their diseases, mucus and scabies.

Only leftovers can be given to the spirits of sickness. When the poryi is over, everybody goes home, the "upper ones" (that is, gods of the heavens) go away and only armed guards remain to protect the people. "The lower ones", the demons, throng around like dogs and the guards drive them back. When everything is finished, then they will come to gobble up the leftovers.

Yegor Kanterov's poryi would have been very good if they hadn't given to the three spirits of sickness. But someone with only 99 per cent of wits decided to give to them, too. I asked who thought of giving to them. Yegor didn't know, the others didn't know. They were at the higher site of sacrifice. Surely somebody at the lower site wanted to be clever.

Here I should point it out that the sacrifice was performed in two groups. Everyone high enough in social esteem tried to be at the higher site (that is, higher up the river), where sacrifices were offered to the more important upper gods. At the lower site (down the river), offerings were given to lower gods; and the decision to include the spirits of sickness among recipients of the sacrifice was passed there after a discussion, by voting. The informer deemed that kind of a solution, as well as the ado over a spirit doll during the preparations of the ceremony, a sign of the decline of the shamanic tradition.

According to the informer, he dreamt that the son of "the lord of wind and weather" died before the *poryi*. For that reason, he decided not to participate in the sacrifice. Actually, it was the son of the keeper of the corresponding spirit doll that had died before the sacrifice; and according to the tradition, that doll should not have been used at the ceremony, the family being in connection with death and underworld. Yet the people assembled for the sacrifice raised the question of divesting the family of the right to keep the effigy of the god. Some among them, particularly the old men and shamans, were against it but lacked the authority to settle the matter. Tradition prescribes that the gods themselves choose

the person or family to keep their effigies and sacred storehouses, as we saw already in the case of the exchanging of the spirit dolls of the Kanterov family (Barkalaja 1996). In the present case, people decided to take this responsibility upon themselves. The various obstacles and ado encountered in the process of taking away the effigy, however, were again interpreted by the informer as a sign of the disinclination of the god of wind and weather to participate in the ceremony.

In conclusion we can say that the first great offering on the Pim River after the invasion of Russian oil industry colonists in 1960s on the area reflected adequately the social strife among the local Khanty. The Kanterov family, formerly occupying the lowest rungs on the ladder of social hierarchy, has considerably improved its position due to better adjusting to the changes in environment. Because of the loss of shamanic power, the Kanterovs were exiled to the border areas of the society (in social not geographic sense). Among numerous other functions, however, the border area fulfils one more task in the semiosphere – it is the region where semiotic processes are accelerated. Peripheral areas being less strictly organised than central ones, they allow for quicker change. The regions that are not described by the dominant world model or that no longer answer to such descriptions, undergo swifter change (Lotman 1992: 2029–2030) and act at the same time as catalysers for cultural permutation. Here I deliberately use the word “change” instead of Lotman’s “evolve”, since I cannot agree to the positivistic paradigm implied by the latter word. It’s in the above-mentioned peripheries that the so-called syncretic phenomena can take place.

At the same time, the inhabitants of such border areas are in some sense “strangers” regarded by other families with slight prejudice. On the other hand, they may all of a sudden turn out to occupy culturally central positions if the survival strategies adopted by them prove more successful than those of other families. Then, bearers of the older and “purer” tradition find themselves in the periphery and another new behaviour strategy can take shape on this ground, which may in the course of time prove central, in its

turn. Such shifts of positions do not pass without strain and open or concealed struggle for dominance. In the Pim basin, the “higher positions” were formerly occupied by the Taibin and Nimperov families. One of the informers also comes from the Nimperov family and has gained the image of a leading figure in dealings with the Russian colonists. Naturally, he is not pleased by Yegor Kanterov’s rise among the leaders of the society.

Concerning the events that accompanied the given sacrifice, it is also interesting to note that “the logic of dreams” reflected the state of affairs in material world. Fedya K. dreamt that the sacrifice was to be performed by representatives of the most successful big family of the district. The “opposing” informer, J.N., however, dreamt of an incident that was bound to cast a shadow on the oncoming sacrifice. We can surmise that the patterns and ways of thinking characteristic of man’s everyday consciousness operate as filters in the *changed state of consciousness* (Siikala 1992: 26–27; Hamayon 1995), in receiving and interpreting information derived from the “sacred world” just like they do in receiving and interpreting information derived from everyday experience. Whether we regard this as an imaginary construction of the “sacred world” or a real and existing “depth-structural world” (Uus 1994), unfortunately depends on each person’s individual belief, it being exceedingly difficult here to prove anything pro or contra. Again, we can but acknowledge that our ability to envision the “sacred world” and its impact on the world of everyday experience is limited to what we have been taught to see by habit and education and what is defined by attitude (Bachmann, Huik 1989: 99).

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On the Sacrificial Rituals of the Pim River Khanties: Part Two*

Anzori Barkalaja

In the previous article, published in "Pro Ethnologia 5" I discussed the sacrifices of the Pim River Khanties, giving a more detailed account of the joint sacrifice of December 1995. Not having had the opportunity to be present at the ceremony, I had to put up with the information gleaned from my informers (Barkalaja 1997). In December, 1997, however, I was fortunate enough to participate in the joint offering (*jyyr*) of the Khanties of the same region, enabling me to present a better survey of the discussed phenomenon.

Sacrificial Ritual on Pim river, 1997

In October 1997, I was informed that the Kanterov family had once again undertaken to arrange a joint sacrifice and I might have a good opportunity to participate. Since communicating with the Surgut region Khanties is extremely difficult, I did not succeed in specifying exactly when the ceremony would take place. According to my communication source, such sacrifices are usually held during the last waxing or full moon of the month of December (Barkalaja 1997: 58); therefore I judged that it would be best to arrive immediately before the moon waxed full. The last full moon of the year happened on Sunday, December 13. Unfortunately we were delayed because of transport failures and arrived only late on Saturday, learning upon

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arrival that the sacrificial ritual had begun in the morning of the same day.

The site of the joint sacrifice was located on a bend of the River Pim, where a copse of birches grew to the north of the river-bank. On the trees, I could see reindeer skins and stretches of textile hung there during the previous sacrifice (in 1995). At the right-hand side of the clearing between the trees and the river, a big fire had been lit. A few metres to the north-east of it, there lay the hide and head of a sacrificed reindeer with a red cloth tied around its antlers. On the strength of information obtained during the previous field-work it could be assumed that the reindeer had been offered to the Mother of Fire.¹ Later this assumption was proved correct. Lined up with that reindeer hide, there lay some other reindeer hides and one horse hide. All the hides were placed with their heads pointing to the north. A little way off from the hides, towards the trees, there was a bush with lots of cloth tied to it; bank notes were scattered on the ground around it. The Khanties had just been throwing bank notes onto the place of sacrifice. Expedition members were also offered a chance to sacrifice money; naturally we could not refrain. In the North-Eastern end of the birch copse, next to an old tree-stump, there lay two reindeer hides and one cow-hide with the head of a cow placed next to it. These hides were placed in the reverse direction, with their heads pointing towards the river. To the south of the site of sacrifice, nearer the river, there was yet another reindeer hide flanked by conical sheet-metal gourds. As a result of later questioning we learned that the reindeer had been offered to the "Lower"² god and the gourds were meant to be hats for him and his two assistants. The informant also explained what animals had been offered to what gods: the "Upper god"³ was given two reindeer and a horse, one horse being valued as equal to seven reindeer. Further, the soul of one reindeer was offered to the moon, one to the sun, one to *Postajank-iki*⁴, one to *As-iki*⁵, one to *Pim-iki* – the deity of the river Pim. In addition, one reindeer was sent to *Choorys-nai*, two reindeer and a cow to *Myg-imi* (see endnote 1) and one reindeer, as mentioned above, to the "Lower" god.

Since tradition forbids to carry out sacrificial rituals in the dark, it was decided to continue them on the following day. Extremely cold

weather (-45°C) slowed down the performing of the rites; therefore, according to my informant⁶, some changes had been introduced to the tradition. Usually the shaman conducting the ceremony must, with the help of his drum, guide each reindeer's spirit individually to the lower or upper world, directly to the addressee, that is to the deity the reindeer was offered to. This time, the shaman rounded all the spirits of the reindeer offered to the gods of the upper world up into a herd and took them all together to the "upper way", where he "distributed the spirits to their addressees while moving up along the way" (quote from the informant). A small incident took place in connection with the use of the drum during the ceremony. Initially, the drum of Filipp K. had been chosen for use during the ceremony, but after a couple of strokes the shaman pronounced the drum spoiled, saying it would lead him astray when he moves along the path. Then Filipp confessed that one night, being drunk and in a somewhat elated mood, he had played the drum. Since the spoiled drum could no longer be used for shamanising, it was necessary to use the drum of another family.⁷

A strong cold wave had arrived on Friday night and according to the Khanties, *Torum* had turned the weather cold in order to prevent the filming of the sacrifice. The assembly of the Khanties had originally given permission to the representative of the local Lyantor municipal council to be present at the ceremony in return for his help in obtaining the horse and cow necessary for the sacrifice. Local television, having learned about the event, wanted to record it on video tape, but the Khanties refused permission to the TV-team. The TV people, however, were reluctant to give up and gave the camera to the representative of the municipal council, asking him to shoot the sacrifice. None of the Khanties interfered with the setting up and switching on of the camera, but as my informant triumphantly declared, the camera could not tolerate the cold and automatically switched off in four minutes. It was obvious that the Khanties attributed this course of events to the intrusion of the sky god.

A little way off from the site of sacrifice, a camp had been set up with three conical huts and a few tents intended to accommodate a couple of hundred people. Yegor Kanterov said that the year before, when a joint sacrifice was arranged by a different family, there had

not been so many people present. At the same time he expressed regret that many Khanties had refrained from coming because of rumours that Russians would be allowed to be present. The number of people present at the sacrifice reflects the position of the arranger on the ladder of social hierarchy (Barkalaja 1997: 63). Nevertheless, the arranging of a joint offering is a troublesome and expensive enterprise not very willingly undertaken. Since the gods had imposed it on the Kanterov family to organise three joint sacrifices, Yegor Kanterov decided to assume leadership and hold the second ceremony after so short an interval in order to have done with the obligation sooner. At the campsite, men assembled in Yegor Kanterov's hut where the shaman was to perform a séance in order to find out the gods' attitude towards the sacrifice and appoint a new keeper to the *hlunk* of the River Pim, since the former keeper had died (Barkalaja 1997: 65–66). Unfortunately the shamanic séance could not be held that night because the shaman had got drunk and was not able to perform. One of the informants commented that he had got drunk on purpose, because of the presence of a Russian – that is, the representative of the municipal council – whose proximity might have interfered with the performing of the ritual. Therefore it was decided to go to bed and put the performing of the séance off till next morning.

In the morning, the representative of the municipal council set about to leave, but before he went all the men participating in the ceremony assembled in the elder's tent. The elder of the sacrifice took out the money raised for the purpose (Barkalaja 1997: 60) and, with the help of his assistants, counted it into several piles of equal value. He then picked up one pile of bank notes and handed it on, clockwise, so that everybody present could hold it for a while. After that he handed the money to the representative of the municipality who was at first reluctant to accept it. Only after he was explained that it was ritual recompense for his trouble, he agreed to take the money. Next, money was distributed in like manner to the shaman, his assistants and the owners of the sacrificed reindeer.

After the representative of the Lyantor municipal council had departed, the shaman began his séance. Before he did so the elder of the sacrifice, Yegor Kanterov, asked the members of our expedition to

give a bottle of vodka for the prayer, which was to demonstrate our goodwill towards the success of the séance. The prayer was said by the elder of the sacrifice. For that purpose he poured out a glassful of vodka and set the glass on the corner of the table.⁸ In the prayer that followed, he addressed *Torum* and offered him the vodka, mentioning also the guests from Estonia who joined in the prayer and had brought the vodka. While he was saying the prayer, all the participants turned, at short intervals, three times clockwise around the right shoulder. Finally a glassful of vodka was thrown into the fire; the high-flaring flame was interpreted as a sign that the god was pleased. Next the elder filled the glass with vodka again and gave it to the shaman who took a gulp and handed it back. In the same manner the elder offered vodka to all participants, moving around clockwise. Since the number of men was great, one bottle did not suffice and two more had to be opened. After that the elder picked up the drum and warmed it by the sheet-iron stove, turning it round clockwise and warming it from the edges. From time to time he beat the drum lightly, checking its sound. When the sound was considered right, he handed the drum to the shaman who began to beat it. He used different rhythms while doing so. After some time the shaman leapt up and began to move forward, jumping on two feet and beating time to his movements. The drum was held alternately up towards the sky and down towards the earth; while the drum-stick was held up, he beat free rhythm, whereas while it struck the drum from below, each third stroke was stressed. During the jumping, the men standing by shouted in chorus in exactly the same manner as during the sacrifice. Thus the shaman beat the drum, alternating different rhythms, until he began to sing, using free rhythm for accompaniment. The song sounded different from all previous ones I had heard. The shaman appeared to be using throat singing, yet the voice was rather high. In a short while it seemed that the song was sounding from all directions at once, the effect was particularly impressive when the eyes were closed. After about ten or eleven minutes the shaman grew calmer and sat down, the song also became calmer. Soon he stopped singing and drum-beating altogether and began to talk in the ordinary manner, handing the drum to the master who resumed warming the drum. An informant told me that the song had

been highly figurative and artistic, "like a poem", and the appropriate words were "given" to the shaman. Even though the words of the song were intelligible, the informant was not able to make out its content and meaning. "Only shamans and a few old men can understand the songs," he commented. The old men listened to the song with great concentration and asked the shaman to repeat certain parts of it. The song was discussed for about ten minutes, then the shaman resumed singing and drum-beating. In like manner, the cycle was repeated several times.

The audience felt relatively free during the séance: people were smoking, eating, drinking, walking in and out of the hut. During the intervals, while the songs were being discussed, jokes were cracked and gods' will commented on, so that everybody was laughing out loud. All in all, the activity lasted till noon.

At noon everybody assembled and went together to the site of the sacrifice. Halfway to the river, a three-meter strip of cotton cloth was spread across the road and three bottles and some bank notes were set on it. Great care was taken to assure that nobody remained on the bank but moved on to the river ice. The end of the cloth was lifted up for the late arrivals, in order that they should not step onto or over the cloth. Then a bottle was opened and prayer made. Again the glass of vodka went round, clockwise, until everyone had sipped of it. Then everybody moved on to the place of sacrifice; the women stayed in the background while the men began to hang up the hides of the sacrificed animals onto the trees. The same broad strips of cloth that had been tied around the animals' necks during the sacrifice were used for tying the hides to the tops of the trees. The hides of the animals offered to the sky gods, as well as the strips of cloth given to them, were tied to the trees. The bank notes scattered onto the ground the night before were picked up, portioned off and tied into the corners of the cloth. The hides of the animals offered to *Myg-imi* were left to lie on the ground; the reindeer hide and conical metal hats given to the "Lower One" remained in like manner on the river ice. The hide of the reindeer offered to *Choorys-nai* was dragged next to the spot where fire had blazed on the previous night. The message sticks (Barkalaja 1997: 59) were tied to the branches of a smaller

birch. The shaman pointed out which trees the hides were to be tied to. After the hides had all found their appropriate places, a common prayer was held at the end of which everybody started running clockwise on a course encompassing the whole sacrificial ground, including the reindeer hide lying on the river ice. When a full circle had been completed, the men sat into their snowmobiles and started a race, each straining to be the first one to cross the cloth halfway back to the campsite where sacrifice had been brought previously. In the course of the contest, the vodka bottles got smashed and the money and cloth torn to pieces. Women and children prudently kept out of the way. With the race, the joint offering was finished and people began to dissemble to their homes.

The joint offering of 1997 demonstrated once again that the influence of the Kanterov family among the Pim River Khanties is steadily increasing. In 1996, the sacrifice was arranged by another family and only about ten families, less than one third of the Pim River Khanties, attended it. Further proof of the Kanterovs' influence was furnished by the fact that the representative of the local administration was allowed to participate. Accepting assistance from the administration in obtaining the animals to be sacrificed, Yegor Kanterov was forced to oblige the representative and persuade his kinsfolk to do the same. Keeping in mind that for many years all information concerning joint sacrifices was jealously guarded from strangers, it is obvious that agreements of the kind can only be reached through an influential position in the social hierarchy. Reports of the ceremonies still being held by the Khanties came as a complete surprise to the authorities as well as other immigrants, arising at the same time considerable interest. This interest is partly caused by the changed relations between the colonial and indigenous cultures. After *perestroika*, the latter has risen to higher esteem both among the immigrants and among the younger generation of the Khanties themselves.

1 Here it should be noted that as to the person of the Mother of Fire, there are considerable differences of opinion among the Khanties of different regions. On the River Vakh, Anki-Pugos is regarded as Mother of Fire (Kulemzin, Lukina 1977: 137–138). Sometimes a red cloth is thrown into the fire there, “in order that Anki-Pugos may have children”. Sometimes, again, the fire was covered with a red dress. It was said that Anki-Pugos would wear it. In order to placate Anki-Pugos, white reindeer with even the slightest red markings on their fur were sacrificed to her on the Vakh (Kulemzin, Lukina 1977: 144).

According to Kulemzin, the Eastern Khanties believe that *Anki Pugos* lives somewhere towards the East, where the sun rises; the Khanties of the Vakh, however, claim that her soul lives in the sky while she herself dwells on the Varyugan (Kulemzin 1984: 54–55). According to a folk-tale, again, she used to live in the upper world with her husband Numi Torum but was cast down because of breaching a ban. On her way down she had time to give birth to a son who later on became the chief patron of the Ob-Ugrians (known under various names, basically as *Sorni-iki* among the Eastern Khanties and as *Mir-susne-Xum* – “The Man Who Watches the People” among the Mansi. About the latter, see Lintrop 1997; 1998). *Pugos-imi* (a parallel name of *Anki-Pugos*) protects motherhood, birth-giving and children. If a woman has been unfaithful to her husband, *Anki-Pugos* may punish her with a difficult delivery (Kulemzin, Lukina 1977: 141). Obviously her own fate is tormenting her.

Another name – *Kaltash-anki* (or *Kattas imi*, see Martynova 1998: 45, 130), wife of *Numi-Torum* – is also associated with *Anki-Pugos*. On the Vakh, she is said to be the mother of *Torum* (Kulemzin, Lukina 1977: 137), but apparently the researchers have not specified which of the *torums* is kept in mind. Probably it would be *Kaltash's* youngest son, *Sorni-iki*, one of the most popular *torums* of the region. According to B. Munkácsi, *Kaltash-anki* is alternately the daughter, sister or wife of the main god (Karjalainen 1918: 248): another fact indicating that the researchers have not properly identified the personage the Ob-Ugrians keep in mind when speaking about *Torum*.

Kaltash is also the foremother of the *Mos*-phratry, appearing in the corresponding story in the shape of a female hare (Sokolova 1971: 216). Another shape she can take, according to the Khanties of Vakh, is that of an owl (Kulemzin 1984: 55). Amongst other names she is known as *Myv-imi* – Mother Earth. Karjalainen regards the different names as signifying different personages but the distinction seems to be erroneous, the more so that he himself records cases proving the identity of character and activity of the variously named goddess (Karjalainen 1918: 37–39). The plurality of names is certainly not to be wondered at, since the Khanties of different regions are far from agreed on the different versions – a fact born out also by the following report from the Yugan: “The Salym people have a different language and different gods, too. The Pim River Khanties speak a tongue closer to us than the Salym language” (Martynova 1998: 23).

A strong argument in support of the connection between *Myv-imi* and *Kaltash-imi* is the above-mentioned story about how *Kaltash-imi* was cast down from the heaven by *Numi-Torum* because of her misbehaviour. The misbehaviour consisted

in sexual intercourse with another man (Karjalainen 1918: 248) identified as "Lord of the lower world" (oral report from Semyon Pesikov). The lord of the lower world is known as *Myv-por-koon* among the Pim Khanties. He is said to dwell on the seventh floor of the lower world. Other names for the Lord of the Lower World are *Kul-Otar* (Hoppál 1975: 203) or *Kul-iki*. *Myg-imi* is said to protect people from diseases by keeping closed the hole in the earth which illnesses pass through. In order that she may do so, seven copper cauldrons are said to have been buried in the earth for her. These she is reported to use to cover up the holes. In the course of his field work, the Russian researcher Kulemzin received four copper cauldrons from the Khanties of Vasyugan. He was told that the cauldrons had been preserved on cape *Imi-nai* (Khanty for *Woman-Fire*) in Lake Tuh-emptor where they had been taken "for reasons of health". The remaining three cauldrons were said to have been lost. In her work she is assisted by a god called *Myg-junk*, associated by Karjalainen with the heavenly god *Torum-junk* (*ibid.*: 138). Some Pim River Khanties take *Myg-iki* to be *Myg-imi*'s husband (Yegor Kanterov, 1997). The Yugan Khanties connect *Myg-anki* or *Pugos anki* with childbirth. The latter is also the Mother of Fire, who according to some reports lives in the sky, according to others on the Little Yugan or perhaps the Vakh River (Martynova 1998: 158, 164).

Kaltash-anki or *Pugos-imi* can be identified with *Tshoorys-nai*, Mother of Fire. The River Ob is said to flow into a big sea, at the bottom of which there is hole where the water falls and burns in a big fire. The fire is called *Choorys-nai* and she is the wife of *Tshoor-skyyn*, king of the sea, and also the mother of all fires (Semyon Pesikov, 1993; Yegor Kanterov, 1995; see also Kerezsi 1997: 36). Another interesting report tells us that *As-to-imi*, wife of *As-iki* dwelling at the estuary of the Ob, gives children to women (Galina Kanterova, Pim, 1995). The American researcher M. Balzer also identifies the Mother of Fire with *Pugos* and the "Mother of All Beings" (Balzer 1978: 133–134). At the same time, there are reports stating that *Choorys-nai* and *Kaltash* are sisters: daughters of Mother Earth. The picture is further elaborated by a report saying that Mother Earth (*Meh anki*) has a mother called *Mih pugos anki* (Kerezsi 1997: 35). Generally, as I noticed at the joint sacrifice discussed in the present paper, the Pim River Khanties recognise a difference between *Choorys-nai* and *Myg-imi* and *Kaltash*, too, is represented at the offerings as a separate personage. Yet the coincidences cropping up in myths indicate that there must be some kind of link between these persons.

At this point I should like to leave further discussion of the problems centering around the Mother of Fire for a separate study. To some extent, the subject has been examined by Ágnes Kerezsi (1997: 35–38). To the author of the present paper it has sometimes occurred that the Khanties demonstrate a fluctuating use of gods' names and ambiguity in reporting their deeds which may be caused by a defensive attitude towards representatives of an alien culture. Yet the confusion may also indicate simply that the Khanties perceive reality and think in categories too different to be ordered according to Occidental thinking patterns.

Thus, the problems centering around female deities are intricate and extensive. Connections can be established between *Kaltash* – *Pugos* – *Myg-imi* – *As-to-imi* – *Choorys-nai*, but there are not enough data to give in to the temptation of drawing

far-reaching conclusions and postulating the existence of a single original goddess characterised, among other features, by the practise of polyandry.

2 The Khanties of the Surgut region regard *Heini-iki* (known also as *Kul-iki*) as the ruler of the lower world, inhabiting the bottom-most, seventh floor of it. His colour is black. Therefore the animals offered to him in sacrifice had to be black, too. No other god of the lower or middle world is given black animals (see also Gemuyev, Sagalayev, Solovyov 1989: 69). The main aim of the sacrifices is to propitiate *Heini-iki* (concerning his other names see Martynova 1998: 123, 194) so he would not send sicknesses to people. Offerings of cloth were hung onto the branches of a fir, the sacrificial tree of *kyn'-lung* (Kulemzin, Lukina 1977: 147). Among the Khanties of Vasyugan, the same personage is known as *kyn-lunk* ("the spirit of sickness"). Furthermore he is called both there and on the Vakh "the God of the Dead", "the Evil God" and so on. As to his nature, he is said to be the opposite of his brother *Torum*, the heavenly god (*ibid.*: 135–136). Unfortunately, Kulemzin had not specified who exactly is meant by *Torum*. In the Khanty language, *Torum* is a generic name for god, signifying also weather and the sky (Karjalainen 1983: 36). The text, however, allows to conclude that the person kept in mind here may be *Numi-Torum*'s youngest son, *Sorni-iki*. Kerezsi's data lead to the same conclusion (Kerezsi 1997: 35). According to some researchers, the Khanties of the Vakh and the Vasyugan saw the relationship between those two as being far more sanguinary than conceived by the Khanties of the Surgut region. The ambiguity of the collected materials is proved even by the reports on the Mansi by Gemuyev et al. In the stories they published, *Sorni-iki* has been replaced by *Numi-Torum* who is also at odds with *Kul-otyr*. At the same time, they also publish a myth according to which the great diver who brought forth the earth between its beak was actually *Kul-otar*, having taken the appropriate shape for the occasion (Gemuyev, Sagalayev, Solovyov 1989: 155–156).

Kul-iki can appear in the shape of a dog or a cat. He can also assume the likeness of fog, hiding from people their guardian spirits, as a result of which people become his easy victims (Kulemzin 1984: 118). Kulemzin reports that in 1974 he succeeded in visiting the shrine of *Kul-iki* on the River Yugan, which holds the image not only of *Kul-iki* himself but also of his mother, *Evut-imi* (*ibid.*). As a rule, *Kul-iki*'s name was not mentioned, particularly in the presence of a sick person.

3 *Numi-Torum* has various parallel names: *Ent-Torum* (Great *Torum*), *Sanki* or *Sange Torum* (Bright *Torum*), *Jem-Sanki* (Good Light), *Alle-iki* (Great Old Man), *Nagi-iki* (White Old Man), *Ynyt Torum* (Great God), *Kansh iki*, *Tarn Sanki*, and so on (Karjalainen 1918: 296; Mify... 1990: 14; Kerezsi 1997: 35; Martynova 1998: 45, 158–159). *Numi-Torum* dwells on the seventh floor of the upper world, too high to deal with the affairs of mortals. If a person desires to address *Numi-Torum*, he must do so through the mediation of some lower god. According to Semyon Pesikov, human beings can find assistance from the children of *Numi-Torum*: *Sorni-iki*, *Kazym-imi* and other minor gods. In order to appeal to them, one must give an offering to the addressee, too, and say an appropriate prayer asking to dispatch the soul of the sacrificed reindeer to the Highest One.

Karjalainen also writes that the Khanty *Torum* is inaccessible to common people and it is not possible to bring sacrifices to him directly (Karjalainen 1983: 35–36). According to Semyon Pesikov, even shamans are unable to converse with him: the best of them only reached as high as the fifth heaven in their journeys, whereas the All Powerful inhabits the seventh one. Karjalainen thinks that the figure of *Numi-Torum* originates from a foreign creed, and refers to the influences of Christianity (Karjalainen 1983: 37). Having a Christian background himself, Karjalainen seems to find the influence of Christianity everywhere that he notices any similarity, no matter how slight. Actually, the status of *Numi-Torum* is not very different from that of the supreme gods of other peoples. A characteristic feature of *Numi-Torum* is that after the completion of the acts of creation, he no longer meddles with further developments in the world. Relatively little is known about him, and it is virtually impossible to contact him directly. As such, he belongs to the long list of *dei otiosi* known all over the world (Eliade 1995: 99–104).

Numi-Torum created the world and also, according to some traditions, the man (Karjalainen 1918: 19). In the Surgut region, nothing is known about his sisters or brothers; yet among the Mansi, Chernetsov reportedly heard a story about how *Numi-Torum* fashioned the figure of a human being out of clay but could not give it the breath of life. It was only his sister *Kaltash* who could give the soul to humans (Sokolova 1971: 212). The rest of the data I have been able to collect, however, identify *Kaltash-anki* as the wife of *Numi-Torum*. Naturally one role does not exclude the other. In Greek mythology, for instance, Hera was simultaneously sister and wife of the supreme god, Zeus. The name of *Numi-Torum* occurs in the old myths, but rather less frequently than those of the gods inhabiting the lower floors of the upper world and consequently standing closer to humans. According to Lukina, the Lord of the Lower World, *Kul-otyr*, is also *Numi-Torum*'s brother (*Mify...* 1990: 16). From Semyon Pesikov I learned that the Highest One also had a father and even grandfather, but when asked where they might dwell, Semyon confessed ignorance. At any rate the place could no be in our world. Repeating my question a year later, I got quite a surprising answer. I was told that *Num-Torum*'s father was called *Shlaap-Torum* (or *Pytto-Torum-iki*) and inhabited the seventh floor of the upper world, whereas *Num-Torum*, his son, lived on the sixth floor. Nevertheless, it remains unclear who should in that case be *Num-iki* (Khanty for *The Higher Old Man*) or *Buus-iki*, because according to the data gathered from the upper course of the Ai-Pim River it is that god who inhabits the seventh floor of the sky.

Literature presents data confirming the existence of *Numi-Torum*'s father and grandfather. The Mansi know his father under the name of *Kors-Torum* and grandfather as *Kosjar-Torum*; among the Northern Khanties, the corresponding names are *Num-Kurys* and *Num-Sives* (*Mify...* 1990: 16). According to Karjalainen, *Num-Kurys* and *Num-Sivys* are, together with *Num-Torum*, three different spirits of the upper world, fathered by *Kors-Torum*. In the texts collected by Munkácsi on the Sosva River, *Numi-Kworys* occurs as the supreme god who lowered *Numi-Toorym*, *Saghl-Toorym* and *T'apyl-iki* together with their sister *Kaltash-ekwa* between heaven and earth (Karjalainen 1918: 296–297). Karjalainen consoles us, saying that the same kind of confusion is known also among other peoples and probably, in the

case of Ob-Ugrians, it is caused by foreign, e.g. Tatar and Russian influences (*ibid.*: 297). A similar situation can be found, for example, among the Saami, where it is very hard to specify the exact number of deities because many of them have had different names at different times. Earlier information on deities must be taken critically since on several occasions the gods of some people are known to have been forcefully fit into the framework of a currently valid world outlook and conception (Pentikäinen 1995: 232–233).

The Khanty word *Torum* signifies not only god, but also sky – that means it is a generic name. Therefore, when the name *Torum* is mentioned without epithets, it is sometimes difficult to decide which deity is referred to. The context must always be kept in mind upon making such decisions. Very often, for instance, the name is used to refer to the “Khanty God”, *Sorni-iki*, the youngest son of *Numi-Torum*.

An interesting parallel has been drawn between *Numi-Torum* and *Sorni-iki*, on the one hand, and the old Iranian *Mithra*, on the other. There are data indicating that the lineage *Kors-Torum* – *Numi-Torum* – *Sorni-iki* is associated with the Iranian sun god; the argument takes support from the coincidences between the name *Kors* and the Iranian word *xurđét*, “bright sun”, as well as from several analogous traits in the mythological themes of the two peoples, treating on *Mir-susne-Xum* and *Mithra*, respectively (Toporov 1989: 170–174). In his article, Toporov brings further examples supporting his theory of strong mutual connections between the Uralic and old Iranian peoples (*ibid.*).

4 Depending on the region, that deity is known under different names (see Martynova 1998: 45, 74, 158). A well-known name is *Sorni-iki*, “the Golden Old Man”. Another name is *Postojank-iki*, “the Fast Old Man”. Thus he is called on the rivers Pim and Lyamin, the same names are used on the Tromagan. Kulemzin believes that these names signify different deities acting as assistants to *Torum* (Kulemzin 1984: 114), but the Khanties of the Pim and Lyamin rivers insist they are merely different names of one and the same god. They say that if he is invoked by the name of *Postojank-iki*, he gives a start and leaps high into the air, rushing off to see who was calling to him so urgently. Woè be him who did it just for fun! Therefore he also has another name, *Yi-shlapt-lah-hlioty-iki*, to be used when people do not want to startle him. This is the name often used to address him during sacrifices. *Sorni-iki* rides around on a white horse. Whoever sees him flying past on that white mount may expect to become very lucky. On the Tromagan, he is described in the same manner but under the name of *Sorni kan iki* (Kerezsi 1997: 38).

Sometimes he is heard just galloping past in the sky. *Sorni-Torum* does not like anybody to fly faster than himself. I even heard Semyon Pesikov claim that *Sorni-iki* determines the speed of jet planes which are not to fly faster than he has allowed. Judging by how he has manifested himself at very short intervals to people living at great distances from each other, Semyon believes that his speed must at least equal that of light. Once he is said to have run around the world quicker than it took a bit of birch-bark to burn up. Nevertheless he found time to help people, on his way (Semyon Pesikov, Lyamin, 1995).

Among the Mansi, kindred people of the Khanties, the heavenly horseman is known under the name of *Mir-susne-Xum*, “The Man Who Looks on the World” (Gemuyev, Sagalayev, Solovyov 1989: 102; Lintrop 1997; 1998). For several reasons, he is one of the favourite gods of the Mansi. First and foremost, he is considered to be the forefather of the Mos tribe (Šokolova 1971: 216). He was born during the fall *Kaltash-imi* took upon being cast down from the sky by *Numi-Torum* because of her misbehaviour. Having obtained the miraculous steed, *Mir-susne-Xum* or *Sorni-iki* was able to ride around the whole world. The Mansi see him as the main mediator between *Numi-Torum* and humans (Gemuyev, Sagalayev, Solovyov 1989: 157–158).

5 *As-iki* is the god and “master” of the greatest river of Western Siberia, the Ob. According to the informants, he actually rules not only over the river but also over all the land which sends its waters into the Ob. The hierarchy of the gods of different rivers is determined by the relations between the rivers of the region. The god whose river spills into the river of some other god is subordinate to the latter. Often the relation is expressed in terms of age, so that the gods of tributaries are younger than the god of the main river, often his children or grandchildren. The world outlook involving such interrelatedness finds expression also in the behaviour of the Khanties. Thus, for example, when the son of a family has grown up and married, he moves with his family upstream, often to the bank of some tributary (Barkalaja 1996: 128).

Accordingly, *As-iki* is the most important of the “masters” of the region. That, however, is no guarantee that the others should obey him without dispute. Relationships of subordination are very vague among the Khanties. In support of this, I should like to quote the following story:

“*As-iki* is the master of fish. He makes fish and sends them into the nets of the fishermen. He also decides how many fish must go into each river. Once it so happened that the god of Salym (a tributary of Ob. The god of Salym is the master of Thunder and notorious for his bellicose disposition – *author’s note*) thought he was getting too few fish from *As-iki*. So up he goes to *As-iki* and demands: ‘Listen, why do you give me so few fish, give me more.’ But *As-iki* was in a defiant mood, did not give him fish. So the god of Salym went away and began to prepare for war. He picked up an arrow-shaft and began to whittle away on it. Whittled one chip off it – the chip turned into a stickle-back. Whittled another chip – that, too, turned into a stickle-back. Thus the stickle-backs became many. They swam downstream into the river Ob. *As-iki* looks – a stickle-back. Looks again – *nu, holera*, (emotional interjection in Russian, translates as “Oh, cholera!”) another stickle-back! So he went upstream along the Ob until he could see – the Old Man of Salym is whittling away at arrow-shafts, chips are falling down and turning into stickle-backs. *As-iki* got a terrible fright, began to call from afar: ‘What are you doing there, planning to wage war? Against whom?’ *Salym-iki* called back: ‘Against you, of course, why don’t you give me fish?!’ So *As-iki* reckoned the matter was grave and sent lots of fish into the Salym, many large pikes. Mhmh.” (Semyon Pesikov, Lyamin 1993).

Thus *As-iki* was the giver of fish (Karjalainen 1918: 260). He also had assistants. On the Yugan these were local water spirits; according to the reports from the Agan, however, the fish-giving water spirits were independent (Kulemzin 1984: 48). The notions about spirits in general, not only water spirits, seem to be rather confused. This has also been noted by other researchers with field experience among the Khanties (Kulemzin 1984: 47–48). A common name for a water spirit is *Jyngk-hlunk*. Some of the Pim River Khanties thought that *Jyngk-iki* and *As-iki* stood for the same personage, others again thought they were different beings. I got the impression the names were not of the same level – in the light of such data, *Jyngk* appears more like a generic name. By way of comparison it could be pointed out that on the Irtysh, *As-iki* is known under the name of *Jynk-tonk-iki* (Karjalainen 1918: 261). Another report must be made mention of, according to which the most important giver of fish is none else but the king of the sea, *Choor-skyyn*. The latter view is certainly logical, since the Ob flows into the sea exactly like the other rivers flow into the Ob.

In the Pim river basin, one likeness that *As-iki* may assume is that of a gadfly. When a Khanties notices a gadfly struggling in the water, he is certain to pick it out since according to tradition, the gadfly helps men to escape the danger of drownings.

6 I do not the permission of some Khanties to publish their names.

7 The drum is the basic means of shamanising among the Khanties. In earlier times, each Khanty family used to have its own drum. When a shaman was called in to resolve some crisis, he commonly made use of the family drum. As a result of the repression campaigns of shamanism during the communist regime (Leete 1996), the number of drums preserved in households has fallen considerably. The guardian spirit of the family dwelt within the drum. If the drum broke up while it was beaten, an ill fate was in store for the owner. In such a case it was usually presumed that the owner's family would die out. The outcome, of course, depended also on the importance of the shamanic séance during which the accident happened, sometimes the breaking of the drum portended doom to the whole extended family (Tatyana Moldanova, 1993).

8 According to the informant, the spirits find it easier to receive the “spirit” or “energy” of the offered food and drink from the corner of the table or generally from corners.

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The Influence of Environment on the Identity of Pim River Khanties¹

Anzori Barkalaja

The geographical area covered by this article lies in Western Siberia, and concerns, more precisely, the basins of the rivers Pim, Tromyugan and Lyamin in Surgut region. The Khanties who inhabit this region, according to language and culture features, belong to the Eastern group of Khanties. The semiospherical area I have chosen covers the connections between environment² and identity among the people traditionally living along these rivers.

In earlier papers, I have distinguished among the aborigines' three groups: the Forest-, the Village- and the City-Khanties (inspired by the term City-Sámi used by the Sámi living on the territory of the Republic of Finland). This division is also justified by the influence of the Khanties' environment on their identity and models of behaviour.

In this article, I will not touch upon the questions of identity either as a phenomenon or as a notion; I will merely use some of its characteristics as a basis for study and comparison. The main concepts concerned by the present research are the feeling of geographical identity, the way of life and the world view (including the religious system). One important feature of the Khanties' geographical identity is the river-based division: e.g. the Pim river Khanties, the Kazym river

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² Under the term 'environment', in addition to the geographical environment, I also mean semiotic environment like world view, mentality, the cognitive map of perceived reality, etc.

Khanties, etc. Each territorial unit (in the area chosen, the rivers flow into the same river) is governed by a determined god or goddess (Barkalaja 1996a: 127–128) (as the Khanties do not distinguish clearly the types of spirits and the boundaries between spirits and the humans beings are most confused, the terms ‘god’ and ‘goddess’ must be taken as most relative – Barkalaja 1996a: 125–126). Other criteria have been lately added to the river-based division, as the type of living environment when the Khanties split as far as their paradigmatic way of life is concerned.

For practical aims will build my short historical presentation of the Khanties’ cultural contacts on the world view concept. The world view is constantly influenced mainly by both cultural contacts and environmental changes. I will touch quite briefly upon the contacts of the Khanties both with Russian culture and with tsarist and Soviet rule, for these factors as the main elements, which influenced the Khanties’ world view have been already analysed in my master’s thesis and previous papers (Barkalaja 1999a; 1999b).

Until the 1960s, the Khanty communities on the rivers Pim and Tromyugan lived almost in isolation. Practically no influence of tsarist rule on Khanty lifestyle and identity has been recorded. The attempts of the church to convert the Khanties *in corpore* practically failed (Karjalainen 1918: 11; Bazanov 1936: 14–15, 32; Shcheglov 1993: 104; Barkalaja 1999a: 71–72; 1999b: 53–57): christianisation through “double religion” (Zamaleyev & Ovchinnikova 1991), which had succeeded with Russians, did not succeed, in spite of the emergence of some interesting syncretistic family traditions and beliefs (Barkalaja 1999a: 74–77; 1999b: 57–66). Nevertheless, these features were not widespread and are recorded as regular only on the Southern Khanties’ area. Formal as they were, the Khanties’ connections with the church, were mostly due either to the violent methods used in order to baptise them (Bazanov 1936: 16–17; Karjalainen 1918: 12–13; Barkalaja 1999b: 55) or to the opportunities thus given of gaining economic profit (Balzer 1978: 435–438; Shcheglov 1993: 104).

Although the lifestyle of the Khanties living in Surgut region was at first disturbed by the Soviet rule, did the new power’s activity discontinued because of the environmental conditions. For example,

in the basins of the Pim and the Lyamin rivers sporadic campaigns of collectivisation took place: e.g. the creation of fish collective factories and scattering private reindeer herds, the building of a village, which were afterwards moved piece-by-piece into the new location according to the preference of the colonist leaders, followed by the decay of the same village and the return of the Khanties to their traditional lifestyle (Semyon Pesikov, Lyamin river, 1993). Religious persecution, the so-called shaman-hunt, also was carried out less effectively than in the Kazym area (let us recall the Kazym war), on the banks of the Ob river and in other more accessible places (Leete 1998; Barkalaja 1999a: 72–73).

The actual invasion of the foreign culture in Pim, Lyamin and Tromyugan regions occurred with the start of oil production in the Surgut area in the 1980s of oil deposits (oil production had started in Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Okrug as soon as the end of the 1950s – Gorshkov & Popov 1998: 38). The mass migration caused by the “oil rush” reached the city of Surgut and later the town of Lyantor which was built in place of the Pim village. Between the 1970s and the 1990s, the population of the Surgut region increased 7,4 times, the urban population 9,4 times (Sokolova 1998: 95).

A road network was built in order to meet the needs of oil industry causing the massive felling of timber. The invasion of industrial culture was very sudden and brutal, and submitted the native populations to a serious cultural shock. Unlike what happened during the collectivisation, now the living environment of the Khanties was being destroyed, their lands were taken for oil production.³ The main factors causing the above mentioned cultural shock, apart from the loss of their lands, were a humiliating approach towards the Khanty mental culture repression against the main preservers of traditions, the shamans and mainly the impossibility of leading the traditional way of life (Leete 1998; Barkalaja 1996b: 52–53). Some families were broken by psychical tension and died out for different causes

³ It is interesting to observe the course of creation of the oil industry and the roads leading to it. The roads usually pass through the former Khanty settlements, marking the way the geologists followed looking for oil and moving from one host to another.

(most commonly because of alcohol abuse. Most of the fatal accidents, suicides and murders were and are still committed under the influence of alcohol. The groups involved in abusive alcohol consumption mostly belong to the younger and middle-aged generations i.e. to the main basis for people's reproduction) (Barkalaja 1996b: 56). Some families, nevertheless, succeeded to recover from the shock and started to look for new opportunities for survival (Barkalaja 1996a: 131–132; 1996b: 57–60; 1997: 65–66; 1999c: 63). Although the situation has somehow improved after the *perestroika*, we can still observe some clearly racist behaviour in the coloniser's everyday communication with the natives as well as severe violations of Khanties' rights, up to murders committed by the Soviet militia (Barkalaja 1996b: 54–55, 57; Taagepera 1999: 373–387). As far as the Khanties can live on wooded grounds, the influence of the depressive factors mentioned above hasn't any irreversible effect. The factor leading to fatal consequences is mainly the takeover of Khanties' lands and their forced migration from their native areas. All the natives from the Pim river were gathered into the village of Lyantor, which in the 1990s was given the status of a town. In the Tromyugan area, they were collected into the village of Russkinskie (Barkalaja 1996b: 56).

Under the influence of external factors, a social stratification emerged among the Khanties, based on the changes in living environment. The families not directly touched by the invasion tried to preserve their traditional way of life and world view. Inside the *socium*, a structural change in positions among the Khanties who had retained their forest-oriented lifestyle could also be noticed. Some families who belonged formerly to the peripheral sphere became, in a very short period, the leading families of the region. One example of such a group is the large family of the Kanterovs. As the Kante-rov occupied a low social position in the old system, they were mentally better prepared to react by non-traditional means to new extreme situations. As they couldn't any longer solve problems and behave according to a model relying on shamanism, they were more open to the outside world and it was easier for them to borrow new elements. For example, they were the first who started to use motor-

powered equipment, who brought electricity and television to their forest households. Moreover, members of this family became mediators between the Forest-Khanties and the local officials of the colonial power, thus acting as a link between two different worlds.⁴ The same family was the first in this area to break taboos (e.g. the taboo of mushroom-eating⁵) and to introduce new technologies (e.g. cultivation of potatoes not only on the village fields but also at their forest households; introduction of the so-called Russian house – including an attic and gable roof; use of aluminum wire in making fishing gear, of plastic as a cover in tent-house building; introduction of sauna, etc.). Such innovation on the material level leads also to cognitive and world view transformations as well. Yegor Kanterov, the actual leader of the Kanterov family, has told me, more than once, that he is a non-believer, that he believes in science. According to him, no assertion, even if it relies on tradition, can be taken seriously unless it is “scientifically” proved (through the empirical experience *inter alia*). This attitude brings about different interesting phenomena. For example, the Kanterov family considers the radio, *a priori*, as the source of truthful information. Also, references to the impersonal category of scholar as a source of information, confers higher authority to statements and announcements. Their intensive orientation towards machine-centered culture and way of life provoked unexpected counteraction from the traditional world. If the obligation for organizing regional *myyrs*⁶ communicated by the gods via dreams

⁴ I became aware of the separation that the Pim river Khanties draw between “Khanty world” and “Russian world” when I asked why the Khanties do not use their shaman powers to fight the Russian invasion. They replied that a shaman may have his influence on another Khanties but not on the Russians because the Russians are coming from a different world. The Pesikov family tradition, where Semyon Pesikov’s elder daughter got under the protection of the “Russian god” and later started to lead a “Russian way of life” shows how seriously the Khanties take the existence of the “Russian world” (Barkalaja 1999b: 66).

⁵ The reason why it was not allowed to eat mushrooms was their heavenly origin. The utilitarian explanation is that mushrooms were a major addition in the reindeers’ unvaried food ration (information from the members of the Kanterov family, the Ai-Pim river).

⁶ Collective sacrifices by the Khanties living in the region (look in Barkalaja 1997; 1999c).

can be explained through the subconscious influence of social prestige, it is still difficult to explain the following case. After the death of the guardian of the family's holy dolls, "the gods elected" as new guardian the grandson of the deceased, who didn't know nor cared much for oral inheritance and traditions. The young man refused to take over the function and after that he started to be a victim of accidents. His uncle pressured the shaman, demanding the charge of the sacred dolls for himself, but the gods "remained stubborn". But when the accidents started to become life threatening, the boy finally accepted the functions and the accidents stopped. He established got married, became interested in traditions and, following the advice of "councillors", performed the rites needed for taking over the position (Barkalaja 1996a; 1996b: 57–58).

The second example comes from the same region – the upper course of the Pim river. The father died, and his wife was advised to move to the "national village" in the town of Lyantor for a "better life". The most active advisers were the town officials who described the advantages of city life (later it was revealed that the oil companies were expecting to take over the lands). As she was yielding to the pressure, her dead husband appeared in her dreams and advised her not to move to Lyantor, in order to avoid the situation where their sons would become Russianised and that the family would die out. According to Khanty traditions, the house of a deceased is abandoned, unless the master himself stipulates otherwise before his death. In this case, the spirit gave the permission for going on using the house and promised to help his wife. Later the woman felt the presence of her husband, especially during hard times. The children were sent to boarding-school but they were taken back to live in the forest as soon as they got the three-grade basic education. Following the example of the Kanterovs, she managed to settle her relations with the oil company and town officials and is still convinced that staying in the forest, although economically disadvantageous, was the right thing to do. We can find more examples where "another world" or "the world of legends" (Lintrop 1995: 102–103; 1996) manifests itself and influences the decisions taken by the Khanties, for example in determining the dates for sacrifices and the persons

performing them, in the procedures for turning someone into a shaman (Barkalaja 1996b: 57–60; 1997: 59, 67), etc.

The Khanties draw a line between the “Khanty world” and the “Russian world”: belonging to one or to the other gives, in their beliefs immunity against the phenomena that we call “supernatural” means of influence (Barkalaja 1999b: 68)⁷. The city as the environment in everyday life is the strongest precondition in belonging to the “Russian world”.

The number of the City-Khanties is constantly increasing due to the natural growth in population, for many natives try to solve their problems by abandoning their original world and trying to become “Russians”. This process is similar to the Estonian experience, where rural people tried to settle in towns and to become “Germans”. For the same reasons, some Khanties moved to the city; their tendency to go outside their own ethnic group and their obvious preference for Russians or similar ethnic groups reveals their behavioural change (Barkalaja 1996b: 54–55, 57). In some specific cases, the rejection of the Khanty world is connected with the world view or, to be more exact, beliefs. One of the sons of a family living on the Lyamin river abandoned the old way of life because, according to the family tradition, only one man from each generation will stay alive (Barkalaja 1999b: 63). Mostly, the reasons for leaving are of an economic nature (people go to the cities to look for an “easy life”). Another motivation for leaving is the eventual rise in social status caused by the external cultural and political environment. This was supported by the soviet election system: at every level, a certain number of people from different social classes and also from native ethnic groups were systematically included. It is interesting to analyse the new stratifica-

⁷ It is important to notice that the division of Khanty into “ours” and “strangers” is not carried by the negative approach about which we are warned by warns Lawrence Grossberg (1996: 96–97) but rather by the productive state of mind that defines the individual’s efficiency in a certain environment. This state of mind is described in the Western cultural sphere in three ways: “(1) the subject as a position defending the possibility and the source of experience and, by extension, of knowledge; (2) the agent as a position of activity; and (3) the self as the mark of identity” (Grossberg 1996: 97–98) with everything resulting from them.

tion based on behaviour and attitudes, among City-Khanties which reveals their identity consciousness.

Some of the City-Khanties reject any possible connection with their people and ostentatiously speak Russian with their fellow countrymen, although they are able to speak in their native tongue. Further amalgamation with Russians is hampered by the excessive difference in the two ethnic groups' phenotype which plays an important role in the racism-favorable environment. If they succeed in marrying someone from the Russian-speaking community, their children will be raised to be "Russians".

There are also City-Khanties who have preserved contacts with their relatives. Many of them have their personal *ugodie* – inherited kinship-territory (Ventsel 1998: 4). Their behaviour shows clearly the different strata that compose their identity feelings.⁸ These Khanties are mostly working in fields connected with the regulation of economic and legal relations between the native people and the oil industry. Their priorities are first to improve their own economic conditions, then to take care of their relatives, and finally to assist the other native people. Such behaviour sparks off serious tensions among the Forest-Khanties: the family protects "its own" City-Khanties, while but the others react to them in an extremely negative way. Thus, the claims concerning the City-Khanties' estrangement have quite opposite reasons depending on the source (Ventsel 1998: 6). It is therefore difficult to obtain an objective picture on the City-Khanties using interviews, for the information received is substantially controversial. The main feature, we are concerned with, is that these City-Khanties working in "executive positions" try to preserve their connections with their family lands and live a kind of double-life, fully participating on one hand in sacrificial rituals, but still trying to hide any signs of this part of their life in the city environment.

⁸ To some extent this state of mind can be described with terms like 'fragmentation' and 'hybridity', described by L. Grossberg in his inductive overview on the essence of identity (1996: 91–92). In fact, he describes the possibilities for having several contemporaneous identities which may lead to the situation usually considered by the positivistic paradigm as schizophrenic, as from the Olympian heights of empirical positivism the situational objectivity of mullah Nasreddin is not to be expected.

City-Khanties working in the field of ideology, education and culture (i.e. the so-called intelligentsia), especially younger women, form a separate group. They are clearly hesitant and embarrassed when they participate in traditional events and rites. But, they are extremely involved and authoritarian in staging old traditional rites in festivals etc., acting as higher experts than the old men who perform the rituals themselves.

The lack of self-confidence in behaviour is particularly obvious among the Khanty village intelligentsia (schoolteachers, cultural workers, etc.). In a participatory experiment we have provoked during our expeditions domestic prayers. In these cases, the uneasiness both in following the ritual and in the emotional reactions to this was so manifest among this social group, that people were close to hysterical behaviour. This crisis perception is possibly caused by the opposition at the level of consciousness between on one hand the traditional collective memory based on shamanistic world view and, on the other hand, the basic code of the Soviet Union's educational system. This which implicitly included the oppression of native cultures (as the fight against nationalist relic) and the depreciation of the religious world view ("religion is opium to the people", "giving culture to the natives, excluded from development").

The Village-Khanties are the most mixed group, which embraces almost all of the social groups as far as economic and social positions are concerned (Barkalaja 1996b: 55–56). This part of Forest-Khanty families, who were compelled to leave their original environment, and has not been able to adjust in their new cultural environment, has in the meantime lost the "feeding" connections with the "Khanty world" because of the lack of its material rallying component – the activity area corresponding to the family's sacred places. In this group, alcoholism, suicides and accidents are most widely spread. These families are condemned to die out.

I have thus chosen the attitude towards the religious tradition as a basic element for comparison between the Forest-, Village-, and City-Khanties. According to Joachim Mol, religion is the solemnisation of identity (Gopalan 1978: 124). Social identity is preserved by performing common rituals (Mol 1978: 191) and by having common sacred places (Barkalaja 1999b: 68). If one does not have any sacred

place, one loses orientation in ethical values and one's social behaviour becomes inconsistent. Also, behaviour towards the *socium* ceases to be constructive and one suffers social degradation. Sacred rituals performed in sacred places code again and again one's conscience as archeacts⁹, functioning as "the recreators of universe".

Nevertheless, through the traditional "Khanty world", the "world of legends" has not lost its power on the Khanties who have maintained the connection with their forefathers' legends and their traditional environment. This power is most often becoming apparent through supernatural experiences. Supernatural experiences play an important part in counterbalancing the evolution towards the so-called Russian way of life and identity: the changes in actual life are thus mentally stabilized through spiritual world and the families' connection with life in forest is preserved.

The archetypes to be found in myths contain the fundamental codes for identity, values, ethics etc. These codes affect human behaviour. In myth studies, researchers argue about the primacy of ritual (action) or myth (instructions for action). The method of connecting both (Sidorenko 1999: 85) has also been studied, but a closer approach shows that this method just confronts rituals and myth, putting them into the same system. It seems nevertheless that archetypes and archeacts (as respectively myth and ritual) are related more like electric and magnetic fields: they constantly recreate each other giving thus the basis for light spreading. In this comparison, culture (in our case the Khanty world) is seen as light.

According to their social position, different families chose different ways of reacting to changes, but all the families which try to preserve their traditional identity are characterised by the highest importance given to spiritual tradition. In some cases this attitude is conscious, while in some cases it is unconscious and appears in instructions for behaviour given through different supernatural experiences. These supernatural experiences counterbalance most strongly the move-

⁹ P. Burnel's term 'arheact' has been used by I. Sidorenko in analysing the function of a cultist act from the aspect of protecting person's spiritual world (Sidorenko 1999: 58, 62).

ment towards the so-called Russian lifestyle and identity, thus stabilising through the spiritual world changes occurring in real life, preserving families' connections with traditional forest life¹⁰.

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¹⁰ A good example is reindeer herding among the Pim river Khanties: it does not have any great economic importance but plays an important role in the sacral world and identity.

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On Some Forms of Gaming/Simulation from the Anthropological Point of View

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Abstract

In my paper I have taken under the observation the actions of a shaman as a unifying field that corresponds to large extent to the characteristics of simulation.

Within a community, the shaman's task is to find solutions to all kinds of crises. Crises may create great emotional changes, while successful dealing with them and finding solutions to them is directly related to *decision-making*.

In modern discourse of shamanism the *altered states of consciousness* is used as a key notion instead of previous term — *techniques of extasy*. The altered state of consciousness is attained during the ritual through the increase of emotional tension. Therefore it can be assumed that there exists a connection between the situations of crises, emotions, the ability of decision-making and the techniques of finding solution to the crises.

In the literature of psychology we can find implications that certain parts of brain (cerebrum, frontal lobes, etc.) have a role both in the existence of emotions as well in the ability of decision-making. Also the decision-making and emotional intelligence have been connected. On that basis we can infer that shaman's ability to act in a community as a surmounter of the crises is connected with his emotional intelligence, i.e. the ability of commanding (controlling and directing) the emotions. The concept of commanding the emotions and altered states of consciousness can be used for example in simulation games where emotional intelligence and ability of decision-making are also cultivated.

Introduction

This paper observes the schemes of processing information used in shamanism and their possible connections to the information-processing schemes used in gaming/simulation. The achieved results of comparison should help to imagine some processes occurring among the participants during the simulations better.

Firstly, I touch upon some more important aspects of shamanism. Research in this field is a developing process as all the culture continues to develop. In the present article I would like to present the classical way of looking at shamanism as well as its new concept. Secondly, I describe briefly those aspects of game, gaming and simulation that enable us to design bridges between the studies on shamanism and the theory of simulation and gaming. Thirdly, I provide help for those bridges to materialise, and fourthly, I present some options for using those bridges.

The treatments of shamanism

The word *shaman* has been introduced by Russian explorers who took it from the Tunguisan language. As this paper observes the phenomenon itself, the etymology of the word will not be profoundly treated. (About the etymology of the word *shamanism* see Eliade, 1974: 4.495–501)

By the most widespread treatment, shamanism is a form of special technique for achieving ecstasy, which is used in order to contact the spirits, control some of them and make them pursue the goals chosen by the shaman. Usually those spirits are called the helping spirits of shaman. While in a state of trance or ecstasy, the shaman him/herself has a power to make spirit-journeys i.e. to go to the upper or the lower world or to travel in the middle world (Eliade, 1974: 4–6, 88; Siikala, 1978: 17–18; Hoppál, 1992: 1). A shaman is a social figure who, with the help of assisting spirits, reaches ecstasy for communicating with the supernatural world in the interests of his group members (Hultkrantz, 1973: 34). By a classical treatment, shamanism can be

characterized by such terms as trance and ecstasy (see Hamayon, 1995; Siikala, 1998). Some recent studies show that achieving trance or ecstasy is not always and necessarily needed. It is so in the Japanese miko-tradition (Kanda, 1993: 67), and the data collected about Korean shamans also show that they do not always achieve trance or a hypnotic state during their professional practice. That is why some of the researchers have begun to have doubts about the technique of ecstasy as a necessary condition of shamanism (see Howard, 1993: 5–6). I have also received information from eastern Khantys in West Siberia that shows that the shaman's behaviour during shamanizing does not have to be different in any way from the "normal" state.

So the ecstasy cannot be treated as a basic term of shamanism (Hultkrantz, 1973: 28–29) because binding shamanism only with the technique of ecstasy overshadows its more extensive nature (see Hultkrantz, 1973: 37). Mihály Hoppál places shamanism under the concept of the system of beliefs preferring it to the concept of religion (Hoppál, 1992: 117, 130; Hoppál, 1995). Shamanism is rather a view on the world that values the system of a certain type, where non-material worlds and creatures exist. Aado Lintrop emphasizes the action defining shamanism as a collection of imaginations, beliefs and methods that evoke via the activation of "mythological reality" the shaman manifestation and interprets it as the appearance of shaman spirits, subjects the visions and the behaviour of the one selected to the traditional control and allows to use them for solving the group members' problems¹ (Lintrop, 1995: 157)

Observing shamanism as a phenomenon, it can be easily discovered that communication with the supernatural world usually takes place in a risen emotional condition. The risen emotion gives the potential and the power to break out of the habitual everyday world; it causes a special condition that is called the altered states of consciousness.

The important components that characterize shamanism and some connected phenomena are:

¹ "This phenomenon, similar to Western hypnosis, is brought about by rhythmical stimulation of the nervous system, growing concentration, motivation on the part of the shaman, and the emotional charge produced by the expectations of the audience" (Siikala, 1998: 11).

- a) Altered states of consciousness;
- b) Emotionally tensioned environment and²
- c) Highly structured rituals that are necessary to reach those states.

Simulations and games

Simulations and games are directed to effective training of certain skills. There are three pure types of exercises or activities:

- Pure games
- Pure simulations
- Pure case studies

And four hybrids:

- Simulation games
- Simulated case studies
- Games used as case studies
- Simulation games as case studies

(Ellington, Addinall and Percival)

A. Kirby has defined game as a structured training activity with a content or process-learning objective other than the completion of the activity itself (A. Kirby "Games for Trainers"). Although the aspect of learning is very important, I would like to expand that definition, referring to Johan Huizinga's (Huizinga, 1992) and Juri Lotman's (Lotman, 1990) treatments.

There are two different aspects that can be distinguished. First there is the formal side that enables us to find, gathering different conceptions, a definition of game: "A game is a defining of playfields and -rules as well as an action determined by those playfields and -rules³".

² Environment means shaman's surrounding environment as well as his inferior environment that consists of the state of the body, emotions etc.

³ Juri Lotman has defined the model as "an analogue of cognisable reality that replaces the object in the process of cognition". The definition of the modelling system essentially coincides with the definition of game that has

The other aspect is a potential of a game to lead a player to altered states of consciousness. The state of game can be used for solving different crisis⁴ and the deeper is the crises, the deeper is the emotional game state of players. At the same time the intensity is a factor that determines the salience of the characters of the phenomenon (Allik, 1997: 52, ref. Amos Tversky). The different intensity of games can create an illusion that some game is not a game at all because its

been mentioned above. As a logical conclusion he brings out among modelling systems like language and scientific-cognitive models also arts and games (Lotman, 1990: 9–11). A game is thus a modelling system that is supported by a psychological theory that says that the human creates in his/her consciousness a cognitive card about surrounding reality that helps him/her orient in reality and act adequately. So for human consciousness everything begins with perception. Perception is a constructive process where preceptors acting have an important role (Allik, 1997: 21). Two important factors should be taken into account while talking about perception. First a defectiveness of percept data and second the human's quality to perceive things that do not exist (Allik, 1997: 23). As the largest amount of data comes through the sense of sight, let's observe the problem through an example of perception of seeing. The first factor means that a human gets much less perception impulses than an impression of perception show. Littleness of impulses is compensated by mechanisms of decoding an optical message. There are several decoding mechanisms and they are simple suppositions about the surrounding world. Those suppositions form a chain from strict suppositions to weaker ones. Making decisions of perception a sense of sight attempts to interpret them starting from the strictest supposition moving, if necessary, to the weaker ones (Allik, 1997: 30). The other factor is expressed so that senses hallucinate continuously crating something that does not exist in concrete reality (Allik, 1997: 33). The consciousness is usually influenced by information from divergent organs of perception and so the result is much more complicated. So there is no reason to be astonished if policemen who have been sent to track an armed criminal, who has escaped from the prison, see a pointed revolver in a bottle that has slid between two stones even if they would never do so during an ordinary patrol. This leads us to the second important aspect of game that is its potential to generate different ASCs.

⁴ J. Huxinga words the same vision defining a game. By him a game is agreement to do something by certain rules, in a certain form, during a certain time and place that solves a tension and rests outside the everyday life (Huizinga, 1992).

characters are left in the shadow by an influence of another and more intensive game.

To some extent, it may be caused by the fact that people categorise the world on the basis of prototypes. By the ordinary concept of the western culture the opposition to "the real life" is an important character defining games. At the same time, the line between the real life and the sphere of games is not clear at all. We can easily suppose that "the real life" is acting in a primary simulation. Simulation (or a simulation game) can be treated as a secondary model (the secondary game), where the concrete elements of primary structure that are related with the primary structure just like the smallest sector of a fractal is related with the fractal itself, is modelled (about fractals see Leigh & Spindler, 1999)⁵.

In this light our special interest is directed, according to the division of Ellington, Assinalli & Percivali, to pure games and hybrids except simulated case studies.

Games, simulation games, etc. are used, as already referred, in the first place in the field of education and training but their recreational function, the one that offers emotional satisfaction, can not be forgotten as the growing popularity of such role-games as AD&D, LARP, MUD etc. shows. There is a motivating influence of getting an emotional satisfaction that on the one hand, enables to find the ways to make the official learning programmes more acceptable and on the

⁵ A connection between raising a fractal and chaos and its subordination to certain algorithms gives us a possibility to see it as a metaphorical example about the principles of human activities in creating their playground that he calls the world. In modern information society we can testify fulfilling one circle — we get more and more information which additional value decreases more and more, we can not catch the meanings of all produced information and so we take inevitably the way of choices.

Baudrillard describes universe towards which we are moving with accelerating tempo as a universe that is indifferent but satiated, become unfeeling but filled to explosion. He also describes the disappearing esthetics of Virilo — a process where the fractal objects, fractal forms and zones that growing thin begin to appear — it follows the satiation (Baudrillard, 1999: 137). I see nothing but a normal course of processes, cyclical reorganisation of human world that is coded into worldview of traditional cultures and to which western society must return from its worldview of linear character.

other hand helps to find new moments understanding the working mechanisms of drug addiction (as a spiritual dependence).

Learning through a game or a simulation takes place in cycles. One possible schema of working of those cycles has been brought out by Honey and Mumford (1986) and Kolb (1984). This contains four components:

- Action
- Reflection
- Theorizing
- Planning

On the other hand, Klabbers (1999) describes the structure of the creating and working mechanism of a simulation through the following steps:

- Design of the simulation
- Evaluation
- Action
- Debriefing
- Evaluation

A shaman ritual in the light of gaming/simulation

The structure of shaman rituals carries the same elements as in the main components of simulation.

In shaman tradition, the part of the design has remained in the past making the research almost impossible.

The evaluation of shamanism has generally taken place during several thousand years. The evaluation of a certain performance takes place in the beginning stage of each ritual, where a shaman has to demonstrate his capabilities. The shaman has to answer the questions, to which the answers can only be obtained by “communicating with the spirits” i.e. these are the questions that the shaman cannot answer a priori, but the person who asks the question knows the answer and can thus control the validity of shaman’s action. The evaluation process functions also as the social control on the results of the rituals. An unsuccessful shaman is not trusted any more.

Action is the ritual itself, it consists of the shaman's reaching the necessary ASC, getting the necessary information and passing it to his society members. The activities often consist of "mental travels" for the soul of the sick person or for getting some other information.

Debriefing is a collective activity, usually lead by elders (see Barkalaja, 1999: 61–62).

The main purpose in the practise of shamanising is the overcoming crisis. The crises mean a conflict between the primary stable condition and changes. Shamans are the spiritual leaders of the society who lead their companions to the way of overcoming the crises. In that sense, the purposes of the ritual techniques practiced by shamans (e.g. teaching young shamans) constitute the purposes of management gaming/simulation, where they concentrate to avoiding and minimizing the risk and should enhance the development of competent leadership for dealing with change process (Klabbers, 1999).

Overcoming the crises consists of three main components:

- Restricting emotions
- Gathering and interpreting information
- Making decisions

Acting in accordance with the decision to solve the crises is a part of the decision itself as the acting begins from the moment the decision is taken and that is why it cannot be treated as a different component.

These three elements are presented in a shaman ritual in the following manner:

Restricting emotions

Emotions are generated during the shaman rituals and the achieved tension is used for reaching the shaman's necessary ASC. There are several additional tools to achieve the necessary ASC. Those are different musical instruments, the most significant is probably the drum but there is also some psycho-tropical stuff like *amanita muscaria*⁶. It is natural that for helping weaker shamans, the energy is

⁶ The effect of psycho tropical stuff in process of changing the state of consciousness can be partly explained with resounding of arising emotions in body. In addition to the "neural trip" of emotional state back to the brain,

generated collectively (using a mechanism that generates something similar to mass psychosis). The same method is also used to help stronger shamans, when the far-reaching ASC is necessary (mental trip to far away “spheres”).

Gathering and interpreting information

As a shaman, while in ASC, perceives and cognises the surrounding reality differently than in a normal state of consciousness, the primary interpretation of information in shamans’ consciousness occurs in a figure-language of a traditional mythological world. The shaman presents his dream, without exception, poetically. It can be caused by a fact that people use mainly their sense of sight for receiving information and that is why also in ASC consciousness receives information mainly in images. There is also a hypothesis that the factual knowledge required for reasoning and decision-making comes to the mind in the form of images. Images are based directly on those neural representations, which are organized topographically and which occur in early sensory (prefrontal) cortices (Damasio, 1994: 96–104).

Putting those images into words requires special processing of information that corresponds methodically to “the Great Sorting Out of the Functions of Words and Images When They Are Tightly Integrated” (see Horn, 1999: 29) and Sense-Making (see Dervin, 1999) or in other words — the information design in western culture.

The secondary interpretation usually occurs collectively in the final phase of the cycle (debriefing).

Making decisions

The realization of solutions takes place collectively. The “Customer” achieves a new mental state (permanently new state of consciousness) that helps him to feel the solution and make decisions. In the case of

organism also used a parallel “chemical trip”, which modify the mode in which neural signals are processed. Hormones and peptides released in the body during the emotion can reach brain via bloodstream and penetrate the brain actively (Damasio, 1994: 144–145).

curing, the shift in mind goes from 'the state of sickness' to 'the state of health'. This model works especially well with psychosomatic diseases. The psychological solution is achieved followed by specific action⁷.

The mental attitudes that have brought some solution are attempted to be preserved. The codes to remaking them are retained as descriptions in the so-called base-texts but also as cognitive cards of the shaman journeys in mythical stories, songs or in drawings on drums. Reputing forward those texts occurs the necessary ASC.

How to use the concept of ASC in the Western cultural context?

Results from the study of neuropsychology give us a possible key to the answer. There are certain areas in the human brain that are specialized to fulfil special functions. In the figure below those areas are shown (see Figure 1)

Those areas, according to the research by Antonio R. Damasio, are related to the existence or the non-existence of emotions, and further-

⁷ A contrary process is described by Jean Baudrillard referring to an example of Littré about differences between pretension and simulation: "the one who pretends certain illness can just lay in bed and make a face like he would be ill. The one who simulates an illness evoke some symptoms of that illness". J. Baudrillard continues: "Pretension or concealing do not touch the principle of reality: the difference is clear, it is just masked. Simulation makes us doubt about "true" and "false", "real" and "imaginary". Is the simulator who reveals real symptoms is ill or not? Objectively he/she cannot be treated like ill but he/she cannot be treated as healthy either. In this point medicine and psychology stop facing with illness which truth cannot be tracked. Because if every symptom can be generated and cannot be taken as the natural fact, every illness can be observed as simulation and medicine that can treat only real illnesses through their causes loses its sense. "Psychosomatics move on a doubtful path on the edge of principle of illness" (Baudrillard, 1999:10). The placebo effect produces more questions than answers to modern medicine (See Damasio, 1994: 256).

more, these areas are responsible to the links between emotions, reasoning and adequate decision making (Damasio, 1994).

I would not treat more precisely upon the problem if the paradigmatical approach of interpreting the results of Damasio's research should be positivistic "neurobiology of rationality" (e.g. Damasio, 1994: 83–86) or "the brain as a specific physical system to connecting the living being's personal immaterial soul and physical reality (Uus, 1994: 280–316). For this paper it is much more important to give an abstract of those brain areas.

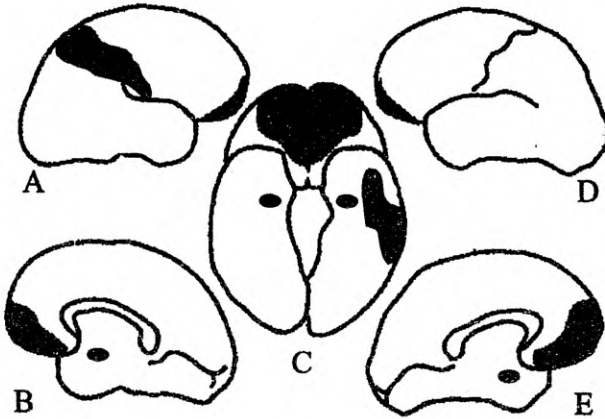


Figure 1.

dorsolateral sector amygdala (the projection) somatosensory
cortices
ventromedial sector (cerebral hemisphere)

- A: Right cerebral hemisphere, external (lateral) view
- B: Right cerebral hemisphere, internal (medial) view
- C: The brain viewed from below
- D: Left hemisphere, external view
- E: Left hemisphere, internal view

First, these systems are certainly involved in the process of reason in the broad sense of the term. Specially, they are involved in planning and deciding.

Second, a subset of these systems is associated with planning and deciding the behaviours that one might subsume under title "personal and social." There is a hint that these systems are related to the aspect of reason usually designated as rationality.

Third, the systems we have identified play an important role in the processing of emotions.

Fourth, the systems are needed to keep in mind, over an extended period of time, the image of relevant but no longer present object." (Damasio, 1994: 78-79).

We saw that during a shaman ritual, emotions are used in order to get decisions about solving the crisis. Connection seems to be relatively strong. In psychology, in addition to verbal-logical intelligence, more and more has been talked about emotional intelligence (even about physical intelligence) and its importance in social success. The results of shaman researches, especially in the field of ASC are convertible through those connections for using in the western cultural sphere.

Thus the achieved results can be used in developing emotional capabilities. This is already going on in the case of simulations and simulation games. But if the importance of emotions is not considered, it may happen that the effectiveness of simulations and learning games that need human participation may be low. An example:

During a simulation of accident organized in Estonia by a rescue service, a member of the staff filled a hole in a leaking ammoniac tank with his finger (the modern version of the Dutch dam closing). Fortunately the tank was filled with water. In the case of a simple verbal-logical debriefing, those spontaneous reactions do not change dramatically, information is just received as it is received when learning via reading instructions. The material processed does not become a natural part of the learner's scheme of cognition via understanding. In my opinion, better results could be achieved if the 'wounds' and medical help that occurred during simulation are dramatized and added a strong emotional charge.

Dramatization of the key aspects of simulation may have a good influence on learning, remembering, and foremost to understanding and recognizing (see Figure 2).

Two different ways can be distinguished talking about dramatization. The first possibility is to bring a human, through raising an emotional tension, to a state of consciousness where the solution or “understanding” reaches suddenly. In that case, an absolute getting into the spirit of the situation as a precondition is required that assumes total confidence and faith of the “operator of the situation”.

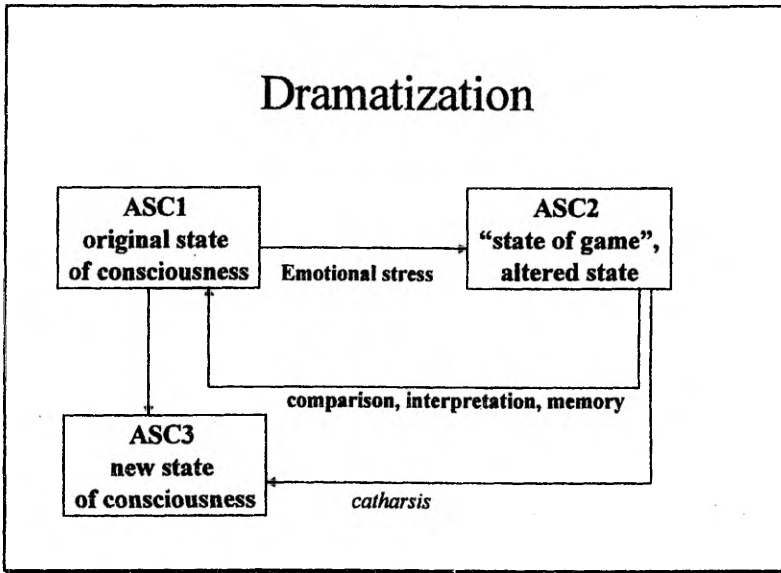


Figure 2.

Often it is impossible to announce what is really going on. Such understanding seems to be related to Aristotle’s catharsis⁸. Similar

⁸ It is necessary to emphasize that the state of catharsis is achieved in assistance of waken, restrained and directed emotions not just in a generated state of affect.

psycho-technical methods are used in Buddhism (especially in Chan alias Zen Buddhism, the phenomena known “lightening”) and in other Oriental practices (Qi-gong, etc.). Such experiences have often a religious aspect that is successfully used by many leaders of modern sects. (As a negative and warning example while the ethical base is considered to be avoiding manipulation with people, especially if the purpose is personal gain.)

In the other case, the moment of dramatization is not so intensive. One sits between the two chairs of “believing” and “not believing”. This way could be more interesting while talking about the simulations and games while the dramatized performance of role-play causes drawing parallels with the theatre.

Many researchers as W. Bogoras, M. Eliade, M. Leiris, etc. have pointed out the similar features of the shaman’s activities and the actor’s work (role play – A. B.) The leading ideologues of avangardistic theatre like Brecht, Brook, Cole, Artraud reached a conviction that the primary drama is nothing but the imitation of reality and they saw in rituals and in ritual drama revived knowledge of compelling performance (Kendall, 1993: 16–17). In the Korean tradition, for example, the line between the shaman ritual and the dramatic performance is quite narrow (see Lee, 1993; Kister, 1993; Kim, 1995; Hamayon, 1995: 26).

In this comparison, we cannot ignore the fact that in the Western society, acting is usually a conscious creation of illusion, having artificial mode. A shaman acting in the mythological reality cannot permit himself an activity he does not believe in. Furthermore, a person coming from a shaman tradition does not mix up a shaman ritual and acting a shaman ritual (Hamayon, 1995: 20).

In the Western cultural context it is hard to believe something based on “simulation”, but the state of “game consciousness” can still be used. Games and simulations based in games fulfil important criteria — the realization of both practical and stipulated behaviour at the same time.

By Juri Lotman, a player must always bear in mind that he/she participates in a stipulated situation and at the same time must forget it. Or in other words: “A child is just afraid of a real tiger, a child is just not afraid of a stuffed tiger; a child is afraid a bit (means that

scares and does not scare at the same time) of a striated dress stretched out to a chair that represents a tiger (Lotman, 1990: 13)". That description is good to describe ASC. Acquiring knowledge about the view of the world by the young Ob-Ugrians during the big Beer Funerals carries the same nature.

Connections between shaman rituals, drama performances and simulation games are not accidental. Brook talks about the degenerated theatre that does not clean the soul — the task described by Aristotheles. It happens when only a simple reflection of real events is used without the process of going through it⁹. Events and knowledge are just declared and forgotten soon but they are not understood. That way the experience will not be acquired, the human continues in the old way and he/she has not learned anything. So just a simple imitation (modelling, simplifying the situation does not change the qualitative character of simple imitation) could even hinder learning than favours it. Using the words of Baudrillard "The information that just reflects or spreads the event, is a degenerated form of that event."

A beauty of the state of consciousness of game that has already been described above lies in the categorical imperative of synchronism of opposite requirements. The synchronism of the different estimation of values that is based on the two different states of consciousness, causes a situation of tension, a spiritual and emotional stress and getting over it requires:

- a) Apprehension of both states
- b) Apprehension of schemas of evaluation that is based on those states
- c) Comparing and interpreting those two states
- d) Abandoning both states (and the schemas of evaluation as well as the corresponding view of the world) for the third state that would correspond to the requirements.

⁹ It can be illustrated by an example of differences between natural and "say-cheese" smiles. Absolutely different brain zones are activated for moving muscles of facial expression. Muscles under eyes are not subordinated to intentional moving and they move only if the brain zones that are connected with arising emotions are activated (Damasio, 1994: 140–142, 148–149).

Stage a) and b) must not be announced but they can be worked through the feelings if we take a hypothesis that feelings constitute the emotional derivative of apprehension. A.Damasio offers a reversed form of this hypothesis by phrase: " /---/ feeling your emotional states, which is to say being conscious of emotions /---/ (Damasio, 1994: 133)" supporting the deep emotional character (or even origin) of reasoning and decision making on stages c) and d).

There are at least two ways by A.Damasio for making a decision between different possibilities: a traditional "high-reason" wave of decision making that is supported by a formal logic and the second possibility that is supported by the "somatic-marker hypothesis". Pure applying of the first method causes a dead end because of a great number of variants (specially in critical situations that need fast decisions). For accelerating the process and retaining the adequacy for the environment, the other method can be taken into use. Somatic markers are a special instance of feelings generated from secondary emotions. Those emotions and feelings have been connected, by learning, to predict the future outcomes of certain scenarios. /---/ Most of the somatic markers we use for rational decision-making were probably created in our brains during the process of education and socialization, by connecting specific classes of stimuli with specific classes of somatic state [of body]. In other words, they are based on the process of secondary emotions¹⁰. (Damasio, 1994: 171–177)

The ASC concept is usable for seeing the process of education from a bit different point of view. Official learning programs and institutions see education mainly as training. "Education is not only training. Training usually provides a narrow explicit machine- or system-specific competence that is quickly obsolete with technological change. Education is a much more durable quality: /---/, it is "a state of mind." (Cooley, 1999: 73). The best results in action give the knowledge and reactions that are reached through recognizing. Here we can observe the hermeneutic nature of learning.

¹⁰ Primary emotions are conditions that are connected with elementary needs — surviving, food, reproduction that are expressed also as direct physical reactions. Amygdala plays an important role in primary emotions. Secondary emotions are connected with memory and influence our considerations of decision making (Damasio, 1994)

The Hermeneutics (see Schleiermacher, 1997; Dilthey, 1974; Heidegger, 1993; Gadamer, 1997) discusses the technique of interpretation and recognizing. Interpretation acts between different sign systems, between different cognition maps, between different realities. As different sign systems presume different schemes of thought and evaluation, we may also talk about the different states of consciousness.

The hermeneutic nature of learning, according to the ASC conception, would appear in the following scheme (see Figure 3):

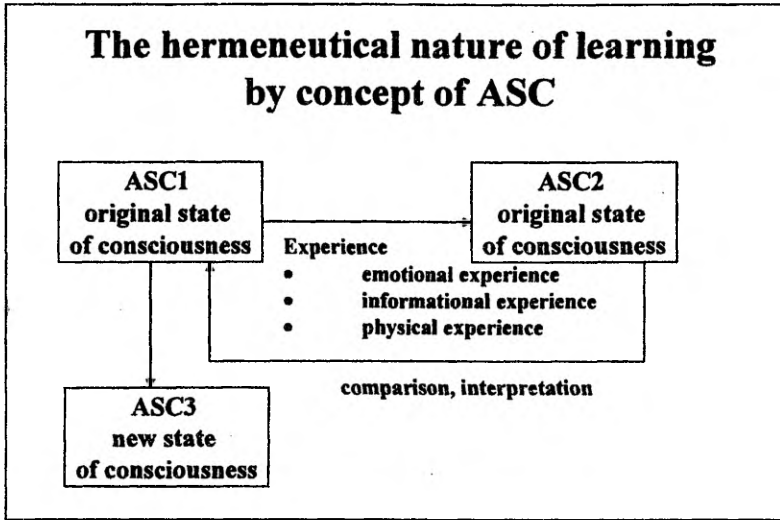


Figure 3.

This simplified scheme only works with an assumption that everything in this world exists par excellence.

By the interpretation of a process the human perceives, apprehends and acknowledges things and phenomena selectively. Things and phenomena that he/she perceives, apprehends and acknowledges as a

reality, as well as connections between those things, determine his/her state of consciousness.¹¹

Some bundles of states of consciousness are optimal for the adequate reactions to environmental influences and they have become the normal states of consciousness (ASC1). Supported by them decisions are made.

The changing environment, new experience, new information always generates a new state of consciousness, especially if emotional intension is added (ASC2). If the experience is not important from the point of view of humans' activities, he/she turns back to the normal state of consciousness. In fact, there is no learning; the acquired information will be forgotten sooner or later.

If the experience is important, the information and behaving models are kept in mind. If the experience is radical (the emotional intension that surpasses a certain threshold) or recurrent, then a new stable state of consciousness arises (ASC3). The first case can be called catharsis and the other is training — there is no real learning.

Learning from experiences accompanies acknowledging different states of consciousness, mutual interpretation and finding additional values that is expressed in "recognizing". Recognizing is usually accompanied with positive emotions (Archimedes' Heureka!) and there is almost always a feeling of enlarging. If the whole cycle of actions and searching new experiences becomes purposeful, it is possible to talk about the process of learning.

Important things usually wake stronger emotions than the norm of contentment foresees. Information can be made important by generating strong emotions and binding with that information.¹² At that an important moment of restraining emotions should not be forgotten. That sort of process can be called teaching. From here we can arrive

¹¹ It is in fact impossible to talk about one normed and unchangeable state of consciousness. As consciousness is continuously infected by exterior factors, as well as and inferior ones, consciousness changes continuously moving from one state to another. Depending on the aim of the research, such scales of analysis where the states on consciousness can be discrete units can be chosen.

¹² Here I mean every sort of structured energy as information, also operational information or behaviour.

an old and in some places even a forgotten truth that we can not even by means of simulation games, be limited to training knowledge, skills and abilities if we do not want to fall to Baudrillard's trap of simulacrum, if we want to go out from teaching forms based on factory models (see Cooley, 1999: 72).

Strict skills and abilities work only in certain situations. Drawing up a standard list of situations and according to that list creating standard methods devoted to training skills there arises a danger that creativity — an ability to find unexpected and innovative but adequate solutions — will be lost.

There is a difference whether we teach product-based skills like using MS Word or we teach a principle-based skill like acquiring the principles of the text editor. The first one leave the learner hobbled in the Microsoft environment that causes a loss of understanding while getting to the word of Macintosh. The other way makes the human find bearing in different environments and generates new skills.

To acquire new mental readiness to valid analysing of situations and adequate reactions to them — open simulations (Leigh & Spindler, 1999) and shaman practices seem to be equal, differing only in the cultural context and the sign-system.

This paper does not present anything revolutionary or new. The picture presented here is more like a sketch. Here I have combined, as Levi-Strauss's bricoleur, some research results from different fields describing one issue. At the same time, it seems to me that developing such a theory, the researchers dealing with simulations, may get a cognitive map to help model their activities. As we can see, the shamans have much more to give to us than only to fulfil our need for something exotic.

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VIII

Shamanism as Information Design
Manuskript.

SHAMANISM AS INFORMATION DESIGN

About the concept of shamanism

Shamanism is most commonly understood as being a special technique of achieving ecstasy that is used to contact the spirits, to control some of these spirits and to make these spirits pursue the ends desired by the shaman. Usually those spirits are the helping spirits of a shaman. The shaman him/herself, while in a trance or state of ecstasy, also possesses a power to make spirit-journeys i.e. to travel to the upper or lower world or to travel through the middle world (Eliade 1974: 4–6, 88; Siikala 1987: 16–18, Hoppál 1992: 1; Bulgakova 2001). According to the classical definition, terms like *trance*, *ecstasy* and *possession*¹ are characteristic features of shamanism and are brought together under the term *altered state of consciousness*. Experiences gained in such a state are closely connected with one's cultural background (Siikala 1987: 16–17; 1998b: 26–27). With the invasion of a foreign, or other culture, and its gradual assimilation, traditional patterns of vision can also change and elements of the new culture become adopted. For example, After a spirit-journey, one young Eastern-Khanty man described a genuine Soviet passport office between the border of the middle world, (our world) and the realm of the dead. (see Barkalaja 1997: 64). Additional examples of contamination can be found in the 17th and 18th century Hungarian *táltos*-tradition (Pócs 1999: 127–128), in the teaching practice of the Udmurt shamans (Lintrop 1999: 43), in the world view of the Khanties that combines Russian orthodox saints and Khanty spirits (Barkalaja 1999: 58–66), and etc. In essence, the phenomena termed by Jung: *visionary rumours*, wherein people see Jerusalem, the Virgin Mother or UFOs, can be considered as belonging to the same category.² (see Jung 1995).

Since Eliade the research scope the field in question has been expanding, both geographically and phenomenologically. Much new information has been added that no longer fits under the old construction. The theoretical concept of shamanism as merely a technique for attaining ecstasy is losing its validity, and does not inspire scholars towards a more creative thinking. Thus, for example, in the recent dissertation of Tatjana Bulgakova (2001), the stress is laid upon the *emic*-approach so that the holistic rendering of the research material might be assured. Because of this Bulgakova makes a

¹ See Hamayon (1995), concerning the difference between *trance*, *ecstasy* and *possession*; see Siikala (1987: 25–26, 37–40; 1998b: 26–27) for an overview of the phenomenologico-historical debate over the possession or ecstasy related essence of shamanism.

² The Khanties have also seen UFOs. At the upper section of the rivers Pim and Tromagan the Khanties have told that “the unidentified flying objects” are an annual occurrence and that they are especially often seen in autumn, suggesting thereby that this might be “the experiments of Russian military industry”. At the lower course of the river Ob in the village of Korvozhevo, a Khanty informant described two types of *menkv* (‘spirit’ in Khanty). One was described as a “bigfoot”, the other displayed traits of an “alien”. The latter were described as being three metre tall robot-like creatures who had flashlights for eyes. The Khanties believe that people who meet such creatures will die soon (Barkalaja 2000: 186–187).

distinction between *shamanstvo and shamanism*³, basing her research on the former, and thereby distancing herself from the traditional concept of shamanism.

Here, it seems that we deal with the contradiction between the emic and etic methods in regards to the research material. The tradition of the etic approach in Russian ethnography has thus far failed to yield an “objective” and comprehensive treatment of specific shamanic traditions as explicitly referred to by Bulgakova (2001). Art Leete has researched the evolution of etic descriptions of West Siberian people, and has subsequently revealed a clear systematisation of distorting the characterisation of these West Siberian people (Leete 1999, 2000, 2001). Marilyn Walker draws attention to the danger of abuses and distortions that may be a consequence of a “this-material-world focus” being used to interpret a spiritually oriented culture (2001: 38-42). In my student research I have also discovered that the earlier, mainly etic-based gathering methods and concurrent theoretical works, inhibit the degree of discovery and have a distorting effect upon the process of data recording, in which the author’s biases, derived from literary sources, are exacerbated by the research object’s attempt to supply the “right” answers, at all costs (Barkalaja 2001: 151–155).

The problem for researchers then, boils down to the question of how to form a holistic picture of the described phenomena. At present it is a natural critical response that along the *emic-etic* axis, the character of collecting field information concerning West Siberian people should have leaned towards the *emic* method, provided that the aim is to depict the culture⁴ under study as a holistic system.

At the same time the choice of methodology should be kept in balance. To be sure, during the material gathering phase, the researcher might be exposed to the danger of a distorting effect of the “hermeneutic temptation” while recording the “etic of mental life” (Bulgakova 2001). However, the *hermeneutike techne* is an inevitable trap while doing intercultural analyses or syntheses. It is still difficult to imagine the application of a predominantly emic analysis in light of Western “materialistic” paradigms while discussing cultures that are traditionally oriented towards the “spirit world”⁵. Inevitably,

³ Here she is drawing upon the works of N.A. Alekseenko concerning the debate within the Russian school. L. P. Potapov and V. N. Basilov on the other hand argue that those terms are synonymous: *shamanstvo* is a Russian term, whereas *shamanism* is an English term (Bulgakova 2001: 7). Researchers from the West have employed such notions as *shamanhood* and *Schaman-tentum*, which point to a necessity of such distinction (Hoppál 1999: 7).

⁴ The topic of culture is a real Gordian knot, the untying of which is most often either impeded or accomplished through Alexander the Great’s method. Nor do I possess a “philosopher’s stone” to cut that open. Rather, as far as it concerns gathering and systematization of field information, I’d like to rely upon Marvin Harris’s approach, by which a culture comprises the level of “memes” as well as its interdependent behavioral level (1999: 19–29). However, in the theoretical analysis and synthesis, this approach does not seem viable because the upper rung of support for Wittgenstein’s ladder is missing. In the treatment of the emic-etic distinction I have also drawn upon Harris’s qualification stating “the reformulation of the emic/etic distinction to include mental and behavioural qualifiers results in four contrasting modes of ethnographic descriptions: emics of mental life, emics of behaviour; etics of mental life and etics of behaviour” (1999: 40).

⁵ In theory, this is possible if the bearer of the researched culture has received a Western education and maintained material contacts with his/her culture, which presupposes a preservation of the traditional life style and mentality. From the Siberian cultures such researches include Tatjana and Timofei Moldanovs, M. Lapina, Agrafena Pessikova, Tatjana Gogleva, and etc.

the intercultural boundaries, or the translation from one sign system into another — semiotics — must be dealt with at this level. Likewise, psychology still remains important since the bearers of the researched cultures are humans according to the tacit agreement of science (although the emic approach would not rule out other creatures). Hermeneutic research⁶ would then constitute one possibility towards avoiding interpretation from an ethnocentric perspective.

As was already stated, the source of methodological conflict seems to reside in a theory of shamanism that has become too narrow (see Hoppál 1999: 7–8). However, some recent studies have shown that achieving trance or ecstasy is not always needed necessarily. This is the case with the Japanese *miko*-tradition (Kanda 1993: 67), and also substantiated in the data collected regarding Korean shamans which shows that they do not always achieve trance or a hypnotic state during their professional practice. This has led some of the researchers to doubt the importance of the technique of ecstasy in the case of shamanism (Howard 1993: 5–6; Hoppál 1999: 8). There are several examples that prove such approach in the case of Khanties. Among the Khanties of the Pim and Tromyugan rivers, I have heard from my informant about one occasion where an old shaman from the Tromyugan area gave him good advice concerning the problems connected with his son and the changing of spirit dolls (see also Barkalaja 1996). The informant was truly impressed by the fact that he had not yet told anything to the shaman or asked for his help. The shaman had not used any aids and never altered his ordinary state as far as one could tell⁷.

An opposite way is also possible — a person coming from a Western country and having the necessary research education merges with and adopts the researched culture, being him/herself accepted as a member of the respective society. Here, I don't mean the kind of participating observation such as Malinowski's whose method still does not secure an escape from the "hermeneutic temptation". Drawing upon her own field experience (most likely), Marilyn Walker advocates the radical participation-I, recommended by Michael Harner. This should ensure the access to first-hand knowledge in the studies of shamanism (Walker 2001: 41).

In both cases we deal with the possession of double identity. Unfortunately, the options in the case of a total emic-study would be limited to the two cultures and the mainstream of the still prevalent materialistic paradigm of science, which does not consider an identity oriented towards the spirit world seriously enough to even initiate a dialogue.

⁶ Since the debate over hermeneutics as methodology is still in progress as in the case of cultural phenomena, then I'd point out that here I draw upon postulate 9 of F. Schleiermacher's "Hermeneutics and criticism" in which interpretation is treated as an art (below I elucidate the reason why) and upon p. 10 in which the main functions of language talent and individual language talent in the art of interpretation are being postulated (1997: 16–18). It is interesting to note that Scheiermacher's postulates 19, 20 and 20.2 establish one of the main criterion for the "emic of mental life". Fully realizing that Scheiermacher speaks about the written texts, I rely upon Juri Lotman's expansion of the notion of text to include other forms of texts besides exclusively written language.

⁷ To understand the informant's reason for wonder, we must know the Surgut Khanties' classification of shamans according to their strength. According to this tripartite division, strong shamans do not use any aids to obtain information, and when manipulating with the environment, they use random objects at hand. Semi-strong and weak shamans especially, use various aids and they also need help from their community while performing rituals. The informant was impressed by the existence of such a strong shaman in the area. As a result of the Soviet repressions in West Siberia, the shamans do not advertize their power or even existence and hence, the information concerning them is insufficient even among Khanties.

Among the Eastern Khanties shamanizing or communicating with the “invisible people” was until recent times allegedly so ordinary that there was no special “theatre” necessary in order to make contacts with this world of spirits⁸. Everyone dealt with shamanizing to a larger or lesser extent, otherwise “one would not live very long” as Yegor Kanterov from the Pim river area put it. When we asked why there is such a small number of those with shamanistic powers in these days, he answered that earlier people were strong, but now the medicine is strong.

Indeterminability is widespread among Eastern Khanties. For example, they do not make a clear difference between the ordinary world and the supernatural world, as it tends to be divided by the Western researchers (see Harner 1988: 9). It is also difficult to draw a line between an ordinary person and a shaman, between bears (as holy beings) and shamans, between *hlunks* (spirits or elves in Eastern Khanty language) and babies, and between shamans and *hlunks*. A similar tendency has been noticed in the earlier cases of material regarding the Sami people (Hultkrantz 1987: 114).

Ecstasy cannot be regarded as a basic notion of shamanism because characterizing shamanism as being only connected with a technique of ecstasy restricts its much wider character (see Hultkrantz 1973: 28–29, 37). Hoppál places shamanism under the concept of *system of beliefs*, preferring this to the concept of religion (Hoppál 1998: 117, 130; see also Hoppál 1995). Tatjana Bulgakova also treats the Nanai shamanhood in the same way (2001). According to this conception, shamanism is rather a world view or a certain system of valuation in which physically nonmaterial creatures and levels of the world are invested with value and thereby they exist.

It may be asked, what is the essence of shamanism so that the term might not disperse to cover the spectrum of all religious expressions and rituals from nature and literal religions to mysticism etc.? For example, the increase in popularity of so called anthropological shamanism, the leading figures of which are the American anthropologists M. Harner and C. Castaneda is noticeable. The appearance of anthropological shamanism is an attempt to bring elements of a traditional worldview into the positivistic Western worldview. The field is not limited to the only theoretical work, its concepts and know-how are intended for application (Horwitz 1991: 48–49). These shamanistic methods are mostly utilized towards therapeutic ends, but they can also be used to overcome everyday problems and problems arising in creative engagement (Hoppál 1998b: 202–208; Horwitz 1995).

Urban shamanism as a term may sound strange, so the terms postmodern and contemporary shamanism have been suggested (Hoppál 1998b: 197). It considerably widens the concept of urban shamanism, while also allowing the people and social groups from cultures with the old shamanistic tradition to continue the practice of shamanism. Hence in literary examples of southeastern groups and within Western urban communities in America, the Hungarian *táltos* tradition in European city and etc. has been adapted (Hoppál 1998a: 166–168; 1998b: 199, 208; 1996:104). In the context of modern life, Hoppál brings out five roles: 1) A healing function, 2) The shaman ceremony as one man/woman theatre, 3) The shaman as poet and minstrel, 4) The shamans' ritual roles or functions in the community (as teachers of tradition, guardian of linguistic traditions, re-constructors of world view, and etc.), 5) The acceptance of roles

⁸ This observation seems to be supported by the description of a Sakha shaman Gerasimov (see Balzer 1993:154).

as political leaders (1999: 13–16). In her description of the spiritual and national leaders of the post-perestroika movement “Sakha”, M. Balzer in essence covers all these functions, highlighting the keen spirit of the two men described and their creative approach (in the innovative sense) to the shamanistic legacy (1993).

A clear division must be made between contemporary shamanism which is based on traditions and roots as opposed to other kinds of contemporary shamanism or neo-shamanism connected with *new age* ideology. Hoppál divides the first group also into two parts — traditions that have preserved shamanism almost unadulterated and traditions which were almost destroyed but were saved at the last moment (Hoppál 1996: 101). Other phenomena in the Western cultural environment which coincide with the definition of shamanism are spiritualism (Hultkrantz 1973: 35–36) and many rituals like mysticism (Eliade 1974: 508), exorcism, prophesy etc. used in so called high religions. Researchers have also noted within European cultural tradition the presence of shamanism in the fields of magic (Corradi Musi 1997a), witchcraft (Pócs 1999) and the images of the concept of soul (Dömötör 1989). It has also become popular to look for elements of shamanism in the worldview of several European cultures and nations, such as the Udmurts (Krushcheva 1990), Finns (Siikala 1994; Polttila 1990), Irish (Karjala 1990), and the inhabitants of the Orkney and Shetland Islands (Mack 1990). Elements of shamanism can be found in different religious movements that have emerged from so called world religions (cf. Hatanaka 1993).

At this point a question arises: How do we define a shaman?

Åke Hultkrantz refuses to define shamanism but has attempted to define its most important figure, the shaman.

A shaman is a social figure who, with the help of assisting spirits reaches ecstasy for communicating with the supernatural world in the interests of his group members (Hultkrantz 1973: 34).

Tatjana Bulgakova, on the other hand, has observed that “nowadays we can refer to all kinds of healers and other religious experts, who are not shamans in the strictest sense of this word”. The concept of “shaman” is especially ‘abused’ in connection with the spread of neo-shamanism. Such indeterminacy puts Bulgakova in a very conservative position where she has limited the definition of a shaman to being exclusively the native term of the Tungus-Manchu peoples *saman*⁹. At the same time she draws attention to the fact that in the Nanai culture there are experts who resemble a shaman in their activities, but are, strictly speaking, not shamans¹⁰. Bulgakova justifies such

⁹ In this respect she is more conservative than Anna-Leena Siikala in 1978. The latter considered “it useful to use the term *shamanism* for the real, “classical” shamanism of Central Asia, Northern Siberia and other arctic regions, in which the similarities of rite technique and belief system amount to more than few basic features” (Siikala 1987:15).

¹⁰ *Tudins*, for instance, did not possess their own drum nor a special costume and were ranked in-between ordinary people and shamans; *kesie gelei nai* — “people who were able to carry out a prayer ritual to achieve success”; *komako* — “clairvoyant” or “dream-clairvoyant”; *jamako* — “displayer of unusual powers”; *daljö* — “not quite the real shaman”, who inherited the spirits of his tribe as well as his close relatives; *seven punkitdi nai* — “human (not a shaman), who keeps by his side *sevens* (representations of spirits) and is able to carry out, when needed, the smoke sacrificial ceremony of the *seven*. Attention must be also paid to those whose position is close to the shaman, such as *djangian* — traditional judge, *teu* — blacksmith, *ninmanso* — story-teller, who all possessed their own helping spirits. Likewise, there are other experts who have helping

demarcations of the concept with her belief that by doing so the researcher can have at least some sense of security that shamanhood and nothing else will be under observation, and for that reason she focuses on “only those persons who are called shamans (*saman*) by the bearers of the tradition themselves” (see Bulgakova 2001: 16).

In the studies of Eastern Khanties' culture we can observe similar trends as those described by Bulgakova in respect to Nanai shamanism. However, in my fieldwork, I have not noticed the existence of such rigid demarcations as Bulgakova has in her research on Nanai people. This can be explained by the tendency of Surgut Khanties to keep information related to shamanism to themselves, and because of the absence of a strict 'caste-division' or a permanence of the status, on the other. To illustrate my point, I bring the following paragraph concerning the shaman's acceptance:

/---/ Sosko's father was a strong shaman. Two of his three sons possessed shamanistic powers and people sought help from them when it was needed. After his father's death Sosko and his brother argued about their fathers spirit/sacred dolls. This grew into a shaman war that ended with the death of Sosko's brother. The brother's family and Sosko's own children had already died earlier. Sosko himself bragged that he had put his brother to death because it proved what a mighty shaman he was. At the same time, people stopped visiting him with their problems because Sosko “lied”. He used his drum and acted as if he “went into a state” but his action was of no use. Some say that Sosko didn't lie on purpose but that the spirits cheated him because he had lost control over them. Some say that Sosko couldn't contact the good spirits any more and had contact with only the lower, bad spirits. The Pim Khanties believe that a shaman who has put other person to death, or reversely shamanized loses his power to shamanize to a greater or lesser extent. One interesting explanation was that Sosko “ate” his children in order to gain more vitality for the shaman war. The Khanties believe that a person with shamanistic powers can prolong his life at the cost of his children's lives. All in all, most Pim Khanties took a stand that is characterized by an expression of one Khanty: “Nikakoi on ne shaman”, i.e. “he is no shaman at all”./---/

(from the field notes, the Pim river, 1995)

We can suppose that Sosko knows about the circumstances that accompany his behaviour, but still he tried to preserve his position in the community and continue functioning as a shaman. A deep-set alcoholism has worsened the situation and made his behaviour theatrical and inadequate even in ordinary life. He has not met a quick death as the Nanai shamans allegedly do after their abilities have left—during my fieldwork in December 2001 I found him still alive and well.

spirits such as *garpaso* — good shots who were able to shoot quickly and at a long distance, those who put joints together, *paksi* — artful craftsmen or simply *hobar nai*, someone who excelled at doing something (Bulgakova 2001: 16–17). Parallels from other regions, in essence, show the similar connections between different professions. In addition to actors, other men of profession have been endowed with shamanistic abilities by many peoples of the world. The examples include blacksmiths (Eliade 1974: 470–474; Corradi Musi 1997) and especially poets-entertainers (vt. Eliade 1974: 510, Siikala 1998: 72–76, 80–83; Hoppál 1998: 127–128; 1998b: 198–199; Corradi Musi 1997; Shkunaev 1991: 15–16).

There seems to be some confusion over the terms “shamanism” and “shaman”. According to the considerably terse statement of Mihály Hoppál, the symbolic usage of terms such as *mana*, *taboo*, *totem* and *shamanism* could be considered an initiatory (shamanic) sickness of the scholarship (1998: 117). The notion of shamanism is becoming less clear, and we can expect some re-evaluations in this field, but not only through using the concept of *belief system*.

For field research, we could accept the powerful substitution of the conception of shamanism with that of shamanhood (see Bulgakova 2001:16). At the moment there seems to be no alternative for gathering, specifying and systematizing ‘uncontaminated’ and holistic material concerning specific cultures. This is also needed in order to obtain a more clearly structured general picture of different shamanic traditions.

The status of the umbrella-term ‘shaman’ posits a different problem. Although it originally derives from the Tungus-Manchu cultures, the term is used in Russian language communication by other Siberian peoples and thus it is no longer possible to exclude this term. The emic-data should of course clarify the names used in the given culture and their semiotic position in it. However, the term would still be useful when there is a need for a common additional name to denote the Nanai *samanism*, Khanty *tshertism*, Ashyanika *ayahuasqueroism* or Hungarian *táltosism* (provided that there is no assertion concerning the absence of an essential common base of these).

Considering all this, there is a need for a unifying theory that would direct scientific investigation and allow for connections with other disciplines. This theory must draw upon a predominately etic method because this is the only form that can be proved falsifiable in cases of theoretical analysis. This theory should, likewise, draw upon the background of other scientific fields. The umbrella-theory regarding the technique of ecstasy has become too narrow and is no longer productive in the sense that it can provoke scientific thinking towards making discoveries or generate profit in the scintifico-political field while setting up financial (and thereby research) priorities. In other words, according to the overall mentality, the research topic should satisfy natural human curiosity, but at the same time, it should justify the resources spent on a particular research project. At least for the time being, it is unreasonable to discard the concept of shamanism into the dustbin of history the way the concept of totemism has been because shamanism as a phenomena exists within different cultures, in a sufficiently complicated form, that allows us to clearly identify the research concerning it.

Jeremy Narby has offered an interesting line of reasoning concerning the potential direction of a new theory by showing possible connections between DNA and ASC (Narby 1999). This direction can become sufficiently attractive genetics and information technology advances so that the validity of hypotheses could be checked according to the Western tradition of science. One of the important messages from Narby that is already in use is that in order to develop a theory of shamanism that is constantly being remolded, specialists of diverse fields should collaborate. The aim of the comparative method would be to find this common area which would improve our understanding of the peculiarities of human beings in regards their perception, interpretation and cognition of the world, as well as their behaviour. We are constantly unalterably in the same situation in the sense that this situation requires from us “new investigations and return to the old ones as that which is already found should be reconsidered both as it is and in light of later findings” (Dumézil 1992: 25).

I on my part would offer the lines of reasoning that I have reached while comparing the Khanty spiritual culture and the results of psychological research. Actually, I would like to continue the discussion upon a theme that was first taken up by Anna-Leena Siikala, when she defined the character of the shaman's action with the following words:

“the technique of communication used by a shaman as a creator of state of interaction between this world and the other world is fundamentally an ecstatic roletaking technique” (Siikala 1987: 28).

Emotions and decision making

In our discussion of shamanism, we cannot ignore the important role of emotions as a technique of achieving ecstasy (see Siikala 1987: 41). At the same time, as was shown above, ecstasy, trance or possession are not necessary in the shaman's work. Consequently, it can be argued that the mentioned states of consciousness are necessary in the studies of shamanism, but they do not have the utmost importance. Seen in this light, we can suppose that the escalation of emotions to their most extreme point (*trance, possession, ecstasy*), which witnesses have considered a salient feature, can be an aid for weaker shamans, or can be an institutionalised form of fulfilling the more difficult tasks in the respective tradition, such as the spirit-journey to the furthest reaches of the upper or lower worlds or it. One of my informants from the Lyamin river region has related that stronger shamans need fewer aids because their own “gipnoz”¹¹ is strong enough to enable them to travel freely between the different worlds. Weaker shamans must perform certain operations so that they may achieve such an emotional state that brings them enough power to make contact with the spirit-world. It can be hypothesised that heightened emotional stress gives the necessary power to break free from the ordinary, everyday world, by means of a state that scientists have termed *altered state of consciousness*.

One of the central tasks of a shaman is to deal with crises (Siikala 1987: 15–16), this task is also connected with the ability to make adequate decisions in order to overcome the crisis. At the same time neuropsychological research has shown that in the dorsolateral and ventromedial sectors, amygdala and somatosensory cortices play an important role in the processing of emotions. Those areas, according to the research by Antonio R. Damasio (1994), are related to the existence or the non-existence of the emotions, and furthermore, are the areas that are responsible for establishing links between emotions, reasoning, adequate discussion making, and memory:

“First, these systems are certainly involved in the process of reason in the broad sense of the term. Especially, they are involved in planning and deciding. Second, a subset of these systems is associated with planning and deciding behaviours that one might subsume under rubric “personal and social.” There is a

¹¹ “Gipnoz” is a Russian word that Khanties use in Russian communication to denote shamanistic power.

hint that these systems are related to the aspect of reason usually designated as rationality.

Third, the systems we have identified play an important role in the processing of emotions.

Fourth, the systems are needed to hold in mind, over an extended period of time, the image of relevant but no longer present object.”

(Damasio 1994: 78–79).

Damasio also points out an opposite process, whereby emotions are derived from the manipulation of particular brain regions by means of chemical influences upon the impulses of the body. He divides this mechanism into two types: “the neural trip”, and “the chemical trip”, showing thereby that the neural trip can be stimulated by certain chemicals (Damasio 1994: 144–145). There have been other investigations done that show the generative effect of ASC substances on emotions (Siikala 1987: 41). The movement of mimic facial muscles also has an affective counter effect (Damasio 1994: 148). Moreover, Damasio advances a hypothesis ascertaining that the complex which integrates emotions, decision making, reasoning, and etc. is interdependent upon the states of the body as a whole. This would help us gain a fresher insight into the dance of someone participating in shamanic rituals, at certain bodily positions, techniques of sound making, and etc. within quite a few cultures¹² (the mechanisms of influence of the Chinese *qi-gong*, for example, have been explained by the bearers of the tradition as being the effect of physical exercises upon the consciousness). In so far as the same neurological areas, as integrated complexes, cater to the different phenomena mentioned above, it should be natural that the latter are interdependent, and a change in one part of the complex will result in a change of other phenomena. This is a field in which further research and a comparison of the results of separate fields of study can bring not only aesthetic pleasure, but also a socially beneficial knowledge, considering for example, the potential of drug addiction prevention in the Western countries with the help of the alternative ASC methods.

J. A. Kupina has researched the importance of emotions in the folklore of the Siberian people. She has found that physical, psychic, social and intellectual characteristics are in close interdependence within the texts that carry cultural identity. Texts in which the emotional states of the protagonists are rendered through the physiological processes are abundant. The lexicon and semantics of the Siberian people etymologically is connected to various manifestations of emotions, self-cognition, abilities and physical capacities (Kupina 1997: 134–135). The burdening of language with such connections is a proof of their importance within the life of the Siberian people, and it proves as well the existence of a keener research attention paid to this field. In traditional Chinese medicine (and as we know Chinese culture adjoins the Siberian people and has influenced them), the connections between emotions and the physical and psychological condition of the organism is a canonical fact.

The conception of ASC as defined by Arnold Ludvig encompasses all the states of the consciousness outside the normal waking state, “including day dreams, sleep and

¹² One example, from the Western perspective, is how the shamanizer’s state of consciousness is changed by making monotonous rhythmic music (Siikala 1987: 44–45). Singing and rhythmic speech also belong to this category.

dream states, hypnosis, sensory deprivation, hysterical states of dissociation and depersonalization, and pharmacologically-induced mental aberrations”¹³ (Siikala 1987: 32). However, the meaning of the normal waking state is not quite clear, nor is it clear where the exact boundary between the “normal state of consciousness” and “altered state of consciousness” is. The boundary is drawn by cultural patterns that differ within cultures as Anna-Leena Siikala has pointed out in her conclusion (1987: 31–34). If the boundaries between different states of consciousness are conventional or arbitrary in regards to humans, then it can be hypothesized that different states of consciousness exist which are mutually interrelated, a similar phenomenon to the relationship between the colours of the spectrum. Between these states, human consciousness moves back and forth depending on the internal and external influences directed upon it, and in this movement, emotions play a significant role. Thus, the states of consciousness should change during the normal waking state. According to each specific tradition, some states of consciousness are categorized as being normal while others are regarded as being ASC.

The ability to obtain different mental states can be connected with creativity, or the ability to create associations. In psychology, in addition to verbal-logical intelligence, the importance of emotional intelligence in the achievement of social success has been taken into greater consideration (Damasio 1994; Goleman 1995). The same emphasis can be found in varied forms within traditional cultures. A relationship to the environment that is characterised by successfully controlled emotionality is the basis of social recognition of the Siberian peoples. Myths, fairy tales and heroic epics codifying the collective identity display a human aspiration towards self-definition, self-affirmation, and the desire to gain recognition and respect. Texts describing the destructiveness of behaviour and decisions driven by uncontrolled emotions have a significant ethical and didactic impact upon the bearers of those cultures (Kupina 1997: 135–141). Success in discussion making largely depends upon the person's ability to adequately assess his or her environment and conditions. In other words, success is achieved if the cognitive map or world map of the person describes the reality with a sufficient precision concerning important factors.

Emotions and cognition

The human cognitive map is largely determined by the person's decisions, whether conscious or unconscious. In order to create such a map and take it as a basis for his/her behaviour, the person has no choice but to identify him/herself and through this identification adapt to different roles. In discussing the role taking function of the shamanic activity, we cannot ignore the concept of identity. I regard *mental participation* as being one of the most important markers of identity and its functional part. Participation presupposes the observation of the surrounding phenomena and the ability to situate

¹³ Alternative classification of altered states of consciousness, mentioned by Arnold Ludvig is: “alteration in thinking, disturbed time sense, loss of conscious control, change in emotional expression, body image changes, perceptual distortions, hallucinations and pseudo-hallucinations, change in meaning or significance, sense of the ineffable, hypersuggestibility (see Siikala 1998b: 27).

oneself within a certain relation to the environment. This in turn presupposes the attribution of value as to whether the phenomenon under observation is considered positive, neutral or negative.

The attitudes influenced by self identification can have an impact on the visions seen in the classical ASC state. Depending on the nature of the emotional relation, the visions can have a diametrically opposite value when reflected within different people. The same event may be brought into consciousness and interpreted differently (see Barkalaja 1997: 67). Cognition also leaves its imprint upon perception as it modifies the picture of the surrounding phenomena that is formed upon the combination of perceptual impulses, thereby creating a model of reality in human consciousness (see Barkalaja 2001b: 98–99). The process of cognition could be another potential field of research that would cast light upon the underlying mechanisms of shamanism.

How are emotions connected with all this? Antonio R. Damasio's research includes clear references to the links between emotions and cognition that are based upon neurobiological mechanisms (1994).¹⁴ Damasio has attempted to explain the questions of mind, mentality and soul through neurobiological mechanisms only, which however, rules out the truth value of the shaman's personal experience as a reality¹⁵. Still his results provide a valuable basis from which connections between different scientific disciplines for further research of the phenomena can be made. It can be supposed, quite

¹⁴ Damasio describes the case of Phineas P. Gage, a survivor of brain damage who maintained his physical abilities as well as his basic intellect and language, but lost his personality, or more precisely, his personality "had been traded"— "Gage was no longer Gage". His decisions did not derive from the consideration of his or other people's wellbeing, he had lost respect for social convention. /---/ his value system had also become /---/ different, or, if it was still the same, there was no way in which the old values could influence his decisions. The cases of other patients with similar damages certified that "When the Phineas Gage of this world needs to operate in reality, the decision-making process is minimally influenced by old knowledge". (1994: 7–11). Damasio concluded by highlighting an important aspect that "in Gage's case the impaired character was dissociated from the otherwise intact cognition and behavior" (*ibid*: 12). Subsequent studies with his own patients have detailed the same picture. The patient code-named Elliot survived an operation in which the frontal lobe tissue had been damaged by the tumor that had been removed. The brain regions were damaged similar to the way in which Gage's brain regions were altered. IQ tests administered after the operation yielded excellent results, however, the patient had severe problems with adequate decision-making and the mapping of tasks according to their importance (cognitive map — A.B.). At the same time Elliot had lost emotionality (*ibid*: 34–51).

¹⁵ To illustrate this, the following passage from the fieldwork of Marjorie Mandelstam Balzer in Sakha seems to be relevant:

It was one of my first attempt at a séance, and I was by myself. I started near my hearth, dressed in [traditional] clothing and using a drum I had made myself. I did not know what would come of it, but I started beating on the drum and chanting. Soon two beings, exactly, definitely two, appeared on either side of me. I did not know what to think. I even asked myself, "Am I normal?" Most shamans are perhaps abnormal, so the thinking of many people and some scientists goes. But this is just an illusion. My mind was sound. My logic was intact. Indeed I am always psychologically healthy. More than most. So I looked and I saw I was very far from my hearth. It was receding and I came into the house of the man who had insulted me. He was very frightened. I am not sure what I or the spirits did. The next day I came to him in person. He looked at me in horror. I laughed and walked out. To this day, when I see him, he turns away. We do not greet each other. [Laughter]

Balzer 1993: 149

confidently, that the human emotional condition and the respective cognitive map are in close interdependence. In the traditional world picture of the Siberian people, creatures and phenomena of the surroundings are charged with emotional characteristics. The conceptualization of the living is connected to sensitivity and emotionality. Those two start the processes that are actively reconfiguring the world and as such are a characteristic of life. During the creation and reconfiguring of the world, the emotions of those involved are of utmost importance (Kupina 1997: 135). Below, we will take a closer look at the evaluation codes embedded in myths and their impact upon the person's understanding of the world. Because the behaviour and attitudes described in the myths serve as models for internalization by the bearers of the culture, it is then possible to draw parallels between cosmogonical myths and the emergence of the cognitive map (or the world map) of each individual bearer of the culture (Hoppál 1992: 146–147).

Insofar as the emotional state of a person constantly changes, the cognitive map changes as well. Moreover if the change of emotions alters states of consciousness, it can be hypothesized that there are as many cognitive maps as there are respective states and human consciousness travels along those maps, using them while making a certain decision. Some elements of these maps overlap to a greater or lesser extent. The states of consciousness that have justified themselves over a long period of time are maintained unchanged through personal means as well as through culturally developed methods and these states can be termed identities¹⁶. One person may have several identities or levels of identity, some of which are more frequently used than others (see Dundes 1996: 1–39). Problems usually arise in cases when an inappropriate level of identity is used towards making decisions¹⁷. In order to achieve a certain level of identity, the technique of shamanic role taking makes use of mechanisms that are probably based upon principles similar to those used in any human activity, in all cultures, including ours.

It would be interesting to examine the shaman's clothes from this perspective. With the help from the several different states of consciousness used, it would be possible to then explain why certain shamans have several shaminist costumes or drums, and also why it is that there are images of helper spirits sewn upon the costume. The shaman's costume helps a shaman to navigate within the spirit worlds, whereas the helping spirits, in the form of different birds or animals, fulfil the different tasks that they are best at during this journey (see Taksami 1997: 10–11). Taksami's opinion that the shaman's

¹⁶ In traditional cultures oriented towards the spiritual world, a successful coping strategy is expressed through the accumulation of not only material, but spiritual values as well. Seen from this perspective, the spiritual values include the psychic features and peculiarities of the person, which in Siberian cultures are individual as well as societal achievements. In this case the common consciousness of people did not agree with the disappearance of the named values after the person's death. Certain mechanisms were worked out in order to transmit and develop spiritual values (including the psychic properties) that are important for the community to be able to cope. This is most vividly expressed in the example of the transmittance (transference) of the "shamanistic talent" (Kupina 1997: 140–141).

¹⁷ Shamans often make a conscious effort to change their level of gender identity. Central-Asian as well as Siberian male shamans clothe themselves as women. This is explained by the female gender of the helping spirits of the shaman and the respective requirements set for the shaman (Kurolyev 1997: 96–97). Another underlying mechanism here can be the principle of anomaly in witchcraft as described in this paper.

costume is a miniature world, or the home of helper spirits during the ritual, coincides with Bulgakova's observations that the aggregation of helping spirits comprises the shaman's extra personal spirit *niokta* (see Bulgakova 2001: 94). If we do not enter this debate as to whether there truly are spirits or whether they are an "animistic fantasy", and we hence remain at the border of this topic, then we can hypothesize that the shaman's costume, like the rest of his implements, is a necessary aid for achieving and fixing states of consciousness that enables the shaman to *relate to* something. The thing that the shaman relates to is brought into his/her consciousness in the form of helper spirits as part of the common identity the shaman shares with them.

The attitudes based upon the person's self-identification are influenced by value judgements. Attitudes are also conditioned by habits that are crucial in the transmission of traditions and cultural legacies. Traditions may channel an individual action into socially accepted forms (Kupina 1997: 139–141).

As was stated above, ecstasy is not always necessary for the communication with the 'other side'. It is enough to be in a state of mind that is *different* from the ordinary one. This state can be characterized as being based upon the social ritual framework (Hamayon 1995: 30–31), or it is culturally patterned *à la* Jackson Stewart Lincoln (Siikala 1987: 32).

The shaman's operation although differing from the ordinary norms must follow the tradition. In the language of physics, anomalous behaviour (and the related state of mind) creates the potential for work which in this case consists in the communication with the supernatural world. In this context, we can recall several parallels of different peoples, including the magical engagements of Estonians, in which the anomaly manifests itself in the reverse or inverse use of clothing, i.e. carrying out the rituals in the nude, and etc. For example, emotional lability and violent digressions of the state of consciousness accompanying anomalies are typical features of the so-called shamanic disease, or of the "sensitives" emerging in the Western countries who lack any traditional background. A tradition that sanctions the radical changes in the state of consciousness makes it possible to stabilize lability into a dynamic balance by employing a technique that restrains and directs emotions.

In the case of West-Siberian nations, Eliade stresses the inheritability of the shaman's profession (Eliade 1974: 15–16). Lintrop agrees with him, explaining the inheritability through the fact that songs and tales heard from the older generation create a new reality of legends that is generated in shaman's subconsciousness (Lintrop 1996). For Eliade, tradition together with ecstatic teaching (visions, dreams, and etc.) are two necessary conditions for the teaching of a person who has been chosen to become a shaman (Eliade 1974: 13).

If neuropsychology and biology (drawing upon Mendel's discovery) can explain the transmission of natural assumptions concerning emotional and image-creating abilities by means of the genetic consecutive line, then the concrete forms in which they are expressed are directly connected with cultural education which in turn is held by myths as the basic elements of world view.

Myths tell us about the order of things and instruct us how to act in different situations. During a shamanic rite, the shaman connects with the sacred, and then mediates the regulating power of that outer world to this physical world. The performance of the rituals repeats the God's actions and thereby brings the surrounding into proper order. A continuous re-generation of the system takes place. Myth is a paradig-

matic model that is created by supernatural beings, and not a separate experience of this or that individual (Eliade 1995: 129). Although many researchers stress the individual nature of the description of the “other world” by different shamans, (Bulgakova 2001: 69, Taksami 1997: 10), we cannot ignore the significance of the contexts in which the traditions thrive¹⁸. The shaman sees in his mind’s eye the reality of the “other world” and translates this information gained from the “outer world” into the language of his community. Myths actually provide the translation code. Myths are not just “arbitrary fabrications of a dramatic or lyric kind that have no relation to the social or political structures, rituals, regulations or conventions. Their role is just the opposite — to justify and form through images those great ideas that underlie and support everything that is happening” (Dumézil 2001:40).

In ASC the shaman perceives the (surrounding) reality differently than in the “normal” state and information is primarily interpreted in shaman’s mind through the language of images of the traditional myth-world. He always performs his vision poetically, using the whole arsenal of image-creating means. The shaman’s use of language during the seance usually differs from ordinary language and is not understood even by the community (Barkalaja 1999b: 61–62; Bulgakova 2001). One could even speak about the language of spirits (see Cauquelin 1995: 195; Walker 2001:46-47) or “the language of all nature” and “twisted language” (Narby 1999: 97–99). The aim of shamanistic poetry is to transport the participants into other realities (Balzer 1995: 184, Walker 2001: 54). Its inscrutable imagery can also render “descriptions of the indescribable”¹⁹ in which the disjunctive linking of the articulated images provides information concerning the phenomenon towards the foregrounding of which the marked non-description is directed. Scholars have outlined an operation of the similar principle in the older stratum of Estonian folk songs, for instance, (Kaplinski 1974), but it can also found in the Buddhist texts such as “The Essence of the Perfection of Wisdom-sūtra”.

Mythologizing and other processes related to myths can originate from the clashes between language and cognition. Mythologizing, then, is likely to occur when rendering a predominantly image-based cognition into a verbal language based on linear thinking. In my examination of those issues, I did not at first realize, at the conscious level, that the mythopoetical description of the world can be based upon a *predominantly image-based cognition of the universe*. My tentative ideas in this direction assumed a clear articulation when I read an inspiring work by Linnart Mäll, an outstanding Estonian orientalist. In his first article “Revisiting Jamāntaka”, he shows how the figural concept of the Indian Buddhist texts²⁰ becomes the foundation for myth in the Tibetan mind

¹⁸ The personal visions of concrete shamans seem to have the same relation to mythology as the concrete personal songs of Khantis, American Indians, Lapps, and etc. have to the personal song as such.

¹⁹ It’s seems be universal method around the world, see Yaminahua shaman explanation: “With my koshuiti I want to see — singing, I carefully examine things — twisted language brings me close but not too close — with normal words I would crash into things — with twisted ones I circle around them — I can see them clearly” (Narby 1999: 98–99).

²⁰ Mäll uses the term anthromorphic symbol, and differentiates between meditative and mythological thinking (Mäll 1998: 170). This is an important distinction in the philosophical sense, and it has helped to further the thought that a predominantly figural cognition of the world finds different derivatives depending on the nature of relations between linear thinking and figural thinking.

(Mäll 1998: 171²¹). In his second article, “The Course of Interpreting”, he shows the opposite process, dating “The Way of Tao” to the period that is characterised by the transition from the mythopoetic thinking, to theoretical thinking (Mäll 1998: 99²²). The concepts of “The Way of Tao” are also images at the same time. Figural forms of concepts can be found within the scientific language of the Occident despite the mutual estrangement of poetry and science. For example, in quantum mechanics, the qualities of elemental particles are described in terms of such words as “charm” and “truth”. Within information processing activities that belong to the border area, linear descriptions of models seem to offer little, leaving one no recourse but to resort to the generative methods of image-based associations.

At first glance, we can thus hypothesize that the problem of the birth of myth is not so much a question of natural language but rather a question of cognition. Mythologizing, mystifications, and other processes related to myths, originate from the clashes between cognition and the linear essence of human speech. Mythologizing can then occur when a predominantly figural cognition is shaped into language that is predominantly structured upon linear thinking (mysticism as a phenomenon and not as a value judgement is a form of mythology²³). Mystification on the other hand can occur when a predominantly verbal-linear information (such as a message or an utterance) is put into the form of a predominantly image-based language. Thus mystifications always involve a certain amount of conventional truth upon which the displaced figural part rests. Actually, both examples are subordinate to the phenomenon that Yuri Lotman has described, with the aid of mirror symmetry, as the generative process for qualitatively new texts (Lotman 1999: 26–33)²⁴.

Principles of value attribution embedded within myths serve to form a person’s cultural identity²⁵. When the principles of value attribution change, the myth naturally loses its credibility and takes on the features of a fairy tale. However, ‘the collective consciousness’, like any other substantial phenomenon, has a tendency to stick to the old ways. Thus the construction principle inherent in the myth, is considered good enough to solemnly justify the still ruling order and is therefore used as an essential part of the epic or genealogy, that is until the time when a new order emerges and brings about a new system and myths that would sanctify their existence (see Barkalaja 1999: 27–28). Beliefs change, and in most cases the whole worldview can change with it, but the underlying mechanisms and often the principles of categorizations remain the same. Myths are constantly being generated, even nowadays, and upon further examination we can find mythopoetical constructs dispersed, intersected, and stacked upon the unre-

²¹ Original version in Mäll 1978: 43–47

²² Original version in Mäll 1981: 120–126

²³ Mysticism in this case could be defined as an attitude based upon a predominantly figural cognition within a predominantly linear cognition and thinking tradition. Cultures in which mysticism exists and which have alphabetic tend to be an instance of the latter.

²⁴ Chinese hieroglyphic writing (in this case based upon the example of palindromes) is an especially pertinent example of a useful appropriation of the tension between the figural way of signification and the linear way of writing *à la* q`-q`=A, whereby data necessary for the construction of a minimal structure yields maximum information (see Barkalaja 1995: 40).

²⁵ Myth as a religious text is a component of faith. Religion, on the other hand, can be formulated as a sacralization of the identity (see Gopalan 1978: 126). As an example see Puhvel 1996: 55.

strainable avalanche of texts subordinated to linear thinking (I refer to “Western mass culture” both in the modern and post-modern age)²⁶.

The reason why image creating takes place can be explained by the predominance of sight in human reception of information. Therefore, in the ASC state as well, the consciousness processes information in a predominantly pictorial form. Factual knowledge required for reasoning and decision making enters the mind in the form of images. Images are based directly upon those neural representations which are organized topographically and which occur in somatosensory cortices (Damasio 1994). Thus it is possible that the shaman, or any person engaged in a creative activity, processes information through the visual centre. However, the reception of information takes place elsewhere, and not through the visual receptors.

The articulation of image-based perceptual impulses, or the pictorial form, requires a special method of information processing. Its equivalent in the Western cultures would be “the Great Sorting Out of the Functions of Words and Images When They Are Tightly Integrated” (Horn 1999: 29) and Sense-Making or, in other words — information design.

Why Information Design?

A society makes every effort to preserve the mental attitudes derived from those states of mind that deal with crisis resolution and the (re)-establishment of the order. The codes for their re-creation are preserved in so called basic texts as descriptions of an event, but also as cognitive maps such as descriptions of the shaman’s travels in mythical tales and songs (and sometimes they are drawn on a drum). The reinterpretation of these texts in accordance with the emotional involvement creates the necessary states of consciousness. A functional orientation sets its own criteria for the text production that the concept of modern information design describes with a surprising correspondence.

The notion of *information design* includes certain basic concepts: *edification*, *commutativity* and *interactivity* (Jacobson 1999: 2) which also describe shamanism. The information designer works with fields of meaning, and not with the materials necessary for the transmission of meaning (Jacobson 1999: 5). For example, if a bear head or the sacred tablet and knife is not immediately available, a Khanty shaman can use a bucket filled with water or with an axe in it in order to do soothsaying. The Tuva female shaman, Seren-ham, began using a knout when the Soviet authorities confiscated her drum in the 1950s or 60s (Djakonova 1997: 40–41). One of the characteristics of

²⁶ Cf. with an instance when with the advent of rationalism, mythology is relegated to the past or to the ‘primitive people’. In short, it is consigned to ‘the realm of ignorance’, whereas no notice is taken of the myths that are continually being produced by those who condemned myths or their contemporaries (see Lotman 1990: 319–320). At the same time, myths are created consciously, whereas the aims of mythologizing can be quite the opposite. Thus the star mythology cultivated in the modern mass media serves to bind people to consumerism. In the philosophical Buddhism, on the other hand, mythologizing was perceived as a way to reach nirvana (Mäll 1998: 177–178), i.e. it was seen as a means of liberation from the bonds of this world.

creativity is the ability to create new, unexpectedly innovative associations in order to re-generate the same states of consciousness.

Modern information design is defined as being the art and science of preparing information so that it can be used by human beings with efficiency and effectiveness. Its primary objectives are:

1. To develop documents that are comprehensible, rapidly and accurately retrievable, and easy to translate into effective action. /---/
2. To design interactions with equipment that are easy, natural, and as pleasant as possible.
3. To enable people to find their way in /---/ space with comfort and ease /---/.

An important feature of information design is its effectiveness in accomplishing a communicative purpose (Horn 1999: 15–16).

Communication takes place by means of information. Information, in turn, instructs people as to the nature of the world we live in: its history, its future, its functioning, our place in it, our possible actions, and the potential consequences of those actions. On the other hand, information, no matter what it is called — data, knowledge, facts, song, story, or metaphor — has always been designed (Dervin 1999: 35–36). Human beings usually design things so that they serve a certain purpose (beauty may fulfil a practical purpose as beautiful things affect us). The environment surrounding us often leaves its imprint upon this purpose, and therefore, it is possible to find differently designed shamanic attributes within different environments.

Usually some kind of special attributes such as special clothing, or drum, and etc. are considered as being characteristic of shamanism. Nevertheless, these are not always necessary materials for shamanizing. For example, one peculiarity of the Eastern Khanty shamanism is the lack of special clothing. Mansi shamans likewise do not make use of a shaman's dress (Sokolova 1971: 224). The purpose of such tools is to help focus the shaman's will and attention upon some object, and help create an appropriate state of mind for the participants of the ritual. As mentioned before, Eastern Khanties do not draw a sharp distinction between ordinary people and a shaman. This is a characteristic of hunters and fishermen due to the fact that their lives are so closely connected to nature and depend upon it for their sustenance. Survival is contingent upon an ample and accurate reception of information from the surrounding and also contingent upon the reaction to this information. Therefore it was also the task of ordinary people to master the art of information design and to avoid noise or excessive information. Forest Khanties have achieved this by having lived in balance with nature for a very long time, and this should be a sufficient enough argument for Western science. The fact that the shamanistic worldview uses different language should not impair our judgement as to its accordance with the reality.

Farmers and live-stock owners live in a socially and materially more regulated (or concentrated) environment. Hence their bond with nature is somewhat looser. This allows for minor lapses in the evaluation of a situation at the personal and familial level. However, the error does not assume fatal dimensions. Consequently, the genotypes that gain the right to live and will survive are those who do not allow for the reception of subtler information from the environment. Likewise existing abilities need not be developed simply because they are not necessary for operating successfully. The village community regulates its life to a higher extent than hunters do, and it does not require

that every person need be shamanically oriented. It is enough when only a family or another smaller regulated unit has such an orientation and ability to contact the highest *sacred* and is therefore privileged for shamanizing. Such an ordering of the affairs of life gives rise to forms of shamanizing other than those found among the hunting and fishing peoples such as Eastern Khanties (see Hultkranz 1995: 147, in which he refers to the division of shamanism by Hamayon between the hunter's and pastoral shamanism), and forms of urban shamanism differ from it markedly. Mansis and Northern Khanties have adopted an agricultural way of life, and they, to a higher degree, tend to display features of the so called classical shamanism which contain elements of shamanic clothing, wealth of special attributes and richly furnished rituals that are often directed towards the audience.

Within a tighter community, the broader nature of the shaman's role-taking activity becomes more evident, and we can see included an opposite process of role-giving, or more precisely, of identity-giving. The shaman does not limit him/herself only to the trafficking between identities, but also passes these identities on to the community, so that the health of community members and the interconnected unity of their world (picture) and society might be restored. It is likely that for this reason, the institution of religious specialists, such as priests, has preserved within its auspices the shamanic institution in the form of oracles, augurs, holy men, prophets, and etc.

In a postmodern urban society, the same role has been divided between the representatives of several occupations. A close connection with art, for instance, is a typical feature of the contemporary urban shamanism. A large proportion of those people participating in the course "Shamanism according to Harner's method", conducted in Northern Europe by Jonathan Horwitz, consists of people engaged in the creative arts and whose aim of participation is to seek inspiration for their work. In essence, *Performance-art* is also a younger relative of the shamanic ritual. Several researchers such as Waldemar Bogoras, Mircea Eliade, Michel Leiris, and others have drawn attention to the correspondences between a shaman's activity and the performance of an actor (see Kendall 1993:16). The leading ideologists of the avant-garde theatre such as Brecht, Brook, Cole, Artraud and others have arrived at a conviction that original drama is something more than just an imitation of reality. They saw within it a ritual and within ritualistic drama, the revived knowledge of compelling performance (Kendall 1993: 17). In the Korean tradition, for instance, the border between a shamanic ritual and dramatic performance is very thin (see Lee 1993; Kister 1993; Kim 1995; Hamayon 1995: 26). This comparison, however, should not mislead us in the sense that within Western society acting has the reputation of construction, of being consciously created as an illusion. However, the shaman acting in the *reality of legend* cannot afford to be engaged in an activity in which he himself has no faith. Apart from this, someone coming from the shamanistic tradition does not normally confuse shamanizing with the play of shamanizing (Hamayon 1995: 20). The latter can be indicative of the urban culture bearer's "drive towards the origins", of the desire for tradition that has taken the form of neo-paganism, *wicca*-religion and etc. In short a need for an identity that generates new states of consciousness²⁷.

²⁷ According to another set of associations, this need of Western society reflects the escape reflex of those driven to the utmost point of stress. "Sunday searching" undertaken in order to break away from the routine waking state combined with the engrained consumer mentality can

Shamanism has been associated with theatre, music, poetry and other fields of creative arts. The hypotheses outlined above can serve as a bridge towards the development of methods used for the application of the research results in regards to the techniques of shamanism and shamanism as a modelling system in the named fields as well as in the creative processes of learning²⁸.

The same problem concerns the development of mnemonic techniques. For some reason I recoil with horror at the thought of losing all the information from my computer (based on my own experience). It is possible to make additional copies of hardware, but even that can be irretrievably damaged. Seen in this light it would be an interesting direction to take within the research of shamanism to investigate the extraordinary memory capacities of the shamans (or other specialists close to this status) that enables them to perfectly recall thousands of verse lines or a neatly structured fairy tale. The informant's descriptions of the road on which he meets various creatures and objects and regenerates all those texts by means of associations, recall of the techniques of super-memory practised in Western cultures.

I am convinced that the rejection of an ethnocentric perspective offers many moments when we can learn from the so called shamanic cultures the improvement of our *quality of being human*. For example, the use of genetics in the treatment of diseases is as external as the advance of computer technology. This advance is well worth counter-balancing with methods that do not require highly developed material technology for use in such cases as when this technology might let us down.

I realize more and more fully that the methods used by shamans are based upon the entire range of mechanisms that humans make use of. The techniques of communication used by humans when creating the states of interaction between themselves and the world around them are based on role taking techniques. The difference between the so called ordinary person and the shaman is that the shaman is able to take action in an emergency situation, and he continually probes the boundaries of being a human. Taking a phenomenon to the extreme on the other hand brings out the essential features of this phenomenon. Thus upon in the study of shamans, shamanizing, and shamanism, we can actually study the essential features of human beings and their culture through these border cases.

A strategic objective of Anthropology could be research directed toward the improvement of the quality of being human, both in a psychological and cultural sense. Shamanic cultures can teach us something and thereby they can be incorporated as equal members of the world culture in practice and not only formally. As it is well known, one aim of a culture is the establishment, incorporation and preservation of the attitudes, knowledge, skills and behaviour issuing thereof that are necessary for human survival. From a functional point of view, it is important to possess an adequate picture as possible of the internal and external worlds, taking into special consideration their boundaries. The descriptive, conceptualising and behavioural nature of this aim comprises information design.

Thus shamanism is not something that exists by itself as a phenomenon or as a method. Shamanism could possibly become be a research area of shamanhood that

be the source of any expression of addictive activity such as computer games, chat-rooms, and also "regular" narcotics. Drug addiction could thus be defined as the ASC consumption habit.

²⁸ See Barkalaja 2001b: 110–113.

concerns the boundary wherein the means available to science could provide an opportunity for writing into the overall human information design our own lines in order to mark the point of convergence with the 'indescribable' through the disjunctive chain of associations of the texts of scientific paradigm.

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