STRANGERS IN THE ARCTIC

'Ultima Thule' and Modernity

Sergei 'Afrika' Bugaev

A.K. Dolven

Jimmie Durham

Ilya Kabakov & Pavel Pepperstein

Per Kirkeby

Jussi Kivi

Ian McKeever

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Richard Prince

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Edited by Marketta Seppälä

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Strangers in the Arctic, 'Ultima Thule' and Modernity
accompanies an exhibition of the same name organized by:

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The Copenhagen 96 foundation
Pori Art Museum
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Markku Valkonen
Chairman of the Exhibition Committee

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THULE

Pliny holds that Thule is an island in the Northern Ocean discovered by Pytheas after sailing six days from the Orcades whereas Camden considers it to be Shetland (still called *Thylense*). Bochart tells that the Phoenician merchants named it *Gezirat Thule* (Isles of Darkness). Perhaps Thule is also connected with the Greek word *telos* (the end) and the Gothic toponym *Tiule* (the most remote land).

Thule served as an object of indefinable yearning to the Romantic Movement. Goethe picked up Thule in Seneca, associated it with the Nordic Sagas and used the concept in his poetry.

THE ARTIC REGION: A DEFINITION

by Ilmari Hustich

There is no exact, universally accepted definition for either the arctic, subarctic or boreal region. As biogeographic concepts these terms, unfortunately, are imprecise. This is not to say that they are unscientific; their vagueness merely reflects the real world.

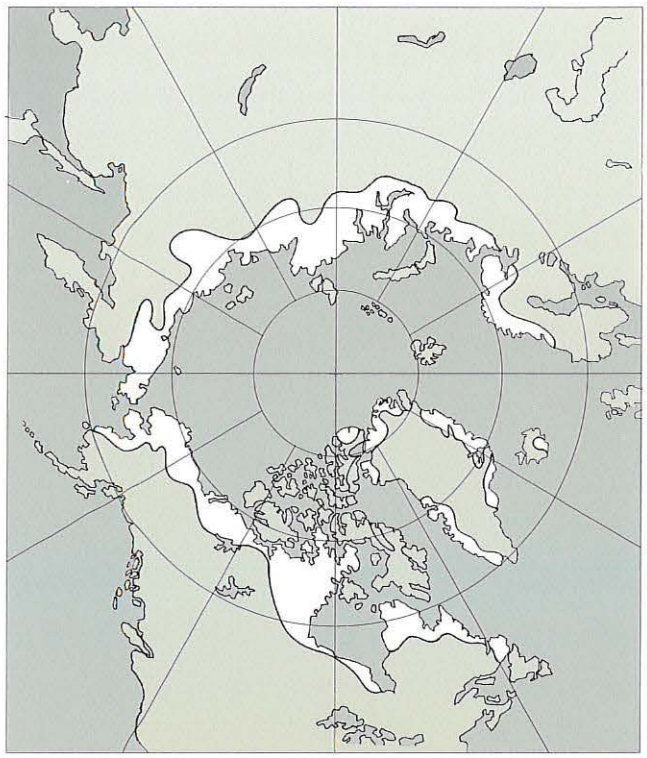
Biogeographers define the *arctic region* as the area north of the polar tree line. As Fig. 1 shows, however, the concept of tree line, or forest line, is not entirely clear either. We might also ask what should be considered a tree – another question that is not as simple to answer as it looks.

The polar line for coniferous trees does not extend quite as far north as does that for deciduous trees. Greenland and Iceland, for example, have small birch groves north of the polar conifer line. Scattered sites with tree-size willow, alder, aspen or poplar can also be found within the arctic region north of the conifer belt. Furthermore, the cultivation of conifers on a small scale seems possible even in the northernmost areas where certain birch species reach tree size, especially in Iceland.

The northernmost outposts of conifer growth mark an important biogeographic boundary, which coincides with limits for ground cover and distribution of animal species.

The conifer line shifts with climatic change. Plant and animal species are more sensitive to climatic and edaphic factors at the extreme limit of their range than at its centre, and thus even minor climatic variation during the short growing season can have a considerable effect on the growth and distribution of species. Human activity in northern regions, such as the cutting of firewood, has long since resulted in noticeable local retreating of the polar conifer line in many places.

Owing to the infrequency of seed years,



the farther north a forest is located, the more serious the consequences of felling are. Particularly in former times, people living in the arctic or subarctic zones tended to move along the tree line and in the forest tundra, i.e. the area that extends from the tree line in the north to the northern boundary of continuous coniferous forest in the south.

Owing to fluctuations in vegetation resulting from climatic change, the nature of forestry operations has changed, as have attitudes to protective measures and planting in the north.

The polar conifer limit has the advan-

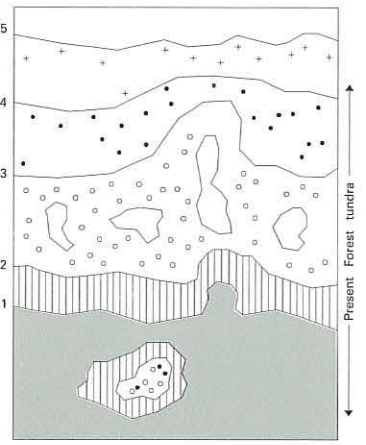


Fig. 1 *Forest and tree lines.*
1= economic (also known as rational or generative) forest line.
2 = physiognomic (empirical or vegetative) forest line.
3 = tree line. (The polar tree line can be home to various tree species. The concept 'tree' is also variously defined by different authors: some give 2 or 3 metres, others even 5 metres as the requisite minimum height).
4 = species line (whether plant, deformed shrub or other)
5 = historical species line (traces of tree species in question found north of the present species line).

tage of being comparatively easy to chart as fields, whereas the borders defined by climatologists, for example, not least because of the sparsity of the network of observation stations, have represented – at least so far – no more than rough interpolations.

Among the definitions employed by climatologists and geographers for the arctic region, those put forward by K. Köppen and O. Nordenskiöld particularly deserve to be mentioned. According to Köppen, the arctic region extends north of isotherm 10C for the mean temperature of the warmest summer month. Nordenskiöld modified this definition somewhat by also considering the mean temperature of the coldest month. These averages, however, provide only very approximate climatic indicators. Moreover, both were formulated directly on the basis of the position of the circumpolar forest line, and are therefore circular definitions of sorts.

Moreover, the northern climate varies a great deal; thus, isotherm 10C for July, which is very close to the forest line, can shift several hundred kilometres from one year to the next. Note, however, that more finely-tuned climatic instruments are not available as yet. It should be pointed out that the biogeographical limits themselves are also interpolated to a considerable degree, as not only the climate but also the soil and the morphology of the terrain affect the spread of tree species.

The dramatic annual fluctuations in summer temperatures in the north can be expressed with the *coefficient of climatic chance*, which increases towards the north, and causes substantial annual fluctuation in both the productivity of the plant cover (organic matter, florescence, type of cone year) and the number of animals (e.g. lemmings). This coefficient of chance (or variation) expresses standard annual deviation from the mean value of a climate or growth series according to the formula:

$$\sigma = \frac{\Sigma (x-M)^2}{n} \quad ; \; v = \% \, \sigma / M$$

in which M = mean value,
n = number of years,
x = annual values in the series,
σ = standard deviation and
v = coefficient of variation.

This variation factor, or factor of climatic chance, must always be taken into account, regardless of whether we are examining harvests, tree growth or climate series. The coefficient of chance rises as we move towards the north, where temperature fluctuations are greater during the ever shorter summer; the main factor restricting tree growth in the north is temperature, whereas in the south it is precipitation.

There is thus every reason to continue to refer to the relatively simple concept of the polar conifer line as the southern limit of the arctic region and thus also as the northern limit of the subarctic region.

Ilmari Hustich, Societas Scientiarum Fennica 1973 Yearbook, The Arctic, Subarctic and Boreal Region: Definitions, Population and Perspectives. Extract from a lecture delivered on taking up the chairmanship of the Finnish Society of Sciences and Letters.
Translation from Swedish:Timothy Binham

CURATOR'S INTRODUCTION

by *Marketta Seppälä*

> About the feathers which the Scythians say fill the air, and make it impossible to traverse, or even to see, the more northerly parts of the continent - I think myself that it must be always snowing in these northerly regions, though less, of course, in summer than in winter. Anyone who has seen heavy snow at close quarters will know what I mean - it is very like feathers; and it is because of the severity of these northern winters that the country is uninhabited. No doubt the Scythians and their neighbours when they talk of the feathers really mean snow - because of the likeness between the two. I have now related the utmost which can be gathered from report.
>
> Herodotus (ca. 484-425 BC)

The Histories[1], one of the earliest surviving narratives of Northern peoples by the Greek historian Herodotus, is generally quite clear in the distinctions it makes between fact and fiction. But the further north Herodotus moves, the more often he has to turn to the latter. That said, much of *The Histories* is connected with the facts of Herodotus' personal life. He had travelled widely amidst the old civilizations of South-West Asia, along the coastal regions of Asia Minor and Syria, the regions around the Black Sea, Egypt and parts of Libya. Indeed it is against this background of his personal experience that Herodotus provides the first analysis of Greek history that is embedded in a broader context, exploring its stages particularly from the point of view of the battle between Hellenists and barbarians.[2]

Although Herodotus himself took an unusually open-minded attitude towards foreign cultures and peoples (unlike most of his contemporaries), Periclean Athens, where Herodotus was eventually to do much of his life's work, was at the time very much captive to a sense of superiority vis-à-vis the outside world, basking in the glory of its victory over the Persians. This self-conscious idea of superiority had of course a historical background that went all the way back to the Bronze Age when the Greek had established strong outposts along the shores of the Black Sea. The notion of "wild barbarians" originated in the early encounters with the horseriding peoples living in the steppe regions. However, it was recognized from very early on that in order to secure their own wealth, the Greeks had to trade with these barbarian peoples. The seeds had been sown for a curiosity in more distant, unknown territories.

The first hard data recorded in the geography of antiquity about the end of the world in the North, about *Ultima Thule*, something behind the horizon, originate from the Greek explorer Pytheas of Marsailla and his book *On the Ocean* (ca. 325 BC), of which only some citations have survived. Ever since the death of Pytheas, posterity has been fascinated by the question of where exactly this mysterious Thule was located at the time, as well as by the linguistic origins and the meaning of Thule. In the modern imagination Thule represents a faraway place shrouded in the mystery of the unknown; it is nowhere in any literal, exact location. Yet up until the present

1 Herodotus, *The Histories*, Translated by Audrey de Sélincourt. Revised, with an introduction and notes by A.R.Burn, Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, Middlesex, 1972.

2 Erno Paasilinna, *Kaukainen pohjola*, Hämeenlinna 1968.

day people have continued to try and locate and define Thule; the Norwegian explorer Fridtjof Hansen placed it in Norway, Winston Churchill in the northern parts of England, Lennart Meri in Estonia... Today, Thule is most concretely associated with the small town in Greenland that the Dane Knud Rasmussen named in 1910.

There is a huge gap from Herodotus and Pytheas to the first accounts that brought hard information to the 'civilized' world about the regions of the North; witness Tacitus' *Germania* (98 AD) or the descriptions by the wealthy Norwegian viking Ottar from the 9th century. It was not until the turn of the 16th and 17th centuries that the real race to the North got under way between the major powers of those days: with the southern sea routes blocked by Spain and Portugal, the trading nations needed to find a northeastern passage to India and China. Expeditions to Siberia started in the mid-18th century, when the search for northwestern and northeastern passages was also resumed, and the explorations of North America in the 19th century and the early 20th century.

However, from the earliest days on when Herodotus wrote about white feathers falling from the sky, travels in the North have been about more than just new routes and new conquests. Cultures generally form their opinions of *other* in order that they can define themselves. *Other* has always been an important part of every culture's own cosmos; it has been related to beliefs about the hereafter and the supernatural, or to real and imagined threats and enemies, or to pure curiosity about the new and unknown. All in all, the *other* has always been far away and different from what we have in our own world, at "the centre of the world".

However, it is only with the efforts of western nations in the modern times to conquer and exploit unknown territories that those myths, histories and geographies, i.e. those views of *others* have been created which also exist in the images and in the everyday life of real others and through which assimilation generally has taken place and continues to take place.[3] Against this background present-day concerns about the survival of aboriginal cultures are a paradox; in fact they reflect the deep-rooted notions according to which something that to us is *other* should belong to the category of genuine, immutable, primitive, a category that we ourselves can define. That category represents a geographically and (for us) a temporally distant "phase of evolution" which has already been lost. Modernism, which produced our present-day *other*, represents the universal, homogeneous, progressive. But it also needs the "original", for itself.

***

The Greek-Roman concept of *Ultima Thule* was based on no more than a handful of hard facts; for the most part it was grounded in myths about primaeval power, magic darkness and inconceivable brightness. At the same time, the Arctic coldness has helped to keep intruders out. Just as the members of "The Literary Expedition"[4]: Knud Rasmussen, Harald Moltke

3 Bernard McGrane: Beyond Anthropology. Society and the Other. New York 1989.

4 Knud Rasmussen (1879-1933), who was born in Greenland by a Danish father and a Greenlandic mother, was sent to study in Copenhagen, the

and Peter Freuchen, exploring the Greenland scenery in search of inspiration at the beginning of the present century — just as they almost lost their lives, so too are modern-day westerners approaching the Arctic still very much at a loss; not only do they face the other, but also themselves — their own limits and restrictions.

Travelling to the Arctic is of course much easier today than it was at the beginning of the century. However, the occasional visitor is very much in the same sort of position. This was the main lesson from a previous "expedition" in August 1992 to Chucotka in connection with the exhibition *Air and other elements* at the Pori Art Museum.[5] The following briefly runs through some of the main aspects of the trip that have been fruitful in the development of the present project.

First of all the trip made it absolutely plain that it is impossible to travel anywhere without carrying along a web of cultural conditionings, which determine *a priori* what is seen and experienced. Our preconceptions, our expectations are conditioned by what we know about the history of a certain area. History is not the same as the past. The difference between history and the past is particularly obvious when "history" is constructed out of the past of others.[6] Like Jimmie Durham puts it elsewhere in this publication, "... we want to know only that which we know".

Into the tundra the expedition brought along particularly resistant preconceptions, which revolved around the idea of the Arctic as a "wilderness" practically untouched by human culture. But in what sense is the Bay of Chaun (Arctic Ocean) out of the reach of culture? The known history of the Arctic is very "short": it was only some 400 years ago that the Arctic areas of the Old World were conquered; and on the American side the history is even shorter. Our own notions of history are hardly affected by the fact that the river valleys of eastern Siberia that were not covered by ice and that today are amongst the coldest areas of the world, are also amongst the oldest palaearctic areas of human settlement. Ancient mammoth hunters moved up into the inner parts of eastern Siberia (the area today known as southern Yakutia) as early as 35,000 to 30,000 years ago, and further east to Beringia perhaps some 20,000 years ago.[7]

Although the Bering Strait has been a

Nordic Metropol of the time. There he met the young painter Harald Moltke and the young writer Peter Freuchen. The three young ment started a dog-sledge travel that was later to be known as "The Litterary Expedition" from Rasmussen's home-town up along the north-western coast of Greenland crossing at last the Melville Bay. From this trip Moltke as a matter of fact never recovered. North of the bay they met Polar-Eskimos, and here Rasmussen founded the small trade-center of two houses and called it "Thule".

5 One of the basis for Strangers in the Arctic lies on the publication *Ikijää-Permafrost-Merzlota* (edited by Yrjö Haila & Marketta Seppälä, Pori Art Museum publications 30, Pori 1995), which was a result of the expedition by artists and scientists to Chucotka. It includes articles and projects by Ian McKeever, Marianne Heske, Lauri Anttila, Yrjö Haila and D.I Berman.

6 Yrjö Haila, 'In Search of the Wilderness', *Ikijää-Permafrost-Merzlota*, Pori 1995.

7 See articles in: David M. Hopkins et al. (eds.) Palaeoecology of Beringia, Academic Press, New York, 1982.

boundary river between two superpowers for almost a hundred years now and although the territories on both sides of the strait are very much hinterlands, Beringia has in fact been a route for human settlement connecting the Old and New continents. The strait has been exposed several times in the past. The last time that Asia and America were connected and that Man took advantage was 12,000-14,000 years ago. People moved into Alaska from Chucotka by foot, along the isthmus of Beringia, and then colonized the Americas all the way down to Tierra del Fuego.

Northeastern Asia and Alaska have much in common in terms of both natural and cultural history. When the mammoth was driven into extinction, people began to hunt other game, and eventually reindeer husbandry was started in the Old World. Permanent trade routes were opened along the northern coasts of Alaska and into Chucotka hundreds of years ago. Humans have left their mark in the tundra since ancient times; in relative terms their influence has perhaps been even greater than in many southern areas.

Conditions vary considerably across the circumpolar Arctic and there is accordingly considerable cultural diversity. Unlike the Antarctic, the Arctic to the north of the polar circle is populated by 1-2 million people, and the lands are owned by different nations and by indigenous peoples with significant land rights, particularly in Canada, Greenland and Alaska, or by peoples who are hoping to obtain such rights, such as in Russia. Today, the Arctic is a point of confluence for many diverging national and international interests. What is more, the world's two superpowers face each other across the Arctic, and for the best part of the 20th century it has been heavily militarized.[8]

***

The idea for a project devoted to the Arctic was originally conceived a couple of years ago by Markku Valkonen, Director of the Finnish Fund for Art Exchange. After a period of germination the project got its final shape: 14 artists working within the dominant western culture were invited to address and deconstruct the tangle of cultural concepts associated with *Ultima Thule* by carrying out their projects in different parts of the Arctic (broadly defined).[9]

Some of the projects were joint efforts from the very outset. Sergei "Arfrika" Bugaev's project in Vorkuta, on which he worked together with a psychiatrist, a physicist and a

8 Peter Prokosch: 'New protected areas in Russia in the framework of a circumpolar protected area network plan', in: *Northern Wilderness Areas: Ecology, Sustainability, Values*, Arctic Center Publications 7, Rovaniemi 1995

9 "Eight nations define themselves as Arctic countries: Canada, Russia, the United States, Denmark/Greenland, Norway (including Svalbard), Sweden, Finland and Iceland. They all share what can be seen as the largest remaining wilderness region in the Northern hemisphere, where nature in its original form still dominates the landscape on a large scale. This is in contrast to most other places where natural habitats or ecosystems have been fragmented or altered dramatically." Peter Prokosch:' New protected areas in Russia in the framework of a circumpolar protected area network plan', in: *Northern Wilderness Areas: Ecology, Sustainability, Values*, Arctic Center Publications 7, Rovaniemi 1995)

fellow-artist, leads up to a common proposal for the creation of a Universal Necropolis in the Polar Zone. Ilya Kabakov and Pavel Pepperstein engaged in a conceptual dialogue, *Tennis Game*, which puts the viewer into the uncomfortable position of having to decide whether there is a winner or a loser in the game. The photographers Esko Männikkö and Pekka Turunen returned for the sixth time to the mining and factory communities on the Kola Peninsula in the remotest corner of northwestern Russia.

Some of the participants were familiar with their destinations. This is true most particularly of Per Kirkeby[10], as well as of A.K. Dolven, who was born on the Lofoten Islands in Norway and who travelled to the mountains of northern Norway.

But for several artists the Eurasian Arctic circle was a novel and unique destination. Up until the early 1990s these vast areas which belong to Russia have been closed to foreigners. The isolation of the area during the Soviet era has only added to the sense of secrecy: what exactly lies hidden in this unknown territory? So for western people the Russian Arctic represents the other in a far stronger sense than comparable areas in the New World.

10 It may not be widely known that Per Kirkeby, one of international art's central figures, began to study natural history at the University of Copenhagen in the late 1950s and graduated with a thesis on polar quaternary geology in 1964. He took part in several expeditions to Greenland and worked there as a geologist in the 60s and 70s. This practical involvement with geology without doubt also gave an impulse to a series of experimental films, for instance *Og mundighederne sagde stop* (1972), *Normannerne* (1975) and *Geologi er det egentlig videnskap* (1980).

Jimmie Durham, whose cherokee background gives him good reason to deliver ironic assaults on the colonizing procedures of Western culture, visited Yakutia, one of the coldest regions on the earth. Eastern Siberia is possibly the best example of a place where human existence is reduced to the barest essentials because of the harsh natural conditions and isolation.

Ian McKeever, an investigator of landscape and nature, participated in the expedition to Chukotka in 1992; now he continued his work by travelling to the city of Magadan. Jussi Kivi, a romantic "explorer", travelled to the Urals, the mythical border between Europe and Asia. It was a unique moment for an autodidact archaeologist, particularly familiar with wastelands and outskirts of urban dwelling areas, to find himself in a forest wilderness comprising thousands of square kilometres where no one has ever lived. George Steinmann travelled to the Kola Peninsula, Russia, to collect material for a comparison with his previous work in Finnish Lapland: lichen serves as an indicator of the condition of our planet in his metaphoric work that merges the local and the global.

The conceptual project by Ulf Rollof calls into question the models of tradition and hegemonic cartography by "real substances", the fir tree of the North and the wine of the South. Maura Sheenan nudges us into thinking about the power of cultural concepts as forces of historical causation, about how naturally we associate "North" with "Up". In turning the conventional map paradigm on its head, she implies that the choices shaping what we learn are often arbitrary. Richard Prince illustrates that very arbitrariness in his constructed "illusions" by extreme mechanical

trickery. The main function of these constructions is to "betray themselves, first fooling us, and then making us aware of our willingness to be fooled".[11]

The essays in the first part of this publication have been solicited in an intuitive and idiosyncratic fashion. Their three elements: history, nature and cultural criticism, deal with the ideological patterns that exist more or less invisibly everywhere but that without offering any objections are revealed in the Arctic.

Arctic nature has most significantly marked the history of the Arctic, and even today environmental questions are the most acute of all in these extremely fragile areas. Arctic nature is thoroughly present as a basis for presenting the problem in this publication. Reference is repeatedly made to many of the early explorers of the North, from Tacitus to Carl von Linné and from Giuseppe Acerbi to Knud Rasmussen or M.A. Castrén: their descriptions flow into each other and provide a basis for current interpretations. This fragmentary wholeness is finally, like a prism, to form an outline of a common thread: the Arctic today is one of the last natural preserves and sanctuaries for "primaeval" nature on earth. As such it raises a fundamental question for the future: shall we regard these regions merely as an object of economic exploitation and a source of natural resources, or as a unique cultural heritage of humankind which needs to be valued and respected?

Ilya Kabakov and Pavel Pepperstein crystallize the very theme of the exhibition in their dialogue *Tennis Game:* "It is more important to participate in these games than to win." Everywhere, in East and West, in the Arctic and the Antarctic, the past comprises multiple layers. People have since times immemorial moved from place to place and made local destinies merge together. "Our history" is mixed with the "history of others" because our past has been dependent upon the past of others — whoever "we" are .

11 Jenifer P. Borum, *Artforum*, Jan 1990.

Essays

Markku Valkonen

Kirsten Hastrup

Sheila Hicks

Pirjo Varjola

Juha Pentikäinen

Lars Levi Laestadius

Hans Rudolf Reust

Michael Glasmeier

Viktor Mazin

Valentina Semyatshina

Lassi Heininen

D.I. Berman

Yrjö Haila

PROLOGUE: WITHOUT ICE, THERE IS NO LIFE

Markku Valkonen

In 1723 the young physician and naturalist Carl von Linné was out in the wilds of Lapland, experiencing the advent of spring. He was beset simultaneously by a cold wind, rain, clouds of mosquitoes and a pitiful uncertainty of which way to go. Linné confided in his diary, *Iter Lapponicum:*

By now I was completely fed up with the journey. This whole land of the Lapps is one huge bog; its proper name should be Styx. Never can a priest describe a hell worse than this. Never have the poets been able to decribe Styx as so ugly that this would not be uglier yet. I had passed through the land of the River Styx, the land of purgatory. We wandered through the wilds, not knowing where."

A modern scientist though he was, Linné expressed his experiences by using with the imagery of Greek mythology. The concepts shaped by antiquity still carried rhetorical authority, as there was very little first-hand knowledge about the coldest regions of the globe even at the beginning of the 18th century. Even the science of cartography was full of mysteries and riddles. The Danish seafarer Bering had sailed through the strait that now carried his name only a few years before Linné set out for Lapland.

The history of Europe, however, knows of several attempts to find out about the North. As early as 330 BC Pytheas had set out from Massalia (Marseilles) on the most famous sailing voyage in Antiquity. But experiences recorded since then did not greatly increase in scope until Saint Brendan of Ireland and his fellow friars sailed to the Faeroe Islands and Iceland, and possibly as far as Jan Mayen.

The businesslike Romans did their best to sift out the grains of truth from all the tales fanned by the imagination. Pliny compiled the ideas of Antiquity regarding the North, noting with humility that information on Thule is uncertain because of the long distances involved.

For Pliny, it was an undisputed fact that Thule was the most distant of all known land. He explained to his readers that when the Sun passes through the constellation of Cancer, there is no night in Thule, while in winter there is very little daylight. Pliny also related that a ship journey away from Thule there was a turgid ocean, which some called Cronium. The ancient Indians and Persians had similar images of the realm of darkness and the long winter.

Thule has been given various locations, but Pliny's Thule was not far off in the north. The author Lennart Meri, currently President of Estonia, may be just as right as other scholars in suggesting that Thule meant his own homeland. Meri took full poetic licence in giving the book *Hopeavalkea* (Fire of Silver, 1983) the subtitle "A journey to the past under the guidance of with the sun, fantasy and folklore as guides".

Seen from the Mediterranean, the edge of the world was to be found in the frozen expanses of the ocean. In 98 AD the Roman historian Tacitus observed that beyond the Svionii is a turgid, almost unmoving sea. From there one comes to the edge of the world, and Tacitus assured his reader: "Only thus far - and this is certain - does the world extendt."

Not all, however, suspected that a void opened up at the edge. Ancient mythology contains the fantasy of a far-off warm region. It was thought that beyond Boreas, the birthplace of the north wind, was the paradisiacal region of Hyperborea. It was also suggested that its gentle inhabitants were of the oldest race on earth.

But in the North people were more realistic. The Vikings could sail far north to the frozen ocean, but they preferred to make their way east, west and south.

The Vikings sailed to the White Sea and colonized Iceland, but they would venture further into the Arctic only if forced to do so.

Erik the Red, known for his belligerent tendencies, was first banished from Norway to Iceland, but before long he had to leave Iceland as well and sail further west. It was not safe to journey in a small group, so he invented a good way to attract companions: "He gave the country a name, calling it Greenland, saying that people would be keen to go there if the country had a nice name."

Erik gathered a fleet of 25 ships. Only 14 of these, with 400 people on board, arrived in Greenland in the year 986. The settlers colonized two areas, of which the so-called Eastern Settlement suddenly disappeared at the close of the 15th century, when Columbus discovered America for the second time. The Greenland colonies flourished around 1100, when their population totalled ca. 6,000. New colonies, albeit short-lived, were also established in Newfoundland (L'Anse aux Meadows).

Various explanations have been supplied for the disappearance of the Greenland colonies. The climate apparently became colder, making conditions more severe. The descendants of Erik were not so adaptable as to follow the way of life of the indigenous population. The colonies had based their survival strategy on Scandinavian-type agriculture, the hunting of terrestrial game and trade with Iceland and Norway.

Trade suffered when Norway lost its former leading position. Greenland had been the source of luxury items imported to Europe, such as polar-bear skins, walrus tusks, walrus-hide rope much coveted by ships' chandlers, and Greenland hunting falcons which were desired by royalty. Other sources, however, began to replace these products. The Russians, for example, traded in Siberian falcons.

In any case, the colonization of Greenland marked the first major cultural contacts between Europeans and the Inuit, of which there is a great deal of archaeological evidence. Contacts appear to have been primarily in the form of peaceful trade and barter.

The route to Cathay

Competition among the maritime powers of Europe created the need to find new routes to the markets of India and China. In 1553 the so-called Muscovy Company was established in England. It's broad aims was neatly captured in its official name outlined: "The companie of the Marchants adventures for the discoveries of Regions, Dominions, Islands and places unknowen."

In 1555 the Company sent Richard Chancellor and his associates to search for a route to Cathay. Although the expedition failed to accomplish what it set out to do, this did not deter renewed attempts.

England, Holland and Denmark outfitted one expedition after another either to open up the northeast passage or to investigate the northwest passage to Cathay around North America.

The seafarers suffered from scurvy and the ice. One of the most dramatic accounts of their plight is found in the diary of the Danish captain Jens Munk, who tells of a winter spent on the uninhabited shores of Hudson

Caspar David Friedrich, Ice Sea, 1824. Oil, 97 x 127 cm, Hamburger Kunsthalle.

Bay in 1620. Only Munk and three sailors survived the winter to sail back to Denmark. King Christian IV of Denmark, who wanted to establish control over the northern oceans ordered Munk to undertake another voyage, but this was never realized.

In the seventeenth century growing interest in rare curiosities of art, instruments of tribal war, household utensils etc. resulted in ethnographic collections, Kunstkammeret, was established in Copenhagen by king Frederick III in 1648.

The northeast passage was finally navigated by the Finnish-born explorer A.E. Nordenskiöld on the ship Vega in 1878-1879. Roald Amundsen of Norway was the first to sail the northwest passage in 1903-1906.

In the 19th century, the real significance of seafaring in the Arctic regions centred on whaling. It is impossible to asses the ecological effects of large-scale whaling, but for example the Bowhead was saved from extinction mainly by the emergence of the mineral oil industry and later by conservation efforts.

The wreck of the Hope

Arctic themes play a relatively minor but evocative part in the history of Western visual art. Most works are illustrations of events of a documentary nature or recordings of ethnographic observations. With the spread of photography and filming, depictions of the majestic nature of the north remained the task of artists.

There are also exceptions, for the major themes of romanticism include shipwrecks and the sea. An example is Théodore Géricault's monumental painting *The Raft of the Medusa* (1819), capturing the moment of hope among the survivors of a shipwreck when a vessel appears on the horizon, or William Turner's *Snowstorm* - steam-boat off a harbour's mouth making signals in shallow water, and going by the lead (1842) with its infernally raging volumes of water. However, only Caspar David Friedrich, in his painting *Ice Sea* (formerly *The Wreck of the Hope*, 1824), has depicted a shipwreck in the Arctic Ocean - the stillness of death among indescribably beautiful ice-floes.

Géricault's work was based on a real event and the accounts of survivors about thirst, hunger and cannibalism. This painting became a political icon, pointing to gross inequality. The officers and noble passengers of the Medusa had thrown the crew onto a dangerous raft and saved themselves by taking the ship's lifeboat.

Turner's painting, in turn, presented the artist's own experiences, Like Ulysses he had had himself roped to the mast to be able to study the drama of wind and water. Friedrich's painting was inspired by illustrations and accounts of Edward Parry's voyage to the northwest passage in 1819 and 1820.

Robert Rosenblum has described Friedrich's work as a Gothic mausoleum of ice-floes. The painting permits various interpretations, of which the most popular one involves the concept of the artist's own guilt and grieving for his brother, who drowned in the ice. In more general terms, the painting comments on man's persevering efforts to conquer death and to be in possession of extreme otherness.

In Friedrich's painting, Arctic nature has taken on a majestic role, demonstrating the hopelessness of the hubris of man, the would-be conqueror. The Hyperborea of modern man

is beautiful, but it is inhabited by cold death itself. It will not tolerate man even as an allegorical addition to the picture.

One hundred years on we encounter another variety of artistic interest in the Arctic, namely the primitivizing art of the surrealists and abstract expressionists. In their quest for a fresh approach they made wide use of tribal art including Eskimo masks and small scale sculpture. No wonder then that the Surrealist Map of the World published in Variétés in 1929 represented Alaska as the world's second biggest country. Russia was the biggest one but the United States did not exist at all.

As Kirk Varnedoe has remarked the big question is what this modern primitivism tells us, if anything, about the tribal objects themselves. Varnedoe holds that all Western artistic impositions falls under the category of self-serving practice of remaking the Other in our own terms.

Technology and the scourges of man

The aspect of hope in Friedrich's painting is evident in the idea that there is something that man or technology cannot defy or damage. The rise of industrialism had made artists turn their back on the mechanization of the world and the decay of the cities.

In a sense Friedrich is wrong. The plunder and exploitation of the Arctic had come a long way by the time of his painting. The white man with iron-reinforced ships had already defied the cold and the pack-ice, and whaling ships brought oil for the street-lamps and weaving mills of Britain, and whale-bone was used like plastic today for all kinds of modern products such as blinds, corsets, pens and furniture.

One whale alone could provide 236 tons of oil, and it is estimated up to 23,000 whales were slaughtered in the Davis Strait alone. The animal populations sunk, but the same also happened to man. There are no statistics to tell us how many indigenous people of the northern regions died of smallpox, tuberculosis, diphtheria or poliomyelitis. The most dismal estimates claim that the scourges brought on by white men caused the untimely death of 90 per cent of the native peoples of North America. They were clearly more disastrous than the Black Death of medieval Europe.

The worst over, yawning gaps of understanding and comprehension remained. Kenneth L. Pratt describes in an article (see Burtch and Ellanna, eds. Key Issues... 1994) how legislators in the United States could not understand the Inuit sparing use of the land on their concepts of legality related to the land. Noble documents, such as the Wilderness Act of 1964, neglected the fact that not all tracts of land can be made into conservation areas, if old means of livelihood and religious traditions are to be preserved. Richard Davis, an inhabitant of Nunivak Island explained this point as follows:

"[The south of Nunivak Island] is not fit for a wilderness, because it has been established on top of ancestors' old living places. Even on tops of mountains. Mountaintop houses were not used just for caribou hunting, but also for reindeer-herding, one to three months at a time. Just about any mountain you look at has the remains of these shelters."

Sometimes the white man's cargo led to something good. This was the case when Captain Robert M'Clure sailed and wintered north of Banks Island in search of the lost expedition of the Franklin. One of M'Clure's

ships, the copper-sheathed Investigator was caught in the ice and had to be abandoned in 1853. The Inuit of Victoria Island heard of the shipwreck and travelled long journeys to salvage metal and other scrap from this treasure. These Inuit came to be called Copper Eskimos, for they knew how to utilize natural deposits of copper and they immediately understood the immense value of scrap metal and other material from the ship for making hunting weapons and other implements. The Copper Eskimos first came into contact with the white man in 1906.

Archaeologists are presently studying this tribe, and their finds have revealed the importance of the *Investigator*. Knud Rasmussen (1879-1933) of Denmark was one of the most important figures to improve the situation of the Inuit. He was responsible for the economic recovery of the city of Thule, and his books propagated understanding for the Greenlanders. Rasmussen was of partly Inuit descent, and therefore he could act as an important mediator between the dominant Danish culture and the Arctic minority.

Wonder and conflict

The contacts between early expeditions and indigenous people were mostly peaceful and marked by mutual bewilderment. The Ancient Greeks had been right in assuming that the Hyperboreans were a gentle people. A typical observation is found in the entry for 20 July 1556 in the diary of Stephen Burrough, the first West European to sail to Novaya Zemlya:

"That morning Gabriel saw smoke rising and rowed towards it. The smoke was rising two leagues from our anchorage. He came back on the northwest wind, bringing with him a young Samoyed. The latter was a young man, who appeared strange to us. As a gift he brought three geese and a barnacle."

This scene captures the arrival of strangers in the Arctic and the relationship of exchange arising from the contact. The inhabitant of the north brings gifts from nature, while the Western visitor is in wonderment over the racial features and lifestyle of the indigenous people. All kinds of trinkets find their way as reciprocal gifts or payment to the Hyperboreans, until they are seen as virgin territory for religious and economic exploitation.

The interests of foreigners and the Arctic peoples soon conflicted as the conquest of the marginal areas progressed. For example, Russia strengthened her hold on Siberia by force. Most of the tribes accepted the new order, but not all.

The historian James Forsyth has compared the methods of the Russians to the Spanish conquistadors. The peoples in question are first subdued and then forced to provide the products desired by the intruders.

The Russians were mostly after ermine furs. For a period of approximately one hundred years from the close of the 16th century ermine accounted for approximately ten per cent of the revenue of the Russian state.

Central authorities in the grip of fur fever resorted to outright terrorism. Soldiers were sent to take the chiefs of clans and their relatives hostage, and they would not be released until the required amount of furs was given as ransom.

During the last years of the conquest of Siberia the indigenous population put up staunch resistance when cossacks forced the Koryaks to pay taxes in the form of furs by

burning their villages and also by burning people alive. Some of the oppressors fared poorly, such as the cossack chief Sestakov. The Chukchee killed him and his soldiers to the last man in the Battle of the River Egats in 1730.

The fighting came to an end when the Russians finally realized that it was easier and less costly to obtain furs by peaceful means than by violence.

The artist Roshilen

There is a visual document of the conflicts between the Russians and the Itelmen of Kamchatka (ethnically related to the Chukchee). While travelling in Siberia between 1917 and 1919, the Finnish archaeologist and ethnographer Sakari Pälsi bought from the Chukchee of Anadyr a piece of armour with an iron plate on which several battle scenes were depicted in red pigment. These showed the attacks of the Itelmen on the stockades of the Russians, and also conflicts between the indigenous peoples themselves.

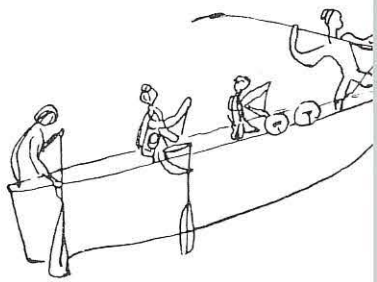
Alongside his other research, Pälsi also studied the art of the Arctic peoples of Siberia. He treated the artists whom he met as individuals, taking into consideration their personal traits when interpreting their picture. Pälsi had the audacity to estimate the technical skills and style of the artists.

Roshilen, Reindeer Chukchee, was one of Pälsi's most significant finds.The Finnish scholar was particularly fascinated by Roshilen's ability to make rapid, chance observations in the form of surprisingly accurate pictures. Pälsi also carried out experiments on Roshilen's methods of perspective. These did not (of course) correspond to the formulas of perspective in Western art.

Pälsi was intrigued by the exaggerated way in which Roshilen and other artists depicted the movements of people and animals. Pälsi suggested the following, bold but plausible, conclusion:

"The pictures made by these Arctic artists resemble snapshots of running horses, in which we can see at the same time strange postures and which our eye regards as unnatural, although we know they were made by an infallible machine. It might be assumed that the drawings of the northern hunters contain similar snapshots, in which a trained eye analyses movements that our slack eyes cannot notice."

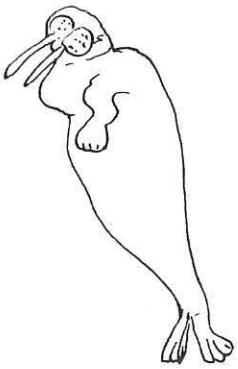
Edgar Degas thus had Siberian colleagues, but they did not need the photographs of Muybridge and others to know how many legs a running animal had in the air at the same time.



From ice hast thou come

The oldest known Paleo-Arctic culture emerged around 40 000 years ago, surviving until ca. 5000 BC. The Paleo-Arctic hunters preyed on the animals of the tundra in the parts of Northeastern Siberia which had not been covered by the ice sheet. The culture of these nomadic tribes resembled that of the Late Paleolithic in Europe.

The expansion of the following stage is difficult to study, because the paleocontinent of the Bering Straits is now mostly under water. The surprisingly rapid colonization of the Arctic areas of North America following the melt-



rawing by Roshilen

ing of the Wisconsin glaciation is, however, known in some detail. The process began around 4000 years ago and ended three hundred years later. During this brief period, settlers spread from Alaska to Greenland.

The colonizers focused their skills and efforts on the hunting of marine animals, and their weaponry includes complex artefacts, such as toggle-headed harpoons. Finds of objects and artefacts have given rise to the archaeological term Arctic small tool tradition, describing the culture of these hunter-gatherers. The ways of life of the northern peoples diversified according to prevailing conditions, and for example the Dorset culture of Canada developed seal hunting on the ice and learned to build igloos.

The last major migration of peoples in the Arctic occurred in Siberia around 1300 AD when the Mongols forced the Yakuts move from the steppes towards the north.

The northern regions, offering a great deal of terrestrial and particularly marine game, attracted the Arctic hunters. Laymen do not realize that the warming of the northern waters, which occurs from time to time, decreases rather than increases the amount of available game.

The ice - a fundamental issue

The nomadic hunter-gatherer culture did not permit a high population density. It has been estimated that among the Inuit, the typical population density was 6 persons per one hundred square kilometres. Under more favourable conditions, the figure may have risen to 30. These figures speak volumes of the carrying capacity of the natural environment and of the mobile lifestyle of the Inuit which required complex means of survival.

The Arctic zone and its ice cover are a fundamental issue to man in an even deeper sense than the miracle of Inuit subsistence.

Let us look at Africa six million years ago. The cooling of the climate and the formation of the savannahs drew the large apes down from the trees, forcing them to become bipedal.

The first brachiators were successful and did not require much intelligence. The Ice Age, however, influenced Africa. When Homo habilis was emerging (at the beginning of the Pleistocene around 1.8 million years ago), the climate changed markedly in phases. Precipitation decreased, the climate continued to become cooler, and a snow cover appeared on the mountain-tops. This forced the bipedals to adapt to new conditions. The process is summarized by Mary and John Gribbin:

"The first phase of cooling in the northern hemisphere and drying in Africa was sufficient to push our ancestors out of the woods and make them upright walkers. But the series of climatic changes that put a premium on intelligence, and set us on the road to being human, were much more subtle and complicated than a mere cooling of the globe. They turned an ape (albeit an upright one) into H. sapiens in less than 3 million years, a breathtakingly fast spurt of evolutionary change."

According to the Gribbins we are all children of the ice. It is no wonder that the north holds its attraction. Man has always carried on a dialogue with the conditions laid down by the ice, but now we must investigate these conditions in far greater detail than ever before.

It took Western culture hundreds of years to learn to adapt to Arctic conditions with

all its technology. This period was extended, because the knowledge of Arctic peoples was ignored; they were bypassed and the limitations of the natural environment went unnoticed. Those who come from warm or cool climates will always remain strangers in the Arctic regions. But let them be at least strangers who can learn and enter into a dialogue.

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UCHRONIA AND THE TWO HISTORIES OF ICELAND, 1400-1800

Kirsten Hastrup

One of the important lessons of historical anthropology is that modes of producing 'history' differ from one context to the next. Beyond the obvious differences in environment, economy, and social organization, the making of history is also in part determined by local ways of thinking about history. The conceptual and the material are simultaneous in experience of the world.[1] This implies that there is more to time and causation than chronology and sequence. It also implies that a society may construe its history in a way unfamiliar to the Western historical genre.

These points have been extensively substantiated by the history of Iceland, which I have analysed in some depth.[2] This story displays a remarkable long-term oscillation between highly structured, well-organized autonomy and disintegration, dependence, and crisis. Paradoxically, these contrasting conditions seem to coexist with an equally remarkable conceptual continuity. Through the centuries there has been a conspicuous coherence and unity in the image of Icelandicness which - and this is the point - has had a decisive influence upon the course of history in this North Atlantic community. Obviously, part of the framework was already 'given'; we cannot and should not overlook the role played by such objective features as subarctic climatic conditions, geographical isolation, and political subjection. But even these features are subject to a particular local interpretation and a social response which transmutes objectivity into relativity. The irreversible is not the same as the inevitable, and the sequential is not coterminous with the causal.

Taking this as a point of departure, this chapter introduces the concept of 'Uchronia' as potentially useful for describing a particular way of thinking about history. As usual, the anthropological argument here has been spurred by a particular empirical history, that of the Icelandic society of the period 1400-1800.

Time and causation

Anthropologists have often portrayed other societies as timeless or 'without history', but this is unwarranted. All societies have histories of equal length and significance. If 'Europe' appears more historical than the rest of the world, as implied by Wolf (1982), this is a *trompe l'oeil* owed to the fit between European history and its own conventions of representing 'history'. Similarly, peoples may have different concepts of time - as is abundantly demonstrated in anthropology - but as a species certainly share a fundamental sense of time.[3] Phrased differently, societies may have different temporal registers and socially construct their histories in different ways.[4] In the words of Sahlins, cultural consciousness is objectified in a particular historical genre.[5]

In Europe, the cultural consciousness of history has been represented in terms of chronology and linear growth. This has shaped a particular way of thinking about causality. In general, causality is constructed upon past experience.[6] This means that it is an empirical matter. In human society notions of causality are based on local social experience and are part of a society's collective representations. Causality is identified in a context in which experience and definition merge and the individual and the collective are continuous with one another.

Thinking about history implies a conceptual organization of social processes in a meaningful sequence of events that are somehow logically and causally connected. It also

implies a particular construction of social memory[7] and of cultural exaggeration and dialogue.[8] I am not arguing that these kinds of historical thinking alone create history; there are of course certain identifiable events or social and political features that cannot be acquitted from influencing its course. I want to emphasize, however, that while we cannot separate the material from the conceptual, we must at least distinguish between the sequential and the causal. Causation in history cannot be identified without due reference to both events and internal ('cultural') patterns. The anthropological perspective on history thus adds a spatial dimension to the 'temporal causation' of historians[9].

In Western thinking about history, the context has been established as one of chronology. Events have been causally connected in time rather than in space. The latter would link particular events to culture and cosmology. Given the *post eventum* character of historiography[10], causal connections are established from events to antecedent phenomena - whence 'temporal causation'. The result is that antecedents in general have been treated as causes, opening the way for a process of infinite regress through chronological time. This process has, however, been punctuated, and *the* relevant antecedent has been selected. In other words, historians have tended to elevate their own representations of causality to a general theory of causation. 'Causes' have been identified quite arbitrarily as a matter of course. In an illustrative example, Marc Bloch shows how 'causes' are isolated from all the necessary antecedent not by their being the most necessary but by their being the most recent, the least permanent, and the most exceptional in the general order of things; they also seem to be the antecedents that could most easily have been avoided.[11] The explanatory problem is not simply one of arbitrariness in the identification of the (empirical) cause; it is also that 'the most constant and general antecedents remain merely Implicit'.[12]

The shortcomings of the idea of temporal causation arise from the fact that, as Evans-Pritchard (1964: 174) observed, history is not only a series of events but also the links between them.[13] Such links are provided by culture as well as by chronology. If we accept that cultural order is virtual rather than empirical, the individual historical event is culture made manifest. In the words of Sahlins, culture is *potentia* rather than *presentia*.[14] For all the shared human experience of time, the potential ways of registering it are culture-specific.

In general, awareness of the past and hence of history derives from two distinct experiences: antiquity and decay.[15] The first implies a sense of age, the latter a sense of material change. The two need not be equally represented in different societies. This point is pertinent in dealing with Icelandic history in the period 1400-1800, when it seems that Icelanders were living between two histories, one marked by age, permanence, and authenticity and the other by decay, change, and extraneousness. In the collective representations of Icelanders these two histories were unconnected - the experience of decay was not integrated into the cultural consciousness - and the consequences of this were disastrous.

The historical background

If society is the institutional form of historical

events[16], there is no way to analyse it outside history. We are thus immediately faced with a problem that was already identified by Evans-Pritchard: when dealing with a changing social system, 'do we then speak of a society at different points in time or do we speak of [two] different societies?'[17] This problem is acute in the study of Icelandic society through time.

Iceland was settled in the late ninth and early tenth centuries by Norsemen in a final wave of Viking migration.[18] The largest proportion of settlers came from western Norway; Swedes and Danes were also represented, as were second- or third-generation Viking immigrants to the British Isles. In 930, the community of settlers, by then probably numbering some 40,000, was transformed into a society of Icelanders. The constitutive event was the creation of a code of Icelandic law and the establishment of a 'people's assembly' (the *alpingi*). The constitution was advanced for its time; it separated legislative and judicial bodies and was based on the principle of representative democracy (if one may be permitted the use of an anachronistic term). This first society developed and flourished. People converted to Christianity in the year 1000 by a communal decision at the *alpingi*. Writing was soon introduced, and among the first things to be written down were the laws, which had until then been orally transmitted; the elected 'lawspeaker' personified society's memory of itself. Soon there would also be a major written literature; the Icelandic sagas have been declared the only Nordic contribution to world literature[19] and still capture the interest of modern readers. The written laws and the sagas are the primary sources for early Icelandic history.

From these sources one may reconstruct a coherent social and semantic system.[20] Its coherence is related to the fact that the Icelanders created their world from scratch, so to speak. Arriving in a virgin territory with no prior definitions of access to land and no preconceived class structure, the settlers were 'set free' from their inherited notions. It is true that they were deeply embedded in the Nordic world; their language was still spoken all over Scandinavia. From the literature we get an image of proud and egalitarian farmers concerned with honour and personal integrity, statemanship, and poetry. Although history gradually undermined this image by introducing social inequality and a measure of violent political conflict, medieval Icelandic society remained coherent.

In 1262-4, not without strong external pressure, Icelanders swore allegiance to the king of Norway. By then the population had probably reached some 70,000, and the principal mode of livelihood was farming. In the following century fishing gained more prominence, and when in 1380 Norway and Iceland became part of the Danish realm, Icelandic society was rather more composite than in the past. Icelanders were to remain subjects to successive Danish kings until the twentieth century. While the rest of Europe embarked on the road towards modernity, Iceland remained on the margins of this particular history. The economy was archaic, and the social structure remained atomistic and centred around individual households, with no social division of labour system beyond them.

The Icelandic world of the period 1400-1800 was quite different from the mediaeval one. It was a disintegrating social system in which only a minority were 'free' in

the old sense of being landowners, in which kinship no longer mattered for the rank and file, and in which mass death from starvation was recurrent. The more or less permanent social and demographic crises took place in an environment which had not altered drastically and in an epoch in which, for instance, Norwegian society was growing and flourishing under very similar natural conditions.

The contrast between the free sedentary farming community of the High Middle Ages and the starving and to a large extent shifting populations of later centuries, concerned with little more than survival, is striking. If society is the empirically identifiable form of historical events, it is tempting to speak of the two historical periods as distinct societies. However, if culture is an implicational space beyond the observable, the Icelandic world is marked by a continuity owed in part to the overcommunication of mediaeval glory and virtue. Icelanders of the latter period seem to have lived in a world marked by incongruity between the cultural order as constituted in society and the lived experience of people.[21] We shall see how this incongruity was related to an increasing discrepancy between social experience and the collective representations of 'history'.

Society: contemporary experience

A key example of the discrepancy between Icelanders' social experience and their collective representations is provided by the development of their modes of livelihood. There had always been two complementary modes of subsistence, farming and fishing; the sources are unanimous on this. In his general description of Iceland from 1350, Abbot Arngrímur Brandsson states that 'fish from the sea and milk from the cattle are everyman's food'[22], and in Bishop Oddur Einarsson's extensive 'ethnography' of 1589 we read that 'after milk-produce and meat from the cattle, the greater part of the food of the Icelanders consists of fish'[23]. Skúli Magnússon, a renowned Enlightenment reformer of Iceland, is even more elaborate in his description from 1786: 'the Icelandic economy is founded on only two gifts of nature: cattle-breeding and fishing, holding out their hands towards one another, since the latter gets life and power from the former, which again is supported by the latter'.[24] The Icelandic annals provide additional evidence that both economic activities were vital. If failure occurred in one, hunger was likely; if both failed, the consequences were fatal. Each household was founded on the dual economic pattern that seems to have been one of the structures of *la longue durée*.

Although recognized as complementary at the level of consumption, farming and fishing as two distinct systems of production did not occupy equal positions in the minds of Icelanders. They were never simply alternative ways of making a living, because they held asymmetrical positions in the (social) system of classification. We shall see how this contributed to misery of the Icelanders in the period under examination here.

The domestic unit had been based on farming ever since the first settlements. There was a fine balance to be maintained between arable and stock farming; grain was grown in the early period, but the main crop was the hay that was vital for the livestock. Grazing was adequate only from June to September; for the rest of the year, the animals had to

be kept at the farmstead on stored hay. The balance between animal numbers and labour input in the fields was, therefore, a delicate one. Grain-growing was soon abandoned; it is mentioned for the last time in 1589 as a rare occurrence in a small corner of the island.[25] With it disappeared the plough. This means that in the period 1400-1800 farming was principally a matter of hay growing and animal husbandry at a simple level of technology.

Land rights were specified in detail. By contrast to the Norse communities of Viking Age Scandinavia in which most of them originated, Icelanders had no primordial privileges in relation to land. The traditional Nordic principle of allodial rights based on kinship had no meaning in the early settlers' community in virgin Iceland. Land was therefore originally privately owned and could be disposed of with certain minor restrictions. Gradually, as generational depth was regained, kinsmen regained some of their old pre-emptive rights at least to the main land of a particular farm. Outlying farms or lands could be more freely disposed of. Landowners could also lease land to tenants, who had equal civil rights, or to cotters, who had a more dependent status. The important thing was to secure the maximum yield in this arid country; if tillable land was not used for two successive years the owner forfeited it. Labour was therefore a major issue in Icelandic culture.

The land itself fell into three categories - infields, outfields, and commons. Closest to the farm was the tilled and manured infield (*tún*), upon which hay or, earlier, grain was grown. At some distance were privately owned meadows and other outfields, used for grazing. In the earlier period the outfields also comprised saeters; individual farms had outlying shielings to which part of the household and livestock moved in summer.[26] Beyond the privately owned land were the commons (*almenningar*), to which everyone had access for supplementary summer grazing, hunting, and gathering. Most of the earmarked flocks of sheep were left on their own in the mountain commons during the summer.

At the time of the settlement Iceland was covered with a primary forest of low birch. Although only one-tenth of the Icelandic soil was arable, land appeared abundant and rich to the Norsemen, who according to legend were allowed to claim as much land as they could encircle on horseback from sunrise to sunset. As population pressure increased, land became scarcer. Large tracts were laid waste partly through soil erosion due both to grazing and to the cutting down of the vulnerable primary forest for house construction and for fuel. Soon houses had to be almost entirely constructed from stone and turf, and animal dung replaced firewood. This in turn reduced the supply of manure, and the delicate balance between the number of people and animals, on the one hand, and the size of the manured fields, on the other, was under constant threat. As a consequence, Icelanders became more dependent on fish.

Fish had always been plentiful and provided an additional resource for the farming households. During the fourteenth century fishing became a necessity, and it was further encouraged by the new external markets. The Hanseatic League replaced Norway as Iceland's main trading partner, and a new market for dried fish opened up in Europe. The net result was an economic upswing. The old trading ports, which had been nothing but temporary land-

ing places, turned into tiny villages, and a category of 'professional' fishermen emerged. While earlier there had been no specialist groups at all, the late fourteenth century witnessed an incipient division of labour between farmers and fishermen.

In 1404, fishermen (*fiskimenn)* appear in the documents for the first time and, significantly, also for the last. The Black Death had ravaged Iceland from 1402 to 1404, reducing the population by some 40 per cent.[27] Farm labour had become scarce, and therefore farm service was made compulsory in 1404, obliging fishermen and workers to settle on farms and work for landowners or be exiled.[28] Thus, just as fishermen emerged as a distinct group they were subsumed under farming. This is one of the first hints of the conceptual asymmetry between farming and fishing in the local definition of Icelandicness. Fishing continued, of course, out of sheer necessity, but the fisherman was subsumed under the general category of servants (*vinnuhjú*), defined by his position within a household (*bú*) headed by a landowner or a well-to-do tenant on Church or Crown property.

Fishing rights were generally defined by land rights; the land owner and his household had exclusive rights to fish in the streams and lakes on their own land and offshore within a certain distance from the shore, the so-called *fiskhelgi*.[29] Beyond that, the sea was defined as commons (*almenningar*). Thus land rights were apparently always given conceptual priority.

This can be inferred also from the fact that farmhands engaging in seasonal fishing had to return for the hay harvest at the latest, quite irrespective of the catch. During the fifteenth century, when Icelanders still had a clear recollection of the potential surplus created by fishing, the local court passed one law after another designed to make fishing less attractive. Thus, fishing with more than one hook on the line was banned, explicitly because farmers feared that if returns increased fishing would be too attractive to their servants.[30] Sinker lines were likewise banned, and the use of worms as bait was prohibited. It was not until 1699 that some of these restrictions were lifted, sinker lines with several hooks again being allowed but only during the 'season': outside this period they were prohibited because of their allegedly damaging effects on farming.[31] By then Icelanders seem to have lost the motivation, however; a century later, in 1785, Magnússon noted that lines with just one hook reigned all but supreme, and he made a strong case for the reintroduction of sinker lines with up to thirty hooks, giving a detailed description of how to make them.[32] Generally, he complained about the conspicuous deterioration of Icelandic fishing.[33]

The decline of fishing technology had a parallel in farming, where a collective loss of skills can also be documented. We have noted that the plough fell into disuse, and we can add that the fences separating the infields from the wilderness disintegrated. Fences were required to protect the precious infields against stray animals; the laws on fencing had always reflected farming interests, but the peasants nevertheless failed to keep up with the requirements. In the eighteenth century this became a major issue, Icelandic living conditions having by then reached rock-bottom. In 1776 an ordinance was issued by the Danish king demanding that Icelanders reconstruct their fences under both the threat of fines and the promise of rewards.[34] Judging from later decrees it was not an easy task

to convince them of the necessity of the restoration. It was even suggested that exemplary fences be built in all regions for the people to study.[35] The old technology had apparently been forgotten even though the material (stone) remained plentiful.

The collective loss of memory is witnessed also in the fact that, instead of being stored in barns as in medieval times, hay was just stacked outdoors, where it was subject to rather humid conditions. The result of these developments was a lesser yield from the scarce fields and greater vulnerability to even one 'bad' winter. We know from the Icelandic annals that at least one-fourth of the 400 years examined here must be classified as lean years, with famine and death.[36]

In short, one of the salient features of Icelandic society in the period 1400-1800 was a failure to keep up with the implicit requirements of social reproduction. Failure to exploit the potential for fishing, allegedly to protect farming, entailed increasing material poverty. This was correlated with a remarkable degree of collective amnesia as far as local technological skills were concerned. The result was that Icelanders became increasingly the victims of forces beyond their control. In the collective social experience, conditions worsened because of external threats, climatic and other. People became fatalistic - again, according to their own concepts of fate.

Since the earliest times, Icelanders had entertained two notions of fate.[37] One concept gave the individual a certain measure of life; it was impersonal in the sense that one's measure was more or less a matter of chance. The other was personal and amounted to an innate quality of 'fortune'. This was the *gaefa* of the individual, one's personal gift for exploiting or even avoiding one's larger destiny.

These two concepts of fate gave rise to a permanent dualism in the Icelandic view of the factors determining the course of life. The course taken by individual - and hence social - history was the outcome of the joint forces of externally determined fate and the individual power to subvert it. By the old notions of causality, the individual Icelander would have taken fate in his own hands and reclaimed his influence upon history. But the social experience of Icelanders no longer sustained these notions. As time wore on, their experience was one of increasing impotence in all the domains of the social; survival had replaced influence as the most important item on the agenda. The idea of human causation in history gave way to the idea that the causes of change were external and largely uncontrollable. The economy deteriorated; people were exploited by the merchants and subdued by the distant Danish king. The wild approached from all quarters as the fencing of Icelandic society disintegrated.

To understand how this could happen - since it is by no means an immediate consequence of material factors - we must look into the Icelandic way of thinking about history.

Uchronia: Reality in the past sense

If the production of history is related to thinking about history, then it is important to explore local notions of change and tradition in Iceland.

First of all, no conceptual distinction was made between history and story. The notion

of saga referred to anything that was 'said' as history; as such it contained its own claim to truth.[38] When the main corpus of Icelandic sagas was written in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, their objective was to recount the history of Iceland. Although certainly literary products, they were perceived as history proper. This was true also for the reconstruction of the ninth- and tenth-century events and characters in the *Íslendingasögur*, 'stories of the Icelanders'. In these sagas the pre-Christian past of Icelandic society is recast in the shape of a *Freiheits-Mythos*[39] celebrating the original 'free state' of Iceland. Again, the literary activity of the thirteenth century may in fact be seen as an attempt to raise local consciousness about Icelandic achievements in *terra nova*.[40] Freedom and the taking of new land are tokens of original Icelandicness.

One of the consequences of Iceland's particular conflation of story and history, on the one hand, and its peculiar atomistic social structure, on the other, is a remarkable conflation also of individual and collective history. As one scholar has observed,

"There is no sense of those impersonal forces, those nameless multitudes, that make history a different thing from biography or as drama, and there was no large crowd at the back of the stage".[41]

If the individual Icelander was unable to control his own fate during the 'dark' centuries, he was equally unable to influence the larger history of Icelandic society. Actual history originated in a space beyond control, while at the same time the Icelandic dream was recreated in an Icelandic Uchronia.

Uchronia is nowhere in time. If Utopia is a parallel universe, Uchronia is a separate history, a history, so to speak, out of time. Uchronic visions were part of Icelandic collective representations of the world, and as such they deeply influenced the response of the society to its own history.

With modernity, a vision of history as linear growth emerged in Europe; this was to remain the distinctive feature of the Western historical genre, as we have seen, and the (largely illusory) basis for the comparison between 'Europe and the people without history'.[42] In contrast to the old view of a qualitatively defined time-space, the new chronology and linearity implied that any stage in history was temporary. These features also indirectly sustained the idea that history could not go absolutely wrong because it had its own directional logic. Iceland resisted modernity until recently, and the development of Icelandic society teaches us that the vision of history as linear growth was alien to it. Even in modern Europe this vision remained élitist for a long time and may actually still alienate the rank and file from history in more ways than one.

The conceptual discrepancy between two views of history, if not actually between two histories, makes room for uchronic imagination. Where this is found, and certainly where it achieves the proportions of the Icelandic case, it reveals a feeling of incapacity to influence actual history. It also points, however, to a failure on the part of the dominant historical discourse to incorporate the experience of ordinary people. The gap between the two histories leaves people in a void.

Lacking experience of a progressive history, Icelanders knew that history could go wrong; the degree of misery that it entailed locally had no logic. In the fight between fire and ice, or between 'hot' and 'cold' conditions of history, Icelanders retreated to an imagi-

nary time when history was 'right'. This gave rise to uchronic visions which were at odds with contemporary social experiences. Uchronia had its own reality, of course, but from our point of view this reality was hypothetical.

We cannot ask the Icelanders of bygone centuries about their imaginations, but we can infer them from a whole range of historical evidence. As a vision of another time, Uchronia connects otherwise disconnected elements and adds a level of comprehension to our historical narrative. The history out of time entertained by the Icelanders was informed by their view of the past. The past was over, yet in narrative form it was continuously reproduced and invoked in search of meaning in the void between two histories.

The reproduction of the old images of Icelandicness consisted in the constant renewal of a strong literary tradition dating back to the Middle Ages. Young people learned to read from the old lawbook, and the saga literature was consumed through the institution known as *sagnaskemmtan* (saga entertainment), the reading aloud of the old stories as a general evening pastime on the farms.[43] As we have seen, the individual farmsteads represented society in miniature; there was no distinction between élite and popular culture as elsewhere in Europe[44], no urban populations set apart from the peasantry. Although mass literacy was not achieved until some time around 1800 (which is still relatively early by comparative European standards), there is strong evidence that on most farms at least one person could read.[45] What is more, the stories of sagas also formed the core of the popular verses (*rímur*) that were orally transmitted for centuries. The old images were thus continually reproduced by a recasting of the old myths of creation and of the past virtues of men. Through this recasting, the Icelanders were perpetually confronted with an ideal order nowhere in time. One could even argue that while other peoples have invented traditions to match new historical situations[46], Icelanders reproduced the images of the past to invent themselves.

The uchronic imagination was concurrently sustained by this invocation of the past. Because Icelanders had no 'real' others to identify 'themselves' against, the mirror-image of themselves in the past tense had major social repercussions. Living in the imaginary world of Uchronia, Icelanders had no symbolic exchange with others and no way of achieving a position from which they could see themselves and their situation in realistic terms. Because of their virtual isolation in the North Atlantic, they lacked a contemporary comparative reality against which they could measure their own culture.[47] Paradoxically, this meant that the present escaped them; they felt this and clung even more firmly to Uchronia, which at least preserved a sense of injustice in the existing world.

Icelanders lived between an empirical and experienced history of decline and decay and an imagined Uchronia implying permanence and antiquity. Rather than defining a new reality and shaping it in language, they defined the present in terms of a past of which only the language remained real. Reality itself was discarded as anomalous because it no longer fitted the old language. Whatever creative skills the people possessed were directed towards a recollection and a continuation of 'proper' history - as story - at the expense of a comprehension of contemporary realities. Uchronia represented a structured world

nowhere in time which strongly contrasted with the experiential space. Uchronia was a dream about a primordial society and a timeless history in which man was fully human.

Culture eccentricity

Culture is the implicational space which gives meaning to social experience, and it was Icelandic culture in the period 1400-1800 that gave consistency to the disparate realities of society and Uchronia.

The disintegrating fences around the infields provide an apt metaphor for the developments of this period. Nature encroached relentlessly, diminishing the socially controlled space. The cosmological centre had always been locally represented by the household, which was society writ small and concretized in the landscape. In the classical period, a concentric cosmological dualism firmly distinguished between an 'inside' and an 'outside' world.[48] Inside, humans were in control; outside the wild forces reigned. As time wore on, more and more humans were alienated from the centre and merged with the wild because of poverty, vagrancy, or fishing. An increasing proportion of reality was beyond control.

'History' itself was split in two: an externally induced and uncontrolled succession of changes and an internally emphasized repetition of traditional values. The repetition owed its force to the reproduction of past images in a discourse which mirrored the negativities inherent in the contemporary Icelandic world. Lacking symbolic exchange with real others, Icelanders could, engage in no relationship of identification other than with themselves in the past tense. In a manner of speaking, they became 'others' themselves. As such they were alienated from the larger history and ultimately from their own present.

This alienation was correlated with a particular pattern of event registration. Events are happenings which are registered as significant according to a particular cultural scheme.[49] This scheme is constantly placed at risk by social action; even social reproduction may eventually entail transformation.[50] But in Iceland the scheme persisted. The uchronic vision was intimately linked to the reproduction of the past in voice and in action. The literary image of the free farmer was proudly read aloud and was confirmed in action by the *alpingi*'s decision to concentrate energy on the reproduction of the farming households at the expense of fishing, among other things. Because of the reproduction of an outdated cultural scheme, actions became anachronistic, and contemporary happenings failed to register as events. In contrast to the event-richness of the past - as collectively memorized in the history conventionalized in the local genre - the present appeared event-poor.[51]

Some social spaces or periods seem to generate more social events than others. This is not primarily a mensurational feature but a feature of registration. For events to be registered as such, they have to be significant from the point of view of the world as defining. The Icelandic world of our period did not single out many happenings as socially significant. The social space was event-poor; movement, change, and innovation were relegated to a non-social space in which no events were registered. While Icelanders certainly *had* a history during these event-poor centuries, they only indirectly *produced* it. Poverty was both material and symbolic; the two

levels merged in the experience of the people.

Event-richness is a feature of space, and it is identified in the synchronic dimension. In the diachronic dimension, relative event-richness is transformed into relative historical density.[52] In the representation of history, historical density is a measure of the relative memorability of paticular events. For events to be memorized and to become part of 'history' they must have been experienced as culturally significant. this apparently self-evident point covers a fundamental truth: the structuring of history and the selective memory are not solely imposed retrospectively. Contemporary event registration always serves as the baseline for the trace of experience left in history.

For Iceland this implies that the event-richness of the Middle Ages was matched by a historical density that contrasted with the unmarked reality of the later period. The continuous attention paid to past events made the present seem insignificant. The comparative historical density of the past also made the present seem not history at all. The reproduction of culture impeded the production of history. Inadvertently, Icelanders themselves contributed to the destructive course of developments. 'History' had become 'myth' and therefore beyond influence. What we are witnessing here, in fact, may be read as yet another instance of the inherent antipathy between history and systems of classification.[53]

The dictum that culture encompasses the existentially unique in the conceptually familiar[54] had a particular truth in Iceland. The strength of the conceptual scheme actually entailed a failure to register the uniqueness of contemporary existential conditions. In other words, while 'culture' is an organization of current situations in terms of the past[55], in Iceland the 'current situation' hardly registered because the 'terms of the past' were so vigorous. Having lost control of their own social reproduction, people were left without a proper historical appreciation of their main cultural categories. The unreflexive mastery of the traditional cultural system made the Icelandic habitus the basis for an intentionless invention of regulated improvisation quite out of time.[56]

The strengt of the traditional language entrapped Icelanders in a state of refracted vision. Their world view was focused on another time, another history. Their culture became increasingly eccentric because of their uchronic vision, and this cultural eccentricity was instrumental in producing permanent crisis in Icelandic society. This particular way of thinking about history influenced its actual course; causation in history conflates the material and the conceptual, as does social experience.

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Notes

1 cf. Ardener 1982; 1989a; Hastrup 1987; 1989a
2 Hastrup 1985; 1990a; 1990b
3 cf. Whitrow 1975; Bloch 1977
4 cf. Friedman 1985
5 cf. Sahlins 1985: 52
6 Douglas 1975: 276
7 Connerton 1989
8 Boon 1982; Borofsky 1987
9 cf. Rabb 1982: 331
10 Leff 1969: 26
11 Bloch 1954: 191
12 p. 191
13 Evans-Pritchard 1964: 174
14 Sahlins 1985: 153
15 Lowenthal 1985: 125
16 Sahlins 1985: xxi
17 Evans-Pritchard 1964: 181
18 Foote and Wilson 1980
19 Hallberg 1974: 7
20 cf. Hastrup 1985
21 cf. Sahlins 1985: ix
22 Brandsson 1858 [1350]: 161
23 Einarsson 1971 [1589]: 124
24 Magnússon 1944b [1786]: 37
25 Einarsson 1971 [1589]: 126
26 Hastrup 1989b
27 Bjarnadóttir 1986
28 Lovsamling for Island 1853-9, vol. 1:34-5
29 Jónsbók 1904: 188 ff.
30 Alpingisbækur Íslands 1912-82, vol. 1: 432-4; vol. 5: 122
31 Lovsamling for Island 1853-9, vol. 1: 564-7
32 Magnússon 1944a: 55-6
33 Magnússon 1944b
34 Lovsamling for Island 1853-9, vol. 4: 278 ff.
35 Lovsamling for Island 1853-9, vol. 4: 426
36 Finnsson 1970 [1796]
37 Ström 1961: 200-4
38 Hastrup 1986
39 Weber 1981
40 Schier 1975
41 Ker 1923: 315
42 Wolf 1982
43 Pálsson 1962; Gíslason 1977
44 Burke 1978
45 Guttormsson 1983
46 Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983
47 cf. Boon 1982
48 Hastrup 1985
49 Sahlins 1985: xiv
50 Sahlins 1981
51 cf. Ardener 1989b
52 Ardener 1989b
53 Lévi-Strauss 1966: 232
54 Sahlins 1985: 146
55 p. 155
56 cf. Bourdieu 1977: 79; cf. Sahlins 1985: 51

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THE `LIFE CURVE' OF A FOREST SAAMI VILLAGE RECORDED MICROSCOPICALLY IN PEAT

Sheila Hicks

The 17th and 18th century forest Saami of Finnish Lapland lived in harmony with their environment[1]. They were primarily hunters who gathered together during the cold, dark winters to pool their resources and hunt the wild reindeer by forcing them to take routes along which they had prepared pitfall traps. During the winter, this time of joint hunting, many families lived together in the same village, but during the summer the families dispersed, each going to its own fishing grounds and moving on, maybe several times, during the season of light and warmth and greenness. Both summer and winter these Saami moved through the pine forest and, indeed, the pine was important in that its bark, freshly peeled in the spring, provided a valued source of food which, when dried and ground, was added to both meat and fish soup alike. The Saami winter village which forms the focus of this article is that of Einehlammet near the south-west corner of Lake Inari (Fig. 1).

As is the case with all hunting/gathering communities, the environment, while offering good, sometimes even luxurious opportunities, also imposed restrictions. At the same time the Saami groups, while maximizing the riches offered by their environment, also changed and modified it. This happened to varying degrees in different places. The whole, however, was a symbiosis which evolved through time at different speeds, so that what we see today, in the 20th century, is the end product of a long interplay between people and their environment.

By the 16 - 17th century the northern Lapland forests had reached their maximum carrying capacity as far as the hunter Saami were concerned. The area had long been divided into siita which defined the limits of specific Saami families. The Inari siita, for example, covered an area of 13 230 km^2 and we can deduce that it probably had a population of around 372. We know from 17th century tax records[2] that there were a minimum of 57 households, and we can estimate that a household consisted of 6 people on average, so that a minimum population figure would be 342. It has also been calculated that inhabitants at the northern forest limit require 32 km^2 per person to exist[3], which would put an upper limit of 413 on the Inari siita population. By the mid-19th century the wild reindeer had become extinct and the old basis of Saami

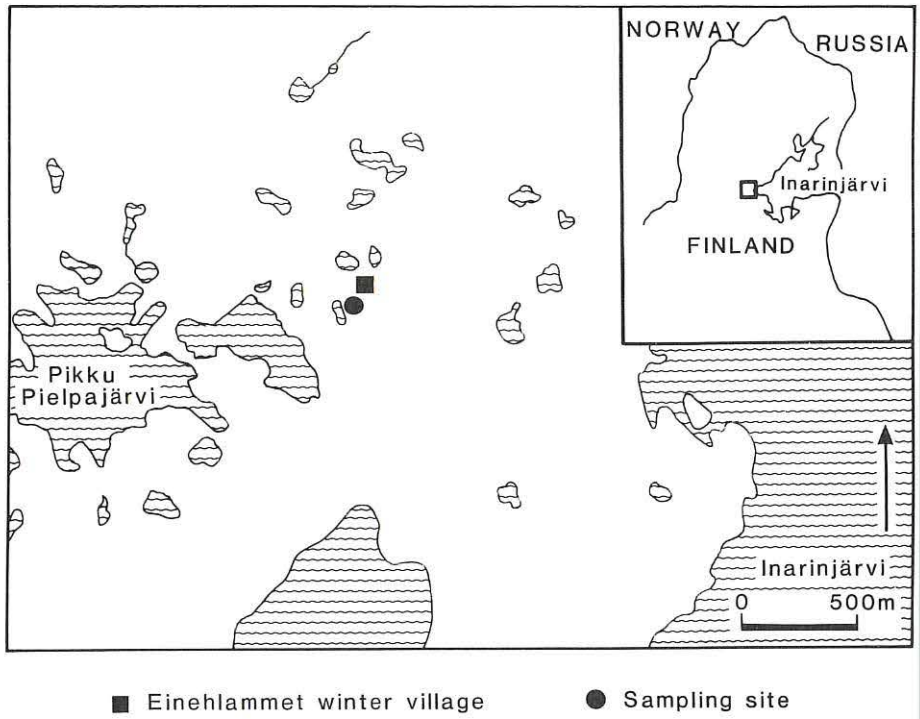


Fig. 1. Location of the Einehlamme winter village relative to Lake Inari

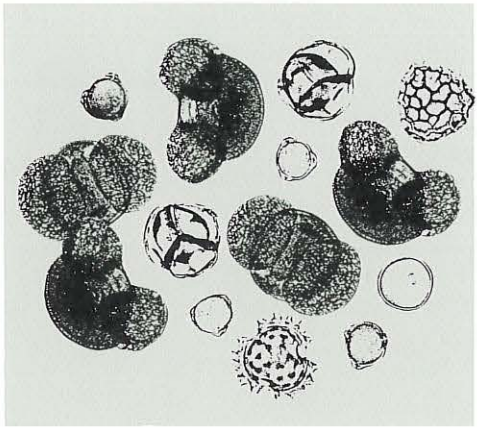


Fig. 2. Pollen of pine (the five largest grains with air bladders), birch (the four, small somewhat triangular grains), crow-berry (the two four-celled grains), grass (the one simple circular grain) and golden-rod (the one grain covered in spines) and a spore of clubmoss (a triangular spore with reticulate pattern).

life had collapsed. By this time, too, the clergy were actively encouraging these nomads to take on a more settled lifestyle and live permanently in one place, preferably close to the church. Once people changed to herding domestic reindeer or keeping cows and abandoned the hunting way of life, the population was able to increase.

We are used to turning to historical records, tales, sketches, even archaeological artifacts, to give us a clue as to what life was like in past ages, but we rarely realise that a detailed record is preserved for us in peat and lake sediments if only we know how to read it. This is the record provided by pollen, that substance which is invisible to the naked eye but whose presence all hay-fever sufferers are all to well aware of. All flowering plants produce pollen, often in very considerable quantity. This is then dispersed by the wind and, when it comes to land on a wet surface, is preserved almost indefinitely. A mire, which grows upwards year by year, therefore contains within its layers a detailed record of the plants which have grown round about it throughout the time of its existence. This can be thousands of years. When one adds to that the fact that many pollen grains are so distinctive in shape and decoration that they can be identified to the plant species from which they originated[4] (Fig. 2), the possibilities for reconstructing vegetation through time become evident.

The pollen record from Einehlammet, which will now be described, gives us a view of the village from its foundation at the end of the 17th century through to its abandonment at the end of the 18th century, together with the re-establishment of the forest which followed[5]. Because this was a winter village, however, the picture we see refers only to the winter part of the year (Fig. 3). We would have to go elsewhere to find records of the people-environment interplay which characterized the summer months. Figure 3 illustrates the yearly cycle of events for the forest Saami of this time starting with the collecting of birds' eggs in the spring and the peeling of pine bark as soon as the sap began to rise, accompanied by fishing and, by the end of the summer, berry gathering. The winter dwelling was a turf kota which, once constructed, could be re-inhabited year after year. Such a kota was built with a framework of pine and was covered with turves cut from the forest floor. The base of the kota was very firm, being composed of a hexagonal framework of pine trunks against the outside of which soil was

banked up. This soil was dug from the immediate surroundings and so a shallow trench encircled the whole construction. In the centre of the kota was a platform of stones which formed the base of the hearth. Nowadays the discerning eye of the trained archaeologist can pick out the remains of the stone hearth and the surrounding hexagonal trench-plus-soil bank as marking the site of a long-destroyed turf kota. There are at least 10 such kota bases in the forest at Einehlammet.

Knowing something of what winter-village life for the forest Saami was like, it is possible to predict the way in which they must have modified the forest around their village and how we can expect this modification to show up in the pollen record[6]. This is illustrated in Fig. 4, where four aspects are considered: housing, fuel, food and other functions of everyday life. The impact of these different aspects varied. The building of the kota in the first instance must have made a big impact, as trees were felled, turves cut and trenches dug, but since this happened only once in the life of the village the long-term impact was not so great. Since the wood for the building was dead standing timber, its removal will not have affected the amount of pine pollen being produced, so we can expect to see the building event more in terms of an abundant flowering of the plants of the forest floor (the dwarf shrubs) as the forest is thinned and they receive more light. Since the digging of trenches and the cutting of turves will have opened up the soil cover to erosion by both wind and water, an increased amount of mineral material might be expected at this time horizon in nearby mires and lakes. The activity which must have had the biggest impact in terms of both the area around the village and the continuation through time was the collection of fuel. Again dead standing pine was preferred so its removal will not have affected the amount of pine pollen, but the forest would have become much more open. As the fuel was used, though, small charcoal particles will have been produced which, being light, will have been dispersed to accumulate in the mire in the same way as pollen. More abundant and bigger pieces of charcoal can be expected if a whole kota accidentally burnt down. Following such an event we can expect the spread of willow-herb, or fire-weed as it is so aptly called in America.

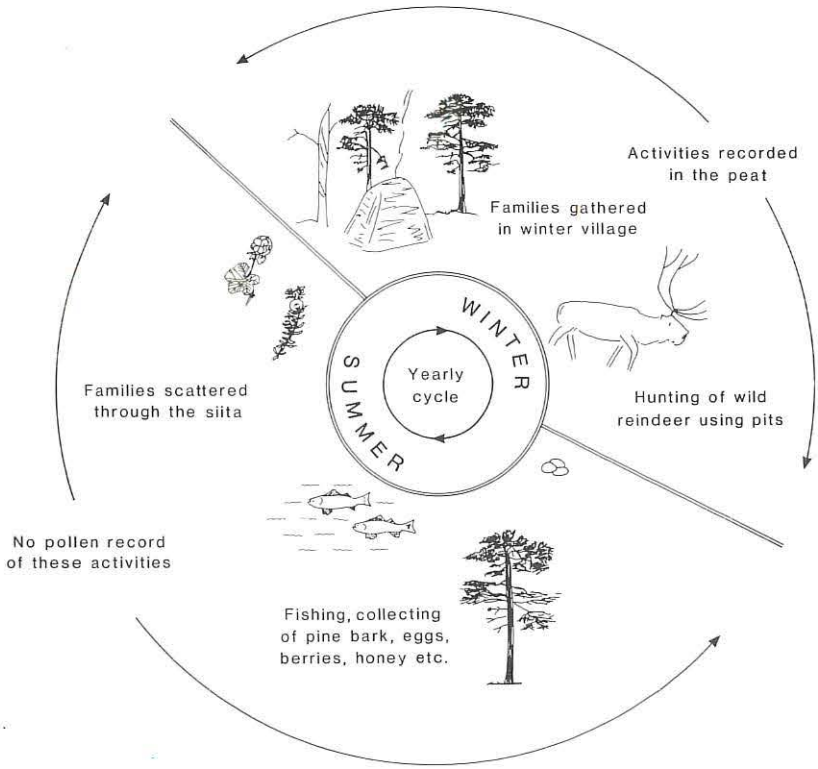
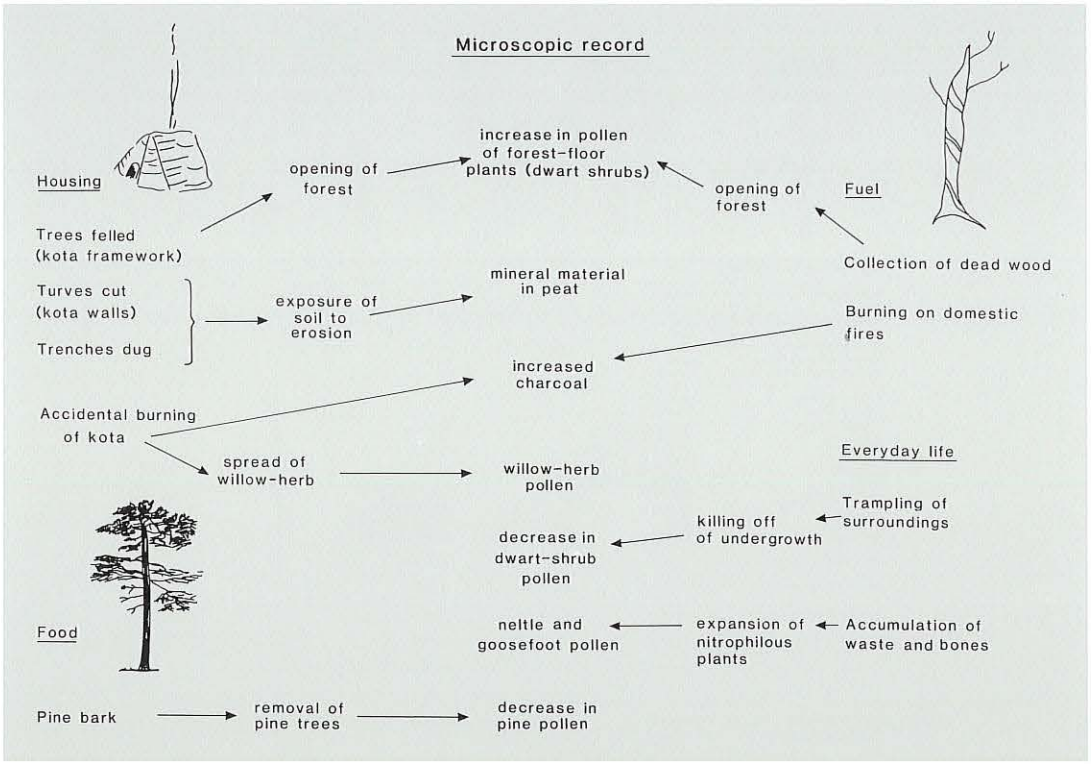


Fig. 3. Saami activities through the year.



ig. 4. The relationship between he activities of winter life and he pollen record.

The collecting of pine bark for food will have killed off the trees and this certainly would be seen in a decrease in pine pollen. However, this activity was not one primarily associated with the winter village. Pine bark is best taken in the spring when the sap is rising, and its collection at the winter site would have been resorted to only if supplies ran short, so the impact would not be so great. The other everyday activities which will have caused the greatest changes in the surroundings of the village include trampling, and the accumulation of waste and bones. As a result of trampling, the now richly flowering dwarf-shrub undergrowth will gradually have been destroyed. The accumulation of waste and bones, on the other hand, will have enabled those plants requiring a higher nitrogen content in the soil, such as nettles and goosefoot, to become established. Generally, too, we can expect that a variety of grasses and herbs would be found in the open trampled area around the kota, so that the pollen of a whole range of 'new' plants can be expected to appear in connection with the settlement phase.

Indeed this is exactly what we see in

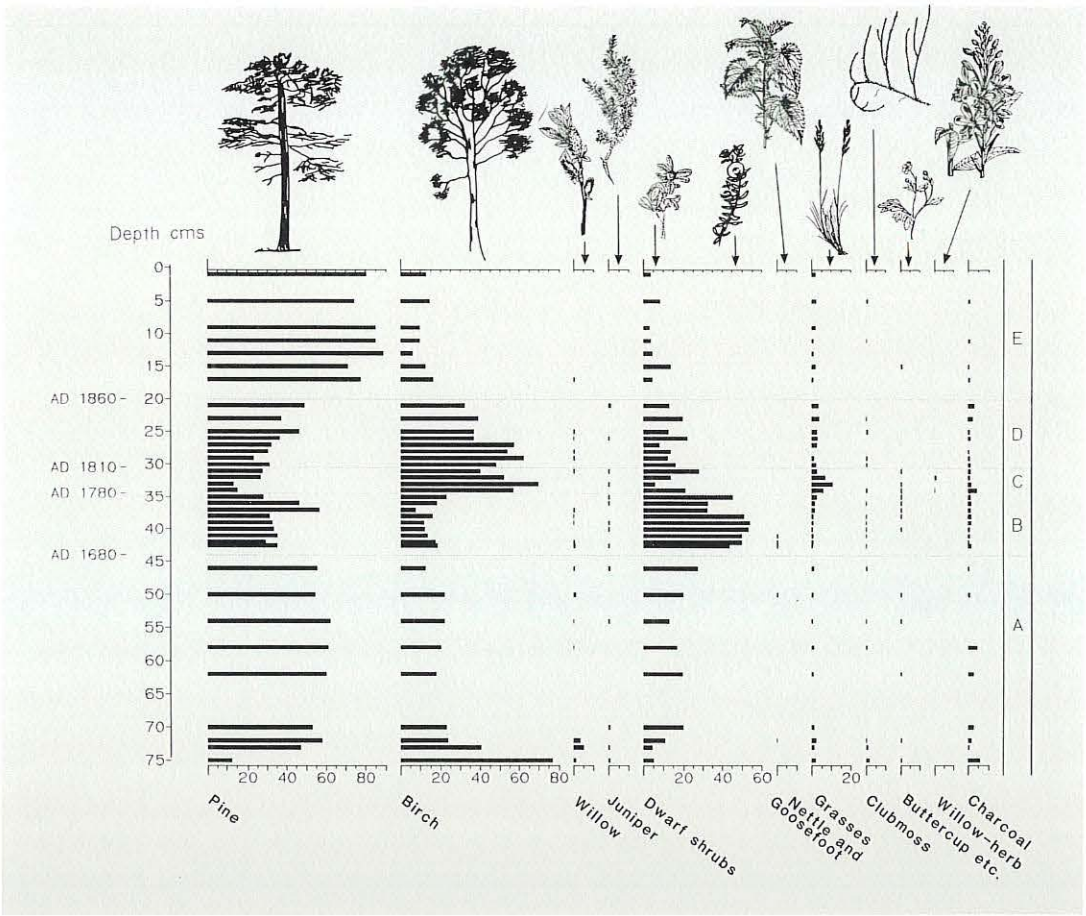


Fig. 5. Simplified pollen diagram from Einehlammet. The 'life-curve' of the Saami winter village.

the pollen record. A pollen diagram from a mire just 50 m away from the winter village is shown in Fig. 5. The vertical axis represents the time scale and some significant horizons have been dated. Note that this has to be read from the bottom upwards - the same direction in which the peat of the mire has accumulated. The curves show the variations in the percentage presence of selected pollen types through time. Together they give us the 'life-curve' of the winter village. This 'life-curve' can be divided into five phases which are marked by the letters A - E at the right hand side. What we see is the following:

Phase A is the forest situation before the village was built.

Phase B is the time of occupation of the village: pine pollen decreases somewhat and dwarf-shrub pollen increases, grasses and other herbs become more frequent and charcoal quantities increase.

Phase C is the point at which the village is abandoned because the surrounding area can no longer support it. Some kota are perhaps burnt, the amount of charcoal increases and willow-herb pollen appears. Grasses grow up quickly in the light, open conditions of the abandoned village, and birches spread to colonize the unforested area and soon begin flowering.

Phase D represents the time when the forest is re-establishing itself. Pine pollen values rise and birch values fall as the pine replaces the birch in the natural forest succession. The amount of dwarf-shrub and grass pollen also decreases as the forest canopy shades the forest floor.

Phase E brings us close to the present day, with the pine forest completely re-established and the damage to the forest caused by the winter village healed up.

Such is the 'life-curve' of the village as recorded mircoscopically in the peat. Once the fuel resources within a certain radius were exhausted, and here we are thinking in terms of a population of 60 to 85 people and a period of 80-100 years, the village was abandoned. These same people had had other winter villages in other parts of the siita prior to coming to Einehlammet[7], and in these areas we can expect to find similar 'life-curves' but dated to an earlier period. Although the pollen evidence as shown here is dramatically clear, it is only recorded in the immediate vicinity of the village, and would not be visible at a distance of 1 km. Similarly the damage to the forest caused by these activities, although locally great, affects only a tiny fraction of the total forest area.

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GUT CLOAK AND SEALSKIN MITRE, STRANGERS IN RUSSIAN AMERICA

Pirjo Varjola

Among the Foreign Ethnographic Collections of the National Museum of Finland there are around 1000 items from Alaska. The majority of these represent the several Eskimo peoples and the Aleut, while a smaller number originate from the Northwest Coast and Athapascan Indians. Most of the objects were brought to the Museum some 150 years ago by Finns who visited Alaska or worked for the Tsar's Navy or the Russian company that had monopoly on the fur trade before the huge area was sold to the United States in 1867. For part of the period, that is, from 1809 right up to independence in 1917, Finland belonged to the Russian Empire as an autonomous Grand Duchy. During the first half of the 19th century many enterprising Finns sought employment in Russian America in official and military capacities, and as craftsmen employed by the Russian-American Company. For a brief period around the middle of the century ships of the Russian-Finnish Whaling Company were also to be seen on the Sea of Okhotsk, from where they called at ports on the eastern coast of the Bering Sea.

The Russian Empire began its Siberian conquest in the 16th century. By the end of the 17th century the town of Okhotsk had been founded. In the early 1800s Peter the Great sent his fleet to explore the ocean and lands east of the Empire, but the discovery of Alaska is officially recorded as having taken place in 1741, when Vitus Bering, a Dane serving with the Imperial Russian Navy landed on Kayak Island. Earlier observations of the American continent had been made by Russians sailing from across the Bering Strait. People living in sod huts but rich with furs were mentioned in the Siberian tax collectors' reports as early as 1711 (Ray 1975) The as yet unexploited wealth of the Great Land, with its unknown possibilities, and an area still owned by no one, beckoned to Europeans.

Individual *promyshlenniki* (hunters) and private companies hunted for furs on the Aleutian Islands and the Alaska Peninsula for decades and the number of fur-bearing animals, particularly the sea otter, had already started to decline on the Aleutian Islands when Tsar Paul I decided to procure a part of the profit for shareholders within his family and the court. To this end, he issued a decree granting the Russian-American Company a state monopoly on the Alaskan fur trade in 1799. The trading posts and bases established around the area signaled to the international community that Alaska was a part of the Russian Empire. The Company represented the Imperial government in Alaska, and Novoarchangelsk (Sitka), its capital since 1805, was the Alaskan equivalent of St. Petersburg. The Governor or Chief Manager of the Company, was the highest official of the dependency, and resided in Sitka whenever he was not on his inspection tours on the vast area. Among the 14 chief managers of the Russian-American Company there were two Finns, Adolf Etholén (1840-45) and Hampus Furuhjelm (1858-63).

The Russians, not to mention the Finns, were not the first people to arrive in Alaska. Others had come long before them. The forefathers of the Athapascan Indians are thought to have arrived from the Asian continent some 40 000 years ago, and those of the Aleut and Eskimo groups came among the last migrative waves about 15 000 to 10 000 years B.C. When the first Europeans arrived in the 18th century, they encountered people who had lived in established cultures for thousands of years. The people of Alaska were dominantly mari-

Cape, thin and wide strips of membrane. Aleut, Pribilof Islands.

time or inland hunters, whalers or fishermen, depending on the particular environment they had chosen for their abode. In the Great Land, as elsewhere in the world, each people regarded themselves as the "real people" and their neighbors as either inferior or dangerous to them, but above all as rivals in the struggle for existence. The traditional hostility between neighbors, in Alaska particularly between the Eskimos and the Indians but also between closer groups, gave rise to warfare and plundering. There was, however, also a tradition of peaceful contacts. Commodities, food and clothing as well as luxury items such as furs and jewellery passed from one group to another by means of intertribal trade carried on up and down the coast as well as on established trading spots at certain times of the year. Necessities such as walrus thong and seal oil were traded by coastal tribes for caribou skins and wooden vessels carved by inland peoples. Inviting-in festivals and a network of gift-giving were organized in order to support amicable relations between tribes. Cultural influences were passed on with these contacts but possibly also with slaves taken from other tribes.

In addition to the early 19th century charting missions dispatched by the Imperial Navy and the expeditions sent out by the Russian-American Company to study the prospects for trade, there were others active in the area, too. Among the Russian expeditions were those of Otto von Kotzebue north of the Bering Strait in 1815-1818, Pjotr Korsakovski to north of Bristol Bay in 1818-1819, Mikhail Vasiliev and Gleb Shismarev in 1819-1822, Vasilii Khromchenko and Adolf Etholén in 1821, and Lavrentii Zagoskin to the Yukon River area in 1842-44. The most famous of the non-Russian expeditions to the Northwest Coast, the Aleutian Chain and the access to the Bering Sea and further to the Arctic Ocean, were led by Britons. James Cook's third voyage to the Pacific Ocean brough him to Nootka Sound, Cook's Inlet and the Aleutian Islands in 1776-80, George Vancouver charted south Alaska in 1790-95, and members of Frederic W. Beechey reached Point Barrow on the Arctic

Ocean in 1826. Trading between visitors and natives was the rule. It should be safe to assume that all contacts influenced the natives of the coastal areas in one way or another, and in the most concrete way by objects bartered.

Some of the novelties introduced by the Europeans were eagerly accepted and adapted to the local tastes and usages. Such were particularly the use of iron in the form of kettles, knives and needles as well as the drinking of tea and the smoking of tobacco. It is assumed that the level of handicrafts rose with the introduction of sharp knives and needles, commercial yarn, imported Chinese vermilion and later chemical dyes. Some new items and ideas were accepted because there was little choice. In the name of progress and civilization, the Russians ordered the Aleut and Koniag to abandon their large dugout dwellings and to build "normal" houses with doors and windows above the ground in the early 19th century. These houses were clearly inferior to the draftless turf dwellings the natives had developed for their protection in the windy and rainy environment. In 1841 Chief Manager Etholén consolidated numerous dispersed Koniag Eskimo communities into a few large villages. This violent change was not intended to destroy the way of life of the people but to make them easier to control and to bring them closer to the fold of the Orthodox Church. Nevertheless, it eventually affected the culture of the Koniag irreparably. Organized hunting compounded the effect. As the fur company sent the fleets of able-bodied Aleuts and Koniags to distant hunting grounds for months on end, it fell to the women and the elderly to provide for the families remaining in the villages. Consequently, there was no time for the women to produce the traditional, time consuming handicrafts and ornamented clothing.

The Russian-American Company expected all valuable furs such as sea otter and fox to be handed over to the company. No longer could the natives use them for their own clothing. Instead, the Company offered simple garments as part of the salaries. As a sign of progress, civilization and the Christian faith, people - as elsewhere - began to wear European style clothes, which were not as adequate as the traditional garments in the wet climate. Some of the early travellers in Alaska were highly appreciative of the native clothing, but could not stop the trend. Bishop Innocent (Ivan Veniaminov) preferred to wear an Aleut parka or kamleika for kayak journeys. He wrote in 1840: "The parka for Aleuts in the local climate is an indispensable article. On the road it constitutes their bed and blanket and, one might say, home. With it they are not afraid either of wind or cold...Another and just as necessary Aleut garment is the kamleika, also a kind of long shirt... Nothing can replace kamleikas in the terms of comfort or (serving) the purpose for which they were invented." No matter how practical the native garments were, the process was to replace them with cloth garments. "Shirts were wholly unknown to the Aleuts in former times but now they have come to common use. However, not everybody has the means to own them. Prosperous Aleuts even wear waistcoats, trousers (of which previously they had no conception), and neckties. Wives and daughters of such men, on holidays, wear fashionable Russian dresses and shawls (which, because of their clumsy gait and stooped posture, sometimes appear rather comical)." (Veniaminov, 1984,266-268.) European dress was common in South Alaska by the

second half of the 19th century.

Before the final exit of the traditional Alaskan dress, details of European fashions were accepted to glamour the inherited styles. In the early years of Russian and Siberian presence the attire of the individual hunters who came to Alaska may not have influenced the clothing of the natives to any noticeable degree . Probably these rough men wore Siberian or Alaskan native clothing in order to survive in circumstances where even the most basic comforts were lacking. The wind and the water hit the newcomers with the same force with which they hit the natives. When larger numbers of Russians settled in established forts and bases, they had wooden houses to live in and native women to do their sewing and their laundry. Passing visitors came on their big ships. They wore their European attire, and the curious natives had an opportunity to make observations, to pick up ideas and to barter for tools and materials.

Woven cloth material was new to the native Alaskans, basketwork applied to grasses and roots being originally the only weaving technique. They knew how to sew warm parkas and waterproof clothing from materials available in their own environment: furbearing mammal, bird and fish skins as well as intestines. They ornamented their garments with delicate leather applique, hair and sinew embroidery sewn with a bird bone needle, and painted decorations applied with local mineral and oil dyes. Their dresses were dotted with shell beads and hung with bird beaks, caribou calf hoofs and tassels of many kinds. Originally these tassels were made of bird feathers, human hair and strips of leather or fur, but after the Europeans had introduced woven wool or cotton, which could easily be unraveled, the Alaskan seamstresses eagerly took the beautiful red broadcloth apart in order to apply it in the traditional way. Only gradually did the Alaskan women and girls agree to use the material as such for collars and hems and similar limited areas. One reason for applying trade cloth in narrow strips may have been the habit of using bright colors merely to highlight, not to dominate the items; another, and the more likely reason was that the commodity was scarce and could only be obtained through trading.

Fashionable novelties were applied not only to the traditional clothing worn everyday for kayaking and other work but also to ceremonial wear. New styles were frequently combined with traditional Alaskan materials and always modified with Alaskan esthetic taste. Certain items of European pieces of clothing and objects such as bags and boxes were imitated as were complete designs and patterns wherever something new and pleasing was noticed. Consequently, many delightful woven patterns in Aleutian basketwork and some painted designs on hats and other objects are not ancient and genuinely Aleutian but can be traced down to imported items such as wallpapers, chocolate boxes and commercial cross-stitch books (Hudson 1987, 76, 91-92.) Alaskan women have been no less innovative than any alert women with sewing or knitting as a hobby today.

Bentwood hats, also called hunting hats, were owned by Aleut men of standing. They were made from driftwood and decorated with painted designs, walrus ivory carvings and sea lion whiskers strung with Chinese glass beads. The hats were symbols of status and often worth one to three slaves (Veniaminov 1984, 269). One of the National Museum Aleut bentwood hats, brought home by the Rev. Uno Cygnaeus, has very interesting painted de-

signs that do not resemble anything else in its traditional background but, on the contrary are reminiscent of the embroidered wave, rock and cloud designs sewn at the hem of Chinese silk robes. It would not have been impossible to see these silk robes in Sitka during the Russian period, as traffic was frequent between Alaska and China. Company furs were shipped to Canton and tea was brought back to Russia in exchange. The Aleut themselves did not go to China unless they worked on the Russian ships, which was possible in theory. It is more likely, however, that an Aleut craftsman saw the embroidered garment in Alaska. Lars Krogius, one of the Finnish sea captains in the service of the Russian-American Company, brought one of these robes home as a souvenir. An Aleut employee could have taken the pattern from the majestic robe being displayed for friends and visitors to admire.

The gut anoraks or *kamleikas, mentioned earlier,* were among the most important garments of the Alaskans, and also the most persistant item of the native clothing, being worn at least up to the 1930s. They were essential in the kayak. Being waterproof, they kept the warmer fur or feather *parka* underneath dry. Gut garments were sewn from the intestines of sea mammals, usually of the various seal species. On festive occasions, a dancer's kamleika was often worn over the bare body. The kamleika was also the garment of the shaman and the spirits, and was worn when making contact with the spirit world (Hickman, 1987, 9-10). Besides the practical gut anoraks there were other types of gut garments in Alaska, with a less obvious practical explanation. One of them is the gut cap, which it is very tempting to regard as the Aleutian version of a Russian sailor's cap. The other is the wonderful cloak.

Wide capes or cloaks with or without a shoulder cape and a high collar were popular overgarments in Europe in the 18th and early 19th centuries, before the arrival of the buttoned long overcoat. The garment was practical for travelling and for bad weather, it was a part of the civil servant's as well as the officer's garb. One of the most obvious European novelties in Alaska is the handsome high-collared Aleut capes sewn from sea mammal intestines. The captains of ships visiting Alaska were keen to gain the light and pleasant waterproof kamleikas for their crews instead of the heavy oilcloth normally worn. It is not quite clear whether the several gut capes found in museum collections were originally sewn for and sold to European sea captains or whether they were sewn for Aleut aristocrats to show off. The capes would have worked well as rain wear for someone standing up, but not at all for a native man going hunting. He would be sitting down in his kayak, and would require a fitting garment with hood and sleeves in order to keep dry and to be able to throw a spear. An Aleut would not wear a cape for ceremonial use either, particularly if he intended to take part in the dancing, as Eskimo and Aleut dancing require free movement of arms. The gut capes in the National Museum collection are, on the whole, in perfect condition, suggesting that they were sewn at the request of the collectors either as grand souvenirs or as raincoats, which were then worn very little.

European fashions can be spotted in other native accessories in addition to those mentioned above. Hats, originally worn by the Aleut for ceremonies only, became more common with the European presence. As Ivan Veniaminow again writes of the Unalaska Aleuts in 1840,

"Sealskin mitre", decorated back and front with painted panels, appliqué and fringe. Unalaska (?) Aleut.

"Formerly, Aleuts knew no hats or caps at all, and in general, both sexes did not cover their heads or tie them up. Consequently when the Aleuts saw the first Russians, who covered their heads, they called them, before (knowing) any other name, saligungin, that is, the ones having caps or hats..." (Veniaminov 1984,267.) The high, tilting Aleut headgear sewn of seal and cormorant skin bears some resemblance to hats we know from another connection, namely the mitre of a bishop or the helmet of an infantryman or a grenadier with metal panels back and front. The Alaskan equivalent, "sealskin mitre" (ritual hat) is decorated back and front with painted panels and further embellished with appliqué, embroidery and a fringe. The Russian Orthodox Church had been present in Alaska since 1794. Ivan Veniaminov who arrived Unalaska Island in 1823 was appointed Bishop of Alaska in 1840 (later Archbishop of Siberia and the Metropolitan of Russia). He went on annual visits to the scattered parts of his huge parish. Thus, even the humblest of natives could meet, and be impresed and influenced by, the bishop in his grand attire. On the other hand, the high hat may have a more genuine Alaskan background. The dancer drawn in the margin of Petr Bashmakov and Andrea Tolstykh's map dating from 1752-62 (see for example Black 1982, previous to introduction), wears a high crowned hat here called a mitre, and the information following one of the National Museum Aleut "mitres" states that it is a *toyon's*

(family or village elder's) headgear and made in an ancient form.

The handsome peaked caps of the Koniag Eskimos, the closest neighbor of the Aleuts, clearly imitate 19th century officers´ caps. The sealskin caps painted graphite black and trimmed with seal fur, human hair and wool yarn, plaiting and appliqué work, were hardly worn by any of the Europeans of Alaska but very likely by a proud native. In Europe, the peaked caps date back at least to the Napoleonic wars in the early 19th century. Wearing one on a visit to Finland at about that time, Tsar Alexander I gave rise to a fashion permeated down to the most modest rural village in Finland. The same hat was victorious in Alaska. In 1850-51 geologist H.J. Holmberg (1855, 88) observed that almost all of the men on Kodiak Island had begun to wear peaked caps, the traditional conical hats woven of spruce root being reserved for kayak journeys only. Ivan Veniaminov noted that by 1840 in Unalaska "all men commonly wear visored caps (*furazhki*) made of cloth or (hair) seal skin, the visors sometimes fashioned of baleen and quite skillfully." (p. 268) The European hats most frequently seen by Alaskans apart from the visor cap must have been the round Russian sailor's cap. They were not imitated too faithfully but developed into a wonderfully translucent halo sewn of gut. The very top of the cap was decorated with the finest of basketwork woven with sinew, white caribou hair and unraveled yarns in many colors, sometimes also with soft down inserted in the almost invisible seams.

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Cut cap with seams decorated alternately with mambrane pipim and woolen friging. Aleut, Pribilof Islands.

Aleut bentwood hat.

Sealskin cap, trimmed with seal fur, hairs and yarn. Koniag, Kodiak Island.

NORTHERN IDENTITY AND RELIGION

Juha Pentikäinen

Introduction: Northern Society

> *Lapland offers the philosopher an opportunity to live with nomadic tribes and to study the most elementary forms of social life, society in its oldest and most embryonic form.*[1]

Giuseppe Acerbi's words provide an important lead in the search for an explanation as to why foreign explorers have always been so intrigued by Lapland. The Saami people have interested southerners because the journey North has also meant a journey into the self: in order to discover the self, it was thought, one needs to go to places where living conditions are harsh and ways of life primitive. Hugh Brody says that the best way to find out what we are is to go to places that we believe are at the edge of the world. Faced with communities that call into question our everyday assumptions and prejudices, we can appreciate the importance of other people and discover the truth about ourselves.[2]

Excepting the Indians there is no other people in the world that has attracted the same sort of research interest as the Saami people. The interest shown by Nordic and Soviet/Russian scholars is understandable: after all the Saami region extends across the territories of the four Northern European countries. Recently, however, the outside world has been turning its attention away from the exotic and voicing growing concern about the ecology of the North and the future of its languages and cultures.

All languages of the North are small. While there are some 70,000 people who regard themselves as Saami, only about half of them speak a Saami language, of which there are nine or ten. So who are the Sami people?

The Northern society is built around a larger unit than the nuclear family, i.e. an extended family or clan. *Siita* is an ancient family institution committed to looking after its members, and it was long the basis for the Saami system of self-government. In Finland the system was superseded by the modern institution of reindeer owners' associations, but its principles still survive in the Skolt meeting or *sijdsobbar* as revived by the Skolt law. The values of the Northern society are therefore essentially values of the clan and the extended family: good fortunes in hunting, fishing and in reindeer management. The clan's and family's fortunes was of course a limited quantity and people would like to compare theirs with the fortunes of other clans and families. Weddings were particularly sensitive occasions as far as fortunes were concerned. Therefore the encounter and joining together through marriage of two rival communities was often entrusted to the shamans of the families concerned.

The 'home' of the Man of the North was not a building but an area he knew. In other words, home was defined according to the territory that the clan or family marked out each year, including their networks of pitfalls, dams, their traditional hunting and fishing grounds, mushroom and berry grounds. Ownership consisted in the right of use of the scarce natural resources and was symbolized by standing poles at the end of which families stored their food and clothes beyond the reach of wild animals. In this regard the concept of 'wilderness' does not belong to the vocabulary of the Man of the North, but it has been imported from the south.

Polar people worshiping their idols.Olaus Magnus, Pohjoisten kansojen historia (The History of the Northern Peoples), 1555

Since the people of the North regard the natural environment as their 'home', they also show an exceptional ethical attitude towards nature. The key word is balance, harmony, which means using renewable natural resources in moderation so that there is enough to go round all year - and the next year. The way of life is geared at preservation, not at conquest. The tundra, the fells, the forest and wetlands, the river, lake and rocks, they all belong to the sprites; they represent continuity, stability. Man is merely a visitor who should ask the sprites or earth spirits for permission to lie down and rest for the night. Otherwise his sleep will be restless and troubled by nightmares.

'Big' Traditions and 'Small': Encounters in the North

Religion, in its Western sense, has tended to emphasize the meaning of 'bond' that comes from the Latin word: *cuius regio eius religio*. This sort of commitment and close membership was alien to the Northern world-view until

it was incorporated by Christianity. To my mind a more appropriate term for the North is that of philosophy of life. This, according to Marja Nylund-Oja, refers to a structured entity: to the way in which the human individual lives, feels, experiences, thinks about himself, his place in the world in relation to time, space and other people.[3]

Since the early history of missionary work in the Middle Ages, 'religion' in the Saami regions has been Christianity; while the old, pre-Christian faith has been 'paganism'. So when a Saami person uses the word religion, he is referring to Christianity; in the west to the mainstream, Evangelical-Lutheran Church, in the east to the Orthodox Church. Official religion, for the Saami people, has been the same thing as the Christian message they have heard in churches and at parish meetings, spoken in each country's predominant language and usually translated by an interpreter into the Saami language. Another reason why official religion has remained distant to the Saami people is that it is so closely interwoven with the predominant language: even today Saami people prefer to have a native translator interpret the sermons of Finnish or Swedish priests, even when they know Saami, because this will also give them their familiar Saami figures of speech and religion. So the 'sacred' language of official religion has remained alien, while the language of the old popular religion is what the people themselves speak.

It follows that a distinction has to be made between official religion and 'popular' or 'ethnic' religion',[4] the latter representing an unrecorded, uncanonized tradition handed down in one's own language from generation to generation through various genres of oral and, more recently, written folklore. Part of that tradition has remained hidden in the back of people's minds, without ordinary people or even their cleverest shamans or singers wanting to put them into words. This sort of religiosity has been an indistinguishable part of the human mind: a way of living, experiencing, feeling a Saami existence both as an individual human being and as a society, close to nature in what to outsiders often appear as isolated small communities. All this has existed in the human mind without it being recognized as (or at least called) a religion.

World-view,[5] the cognitive map of the human mind, is a broad concept. Its accent is on the unconscious and conscious sphere of life, on the consciousness that holds together a people or ethnic group. It serves as a mirror of the soul of the human individual, his community, perhaps his people. Ethnic religion is fraught with myths but it is less dogmatically structured than Christianity, which swept the map of the heathen country through its missions. Its hard core was condensed into one short creed when the missionaries set out to convert the Saami people. The only requirement for baptism was to know it by heart: the structures of the human mind in the Saami peripheries remained pre-Christian for a long time, even though officially the religion had changed.

Rituals and customs are the most visible component of ethnic religions. They afford the individual and the community much greater latitude than do missionary religions which are more canonizing in their views on the hereafter. This does not mean to say that ethnic religions have no ethics. Family life, for instance, has been regulated by defining

such acts as incest as a crime against the values that guaranteed safety and continuity in the community. Similarly, there are specific punishments for violations against the nature relationship which, like rewards, have typically resided, for ethnic religions, in this existence rather than in the hereafter. What has been at stake is the happiness, the good luck, the success and welfare of the human individual and the community.

One particularly interesting problem for research concerns the co-existence of missionary religions (in our case Christianity), its various regional movements and ethnic religion. Applying Robert Redfield's research model of small and big tradition,[6] Kaisa Sinikara has studied the encounter between the old Northern religion and the Laestadian revivalist movement and the symbiotic relationship that grew up between them in Tornionlaakso. Where the Church represented a big tradition, the revivalist movement served as an intermediary element. Eventually preachers, wise men, prophets, and earth spirits all coexisted in perfect harmony in the minds of the people who lived along the border in Northern Finland; and no real difference was made between what was old folklore and what was Christianity.

The boundaries between ethnic religions closely follow the boundaries between languages, cultures, administrations. For a full millennium the Saami people have not had a language accessible to all of them; nor has there been a single Saami culture or a single ethnic religion but several ethnic religions. It is a fascinating challenge for the cultural historian to explore these differences, but equally to look at the circumpolar similarities. The problems are made up of several closely related issues. One interesting question from both a historical and a present-day angle concerns the connections between national, ethnic and religious movements as well as the parallelism of these phenomena in Northern cultures.

The Signs of Religion and their Interpretation

'Ethnic' is a more appropriate term than 'primitive' religion to describe the old religious traditions of indigenous peoples, the various customs and habits that go to make up their 'religion'. Whereas missionary religions (most notably Christianity, Islam and Buddhism) are founded, the boundaries of ethnic religions tend to follow ecological, cultural and language boundaries. It is interesting to note that it was only at the turn of the 19th and 20th century when the disciplines of ethnography and ethnology began to establish themselves that the word 'ethnos' took on its meaning of people or population group; up until then the word implied otherness and inferiority in a group whose member 'ethnikos' was a pagan.

In the intellectual landscape of Northern Man, religion is defined somewhat differently than in the Western or Christian world-view. It is an integral part of the environment, economy, way of life. It is a matter of philosophy of life, albeit one that is less interested in dogmas than the missionary religions that have moved into the area. In the world of beliefs, mythology goes together with practice. Rituals are traditional ways of coping in areas where living conditions are harsh.

More important than the concept of 'religion' is that of 'sacred'. Sacred places constitute a network which reflect the wor-

ship of the clan, tribe, family, individual. In Utsjoki, for instance, the three Ailigas fells (Ailigas is derived from the Swedish word helig, sacred) together cover such a large area that the hunter, fisherman or reindeer herdsman could always feel he was within the sphere of influence of at least one of them. Christian churches and their high towers sought to take over the Ailigas tradition.

The conquest of the North has involved the drawing of the southerner's map in areas that used to be white spots: terra hyperborea incognita was thought to lie at the end of the world, like the sun of the polar night. The cognitive map of Northern Man was based upon traditional (both geographical and mythical) knowledge about the universe, heaven, human life, afterlife.

Traditionally, the dividing lines between natural and supernatural, between humankind and animal kingdom, between life and death have been drawn somewhat differently in the everyday reality of the Northern Man than in the world-view of Western Man. Dreams carried equal weight as evidence as did seeing it 'live'. Nature was divided into territories of belief creatures, the presence of which is proven by personal experiences of friends and acquaintances. Many Northern people talk about their mythical origins, which include their ancestral mother's or father's relationship with a totem animal. The line between life and death is less abrupt and dramatic; it is far more fluid. It was believed that at least the shaman could cross the border, for he was thought to possess the ability to transform into different shapes and to transform people into animals.

The Arctic world-view is cyclical, not linear as in Christianity. The creation in its entirety, including Man, stands on the circumference. Cosmos, from heaven to earth, is constantly moving in yearly, monthly, daily rhythms, through human lives. Coping in the harsh conditions of the North requires attentive monitoring of the natural environment. The complex symbolism of rituals reflects a deep knowledge and understanding of nature and its patterns of change.

The Saami people have eight seasons, as Ernst Manker has shown in his book "The People of the Eight Seasons.[7] The calender of the Hanti has four seasons, with the beginning and end of each being determined by the annual migrations of people and reindeer in November to their winter village deep in the forests; in March to the places where the snow begins to melt; in June down to the lakeside; in August to the village of early autumn where there are cloudberries and mushrooms and in late September to the village of late autumn where there are lingonberries and cranberries. When the nomadic village breaks camp, the gods and the drums are packed in the sledge that comes first in the file of reindeer.

Knowledge of the movements of the sun, the moon and other celestial bodies is an important part of the Northern way of life. Important jobs should be done when the moon is waxing because everything that is created at that time will be lasting and beautiful. The period between new moon and full moon, and especially the days when the moon is in its nest, is a time of spirits. This was the period when most shamanic rituals were performed that were important for ensuring good fortune for the clan and its people.

The world is thought to be structured in three layers: the upper world, this world, and the lower world. The structure of nature,

macrocosmos, is in principle the same as that of the microcosmos of the Lapp hut or the human body.

Travels between the layers of the universe are possible for every man and every woman in dreams or in religious experiences: an important ability of the shaman falling into a trance is to be able to make such trips on behalf of other people in shamanistic rituals.

Shamanhood as the Grammar of Mind and Body

What is shamanhood? The concept is new, but I would insist it is necessary in order to make a distinction with the more familiar term of shamanism.

The word 'shamanism' was introduced into western languages in the 17th century by Protopop Avvakum. This persecuted leader of the Old Believers had the opportunity to observe among the Tungusic people of Siberia rituals led by their religious leaders, who were known by the special name of shaman. Since Avvakum's report from his travels, the phenomenon became known in the international literature as shamanism. Once adopted, the concept seems to have become more and more popular; so much so that it is now difficult exactly to define the limits of the uses and meanings of the word.

Having myself engaged in fieldwork among people whose vocabulary includes the concept of shaman, I feel that many of the contemporary uses of the word have strayed too far from its original meanings in the respective cultures. For this reason it is necessary to make a distinction between (1) cultures with the native concept of shaman, (2) cultures which have similar phenomena even though the concept is missing from their vocabulary, (3) cultures with comparable phenomena, and (4) non-shamanic cultures.

Not all religious specialists are shamans. In cultures that have the concept of shaman, there will usually be many different categories of shamans and religious specialists who are not called with the name. One of the mistakes has been to extend the use of the concept into African and Near Eastern spirit possession cults.

One of the false interpretations is to consider shamanism as a primitive religion. In cultures where it is practised its meaning is broader than that of religion in its Western means, on the one hand; and on the other hand, not everything with religious connotations necessarily has anything to do with shamanism. There are many beliefs and behaviours in these cultures that make no reference to their shamans.

The presence of shamans, of course, requires the presence of people who believe in them and who need them in order to survive as human beings and as a society. In these cultures the shaman is a man or a woman who knows, i.e. he or she has more knowledge in the people's mythology and vocabulary than others. Usually it is said that the shaman is chosen by the shaman's spirits. The choice is divine but at once social. The shaman has been elected by his or her family, clan or people for his vocation. The people in these cultures know who their shaman is, and he himself knows his competence. From this point of view shamanistic processes are not a matter of social role behaviour.

Shamanhood is characterized by the

shaman's ability to transform himself into zoomorphic creatures. The shaman is supposed to be able to go beyond his body, or rather one of his souls travels both to heavenly and underground hemispheres in the tripartite structure of the universe.

The previous shaman usually has an important role in the choice and training of his or her successor. The vocation of the shaman is both respected and feared. It seems to be the manifestation of a divine fate, but its personal acceptance is an extremely painful process. Many shamans whom I have learned to know have tried to escape their vocation to such an extent that refusal has been thought to be the reason of their bad luck in economic or family life. If the chosen shaman refuses to take up his position, that will entail considerable suffering; death, a severe illness, etc. Before being able to accept the painful gift of shamanizing, many people have suffered symptoms of madness which has greatly disrupted their personal and social life.

Shamanic competence is inherited both physically and mentally. Part of the competence actually lies in the genes of the shaman-to-be: he seems to be psychologically more inclined than others to communication with the extraordinary, the supernatural, the exceptional. Dreams and experiences are one of the most important criteria of the choice of the shaman. The interpretation is that he has been chosen by the spirits, not by society.

In Finnish the shaman is *tietäjä*, he who knows. Mythology is the key word of shamanism. Shamanic cultures are often illiterate and have no special dogmas that are manifested in the great religious traditions and ideologies of humankind.

Instead of religion, it is more appropriate to refer to a world-view that is typical of shamanic cultures. What belongs to shamanhood is a special competence in the cognitive and behavioural aspects of these cultures: a specific grammar of mind and body.

Notes:

[1] Acerbi, Giuseppe, Travels through Sweden, Finland, and Lapland to the North Cape in the years 1798 and 1799. London 1802, I-II.
[2] Brody, Hugh, Living Arctic. Hunters of the Canadian North. London.
[3] Kulttuuri on avain. Pakolaistyön ja pakolaisten arki Tampereella. Tampere 1995.
[4] For more on this see Pentikäinen, Juha: Saamelaiset. Pohjoisen kansan mytologia. SKS. Hämeenlinna 1995.
[5] Pentikäinen, Juha. Oral Repertoire and World View. FFC No. 219. Helsinki 1978.
[6] Redfield, Robert. Peasant Society and Culture. An Anthropological Approach to Civilization. Chicago.
7. Nordbeck, Gothenburg 1976.

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Translation from Finnish: David Kivinen.

THE THEORY OF GODS WITH RELEVANT MYTHOLOGICAL SUBJECTS

Lars Levi Laestadius

To the Reader

For the information that remains with us about the old beliefs of the Lapps, we are indebted to a few assiduous priests in Lapland and in Finnmark who by order of the Stockholm Antiquities Colloquium and the Copenhagen Missionary Colloquium compiled and recorded everything they could lay their hands on about the heathen religion of the Lapps; but unfortunately! It was not possible for these priests to find out everything about this subject. Because, firstly, they were not very conversant with the language and secondly, it was their duty to persecute the very people who were well versed in all the secrets of the Lapps and from whom the priests could have obtained the most relevant information had only their behaviour been more appropriate. It is incorrect to assume that many Lapps knew all the magic tricks; only shamans (prophets) were entitled to have closer knowledge of these magical secrets of which the Lapps have become so widely known. These shamans (*magi*, *prophets* or *magicians*) were highly respected among the Lapps and they were in fact the wise men or priests of their people.

But since on account of their imagined or real magical powers they were the biggest obstacle to the faster dissemination of the new doctrine among the people, it was natural that they became the target of hatred and persecution on the part of the priests, who regarded the shamans as the means of the devil himself. That made it even more impossible for the priests to find out about the secrets of the shamans, and even today the Lapps are quite reserved and taciturn on the subject of their superstitions; least of all shall such information be parted to a priest; it is only through the stories of children and newcomers that one may learn about this subject.

Since the first priests of Swedish Lapland persecuted shamans, we have not from that source obtained very much information about the original Lappish theory of god. But on the Norwegian side of the border it seems that priests have shown a more reasonable attitude to shamans and it is here that we have obtained most of our crucial knowledge about this subject.

However, not all of the information is equally reliable. One needs to have a closer familiarity with the former and present conditions of the Lapps in order to distinguish between right and wrong in what the writer is saying. The present author is Lapland born and bred. He has travelled the country perhaps more than anyone else, yet he openly admits that there are still many things in the way that the Lapps lead their daily lives that he cannot properly estimate. How much less credibility do those authors deserve who have visited the country as strangers, bringing their deep-rooted prejudices. These stories must be based on accounts given by such people who themselves are equally ignorant of the inner life of Lapps as the traveller himself. It is wrong to assume that the Swedes and Norwegians who live in the proximity of Lapland or Finnmark are familiar with the inner life of the Lapps even though they meet Lapps every year and come into contact with them. Even the priests of Lapland and Finnmark are not particularly well-informed about the position and conditions of the Lapps unless they were born and bred in Finnmark or spent longer

Lars Levi Laestadius (1800-1861), founder of an influential revivalist movement which was to spread from the North Calotte all the way to America, had a significant career not only as a priest for the Swedish Church -- he became the parson in Karesuando in 1825 and in Pajala in 1847 -- but also as an ethnographer and botanist. However, his research career ended abruptly in the mid-1840s when a popular awakening in Swedish Lapland drew him into revivalist preaching. Prior to this he had completed a study on

the mythology of the Saami people, but it was another 100 years before the work was to be discovered by researchers when excerpts were published in the Swedish-language title *Fragmenter i Lappisk mytologi* (1959; see Juha Pentikäinen, Saamelaiset, Pohjoisen kansan mytologia, 1995, pp. 42-45). A Finnish translation (edited by Nilla Outakoski) did not appear until 1994. The excerpts are from the introduction to the text "The theory of gods with relevant mythological subjects" (1840).

periods of time in Finnmark or visited Lapps at their homes. Some more recent authors seem to have based their accounts of Lapland on such unreliable sources and therefore their works are fraught with mistakes and ill-founded arguments.

Johan Scheffen (Johannes Schefferus) was the first to write a somewhat more critical and reflective account about Swedish Lapland. His work *"Lapponia"* was first published in Frankfurt in 1673.

Per Högström's description of the areas of Lapland that are owned by the Swedish Crown, printed in Stockholm in 1747. — Högström does not feed his readers with empty words. He is not looking for any Don Quijote adventures in Lapland. He studies his subject before he voices his estimation. If only such a man had been to Lapland one hundred years ago when heathenism was still widespread. No longer would we be fumbling in the dark when it comes to the meaning of the patterns on the shaman's drum or the figures on the Lapps' calendar, which have been touched upon by older writers but never fully clarified.

Among younger authors, mention may be made of the diaries of *Petrus Laestadius*, printed in Stockholm in 1831-33, as well as Sjögren's notes on Kemi Lapland, printed in Helsinki in 1828. According to my studies these are not reliable works, no more than are those of any authors who have visited Lapland simply as travellers and who have mentioned sundry details in their works about the superstitions of Lapps.

Norwegian writers who have been in contact with Lapps, have far more detailed and comprehensive notes on Lappish mythology than do Swedish and Finnish authors. We know from history that Norwegians have had much closer and much earlier contact with the Lapps than the Swedes. The Norwegians were familiar with the Lapps' magic and art of divination long before the arrival of Christianity in Norway, and they occur in the works of Icelandic authors under the names of *'seita, gan*, Lapp skills', etc. Excepting the few Norwegians who had their children work with famous Lapp prophets as apprentices in order to learn the skill, not very many people knew what the skills actually involved until the Danish government in the late 17th and early 18th century began to send out missionaries to Finnmark. The so-called Missionary Colloquium in Copenhagen had urged their missionaries to tell what they knew about the heathen religion of the Lapps, and from this era we have gained access to more detailed information about the famous Lapp skills.

Nor can it be denied that the Lapp mythology is far richer in content in the descriptions of those Norwegian authors who had learned about the inner life of Lapps on account of their better command of the language. However, the same comment applies as to the Swedish authors that not all of them are equally reliable. For some of them have never managed to break through the barrier of prejudice, way of life and language that stands between the Norwegian and the Lapp. Others have done their best to give a more beautiful and more systematic portrayal of the Lapp mythology than it possibly could have

been in the minds of the shamans themselves.

Following these older missionaries who to a lesser or greater extent have provided information on the Lapps' mythology, Knut Leem (Description of the Lapps of Finnmark etc., Copenhagen 1767) has carried out meticulous investigations and presented lucid accounts by virtue of which he stands clearly apart from the rest of the field and is comparable to Högström in Sweden. Leem was a researcher who not only examined what earlier writers had written about the Lapp superstitions before him, but during his own stay in Finnmark for 10 years he tried to reach to the bottom of the Lapps' secrets, and that is why he can be regarded as a classical writer. In matters concerning the Lapps of Finnmark Leem is beyond doubt the most reliable, and that is why it is incomprehensible why some younger writers today who by-pass these older names are so eager to cheat their readers; writers who still want to be regarded as credible storytellers, such as Zetterstedt, Blom, Brooke, Rosenvinge, etc. The absurd Acerbi and others of that ilk are not even worth mentioning.

"By mythology, I refer to a general popular faith in supernatural beings and phenomena."

So all such views on supernatural beings and phenomena that do not belong to general popular belief but only to the imaginations of individual people cannot, in my humble opinion, be part of mythology; but if a poetic painting, an imagination evoked by fear or a ghost story is adopted in general popular belief, then it also belongs to the domain of mythology.

What images may be evoked in the soul of the lonely traveller when after a long day he lies down beside his fireplace in a lonely forest? Does not the black figure that slips past his eyes in the confusing early-morning fog appear to be a goblin, although on closer inspection it turns out to be merely a grey stone? Does not the howling of the wolf, the hooting of the owl, the rustling noise of the stoat in the dry leaves have to originate from mysterious creatures on and underneath the ground? He who has even tried to sleep alone in the forest on a dark autumn night will soon experience the strange magical force that the forest and loneliness together exercise to start the imagination, and it no longer seems strange to him, is why which mythology is so extraordinarily rich in the more distant forest areas, explaining why one meets so many gnomes and wood nymphs and goblins with all their peculiar epithets and figures. In larger towns there is no time to listen for ghosts or goblins. There are always people around, and if a strange sound comes from the attic or from the wine cellar, thieves will immediately be suspected. The noises that are caused by people walking up and down the streets put an end to any ghost stories.

The situation is wholly different in the outlying forest areas where one rarely meets other people, where there is no variation, and where there is nothing but the natural environment to attract the attentions of the lonely hunter or herdsman. The smallest sound by a bird, a hare, a stone rolling down a slope immediately draws the attention of the lonely traveller. If he is unable immediately to explain the reason for the curious noise or the

bewildering sight, he will assume that something inexplicable or supernatural has happened. His imagination, mingled with fear, will conjure up nothing but horrors and monstrosities. He believes he is seeing ghosts, goblins and evil spirits which are surrounding him. This seems quite natural, and I think the same would happen to anyone placed in the same situation as this lonely forest dweller.

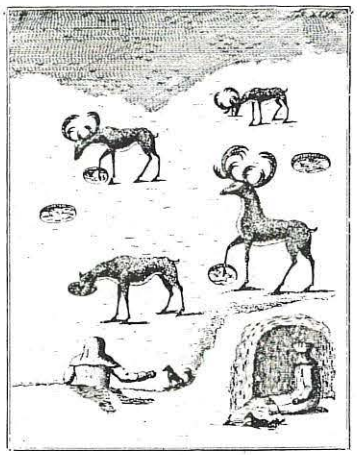
My humble position is that the root cause of the actual myth lies in this magical force that is exerted upon the individual's power of imagination by the combination of loneliness and the wild and rugged nature. The lonely traveller will describe his visions with a solemn face; amongst the people they will evolve into a story and the common folk will believe it. The myth is created. In my opinion this sort of myth is no poetry; but it may develop into an excellent topic for poems if the poet dresses it up in a poetic guise and provides it a more noble colour, i.e. makes it into real poetry.

Lappish mythology, in contrast, is more or less free from all poetic affectation. The Lapps have nothing to compare with the poetry of other peoples. As Blom observes their songs move entirely within fourth and fifth, and it is highly objectionable to anyone with an ear for music. This, however, only applies to the unaccustomed; for when you get used to Lappish singing, you soon notice it is rather pleasant.

But otherwise and although in a musical sense it can be said to move within fourth and fifth, it is wrong to assume that there is no variation in the music. There are certain sounds to express sorrow and others to express joy, specific modulations to express courage and cowardice. In the Lapp language every animal has its own song and related words which express the character of the animal. A song is devoted to every person of even the slightest distinction, describing the style or specific behaviour of that person. The modulations of these songs are equally invariable as they are numerous. But although the improvised lyrics of the songs do not lack poetic elevation, there is no sign whatsoever of rhythm. I have incidentally seen Lapps equally fascinated and inspired by their songs as someone of the fosforist school has believed, which shows that they are not as insensitive as some later authors have wanted to make believe. (Zetterstedt's travels 2, p. 56). Lapp poetry, as I said, has no real connection to their mythology. It is always presented in the form of prose. Even the straightforward story can of course be embroidered in various ways, but the additions are not poetic by nature. Therefore the same story will often be told in different ways in different parts of Lapland. But the basic idea is always the same.

Translation from Finnish: David Kivinen

Paintings by Johannes Rach and Hans Heinrich Eegberg on Saami life, 1749



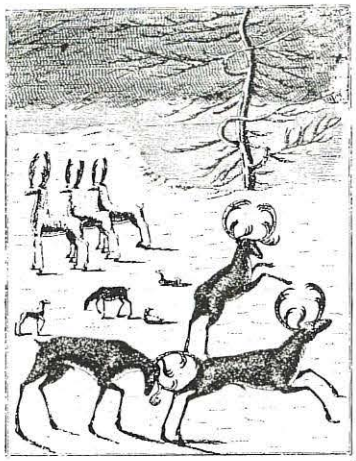


Illustration from *Beskrivelse over Finmarkens Lapper* (*Description of the Saamis in the North*) by Knud Leem, published in 1767.

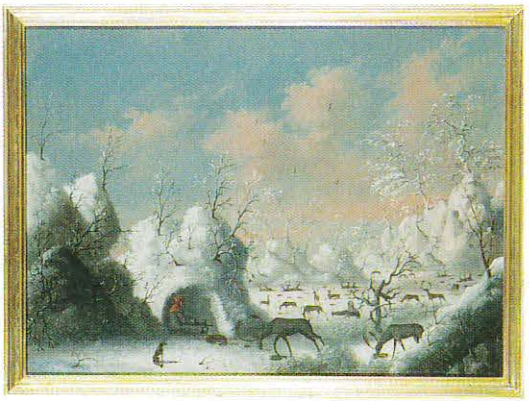
In 1748 Fredrik V, King of Denmark, commisioned 35 paintings with Saami motifs from his two court painters, Johannes Rach (1721-1783) and Hans Heinrich Eegberg (1723-1783).

Johannes Rach was born in Copenhagen. He was apprenticed 1736-42 to the court painter Peter Wichman. After finishing his education he travelled 1744-45 through Sweden and Finland to St.Petersburg. When returning from Russia 1747 he got in connection with the Royal Danish court, where King Fredrik V at the age of 23 years had become King of Denmark in 1746.

Hans Heinrich Eegberg was born in Kalundborg, Denmark. Like Johannes Rach he worked for the Danish court during three years by painting topographic sceneries, street life and buildings of many Danish and Norwegian towers.

The 35 paintings of Saami motifs, which have belonged since 1857 to the collection of the National Museum of Denmark, are modelled on sketches from the Norwegian born missionary Knud Leem's (1696-1774) work on Saami life in Lapland. They are dealing with motifs of reindeer herding, hunting, fishing, transport, habitat and social life. Like in any other Danish motives the paintings have a typical blue and pink sky of the period - the pink glove in the sky has nothing to do with the midnight sun. It is evident that the works have been painted in Copenhagen after Knud Leem's own drawings and sketches.

The material was kindly provided by Rolf Gilberg, curator at The National Museum of Denmark, Department of Ethnography.



Finnens maade at divertere sig paa med en pibe tobac. (How the Saamis enjoy a pipe of tobacco) Oil on canvas, 37 x 50,5 cm

Hvor Finnen vogter sine rensdyr
(Where the Saamis herd their reindeer)
Oil on canvas, 37 x 50,5 cm

I brostens tiid med rensdörne
(The season when the reindeers are in rut and heat). Oil on canvas, 37 x 50,5 cm

Hvor Finnen slaar sid teld ob i orken
(Where the Saamis put up their tent in the tundra). Oil on canvas, 37 x 50,5 cm

CENTERS AT THE END OF THE EARTH

Hans Rudolf Reust

I. The earth is a sphere. That I know. Ships do not abruptly drop away at the horizon, nor is the sun reborn daily from the seas. I am an enlightened person. The historically recent - if by now standard - view of our blue planet in the eyes of the lunar space traveller has supplied but an additional physical substratum, be it perhaps the most incisive of all, to our centuries-old knowledge in the matter: the earth is a ball, a sphere-shaped spaceship hurtling along a pre-traced trajectory through the blackness of cosmic Night. And even if this planet as well flattens out slightly at the Poles, nonetheless the optical certainty remains that the further away it is seen, the more it approximates the ideal geometric shape. We picture the earth as a globe, and present-day catchword expressions such as "global thinking" imply there is more to that vision than a strictly astronomical outlook.

"Beyond the Suiones [trans. note: ethnic groups in Sweden] is another sea, sluggish and almost motionless, with which the earth is girded and bounded; evidence for this is furnished in the brilliance of the last rays of sun, which remain bright enough from his setting to his rising again to dim the stars: popular belief adds further that the sound of his emergence is audible and the forms of his horses visible, with the spikes of his crown. So far (and here rumour speaks the truth), and so far only, does the world reach." (Tacitus, Germania).[1]

If the view of the earth as a sphere reaches back to the 5th century before Christ, the still older conception of the world as a disk continued to exist well into Roman times, appearing for instance in Tacitus' "Germania", which dates from the first century after Christ. The fact that these two world visions continue to exist in parallel still today becomes obvious as soon as they are evaluated in another context than astronomy. Tacitus' disk image - earth encircled with Rome at its center - corresponds today to the mental model of a center and a periphery as applied in macroeconomics, communications technologies, anthropology and art in its sociological implications. As such, it is based ideologically on the sort of "natural" factors that keep us from thinking of the earth in strictly geometric terms: the position of our planet with respect to the sun defines specific climatic zones, and hence zones where growth rates differ, in turn determining different living requirements among plants, animals and men. The more privileged areas, so the abridged theory on the matter goes, gave rise to bustling economic centers. Ideologically speaking, the assumption here is that various natural conditions provided a "natural" impetus to the development of a global state of economic imbalance. The disk model with its center and periphery, highlighting but few earthly centerpoints, provides an economically complex and yet hierarchically structured surface schema.

According to that circle-cum-periphery schema, the Arctic Region continues to be situated as described by Tacitus at the northern end of the earth. Now that several commercial airlines fly over the North Pole region, the "end of the earth" no longer represents a precipice ensuring man's abrupt fall into a bottomless void. Indeed, what was once "earth's end" is composing its bits and pieces into a somewhat coherent no-man's-land from which "civilization" again can gradually emerge: lights, ever more densely packed, now twinkle under the passing jets. There are no longer any end-limits to the earth-girding mobility of man,

though there do remain such neglected stretches of land as merely mark the distances between earth centers. Seen from the airplane windows, the Greenland inland ice looks as unreal - or poetically real - as the backdrop to a fairy tale about polar bears. The heating on the plane, the adventure-packed movie scenes set in Death Valley and the Italian airline fare: all this is far more real. Only a technical failure and a sudden landing at the American air base could make more of a reality of "Thule". Thule exists only in an emergency.

II. The disk model of our world, along with its paradigmatic center and periphery, has already been variously dismissed: from the outset in anthropological theory and, from time to time, in the arts. Technological developments make that conception seem outdated even with respect to the political economy. In that vein of thought, visions of mobility and communication embodied by the "global village" promise to do away with the last strip of land difficult of access to man, to abolish the last incommunicado corner left on our planet. What once appeared blank on maps - space to spare for utopian dreams - was exploited during the 19th century. With the ever increasing data communication networking, it's as if any sort of distance had collapsed. As if every point on earth could communicate on an equal level with every other point: a technocratic utopia. Quite to the contrary, however, it seems that all this data highway business has only reasserted, and ever more strongly at that, the earth's centralization from an economic standpoint. The dynamic impulse promised by - an expected of - mankind's sweeping mobility and total network linkup has been reduced to the static state of the individual riveted to his computer, such as outlined by Paul Virilio.

But the globalization of hazards to the environment definitely imposes the sphere as the geo-political image of the world. The disintegration of the ozone layer, the global warming or the acute danger of widespread radioactive contamination have, as we all know, seeped into the historically consecrated separation of center from periphery. It is probable that with the melting of the polar caps a climatic catastrophe will be loosed upon us from what has traditionally been considered the fringes of the earth. This fact alone renders obsolete a view of the planet highlighting specific center points. Every and any point on earth could become the central factor in how the earth develops.

III. The question is then, whether a global scenario such as is probable at the worst could aslo serve to prevent that very "worst case" on a practical level? Whether thus our geopolitical image of the world could once again be made to match our astronomical image? In competition with the two-dimensional and basically hierarchical circle model with a center and periphery, the egalitarian - closed upon

itself and yet open - mental picture of a sphere remains quite illuminating. Whereas the disk model has as its starting point - no matter how changeable - a center point to be occupied, the space that is at the center of the earth as a sphere remains vacant. Moreover, corresponding to its radius, the distance from any surface point to the sphere's center is by definition always the same. Thus, on the surface every point is on a par with the others; no single - or every -surface point can be designated as a center.

"Global" in the context of the earth as a sphere consists exclusively and entirely of periphery; while the earth's virtual center point is significant only in a physical sense, as the center of gravity. That center point, the empty space which is at the core of our mental picture, should not be cluttered with metaphysical occupancy; above all, it must remain open, for its permanent vacancy is what sets our thinking free in the first place. Francis Picabia's statement that man's head is round so that his thoughts can change direction could be re-formulated more "globally": the earth is round so that its courses of thought can always change direction, making of every point on earth at once a temporal focus point and a transit point. Last but not least, continuously changing points of view abolish the monolithic unity that threatens to run all that is global into totalitarianism. This holds true without excluding the possibility of discovering and rediscovering temporary rules for linking up all the fragmentary views amongst themselves.

"Overnight the universe has lost its centre, and by morning it has countless ones. So that now each - and none - is regarded as its centre. For suddenly there is plenty of room". (Bertolt Brecht, The Life of Galileo, Scene 1).[2]

The continuously changing mental viewpoints afforded by the sphere calls for an end to the static state imposed by one-way communication. The overreach of modernism is to be overcome to the extent that it has exploited realms and cultures traditionally relegated to the fringes of Western society, as reflected for instance in "primitivism" and "art brut". The Arctic Region should not only be looked upon from the outside as an object of thought and contemplation, but regarded for what it already is: a starting point of outward-directed considerations. With its inalienable claim of contributing to man's enlightenment, now more than ever modernism requires the disintegration of fixed observation points. This also implies a revision of the current map of the art world inasmuch as it commemorates so few centers: those where the "privileged climate" depends on the amount of art sales, exhibitions and information available.

As to artistic concepts, the sphere image might be said to imply in the first place a change in our viewpoint with respect to empty space: the surrounding or inbetween space in a work of art that generally receives no notice since it only marks the distance between points of significance. Concentrating empty space at certain points can mean either setting it free or having it genuinely convey intensity. Empty space can also serve as a connecting element, mediating between the remote, the alien. To whatever of these uses it is put, it remains a possible center of attraction for semantic occupants unable to establish themselves on a permanent basis. Thus we are not concerned with new versions of the significant emptiness featured in works by Yves Klein, nor with certain stances assumed in Minimal Art where the context has

A Staff for the Center of the World in Yakutia (by Jimmie Durham
January, 1996)

been drawn altogether into the work. To look at space left open in and around the work is to look for specifically fuzzy areas, where the rules for linking up the various parts of a work can be changed. In its lability, such emptiness is a deviation that works in favor of what Alain Cueff terms, in reference to the sculptural work of the late eighties, "The Place[3] of the Work".

(...there exist places fated to being and differentiating — certain places are more strongly inclined to accommodate and bring into being a work.) *"Meaning elements that have been worked out, fashioned to fit each other [and that are] not necessarily homogeneous but will become so once in place by thinking the existence of place. Not nowhere, in some hypothetical realm where everything would always be possible, free of the constraints of being and subject to larval non-differentiation, but somewhere where being and coming into are basic necessities. Somewhere where nothing exists that would confine itself to purely formal explanations, where nothing exists lest it be by coming into being (...). This open place, bringing into being what has not been, generates difference".*(Alain Cueff, Le lieu de l'oeuvre, Kunsthalle Bern, 1992).

Coming to terms with space left open - labile empty space - enables the sphere image to infiltrate a work of art without turning it into sheer illustration of a theory. In the final analysis, thinking the existence of a place covers as well the body of the perceiving subject, together with all the empty spaces between individual atoms, whereby voice is given to all the empty spaces the world over. What if every particle of my body could reflect every point in the world, at once an ultimate constituent and a microcosm thereof, like the monad in the metaphysical world of Leibniz?

Notes:

1 p. 207, section 45, "Germania", in *Tacitus in Five Volumes*, Vol 1, Translated by Sir W. Peterson, Revised by M. Winterbottom; Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press/ London, William Heinemann Ltd., (first printed in 1914) 1980 GB reprint

2 p.234, Scene I, "The Life of Galileo", in Bertolt Brecht, *Plays*, Vol. I, Methuen & Co. Ltd, London, 1965 reprint

3 trans. note: by opposition to the architectural implications of "site-specific"

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Translation from German: Margie Mounier.

COLD GENIUS - THE ARCTIC SEEN FROM AFAR

Michael Glasmeier

What power art thou, who from below
Hast made me rise unwillingly and slow
From beds of everlasting snow?
See'st thou not how stiff and wondrous old,
Far unfit to bear the bitter cold,
I can scarcely move or draw my breath?
Let me, let me freeze again to death.

"Cold Genius", from the opera King Arthur by Henry Purcell

A metropolis often evokes the most surprising images. Between the deepest solitude and the fashionable attitude, things appear in which despair and the will to live alike take concrete form. In Berlin, for example, where I live and work, sled dogs have been appearing ever more frequently amid the street traffic in recent years. Familiarly and as a matter of course, their owners take them out for walks on a lead. The beauty, hardiness and wildness of these animals are in striking incongruity with the largely mournful physiognomy of the city and its inhabitants. The hope that the alien radiance of such dogs, with their highly intelligent, friendly, even wise eyes, might be imparted to their owners is, however, illusory. The dogs remain exotic status symbols, as bereft of their function and their homeland as are Pekinese, those trembling lapdogs of Europe's eighteenth-century nobility.

Tamed wildness on a lead means power to all those little people who, no longer satisfied with dreams, can instead acquire tangible, living proof that lifts the everyday into different spheres. In our times, of course, such proof is easily obtained. There's no need to travel to the Arctic or undergo hardships in order, perhaps, to befriend a sled dog on the spot. None the less, some questions do remain. Why a sled dog, after all? Is there some kind of secret longing here for genuine cold, for irreconcilable solitude? To put it another way, is the sled dog not just a fashionable trendsetter but a compensation for the loss of true adventures, discoveries and struggles for existence, the paradoxical symbol of a yearning for more reality and corporeality in a media-conditioned world?

Whatever the reason, it's astonishing that, in recent years, German best-seller lists without Nordic literature have become unthinkable, and that the important and experimental novels of post-war literature in German have taken failed Arctic explorers for their subject. A prose sketch by the Austrian writer, Konrad Bayer (1932-64) dealing with the Danish polar explorer Vitus Bering (who, on behalf of Russia, explored the northern Siberian coast from 1734 to 1743), was published posthumously in 1965. Sten Nadolny's *Die Entdeckung der Langsamkeit* [The Discovery of Slowness], a biographical novel about John Franklin (1786-1847, the English navigator and North-pole explorer), appeared in 1983 and was followed, in 1984, by *Die Schrecken des Eises und der Finsternis* [The Terror of Ice and Darkness], by Christoph Ransmayr, a novel about the fate of the Austro-Hungarian expedition to the North Pole under Carl Weyprecht and Julius Payer (1872-4).

All three novels are distinguished by the fact that, in Roland Barthes's *Degré zéro de l'écriture* [Zero Degrees of Literature], they sketch out something approaching the possibility of a different kind of literature. The centre of gravity of such authors is the desk from which they explore the Arctic and set

out in quest of the Northwest Passage. The materials for the protagonists of these novels are piled on and around the desk: documents, journals, other biographies. This material is transformed for the present day, i.e. its language is sometimes untouched and sometimes worked on to a varying degree of density or even made completely unrecognizable. No hero is invented, therefore: instead, a historical person is defined as a contemporary person in terms of his actions. In this process historiography disappears, making way for an exemplar who sets forth in language fragments, in montage-like thrusts, in search of eccentric experiences. The author does not travel to the Arctic: his adventure is one in and with language, an imaginary journey on the ship of archives and libraries. He covers the whiteness of the paper with the marks of his writing, just as the Arctic explorer leaves his tracks in the snow.

Here we are in the presence of an interesting phenomenon, which, despite all the prophecies of doom, still strikes me as remarkable in the modern age. This is the phenomenon of the colour white which, as zero degrees of colour, reveals precisely the hopes of the arts, as well as their acquiescences. It is the white of the writer's still unspotted paper, the white of the cinema screen and that of walls for an artist, and the white noise that, for the musician, is the sum of all sound. In this whiteness, the arts find their new conception of themselves. What is more, they sometimes end with and in it.

In a way, and for these perhaps somewhat over-formal reasons, I have always seen the modern artist as a traveller to the North, as an adventurer seeking the white cold in order to define himself, in order to find in ever new beginnings a way that can be travelled only with difficulty. If the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were the centuries of travellers to Italy, a craving for the Polar Sea has been observable since the middle of the nineteenth century, one that, for Herman Melville, Edgar Allan Poe or Jules Verne, initially and for geographical reasons ran wild at the South Pole but, with the metaphor of the ship - which, like the pen, covers the white space with traces of human presence - a different type of artist was born: alone, experimental, irreconcilable and observing. It is not the Italian warmth of the classical period that surrounds him. He has interiorized his status as an adventurer so very much that he himself meets even the big city with the gaze of a Nordic stranger who has no wish to become acclimatized.

Taking historical Arctic explorers for their material, our three novels disclose differing artistic processes by means of which whiteness is to be filled with life. Konrad Bayer's *Vitus Bering* is all head and brain, and therefore eye. He can be classified as the existential type of artist who recognizes reality and takes it upon himself. Christoph Ransmayr's heroes look for truth in history. They exhaust themselves in a creative reliving, in a dangerous interaction of presentation and representation, while the John Franklin depicted by Sten Nadolny lives by a well proven method in order to withstand the dangers of the whiteness. It is his slowness, his deliberation that make him a winner despite his official failure. He rejects the hustle and bustle of the enlightened and commercially orientated bourgeoisie and submits to North Polar time, its slow, pulsating changes and its ennui.

This last method of making art appears

to me the most promising, precisely today. A feverish quest for innovation yields only short-term results and bears the mark of imperialism. Slowness, on the other hand, opens up the possibility of understanding oneself not as a speeding interloper in the whiteness but rather as an eternal stranger, "a guest who stays" (Georg Simmel) - with the distant gaze that's essential for art. Slowness lets things happen, is twinned with serenity. Thus it is not a question of annihilating the whiteness or triumphing over it. Time should first be spent taking it in, just seeing it.

This artistic and intellectual procedure has already been illustrated in Matthias Grünewald's *Maria-Schnee* altar (1517-19). Its right wing (now in the Freiburg City Museum) shows the founding of Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome. According to legend, the Virgin Mary appeared in a dream to Pope Liberius and to the aristocrat Johannes on the night of 5 August 352, telling them to build a church in her honour on the spot where, next day, fresh snow would fall. Sure enough, in the middle of the Roman summer, a patch of snow shaped like the outline of a basilica was seen on the Esquiline Hill. This miracle was made into a picture by Grünewald in a highly remarkable way. The painter of the revolutionary Isenheim Altar here used the medieval form of the picture story, putting the dream and the laying of the foundation stone simultaneously into the same picture. Often criticized by art historians as a retrograde step, this shows itself on closer examination to be a forward leap. Grünewald was confronted by the aesthetic problem of having to paint a great white area to make the miracle comprehensible. On the other hand, he didn't want the work to turn into an antique German winter picture. For these reasons, he multiplied the three elements of the legend. The aristocrat and the Pope advance, followed by crowds, against the background of a silhouette of the greatest variety of architectural styles. In the foreground, the great patch of snow, standing out wonderfully against the grass precisely because of the surrounding tumult and, above all, because of the colour composition that makes use of the greatest variety of red tones. In order to take hold of the empty space, then, Grünewald composed dynamic pluralities out of actions, colours, buildings, walls and postures.

In this altar painting, the fundamental contradiction between a cultural tradition and a new beginning, symbolized by the colour white, is clearly manifested. It is one of the few works of art I know that bring these two antipodes together into one image with the utmost clarity. Here, whiteness does not speak of the iconography of innocence, divine light or purity, as it customarily did at that time. Here, it teaches us the emptiness that makes a new beginning possible.

Not until much later was whiteness, emptiness, given general form (as it were) in the blank pages of *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman* by Laurence Sterne (1713-68), the empty cartography of *The Hunting of the Snark*, by Lewis Carroll (1832-98) and, naturally, by Stéphane Mallarmé (1842-98). In the latter's poem *Un coup de dés* [A Throw of the Dice], the whiteness of the book's pages becomes part of the text. It dramatizes the latter, makes evocative the words distributed over it. In his foreword to this radical poem, Mallarmé writes: "The 'spaces', in fact, become the important things, strike one first; the versification demanded them as a rule, as a surrounding silence, to

Matthias Grünewald, Miracle o the Snows, panel, 1517-19, 70¹/ x 36 ". Städtisches Museum Freiburg

the point where a passage, whether a lyric or just a few feet, occupies, in the middle, about one-third of the page: I do not contravene this measure, I merely disperse it. The paper intervenes whenever an image ends or withdraws of itself, giving way to others and it is not, as elsewhere, a matter of regular measures of sound or of lines - but rather of prismatic subdivisions of the Idea, as soon as they appear and as long as they participate in some precise spiritual production, it is in variable positions, near or away from the latent main theme, according to probability, that the text must appear. The literary advantage, if I may so express myself, of this transcribed distance that mentally separates groups of words or single words seems at times to accelerate or to slow down the movement, punctuating it, even giving notice of it, in accordance with a simultaneous vision of the Page: the latter being taken as a unit just as are, elsewhere, the Verse or the perfect line."

In silence, "giving way to others": that is what the Arctic can teach us, even at the risk of failure. For these reasons it appears to me utterly conclusive that Marcel Duchamp quotes as his master not Paul Cézanne but Mallarmé, to whom the metaphor of the ship was everything. The white paintings and rooms of Kazimir Malevich, Robert Rauschenberg, Yves Klein, Lucio Fontana, Piero Manzoni, Barnett Newman and Robert Ryman are in this tradition. They are works at zero degrees and, at the same time, adventurous messages from that white stillness that surrounds us in the Arctic. But they also show that, to an ever increasing extent, the visual arts are now taking over from literature the task of acquainting us with other poles. They do this by advancing from the page of a book into the room and replace solitary reading with social regarding. Thus new questions are addressed to the whiteness - questions already addressed by Grünewald's painting; for snow refers to the possibilities of the new and to other views of what is visible, but it is also social and is thus a reminder of the task of assisting it to appear, even when it falls in summer. A sled dog in Berlin is not a substitute for the Arctic. To draw closer to the latter is possible only when the spirit of colonialism gives way to that of the cold, when permafrost is accepted, in silence giving way to others.

For Michael Serres, the Northwest Passage symbolizes the way "from the arts and social sciences to the exact sciences, and vice versa". For him, this way runs through "an empty, homogeneous space". But what Serres, a mathematical philosopher and ex-naval officer, wants to find out is, in the final analysis, that which has driven the arts ever since Mallarmé: to emphasize whiteness and frost, in order to unite the intensity of thought with unmediated contemplation.

Michael Glasmeier is PhD., essayist and curator, based in Berlin

Translation from German: H. Whyte.

GLEAMS OF MURMANSK

Viktor Mazin

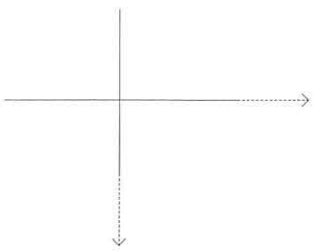
I In the Polar Day

1. Coding the space

The history of the becoming visible has a pre-history, an unconscious history and a history of the unconsious. Thus *below* the history of the landscape lies a geological one. Geology gives the rocks names referring not only to the pre-history, but also to history, Greek history --- galenite, pegmatite, sphalerite, amazonite, sodalite, amphibolite, astrophylite --- or to the history of Soviet mining: murmanite, chkalovite, fersmanite, lomonosovite, denisovite. The lithosphere is personified, comes to light. The magical relationship to the name confirms the desire to penetrate the dark abysses of the cosmosphere and the lithosphere, to extend the heliotropic and geotropic orientation of Homo Erectus.

The Kola Peninsula is the only place in the world where we find astrophylite accumulations in the form of suns and streams: heliotropism illuminates the stage of the Earth history. The Archaezoic Era, is exposed here to the light. How can we calculate the age of this town, stirring at the furrows and crevices which have been left behind by glaciers on this crust from the times when life began to evolve.

The vertical axis of geochronology intersects the horizontal axis of geography: Murmansk is considered the gate to the Arctic.



Everything here is represented as being on the frontier. Here they say: "Behind us is the Arctic ocean." In mythology, "one's own", "mastered" space is located ahead, in the front of one, and "another's", "alien" is behind one's back. Thus, teleologically the back space is to be mastered, but man moves ahead, leaving the mastered space behind. And the mythologically mastered space is in front...the Land of Dead is "behind the water" (Kalevala, rune XVI).

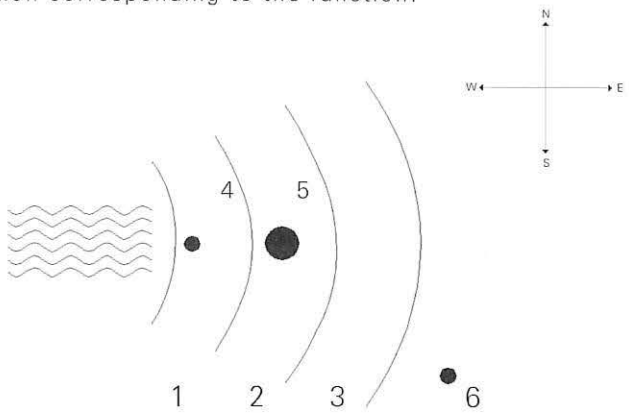
The mastering of time and space consists in arranging the conceptual vocabulary. All the names here are connected with the breath of the North and The Sea: the "North Pole", "Aurora Borealis", "Polar Dawn", "Arctic", "Albatross", "Pole", "Ocean", "Neptune","Gulf Stream", "Wave", "Seagull".

Naming reflects the desire to be everlasting and to be everywhere. "The first" semiotic space of Murmansk (1916) is connected with the *Tzar's family:* the city was named Romanov on the Murman, and the *future* streets were to be named Nicholaiyevskii Prospect (in honour of the Tzar), Alexiyevskii Prospect (in honour of the Tzar's son), Olginskaya St. (in honour

of the Tzar's daughter), Mihailovskaya St. (in honour of the Tzar's brother), Vladimirskaya St. (in honour of the Tzar's uncle), Mariinskaya St. (in honour of the Tzar's second daughter). The next semiotic space created a toponomino-theo-teleology based on the revolutionary period: streets were named after Karl Marx, Victims of the Revolution, Red, Red Army, Red Dawn, Red Fleet, International, Workers, Proletarian, Soviet. In 1925 there appears the next layer: Stalin, Lenin, Comintern, Sofia Perovskaya, Kalinin, Karl Libknecht, Zhelyabova, Sun Yat Tzen, Sverdlova, Zinoviev, Dzerzhinsky, Rosa Luxemburg. Many of the names that appeared at this time have not disappeared. Later, more were added: Gagarin, Pavlov, Yegorov. The streets *carry* the name of the leaders of the revolution or the war, members of the international communist movement, commanders, scientists, writers, artists, polar explorers, connecting the open system of the city with its general socio-ecological development.

The basic form of communication here now is not an external city space, but an internal tele-space. The Murmansk Channel is typical: local news (transformed into advertisement); movies with the attractors of mass-identification (S. Segal, A. Schwartzenegger, J.C. Van Damme, H. Ford), CNN news, allowing virtual tele-co-presence. Thus, distance and proximity, globality and locality are combined, glancing at the screen you would not think that you were on the edge of the Earth; it is even stranger to hear, "I want to go home."

Murmansk is located on three terraces, each of which differs from each other in: a) time of appearance — the lowest is the oldest, the highest is the youngest; b) architecture and planning corresponding to the time of appearance; c) the location of the layer's center; d) the function of the layer; e) the population corresponding to the function:



1) The railroad station (4) is the centre of the first terrace (1). This is not only the epicentre of the city's development, it also was the informational zone (the people came to the station to get news from the outside world). This terrace gradually became the site of the port and fishing industry: that's why it might be called **Work Land**;

2) the second terrace (2) — with Five Corners Square as its centre (5) — might be called Leisure Land. Here we find hotels, stores, parks, the central post office. This communications/information zone, if we compare it with the first terrace, is internal;

3) the third terrace (3) is a bedroom community, and it might be called Dream Land. Its centre is not easily identified: one might propose the TV tower (6) loomig over the terrace, it is the absolute communicative informational centre. A peculiarity of this centre is its remoteness, its not requiring anyone's physical presence: it disseminates itself everywhere, penetrating houses like an all-seeing eye.

A re-mythologization of the way of life is also taking place here. The earlier ideology of Romanticism —based on the mythology of the Soviet polar regions, built on the opposition of Hero and Stern-Nature and on work as a way to overcome this opposition — is now being replaced by the ideology of spontaneous Capitalism directed toward attaining the individual Good Life by means of quick profit. This ideology not only appears at the verbal level, not only in the arrangement of the new conceptual net, but also in the form of poses, gestures, desires, needs, taboos.

2. Coding the constructions

Murmansk was preceded by one inhabitant: explorers discovered a man by the name of Semyon Korzhnyev sitting in front of his small hut:"The floor was earthen. Hot coals were always glowing in the hearth. Above the fire hung a pot. The coals heated the rocks, the hot rocks gave off heat. In place of pipes, there was an opening in the ceiling. A plank bed was made from poles covered with branches." Briefly, a history of urban stratification looks like this:

1) "the first hut"

2) the first plan (1916), which remains unrealized because of the war and the revolution;

3) the chaos of the light construction (1917-1922): barracks and other houses emerge in a disorderly fashion around the train station;

4) the first slow-paced building (1923-1930): a few wooden houses are constructed;

5) the first realized plan of urban development (1931-1940); the actual birth of the city; constructivism.

6) revival of the city in the 1950's; construction of a new train station, a stadium, squares; due to the illumination, architectural details on the facades, the balconies and bay windows of Lenin Street takes on a holiday-like appearance;

7) the new general plan (1960's); construction of the surrounding suburbs, the centre of the city does not change;

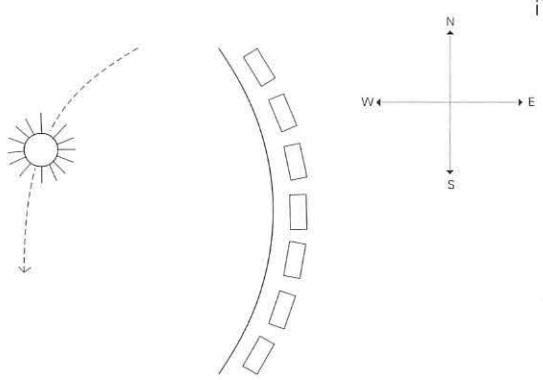
8) 1980-1990's: the continuation of the assimilation of new areas, aesthetization of dwellings by means of decorative panels.

The first church was closed in 1924, making Murmansk the only seat of regional power in the nation without a religious centre. Nevertheless, the absence of cult constructions should be understood only in a narrow sense: in the same year a monument in the constructivist style to the "Victims of the Intervention"(architect A.Savchenko) was erected, and it was not only cult-like in terms of its function, but formally as well: it looks like an Aztec pyramid and a mausoleum, thus referring us to the figure of Lenin. And the labyrinth-like paths to the upper platform enhances one's psychic experiencing of the monument. The houses of culture became another form of cult ideological centre — the first one appeared at the sanctified spot where the city's foundation stone was laid. The newest cult building, the bank, in its function as ideological centre does not require the constant presence of its flock.

3. Coding optics

One might see an amphitheatre of the set-

ting sun in the three-tiered plan of Murmansk:



A theatrical meta-phore is at work here: the architectural plan of Leningrad is transferred to Murmansk through the unconscious development of programms already loaded into the architect's brain. Almost all the specifics of the stage idea-representation are repealed in the constructions of 50-70's. Moreover, Murmansk is naturally theatrical compared to the artificial theatricality of Leningrad.

The building site is lit by the Aurora Borealis, by this varying brilliancy in the night sky which occurs as the result of the phosphorescence of rarefied atmospheric layers under the influence of protons and electrons from outer space penetrating the atmosphere.

Daylight reveals the neolithic drawings, schematic representation of animals and shamans, in the paralogicality of the double world of man. The world of the shaman is a world between worlds. A shaman is a mediator, whose body belongs to the earth, whose soul belongs to the heavens. What we see is not what we see as such but a transformation of visual experience and linguistic paradigms. Disorientation in our realm might be orientation in the invisible world of the shaman.

Returning to the hotel room you look like a maniac, your racing heart waiting for the noise made by a falling instrument bag. Someone peeps out. And scuttles back into Plato's cave...

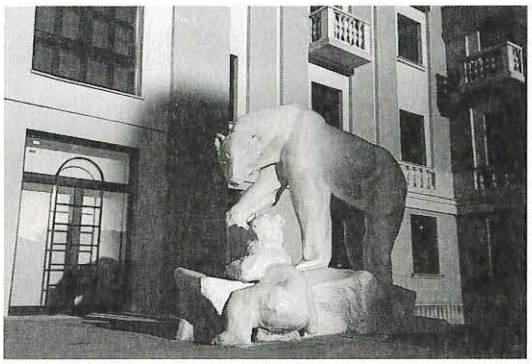
.....and his eyes lit up...

II In the Polar Night

1. In the shadow of the city

From the blackness of Other-Being emerges a polar bear. And not just one, but many: the big one is in front of the Sailor's Way House, the small one is on the television, the third one is an isomorphic bear roaring from the oblivion. Affective traces of the polar bear crystallize in a constellation, and the whole world of the polar bears becomes a melancholic phantom. Toward the eye of Democritus flows the thinnest layers of atoms, giving birth to images. Atoms of the real polar bears comes into contact with the traces of the virtual polar bears... There was one more bear higher up:

in the deep, dark vault of heaven it shined along with the North Star.

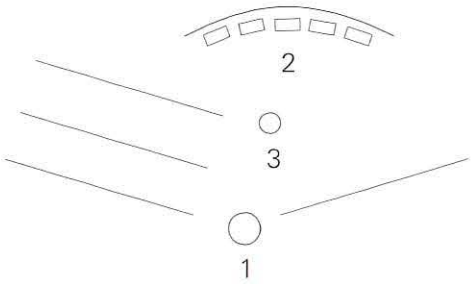


And you still cannot find, descern, name a thing you are looking for. And in the words of Hippocrates: "If the tongue suddenly becomes weak... it is a sign of melancholic suffering".

It is impossible to recall summer, the frozen night twinkles with small lights, grimmers with memories. Winter drives you into the house. On the house there is a sign "Entrance Prohibited".

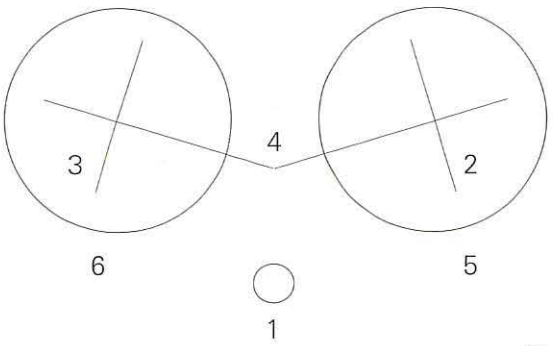
People here are ready to migrate, to migrate in the summertime, to migrate after a certain age. They are temporary hosts here. And they are hostages of the unconsciously functioning topographic plans:

a) The plan of 1916 presupposed the combination of radial and straight streets centered around the cathedral which is inherent to the Peterograd model.



1) The railroad station
2) Government building
3) The church

b) The plan of the 1930's includes a reproduction of one nominological ideology of total control.



1) The railroad station,
2) The first inter-section: Stalin and Militia streets,
3) The second inter-section: Lenin and Marx street,
4) The junction of Lenin and Stalin streets,
5) Mikojan District,
6) Kirov District.

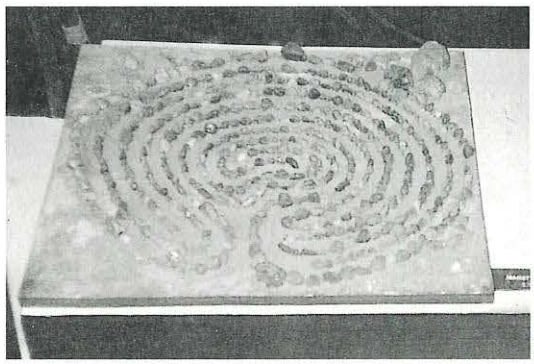
The textual utopia introduces the city's topography: "My city, your rocks gigantic stand to preserve your peace. To make you the rune of the new Kalevala, this is my cherished dream." The city, resting on the local ethnic substrate, is oriented to the u-topia of the future.
"I want to go home" does not know the direction in the Real. One's vector disappears, the glimmerings of consciousness explode one's picture of wholeness, and ... "dismembered parts wandered" (Empedocles). The direction: the symbolic native home stretches from the Mediterranian Sea to the Arctic Ocean. Ancient Greeks and Polar Explorers are related.

2. In the shade of the homeland

"Already you cannot leave from here
Never in the course of your life
Can you return home to your native land
To go out to your land."(Kalevala)

In the shade of the homeland hides the homeland itself. Sunglasses screen the outside light and direct one to the collapsing virtual labyrinth of the shadow, "for the shadow is the only thing he can never hide".

In 1844, on the river Ponoi Karl von Baer discovered labyrinths made of stones in the shape of concentric circles, forming a ten meter oval. You move along the path of a neolithic maze to the center, then you try to get out, but you loose yourself and whirl around a snail-like figure. According to one of the accounts, the mazes were laid out here by seafarers from Crete (this theory is supported by the fact that these same figures were found on Cretan coins). According to another theory, the labyrinths are magic traps called *ubegi*, representations of fishing snares.



Ubegi are necessary to trap space with an a priori existing name, that is with a name which is always already alienated. The name might be in a child-like way turned, transformed and used again as someone's own--- as the name of the conquered territory: on Gerard Mercator's map (1549) it is written: "Russians called Norwegians and Danes Murmans": Normans are Murmans. According to other versions, the name "murman" derives from Lappish roots meaning "sea", "forest", "mother", "man", "moon". The unconscious homeland is overdetermined.

You tried to find an answer to the question: "How is it possible that I didn't exist before I was born?" "If I hadn't been born, would there be someone else in my place?" Where is this place? — "Ultima Thule", an island, born in the empty, dull sea of my longing for you has now attracted me, like a certain fatherland of my least expressible thoughts."(V.Nabokov).

- Let's get back to the hotel.
- No, let's walk some more. Try to re-

GRASS-ROOT ACTIVISM TO SAVE NORTHERN NATURE

Valentina Semyatshina

The committee for saving Pechora is a non-governmental organization established in the Pechora river basin (Komi Republic, Russia) in 1989 by the initiative of the inhabitants of the surrounding villages and cities.

A period of growing social consciousness and activity began in Russia at the end of the 1980s. People (not just single individuals but many people) realized that they could through their own initiative, participation, and action improve the situation in the country.

Serious environmental problems had accumulated during the preceding decades in the Pechora basin. The oil industry had polluted the middle and lower stretches of the basin and the river itself for more than 20 years, and local inhabitants had lost almost all of their traditional ways of earning a living. Poaching on an industrial scale was legalized under the guise of scientific fishing whereas fishing by local inhabitants was prohibited by the government. The volume of industrial waste dumped into Pechora and its tributaries had increased year by year and new industries were usually left without appropriate cleaning facilities. Radioactive pollution was a serious threat in the area because of nuclear tests on Novaya Zemlya and a series of nuclear explosions conducted in the southern part of the republic for economic purposes, namely for redirecting a tributary of Pechora toward the south (this plan was not realized, however). Ruthless forest cutting had caused silting in the river.

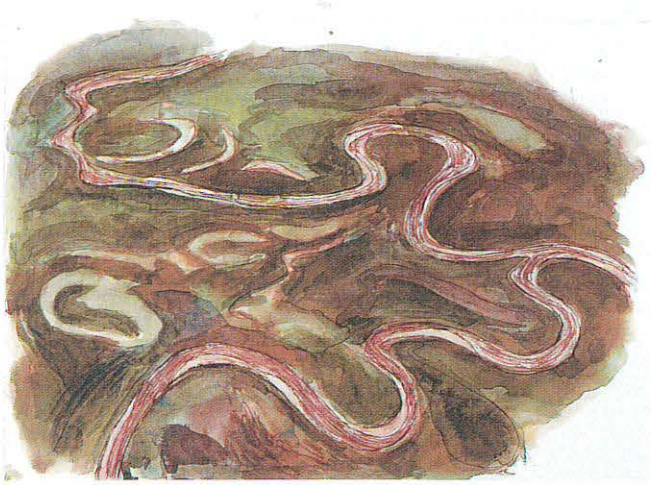
Alarmed by the situation, a small group of inhabitants of the city of Pechora organized a conference to address the ecological problems. The conference was held in the village of Shelyayur (Izhemskii Region of the Komi Republic) in 1989. Delegates to the conference were elected in public meetings in villages and cities all over the huge Pechora river basin.

The conference decided to establish *the Committee for Saving Pechora* and to start publishing a newspaper The Ecological Bulletin. Establishing the paper was a far-sighted step: it immediately became not only a source of information for the inhabitants of the Pechora basin but also a major organizational tool, creating connections among the scattered members of the ecological movement. The role of the paper as an organizer has been particularly important because of the lack of roads in the vast republic. Since 1989 the actions of the committee have been prepared and put into practice with the help of the paper.

One of the most important tasks in the work of the committee during the first years was to save the population of 'semga' (salmon) of the Pechora. The committee succeeded in stopping the government licensed fishing in the estuary of the Pechora. In addition, the Committee prepared an initiative to give fishing licenses to local inhabitants and to prevent poaching by outsiders. Unfortunately, the government did not accept this proposal.

In the first years the committee also organized local ecological actions. Protests by members of the movement caused the relocation of a new cement factory in Uhta to the city limits. Another set ot protests helped to stop the extraction of gold near the source of the Pechora. Such local initiatives were handled by local chapters of the committee which were established in different parts of the river basin.

The present structure of the committee is as follows: The committee consists of twenty members from different parts of the basin,



Jussi Kivi, "Meandering river between Pechora and Syktyvkar, bird's-view", Watercolour, sepia, 21x29,5cm, 1996

elected in the conference that is held every two years. The committee organizes between the conferences activities on issues important for the whole area, whereas local chapters are mainly occupied by local concerns.

Most of the work is centered on the Pechora river (which comprises ten administrative regions and seven cities), but it has expanded to cover the whole republic — ecologically harmful activities in Komi are mainly located in the Pechora basin.

The actions of the committee have brought together hundreds of people living in the basin, many of whom take part in the movement regularly through the local chapters. One of the most important actions taken by the committee in the last years was the demand for an ecological referendum on four questions which had been accepted by the participants of the conference. The mere suggestion of having a referendum caused the government to accept the demands, namely:

1) The Council of Ministers of Komi and the Supreme Soviet passed a resolution on setting a ceiling to the amount of salmon caught in the tributaries of the Pechora.

2) The Supreme Soviet announced a moratorium until the year 2000 on the plans to construct a nuclear power plant in the republic (it was planned in the region of Inta).

3) The Supreme Soviet of the republic sent a protest to the Russian government against their decision to start again nuclear tests on Novaya Zemlya.

4) One of the largest national parks in Russia, "Jugyd Va", was established, its borders determined by the republic itself and then the decision was sent to the Federal government for confirmation.

The committee worked hard to build pressure in support of these decisions. Its members collected 20.000 signatures from inhabitants in the Pechora region. Systematic lobbying was organized in the commissions and committees of the Supreme Soviet of the Komi Republic even though there was only one representative of the ecological movement as compared to 180 others who supported industrial interests. A constant struggle was waged against numerous opponents of the initiatives, particularly those opposing the national park.

The committee has been active in nature conservation. It organized protests againts a plan to give a 40 year lease to a French lumber company in forests surrounding the source of the river (in Troisko-Pechorsk). Supported by Greenpeace the committee prepared an initiative to establish a Unesco World Nature Heritage area on the foothills of the Ural Mountains. Representatives of Unesco visited the area in the summer of 1995, and the

initiative was finally aproved in December 1995.

When the committee became aware of the damage caused by the 1994 oil spill in Komi, it did all that was in its power to bring the catastrophe to the world's attention. The committee follows the situation in the area. In March 1995 a sociological inquiry was made on the living conditions of about 700 inhabitants of the Usinskii region in order to help planning rehabilitation measures. The inquiry resulted in a World Bank credit to the project of 4 million U.S. dollars.

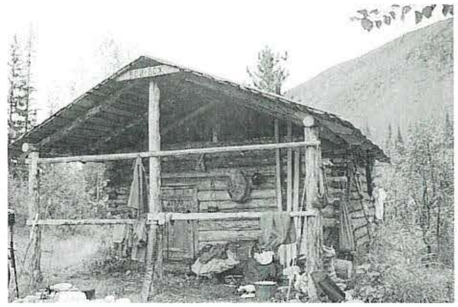
The committee also organizes ecological education for children. This is carried out in cooperation with schools and by organizing nature camps for children in the summer. The committee also continues to publish the Ecological Bulletin which is the only source of ecological information in the republic.

The committee has close contacts with many other social organizations such as the committee for the revival of the Komi people, congress of the Komi people and works together with scientists from the institute of biology and with other ecological organizations in Russia.

Much has changed in the six years since the Committee was established. Unfortunately, however, we are today as far away from a legal democratic society as we were six years ago. Therefore, a majority of the social organizations born in the wave of "Perestroika" have disintegrated. In contrast, the committee for saving Pechora continues to work without having lost its momentum or its commitment to the cause. What is the secret? No doubt a major reason is the worsening ecological situation in the region. The committee also succeeded early on to become an organization which defends the needs of practically all those who live in the Pechora basin, also including the indigenous inhabitants. We have been accountable to people. The committee's work has helped to solve many pressing local ecological problems. Finally, the committee for saving Pechora has proven to be stable enough not to disintegrate because of political disagreements among its members. It has remained a group of similarly minded individuals for whom participation in the movement is not play but a serious commitment.

Valentina Semyatshina is chairperson of the Committee for Saving Pechora, Komi Republic, Russia.

Translation from Russian: Yrjö Haila.



The research base 'Voj Vozh'.

r Aleksej Estafjev, head of the labo-
tory of zoology, Institute of Biology,
omi Scientific Centre.

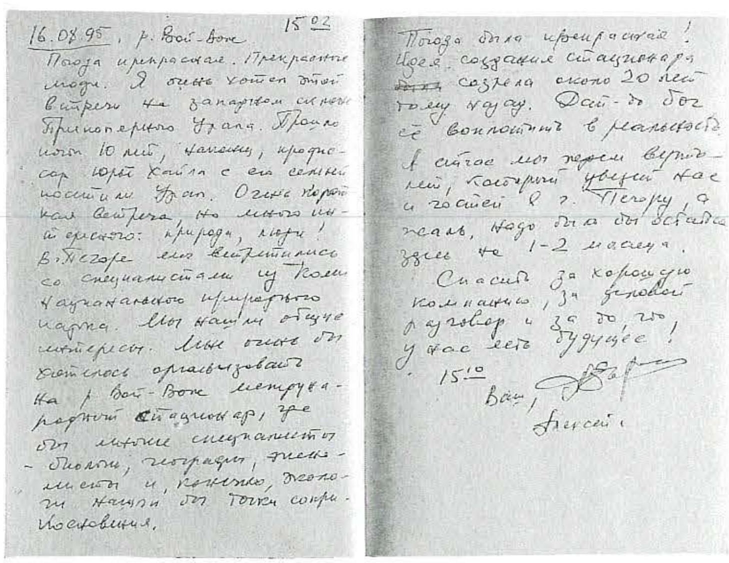
16 August, 1995, The River Voj Vozh

The weather is excellent. The people are nice. I have looked forward to this meeting on the western slopes of the Subpolar Urals for many years. The meeting is very short but interesting in many ways: nature, people! In the city of Pechora, we met with specialists working for the Komi National Park, and found many shared concerns. I very much hope that an international research station be established on the river Voj Vozh to offer inspiration for joint research for specialists in many fields - biologists, geographers, ecologists and, of course, economists.

The weather has been marvellous. The idea to establish the research station was conceived for almost 20 years ago. May Heaven help it to turn into reality. But now we will be taken back to Pechora by helicopter; pity; we should have stayed here for 1-2 months.

Thank you for pleasant company, for our discussions: now we have a common future!

15^{10} yours Aleksej



16.08.95, р. Вой-Вож 15^{02}

Погода прекрасная. Прекрасные люди. Я очень хотел этой встречи на западном склоне Приполярного Урала. Прошло почти 10 лет, наконец, профессор Юрген Хайль с его семьей посетили Урал. Очень короткая встреча, но много интересного: природа, люди! В Печоре мы встретились со специалистами из Коми Национального природного парка. Мы нашли общие интересы. Мне очень бы хотелось организовать на р. Вой-Вож международный стационар, где бы многие специалисты - биологи, географы, экологи и, конечно, экономисты нашли бы точки соприкосновения.

Погода была прекрасная! Идея создания стационара созрела около 20 лет тому назад. Дай-то бог её воплотить в реальность. А сейчас мы ждем вертолет, который увезет нас и гостей в г. Печору, а жаль, надо было бы остаться здесь на 1-2 месяца.

Спасибо за хорошую компанию, за деловой разговор и за то, что у нас есть будущее!

15^{10} Ваш, Алексей.

THE MILITARY IN THE ARCTIC

Lassi Heininen

Five Cases

The following five cases demonstrate the extent of military presence and activities in the Circumpolar North.[1] The first case is Novaja Zemlja, which is today the only nuclear test site of the Russian Federation, and where the Soviet Union used to do her nuclear tests since the end of the 1950s: the total number of tests between 1957-1991 was (117-) 132, 77-86 of them in the atmosphere.

We know that radioactivity from nuclear tests in the atmosphere still forms the greatest source of radioactive contamination of the oceans, and radioactivity is found in the sediments of the ocean bottom. There is also some evidence of radioactive contamination from underground nuclear tests because of local earthquakes.

The Nenets people used to live, fish and hunt along the coasts of the Barents Sea and Kara Sea, as well as on the twin-island of Novaja Zemlja. In the middle of 1950s the Soviet Army started to build up two nuclear test areas to Novaja Zemlja. Since then it has been prohibited to the Nenets to live or hunt in Novaja Zemlja. This is the situation still today. The Nenets are not allowed to move back to the islands. In 1992 the president of Russia, Boris Jeltsin signed a desicion to make the test area an official, and the only, nuclear test site of the Russian Federation.

The second case deals with the accident of the Komsomolets (or Mike) -class nuclear submarine in the Norwegian Sea in 1989. The sunk submarine had a twin nuclear reactor and two warheads of missiles or torpedoes on board. In the water around the sinking place local radioactive contaminations have been found. The accident of the Mike-class submarine is one of more than 20 naval accidents with nuclear-armed and/or nuclear-powered submarines or war ships in northern seas - the total amount of nuclear accidents in major navies between 1945-1988 is 212.

The risk of a nuclear accident and radioactive contamination in the Northern Atlantic has been a real threat and has given reason for anxiety for the Icelanders and the Icelandic government since the mid-1980s. The main reason for their concern is possible environmental effects to the fishing areas around Iceland, where fishery is of great economic importance.

The third case includes from 11,000 to 17,000 containers of solid and liquid nuclear waste and 12-15, and possibly even 21, nuclear reactors of Soviet submarines and ice-breakers, which have been dumped into the Barents Sea and the Kara Sea. The waste and nuclear reactors including weapons-grade plutonium create a risk of a 'ticking time bomb' in the northern seas, and add to the risk of polluting the area. It is also possible that radioactive contamination or dumped mustard gas may have caused mass-scale death of shells, star fish and seals in the White Sea during the last few years.

The fourth case is Nitassinan, near Goose Bay in Canadian Labrador, which is an area of low-level flights for military training, but also a land where Innu indians used to live. Four NATO countries have annually performed thousands of low-level flights in Nitassian at the hight of 100-250 feet, almost at maximum speed. In 1991 the amount of low-level flights was 7,700. Harmful effects of these activities are noise, sonic booms, aircraft emissions and microwaves to people and animals, but they also cause a risk of accidents and crashes.

The fifth case is the American air base in Thule, Greenland. The air base was founded in 1953 on the land of the Inuit people by the agreement of the governments of the USA and Denmark. The Inuits had to move from the area of about 3,000 km2 to another place in Greenland. Near the air base of Thule there was a serious nuclear accident in 1968: an American B-52 bomber lost three of its four hydrogen bombs, and the radioactive fuel of the bombs burned and spread onto snow and ice and through them into water.

In addition to the above-mentioned cases in the Circumpolar North there are other similar cases, e.g. Canadian efforts to force the Inuits to move to the arctic archipelago of Canada; pollution from the equipments of Distant Early Warning (DEW) -system near the residences of the Eskimos in Alaska; or a plan to build up a radar station in the middle of reindeer herding area on top of Litmurinvaara hill in Inari in Finnish Lapland. The models of military presence and action in the Circumpolar North has been intansive since the end of the 1980s, as an inventory of nuclear arms facilities shows: there are modern strategic nuclear-powered submarines (SSBNs), nuclear attack submarines (SSNs), the Command, Control, Communication and Intelligence (C3I)-system, naval bases, airfields and areas for military tests and manoeuvres. The number of military tests and manoeuvres in the northern regions increased considerably in the 1980s, and the trend continues in the 1990s.

The above-mentioned cases indicate competition and conflicts of interests between the military and the northern ecosystem on the one hand and the military and the everyday life of the northern indigenous peoples in the Circumpolar North on the other hand.

The Arctic as a "war theater"

Since the 1960s the Arctic and northern seas have occupied an important role in the military strategies of the USA and the Soviet Union. But the Arctic in general and the northern waters in particular are also regions whose military use is dictated on the one hand by geostrategy and on the other hand by technology. In the 1980s the northern seas and the Arctic Ocean ceased to be peripheries in security and military means and became fronts: the Arctic could be viewed as a 'maritime war theater'.[2]

Geostrategy and geopolitics have relevance even today: the so-called technology models of geopolitics opened the Arctic to the nuclear-oriented maritime strategies of the USA and the Soviet Union. Nuclear arms, nuclear energy and other technical innovations form the technical factor which relates the human being to his physical environment. In the theory of international relations these technology models of geopolitics are generally related to the projection of military power and are thus an instrument of hegemonical politics. This is also the situation in the Arctic and the northern seas. The offensive maritime strategy of the USA adopted in the early 1980s had a geopolitical background.

The Cold War and the East-West -tension brought the high-technology and sophisticated military presence of the two superpowers, the USA and the Soviet Union, but also of the other Arctic states, to the Circumpolar North. In the 1980s both the Soviet Union and the USA produced more and more sophisticated arms systems, especially nuclear arms, and deployed them in northern waters, where the military presence and activities became intensive.

The general development of the high technology after the World War II has accelerated the arms race. The development has stressed the importance of quality over quantity, which the Gulf War in 1991 proved very clearly. Although elements of arms control and disarmament are visible, there is also a simultaneous process of rationalization of arms race. Missile technology, new radar systems, nuclear arms and energy and other modern technical innovations in the service of arms race have made it possible to use weapons like nuclear submarines in icy waters and C3I-systems in the Arctic and other northern regions.

On the other hand, since the beginning of the 1990s the total number of submarines, warships and nuclear weapons has decreased. The reasons for the process are to be found in the end of the Cold War, and partly in the lack of money for arms race; therefore the navies of both the Soviet Union/the Russian Federation and the USA have taken some unilateral arms control and disarmament measures. The Soviet Union, for example, in accordance with the military doctrine of 'sufficient defense' of the last years, decreased the projecting task of its navy far away from her own coast in the end of the 1980s.

All in all, in spite of the decreased amount of armament, the Arctic is also in the Post-Cold War era an area of great strategic importance for the USA and the Russian Federation mostly because of the patrolling and hidden sea areas for strategic nuclear-powered submarines (SSBNs) in the Arctic Ocean.

The military and the environment

Environmental effects and risks are similar all over the world, but the Arctic and sub-Arctic lands and seas are particularly vulnerable. As mentioned above, there are already different kinds of deployed weapons and weapon systems in the Arctic. Military routine action such as garrisons, bases and airfields; manoeuvres and patrols; nuclear and missile tests and low-level flights are present in the Circumpolar North.

The effects of routine military presence and action of armies on northern nature and indigenous peoples can be actual like pollution or potential like risks of nuclear accidents. Therefore I would like to stress the fact that the military has actual environmental effects and risks on the Arctic even in peacetime.

Different kinds of counterarguments can be raised. Firstly, one can claim that the environmental effects of military presence are no longer relevant because the military activities in the Arctic and the northern seas have been decreasing since the end of the 1980s. Another argument might be that in the Arctic there is enough space and land for military testing and training areas and activities, and that the ownership of some areas by armies has prevented the degradation of environment. Thirdly one can argue that it is difficult, or even impossible, to show any evidence of pollution having destroyed Arctic ecosystems. The fourth argument might be that in the Arctic the biggest environmental challenges and problems such as oil-drilling, long-distance air and sea pollution and local industrial pollution are not directly related to military activities.

With regard to the relations between the military and northern indigenous peoples

there are two kinds of arguments: Firstly, that in the northern areas there is enough space for both the traditional livelihoods of the northern indigenous peoples and the action of the armies. Secondly, armies improve the living conditions of the northern indigenous peoples and other people who are living in the North through employment, services, tax return, and improved flight routes inside the northern peripheries. Some groups of the northern indigenous peoples support the military defence by NATO, and think that they have to have at least some representation in the national decision-making process of defence. Also the majority of the Home Rule Government of Greenland is in favour of NATO because Greenland is seen 'as part of the NATO alliance'.[3]

These arguments evoke the following responses. Firstly, the whole viewpoint of armies as polluters is both new, complicated and very political, and has been seen as a real problem only gradually. Secondly, there is a shortage of data on the effects because of the lack of monitoring and of the secrecy around armies and their environmental effects. Thirdly, we are discussing potential threats or risks, for example the effects of nuclear accidents are first of all potential, and therefore the consequences are not yet so well known. However, all elements of pollution and risks of environmental catastrophes are there, and the Arctic and subarctic nature is very vulnerable. Fourthly, in spite of arms control agreements and disarmament activities, the arms race continues, as I mentioned earlier, and can have harmful impact on the Circumpolar North.

The relation between the military and northern indigenous peoples is a complicated question. At the same time when most of the northern indigenous peoples, like the Inuit Circumpolar Conference, have expressed their concern for the growing militarization of the Arctic, some indigenous groups e.g. in Greenland are in favour of military defence by NATO. The fact is that people who are living in the Circumpolar North need development and they want to ensure their living standard. They are also needed in order to prevent these areas from becoming desolated, a fact which also has a security-policy dimension.

In the long run development can be organized by traditional livelihoods, renewable natural resources and trade, but not through military facilities or activities. The role of the northern peoples and communities is vital in this, and one basic element could be regional cooperation between northern circumpolar peripheries.

In the Arctic there have been few regional conflicts after the World War II, but it has been part of the stage of the general tension between the East and the West, i.e. the Cold War. An important and clearly visible part of that has been the competition, and even a conflict, between the armies and military strategies of the two major nuclear-powers. The finale of that was the competition of naval strategies and navies of the Soviet Union and the USA in the late 1980s.

We can also find a conflict of interests between the military elements and the utilization of natural resources and between security-policy tension and a need for international and regional cooperation in the northern regions. The latter is relevant and important because the effects of the Cold War, which was the basic reason for the military presence and activities in the Arctic, are still effective behind the scene.

The problematic relationship between

the military and the environment calls for an alternative concept of security, one that we can call environmentally oriented security.[4] First of all, the current situation in the Arctic calls for the lowering of military presence and action. This, of course, conflicts with short-term interests of national governments. Maybe, however, environmental problems and the pressure by local people for more efficient protection will function as an "engine" helping to remove military activities, particularly those involving nuclear arms, from the northern seas and the Arctic.

Notes:

[1] For more details on the cases, see W.M. Arkin and J. Handler: Naval accidents 1945-1988 (Neptune Papers No. 3, 1989); F. Hauge, T. Nilsen and K.E. Nilsen: Dumping of radioactive Waste in the Barents and Kara Seas (Bellona Working Papers No. 3, 1992); G. Shaun: The Hidden Cost of Deterrence. Nuclear Weapons Accidents (London: Brassey's, 1990).

[2] This analysis draws mainly upon a mimeo by Steve E. Miller, "The Arctic as a Maritime Theater" (December, 1989); see also R. Fieldhouse and S. Taoka: Superpowers at Sea:An Assessment of the Naval Arms Race (SIPRI Strategic Issue Papers, 1989).

[3] M. Faegteborg: "Debate on Security Matters in Greenland", in: J. K. Skogan and A. O. Bruntland (eds), Soviet Seapower. Facts, Motivations, Impact and Responses (NUPI Report No. 128); P. Jull: "Social Change in NATO's Far North", Nato Review 38: 2 (1990).

[4] This idea goes back to the early 1980s, see J. Galtung: Environment, Development and Military Activity. Towards Alternative Security Doctrines (Oslo: Norwegian University Press, 1982); B. Hettne: Approaches to the Study of Peace and Development. A State of the Art Report (EADI Working Paper No. 6, 1984).

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CHUKOTKA AND 'POSTCOMMUNISM'

D.I.Berman

"Maybe Neolithic, but possibly much more recent", answered an archeologist working in Chukotka whom I brought pieces of two spearheads made of flintstone, found at the upper stream of one of the main tributaries of the Anadyr. ... After having walked with companions a whole day on a hillock tundra in difficult terrain we could not resist the tempetation to sit down on dry cliffs heated by sunshine in the river valley. The sunshine glittered in pieces which looked like glass – these, however, were not from broken bottles but from volcanic stone...

"Until the 1920s the Chukchi had a shortage of metal and thus made spearheads of stone as they had not lost the manufacturing skills and culture, and stone remains are scattered in abundance all over the right-hand side of the Anadyr in the surroundings of lake Krasnos. So one ought to work very hard before venturing to estimate the age" – finished my colleague.

So, in the 1920s the Chukchi who lived within a rather complicated social system, were still making flint spearheads for hunting, but in the 1980s they, alike people in other parts of Russia, lived in the conditions of "developed socialism". Now, under postcommunism they are rapidly "getting used to" capitalism. The Koryaks, Eskimos and Tunguses have with equal determination worked themselves up the ladder of social systems. What "developed socialism" meant for Chukotka has been described many times. Let us bring into mind some details; these may not be the most important ones but are always mentioned.

Chukotka was not only the romantic northeasternmost corner of Russia which had to be saved from "American imperialists", it was also for a long time – until the opening of oil fields in western Siberia – looked upon by the central power as one of the "generators of currency" of the whole country. From the 30s onwards Chukotka, similar to other parts of northeastern Asia, was colonized with the purpose of extracting gold, tinn and other valuable minerals which were worked on by, as it seemed, an unending convoy of prisoners of the Gulag. In Post-Stalinism the colonization continued, albeit voluntarily, by people drawn here by high salaries and various other privileges (for instance, working years were counted by the rule "1,5 for 1", the retirement age was reached five years earlier than elsewhere in the country, etc.). All the time – both during the Gulag and afterwards – life in northeastern Russia was subjugated to the interests of the mining industry. But side by side with them and independently of them, without crossings in space or time, the socalled national villages of original Asians continued to lead their lives. Only seldom did native inhabitants settle in mines, although a few of those living in the villages went to work in electric power stations and heating units, as drivers, and so on. Admittedly some individuals worked in the mines, quarries, road or housing constructions, airports, or acquired variable amounts of gold, whereas others had minor occupations in the tundra, herding reindeer or hunting game on the coast...

On selfish motives but referring to the principle "I know what makes you happy" the government provided for the subsistence of the native peoples and, naturally, dictated the "rules of the game". The subsistence was good, as became manifest in many government funded operations: village and road constructions, renting of boats for transporting coal and fuel which were also paid by the government,

distribution of technical equipment and foodstuffs of high quality (often of better quality than could be found in central districts), free airline connections which spread all these good things to the tundra, construction and supplying of hospitals, clubs, boarding schools for children, and so on. A major part of what was produced in national sovhozes and kolhozes (reindeer, meat and fur of marine animals) was consumed on the spot and only fur, not seldom of minor quality, left the region. Considerable sums were thrown away for expensive whims. For instance, a brand-new large village was constructed on a new site and people were ordered to move there from several established villages which were spread on the coast by lagoons with plentiful game and fish but which did not please the authorities because, for instance ... airline schedules were often disturbed by fog. This action was taken in the name of "improvement" – living in one large village was, it was claimed, easier; that is, it was easier ... to organize people to build socialism.

The main task of economic directors (usually Russian) was to follow the "rules of the game" with directors higher up on whom the availability of means and "funding" largely depended – that is, the permission to get at reduced price fuel for transport, construction materials and what else was needed. Every ordinary worker could without paying compensation destroy a car, caterpillar tractor or boat, burn down the house he was living in, or "loose" in the tundra some dozens of reindeer, or, in the last instance, just do nothing and nevertheless receive a fully satisfactory salary. The lost property was written off... No, no, of course there were innumerable good workers but the system enforced its dark sides for decades.

At any large field base supporting reindeer herders from the surrounding communities almost new caterpillar tractors were usually standing outside without small steel parts, snow scooters without belts, radio receivers without batteries... To replace these quite new caterpillar tractors, snow scooters and boat motors which had got rusty for sheer lack of use, brand-new ones were every now and then brought in. As a rule these also worked only for a short time – the Chukchi were usually not inborn mechanics. And then again it was time to get from somewhere new ones...

On one of our excursions we came across a small Chukchi campsite. After the usual greetings the Chukchi at once asked whether we had biscuits, matches, tobacco; our cigarets were wet and mouldy, and the Chukchi gave us some of their own. To keep the discussion going I asked an older person whether the Chukchi smoked before Russian and American merchants arrived in Chucotka.

Of course smoked, was the answer. Where did you get tobacco when there were no merchants? Smiling broadly the Chukchi answered: "Brought from the village, the village has always been around, and everything has always been and will always be available in the village."

Airlines had a special role in life in the north. Helicopters, and where it was possible to build an airstrip, also small airplanes, served as the only but also the most accessible method of transportation. Polar pilots were liked and usually known by name, it was an honour to count them among one's personal friends, and their authority was indisputable. The captain alone decided whether you were taken aboard the plane which al-

ready had the normal number of passangers, whether he would fly 50-70 km aside the ordinary route to reach the site needed, load half a ton of extra cargo or ... whether you would sit for a week or two on the tundra in September, without fuel and supplies, straining the ears so they will hurt – is there a flight approaching? – and trying to recollect: how did I offend the captain, why does he punish me and my companions? Although the price of a bottle of benzin was lower than of a bottle of mineral water in those times, helicopter time was nevertheless relatively expensive, but the northern governmental budget included money for covering airline costs.

Why not use airlines when living under such terms? And the airlines were used... All the infrastructure was built on the helicopter, and this was not only in villages which were off from roads drivable by car. Equipment, machinery, reserve parts, supplies, tobacco, cinema films and fruit, authorities and visiting performers, geologists and biologists, physicians and veterinarians, people on holiday and on working trip, guests and children living in boarding schools, everything needed in people's lives – everything was transported by helicopter. Helicopter on the sky was an obligatory component of the landscape of the tundra. In the 70s the helicopters had 2, 10

and 20 seats, but in the 80s only the largest ones remained and often they flew with two pilots, steward and one or two passengers. Other transport played a subsidiary role (excluding, of course, cars in regions with good roads). Particularly popular were caterpillar tractors which consumed fuel with an appetite comparable to that of airplanes but with which one could drive literally everywhere. However, helicopters were needed to throw barrels of fuel along the routes where these monsters moved about.

Socialism boasted, as is well known, with the planned character of the economy ("the plan is a law"); the northern budget was also planned but always in a peculiar way. It was called "planned–deficit"; it used to be common knowledge that the economy did not bring profit, only deficit. In other words, the deficit was laboriously planned, and a necessary sum of money was transferred to the government...

Since the onset of new times, life in Chukotka has taken an even more peculiar turn. Gold and tinn are nowadays equally needed as they were in 1990, and the prices of these metals have not fallen on the world market. But mining metals here was not profitable enough, and the industry was judged to be unable to compete on the world market. As in other parts of the country, unprofitable production facilities were closed down in Chukotka, including practically all gold and tinn mines, some of them being very large (for instance Puljtin) with hundreds of employees. As the mining industry was the basis of the infrastructure of the region, everything collapsed. A considerable proportion of the previous inhabitants (often of second generation) lost their jobs and perspectives, and left Chukotka; only a few stayed behind and moved to the centers of civilization, replacing those who had left earlier on electric stations, airports, radio stations and garages (but for how long?). Military garnisons became superfluous and burdensome, they were teared down. Over huge territories of Chukotka only native people and a handful of border guards stayed behind. True, there are also exceptions: the capital of Chukotka, the city of Anadyr, although not flourishing, stays alive. Chukotka has administratively become sovereign, it is no more included in the Magadan Oblastj and so one can reason that the number of civil servants on every level is growing and together with them grows the number of small merchants and businessmen. This, however, brings nothing to the city, only sets requirements...

... It must be difficult for watchers from afar to believe, but only five years ago, in 1990, preparations were made to construct a hydroelectric power station at the river Amguema with the total cost of almost one billion dollars (!) in order to guarantee the development of the mining industry and, above all – just for prestige. The plan of the power station was already finished, but the administration of Chukotka did not give the permission for construction because they did not get enthusiastic about such a huge capital investment (this brought them credit), particularly as the counterside of the plan was complete destruction of nature in a river valley unique in Chukotka which, furthermore, supported vast reindeer pastures. The power station would not have been finished by the present, and the construction works would stand in the valley as the memorial of a second colonization attempt.

The first colonization attempt – the Gulag

– left its memorials as well, but these are more depressing and dreadful... numerous fallen-down structures regularly spaced by the roadsides, called "distance stations", where the prisoners of the Gulag and their guards lived (in different buildings, of course). The ill-fated constructed the road which connected the bays of Kresta and Iuljtin with each other, and then moved along it. Due to its dimensions and high quality the road was unique in Chukotka. Today the road is completely destroyed and the bridge across the river Amguema has fallen down, but the walls of the "distance stations" remain. The roof, doors and windows are gone, but the walls of these boxes are standing and not even ruined: here, in the Far North, in the middle of bare tundra, is found slade which is similar to that found in many southern areas and makes excellent mortar (and here, as everywhere else, among the prisoners were many southerners); it can be used almost without cement as mixture to make structures which look exotic and do not resemble, if I am allowed to say, the nothern architectonic style; they have an impersonal and deliberately temporary outlook (in a word, like barracks), but nevertheless give a feel of high standard and professional precision. Time by itself cannot tear down these walls, and in the 60s those in power noticed the consequences and took to dynamite as a last resource to destroy some of those stations which were most portentously in front of the eyes.

But let us get back to the original inhabitants, those who live on the tundra and along the ocean coast. They cannot return anywhere, they are at home. And the profitability of their economy has not improved but dropped, if it makes sense to apply this sort

of rational standard to evaluate the deficit of the livelihood of other people at all. My friends who are still working in Chukotka estimate that the position of the native people is not worse but may rather be better than the position of local inhabitants in, say, central Russia during 'postcommunism'. The reason is, simply, that in distinction from the inhabitants of central Russia, native people in Chukotka turned out to have a social security system which still holds. Payments have been delayed in the whole country, not only of pension but also of workers' salaries, for instance, workers in the mines have not been paid for gold that was delivered to the government for half a year ago. But the local inhabitants – their economy used to be subsidized to compensate for unprofitability, and they continuously get this compensation. According to current estimates, 80-90 % of the budget of Chukotka is covered with subsidies. True, the prices are not what they used to be, and the currency does not recover, furthermore, the subsidies are continuously declining. If, ultimately, the subsidies are dropped altogether, what is in store for the native inhabitants? Understandably, there are very few options: either make the economy prof-

itable at any price, or move to the cities and join the row of beggars, or, alas, die quickly enough....

Since time immemorial the reindeer has been the subsistence base of many northern peoples. Reindeer pastures grow very slowly. Consequently, the herd must be continuously on the move, every year across hundreds of kilometers. And nothing can be done to this – the migration of the herd is the basis of reindeer husbandry. In recent times collectively owned herds moved along permanent routes with permanent field bases which had caterpillar tractors, fuel storages, food supplies, radio stations, saunas, quite often physicians, and so on. The bases were, of course, served by helicopters. It is possible to use helicopters also now; they fly even more readily than before, whereever and whenever needed, in any weather. But the money that used to be available for helicopters is not there any more; they fly seldom. Caterpillar tractors do not drive far off the roads as often as before – there is no money for helicopters that would bring them fuel. True, here and there huge caterpillar tractors similar to army tanks were used which can carry a storage of fuel, allowing them long, autonomous routes, as well as a large load of necessities. These machines are economical and highly valued by reindeer herders. I am afraid that the herding units do not buy new 'monsters' any more, it is difficult to even think of their price and transportation expenses.

A helicopter can carry up to two tons of cargo, a reindeer (on the back) less than 70 kg, usually closer to 40-50; in a reindeer caravan there may be up to 100 animals... Alas, there is no returning to the use of reindeer caravans, as there is no returning to having 100-150, or rather 200 reindeer per family and a completely nomadic way of life. If there were 200 or 250 reindeer per family of five or six people – no commodity economy, they would more or less live on reindeer products and get material for clothing. Why is it necessasry to have so many reindeer? Because some of the animals are needed for transportation, some for reproduction, and only some 30 animals can be slaughtered per year to give meat for the herders. But then, trying to think about it for a minute, what kind of a household can here sell meat – fresh, ecologically pure and cheap, but who will buy it if the transportation costs are three times higher? No, but neither was the reindeer in older times a commodity product eiher because of difficulties with transportation and requirements of the herders themselves.

There is one more reason why it is impossible to return to nomadic reindeer husbandry with the accompanying austere ascetism. During communism a major form of gradually enforcing of a system of total tutelage was the education in boarding schools. From small villages which lacked schools and from herding brigades which moved about in the

tundra, children were taken (this was on order!) to boarding schools which usually were situated in local centres of civilization – large communities. The children received in the boarding schools full subsistence – food, clothing, medicin, practical necessities, amusement, and so on – amost around the year, except for a happy stay of one to two months with parents on the tundra. Understandably, the care by even the most sensitive and considerate educator and supporter cannot substitute parental care, whatever it is like. And how do the parents feel, being wihtout their children 10 months a year? But there is also another side. Children, of course, miss home, wait for months for getting back and are incredibly happy when the flight finally takes off toward the tundra... But after they finish the boarding school and, possibly, additional special courses (to become radio operators, car drivers, tailors or dressmakers, and so on) they cannot physically live and work as reindeer herders or maritime hunters; neither can they just forget acquiring such fancy professions and live, instead, on the tundra from the early childhood, with the habits and mistakes of their parents as the only source of education, and get used to the tundra with its harsh climate and the ocean with its deadly dangers as their native (that is, the only desirable) milieu. On the contrary, the children have deliberately left the tundra and the ocean and rejected the traditional system of values, but without having acquired a new one nor such an adequate education that would guarantee them subsistence in the "civilized" society. And as young people did not visit the tundra under "developed socialism", there was nobody to compensate for the lack of old people, and this was a problem. Not only a problem for particular families, settlements or communities, but a problem for the native peoples altogether. The boarding school system grew so dominating that it broke the continuity of generations.

In other words, not only is it impossible to get rich on reindeer, it is impossible to live on reindeer without almost returning to the Neolithic – but, to be precise, there is nobody around who will return to the Neolithic.

Reindeer husbandry requires lots of space, but space is not comprehensible for modern people without mechanical transportation, and this is not only for subsistence needs. Once in central Chukotka when we were traveling down a mountain river by rubber boat we arrived at a small Chukchi campsite, further than two hours' flight from the nearest settlement. Everybody was delighted by this meeting, the Chukchi for meeting new people, and we for the chance to get back by helicopter – one of our companions had received bad news over the radio and wanted to return, and this disturbed our work. Alas, there were no helicopter flights coming. Then it turned out that one of the inhabitants was preparing to get to see a doctor in the nearest village 300 km down the river, but they only had a small rubber boat which hardly kept above the water; it is not by chance that these are often called "floating coffins". Traveling down a mountain river, which is filled with floating tree trunks, by this killer – is it enviable bravery or, rather, inconsiderate obstinacy?

Great difficulties are not restricted to the tundra, they plague life in the villages, too. A holy belief in the eternal stability of the village as the source of all imaginable goodies has gradually come tumbling down; there are goodies, but these are practically

out of reach. New merchants can bring in anything that is needed, but the price! Even in villages which are connected to civilization via the sea or the air, the prices of products are a couple of times higher than in the point of origin. So, shops are empty and supplies are scarce as people do not have money. There is no money as there are no salaries; there are no salaries as there is no commodity production, and subsidies are irregular and diminishing. Every now and then people are given a miserable advance payment which the worst-off usually spend on vodka, sold from below the desk at robbery price. There may be no money to spend on food and the diet gets from year to year more primitive. Therefore, there is an increasing trend toward paying the salary not in money but in foodstuffs.

The Chukchi and their dependants did not previously think where the goodies came from, but now they have to adapt to the thought that the boat or helicopter with the earthly things does not sail or fly just for nothing, it needs to be paid for. But the people of the tundra or the taiga are not psychologically prepared to such a turn of events. Generations grew up with a different image. In the upper Kolyma there used to be a well-known chairman of a national village who always when hearing of procrastination in reparation works on roads, communication lines, landing strips on the airport, or of delay of freight, took to one and the same action: sent a telegram directly to the UN ("... the national village is cut off from connections, we have no foodstuffs nor fuel for heating left, the temperature is –50 °C below..." or something similar in style); the telegram, naturally, never was sent further than to the nearest district committee of the party, but the works were speeded up. Nowadays telegrams could be sent to whom one ever wishes, even to Mr. God.

The road to hell is paved with good intentions, says a proverb. This really is the case! Tutelage has done its job. On the one hand, during the Soviet era northern people did not go hungry, they got enough food as well as fuel for heating. They had adequate medicine to keep off most diseases, people died mainly of alcohol which they were not genetically adapted to. On the other hand, subsidies brought degeneration. A work by Hartwig, "Nature and Man in the Far North", published in the middle of the last century, includes short descriptions of the way of life of almost all northern peoples. One of the leading themes in the book is the alluring unpretentiousness and complete harmony of northern peoples (including Chukchis, Koryaks and Eskimos) with nature. But today they have turned out helpless: they cannot get along without tutelage, but the tutelage is diminishing. The question is: can their way of life be preserved?

... ..."People have forgotten this truth said the fox, but you must never forget it. You are responsible all your life for what you have tamed." (Antoine de Saint-Excupery, *The Little Prince*, Chapter 21).

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Translation from Russian: Yrjö Haila.

THE NORTH AS/AND THE OTHER

Yrjö Haila

When we visited Yakutia, we were given an illustrated guide of the capital, Yakutsk, with texts in three languages, Russian, Yakutian and English. In its section on history we found the following opening passage:

"The XVII century. Russia was looking for new lands, new riches. Now it turned to the North-East. Detachments of daring people ventured to its far reaches along unbeaten tracks."

This is repetition of a simple and thoroughly familiar pattern: the powerful ones went and took what they wanted from others who hardly even existed; and afterwards this is described as the most natural succession of events. In the 17th century Siberia was, of course, inhabited by a large number of peoples; there were no "unbeaten tracks" to be trodden by the Russians. But the description is correct: the expansion took place. At the same time, or perhaps a little bit earlier or a little bit later, some other powers turned to northern Atlantic islands, the Americas, and the great Antipodean lands and archipelagoes in their search for new lands and new riches.

Siberia has hardly got her own history written, what we have is Russian history of Siberia. The Russian interest in the vast forests to the north and north-east of her heartlands was originally aroused by fur, but mineral riches in the Urals were another early attraction. Thus, documentary sources from Novgorod from the year 1032 refer to these northern lands as the iron "gate" of the Urals.[1] The term "Siberian land" appears in the documents in 1407 as a description of the region where Tohtamysh, who sacked Moscow during Dmitrij Donskoj's reign in 1382, was killed by the khan Shadibek. At this time "Sibir" was the main stronghold of a Turkish-Tatarian khanate east of the southern Urals.

Somewhat more than a century later Ivan the Terrible named himself "the ruler of Siberia" in a diplomatic letter sent to the court of Edward VI of England. This was probably inspired by the English themselves who were actively utilizing a northeastern trade route from Europe to China and wanted to flatter the ruler of the strengthening Russian empire. Colonial tokens are useful export items for a colonial power. A few decades later the merchant house Stroganov hired a cossack party led by Jermak to invade the east, and the Siberian khanate was destroyed. October 26, 1581, was "a significant day in the history of Siberia": Jermak "entered freely into the capital of the Siberian tsardom, Isker, or Sibir, as its full citizen" (Stseglov, p. 36). One can certainly become the "full citizen" of a city one has destroyed. Jermak's party was now free to continue the invasion which proceeded very quickly: it was as soon as in 1638 that the cossacks reached the Pacific coast.

The colonial history of Siberia is, from the beginning, amazingly closely connected with the colonial history of other parts of the world. But perhaps this is nothing to be amazed of. After all, the European colonial expansion was the decisive historical process which brought all continents within the same sphere of in-

1 The source for the following is I. V. Stseglov: *Hronologicheskij perechenj vazhnejshih dannyh iz istorii Sibiri 1032 - 1882*, originally published in 1884 (Surgut: Severnyi dom, 1993). The history is told also, for instance, by Eric Wolf: *Europe and the People without History* (Berkeley: The University of California Press, 1982), and Richard Vaughan: *The Arctic. A History* (Phoenix Mill: Alan Sutton, 1994).

fluence and power. Once the expansion began it continued like an avalanche. This was not only an economic and political process but also a global cultural upheaval: a colonial attitude was created that often grew stronger among rulers in the colonies than in the centers.

The conquest of America was a crucial step in this process of colonization; never before and never after have both sides been as unprepared to meeting each other as in Central America in the 1490s. The result of this confrontation marked the opening of a new era, as characterized by Zvetan Todorov[2]:

"The history of the globe is of course made up of conquests and defeats, of colonizations and discoveries of others; but, as I shall try to show, it is in fact the conquest of America that heralds and establishes our present identity; even if every date that permits us to separate any two periods is arbitrary, none is more suitable, in order to mark the beginning of the modern era, than the year 1492, the year Columbus crosses the Atlantic Ocean".

Todorov's main thesis is that the surprisingly easy conquest of the large empires of Central and South America by literally a handful of Spanish conquistadors was due to the superiority of the Spanish side in adapting to the terms of communication in this new conflict of cultures. The Spaniards were backed by a universalizing zeal and ethos provided by Christianity whereas the Indians were bound to their stable, locally constructed cultural universes. The whole idea of a total conquest was alien to the Indians. The Spaniards subjugated opportunistically the means they used to the end of conquest and were able to deploy a wide variety of tactical tricks such as betrayals, lies, threats, and manipulation of conflicts among Indian states whereas the Indians were tied to a ritualistic and symbolic and, hence, an extremely rigid way of dealing with the opponent. The inability of Montezuma, the ruler of the Aztecs imprisoned by the Spaniards, to make any decisions at all toward raising his mighty army into defence bears evidence for this contrast.

Todorov concludes that the Spaniards were able to incorporate the existence of an 'other' into their worldview, to objectify the 'other', and to turn this ability into a purposeful manipulation of the 'other'. This was a new, and thoroughly modern invention, but it was certainly facilitated by earlier European history. Thus, Columbus himself, although much more traditional in his cast of mind than the conquistadors who followed such as Cortés, used naming and mapping as a means of submitting the new lands to the Spanish crown. The Indians, in contrast, lacked this ability to grasp and manipulate the 'other'. They tried to understand the arrival of the Spaniards from within their own traditional culture but this, of course, proved tragically impossible.[3]

2 Zvetan Todorov: *The Conquest of America, The Question of the Other* (New York: Harper & Row, 1984, p. 5).

3 Todorov regards the lack of phonemic writing among the Indians as very significant in this regard. Cultural characteristics of the Aztecs "... imply a predominance of presence over absense, of the immediate over the mediatized. It is precisely here that the theme of the perception of the other and that of symbolic (or semiotic) behavior intersect..." (p. 157). – Let us note here, however, that there were differences among the Spaniards: Cortés was a more modern manipulator of the 'other' than Columbus. The Indians, of course, learned, but too late.

The novel relationship with 'otherness', complete objectification, was to become a lasting consequence of the conquest for the Europeans: "By winning on one side, the Europeans lost on the other; by imposing their superiority upon the entire country, they destroyed their own capacity to integrate themselves into the world" (Todorov, p. 97).

A similar objectifying attitude has constantly been evoked – in addition to the duty of spreading Christianity – as a legitimation of colonization: whatever there is in the world, the Europeans are justified in finding it, (re)naming it, mapping it, and taking it into their possession. It was always from the center that explorations began. Never in history did, say, the peoples of the north send expeditions to rename and map Moscow, Helsinki, Copenhagen or London.

The colonial expansion brought the colonizers into a systematic relationship to other peoples as 'others' who had one absolute common denominator: they were not "us". This level of consistency and systematics in the relationship toward strangers was never reached in the classical world. The modern sciences of anthropology and ethnography are offshoots of this modern situation.[4] Cortés was a pathbreaker in this regard; for example, in a memorandum addressed to Charles V in 1537 he wrote that before conquering a country "it must be determined whether it is inhabited, and if so by what kind of peoples, and what religion or rite they have, and upon what they live, and what there is in the land" (Todorov, p. 175). Diego Durán, a Dominican who lived in Mexico all his life from the age of five or six and compiled some of the most valuable descriptions of preconquest Indian society was driven by the conviction that paganism can be successfully eliminated only if it is thoroughly known: "If we are trying earnestly to remove the memory of Amalech, we shall never succeed until we fully understand the ancient religion" (Todorov, p. 202-3). This ethos, "learn to know in order to eliminate", was later transported by innumerable Christian missionaries to other parts of the world, including the north.

As has often been noted, the modern relationship to nature, exemplified by modern science, is also derived from systematic externalization and objectification. The historical parallel with anthropology is quite close: the conquest (or, in scientific terms, "discovery") of America had a decisive influence on the European view of nature.[5] The immediate reaction among European scholars was to reconcile the discoveries with the belief in a designed earth, accepted as a commonplace in the Renaissance: "What greater proof of the wisdom, the power, and the creativity of God, then, could one ask than these unexpected tidings from the new Lands?" (Glacken, p. 358). However, when systematic observations accumulated, it got difficult to reconcile the actual findings in the New Lands with biblical history.

4 Critical anthropologists are of course well aware of this legacy; see, for instance, Bernard McGrane: *Beyond Anthropology. Society and the Other* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989).

5 The *locus classicus* describing the development of western conception of nature is Clarence Glacken: *Traces on the Rhodian Shore. Nature and Culture in Western Thought from Ancient Times to the End of the Eighteenth Century* (Berkeley: The University of California Press, 1967).

Gradually a shift occurred from a belief in predermined Divine order to an emphasis that nature is governed by laws and processes that need to be explained by natural reasons.

In a sense, thus, nature is the 'other' of modern culture: systematic investigations of an externalized nature have led to an increasing consciousness of 'culture' as something different from 'nature'. But there is another side to the location of 'otherness' in modern culture, in addition to the level of cultural consciousness. This is the subjective level, namely, the relationship of the modern subject to his/her 'other'. This was realized by Hegel; in the following I cite Charles Taylor's characterization of Hegel's basic idea[6]:

"...(T)he core problem is that the subject is always 'outside himself', he always depends on a surrounding universe; he must therefore come to recognize himself in this surrounding. This is why the principal path to integrity lies through recognition by another; in the human environment a man can recognize himself in others. But we see another important path; man can come to see himself in the natural environment by making it over in conformity with his project. For in doing this we achieve another standing negation, a reflection of ourselves which endures".

The position of the individual in the modern society is characterized by freedom. This freedom "implies first the ability to pull back from my desires and impulses into a unity with myself as ego so that I am not automatically determined by the dictates of my desires and impulses." In the second moment "freedom means the ability to move from the state of indetermination – to determine myself". Such a determination cannot, however, occur in the absence of other individuals; in contrast, it depends on "structures of mutual recognition that are prior to the achieved selfhood of the individuals involved". This necessary relationship between mutual recognizion of individuals and individual freedom brings forth the structure of 'otherness': the other person is the 'other' against whom I can achieve my subjectivity. Implicit in this structure is objectification of other persons. This also applies to nature which is externally available to be molded by the modern individual and, thus, as a template against which the modern individual can mold him/herself.[7]

The position of nature as the 'other' of culture is demonstrated by verbal images used in describing our relationship to the surrounding world. For example, the strive of explorers to reach the north pole is habitually described by saying that they tried to "conquer" the pole. But what is there to "conquer" at the north pole? Magnificient blocks of ice? Eternal whiteness? – No, no, no: the point is entirely different. What is at stake is a much more figurative goal of gaining plausibility for the idea that the whole globe, including its most remote and hostile corners, is "by its nature" subjected to human domination.

It seems the 'other' is everywhere. Hence, it is deceptively easy to use the 'other' as a label for almost anything. Precisely for this reason I have the impression that the 'other' has not really got his/her history written. The

6 Charles Taylor: *Hegel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975, p. 156).

7 This passage leans on David Kolb: *The Critique of Pure Modernity. Hegel, Heidegger, and After* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1986); the citations are from p. 29 and 25, respectively.

'other', in the Hegelian conception, is almost like a logical operation, that is, a necessary implication of the development of human consciousness and thought.[8] How does one write the history of a logical operation?

But also artihmetic operations have a history: they have been invented and adopted in some particular social conditions in the past. All civilizations developed numerical operations, but there is interesting and significant variation among them in this regard. Similarly with logical operations. In particular, logical operations of the Hegelian type, being tied to conceptual thinking, are closely bound up with social history; this is the point of saying that Hegel was a "philosopher of modernity"[9].

The logic of the 'other' is tied to the modern world.

In general, there are two preconditions for unveiling the origin of logical operations such as 'otherness'. First, one should specify the socio-historical domain in which the operation has arisen and is valid. Second, one should identify the particular contradictions and social processes that characterize this domain of validity.

Zvetan Todorov has succeeded in unveiling crucial features in the early development of 'otherness' in the modern world. It seems to me that the north might provide possibilities for further unveiling. In comparison with other parts of the world, the north is a recently and, perhaps, only half-way colonized area. The destruction of native cultures was never as complete in the north as in, say, Spanish America or Australia. Maybe this is because the aborigines have been the only ones who really have been able to live in the northern conditions. This has, from the very beginning, created a necessity for communication between the colonists and the aborigins: in order to get help and advice from the aborigins, the colonists had at the very least to recognize their existence. This element was present already in the 16th century encounters between Spaniards and Indians in Mexico, albeit as a feeble undercurrent. Maybe it is stronger in the north today. Maybe it helps to establish what Todorov calls a "new exotopy", that is:

"(A)n affirmation of the other's exteriority which goes hand in hand with the recognition of the other as subject. Here perhaps is not only a new way of experiencing alterity, but also a characteristic feature of our time, as individualism (or autotelism) was for the period whose end we are now beginning to discern" (p. 250).

But, on the other hand, it is certainly no exaggeration to claim that the north has been assimilated into the realm of the 'other'. The times when the north was an unreachable "Ultima Thule" are long past (except for anachronistic echoes of romanticism). The north has been subjected to pure domination and search for exploitable resources which has advanced at a pace with the development of

8 See Kolb, op cit. As we saw, the 'other' is tied to the origin of modern subjectivity. According to Hegel, "(t)he modern self is the achievement of a long process, and modern individualism as such is something new in history. Civil society is not the final recognition of a permanent condition; it is the creation of a new condition. This is true because the structures of mutual recognition, and the consequent selfhood of the individuals involved, change at different stages in history" (p. 28). Note that this view does not logically entail teleology.

9 Kolb, op. cit.

new technical means to get at them. The explorations to the north were originally driven by the search for north-east and north-west passages for commercial purposes. Later arrived whalers, miners, oil drillers and military forces.[10] As everywhere else in the world, these traders and hunters have driven into extinction several of their most valuable game animals; a legend among these was the flightless Great auk which originally bred in colonies on northern Atlantic islands from the Norwegian coast to Iceland, Greenland and the coasts of New Foundland, Maine and Massachusetts. The last specimens were taken at Eldey Rock off the coast of Iceland on June 3, 1844. An analogous species in the northern Pacific was the Spectacled cormorant which bred on islands off the coast of Kamchatka and Chukotka. Similar to many other island animals, the Spectacled cormorant was famous for being a "stupid bird", i.e., not afraid of humans and easily killed.[11]

Maybe the north also helps to bring into a sharp focus another aspect of the 'otherness' of nature that is worth tending, namely, what John Passmore calls nature's "strangeness". This stems from the fact that "natural processes are entirely indifferent to our existence and welfare".[12] We, humans, need to be interested in the affairs of nature, but nature is not interested in us. It is our own task to arrange our existence as well we can, there is nobody else around to do this for us.

What is required of our relationship with something that is "strange"? – Respect.

The possibility I see here is that respect is "naturally" needed in the difficult and fragile conditions of the north. This respect does not contradict objectivism, rather, objectivism can provide irreplacable means toward conscious respect. What is needed is a communicative dimension to scientific objectivism: not *impose on* and *conquer*, but *listen to* and *learn from*.

However, "listening to" and "learning from" nature are not such straightforward activities as they may sound. It is not possible to derive criteria for dealing with nature directly from nature. Natural change relativizes all observable criteria.[13] In particular, there is no "starting point" in history that could serve as a model for the present. This is true of social history as well: all northern aborigines have, of course, come from somewhere else. But they have had time to find ways to relate to particular environments in particular ways. This long listening to and learning

10 See Vaughan, op. cit.

11 James C. Greenway, Jr.: *Extinct and Vanishing Birds of the World* (New York: Dover, 1967). Let it be noted that international conservation organizations have started new activities in recent years to protect arctic nature. For instance, World Wildlife Fund has launched an arctic program with the aim of establishing a network of preserves all around the circumboreal Arctic. New national parks have been established in Taimyr and the Lena Delta in arctic Siberia. Traditional nature conservation does not inherently contradict the objectifying ethos but rather supplemets it. An important aspect is the attitude to the livelihood of local people. Thus far the experiences are positive; there is a good chance that nature conservation will strengthen the position of the local people in the Arctic.

12 John Passmore: *Man's Responsibility for Nature*, 2nd ed. (London: Duckworth, 1980, p. 214).

13 Yrjö Haila & Richard Levins: *Humanity and Nature. Ecology, Science and Society* (London: Pluto Press, 1992).

from nature has followed several pathways. The present hunting and reindeer herding peoples of northern Eurasia are descendants of ancient mammoth hunters whereas the present cultures of the North-American high Arctic derive from people who invented a new technology apparently in Alaska around 4300 years ago, known as the Arctic small-tool tradition.[14]

Some of the peoples living in the north today have arrived more recently. The Yakutians present an interesting problem: how come a cattle-growing, grassland people has successfully colonized northern forests in the harsh climatic conditions of a permafrost country? They owe this to favourable ecological conditions, namely, the natural occurrence of rich grassland habitats in the river valleys (the Lena, in particular), and in geological formations called by the Yakutian word *alas*. These are circular meadows, varying in size from tens of hectares to tens of square kilometers, with a lake in the middle. The otherwise continuous lowland forests of the Yakutian central taiga are spotted with tens of thousands of *alas* meadows,. Each *alas* is produced by thermokarstic processes which cause the forest to "sink down" on sites where the upper horizons of the permafrost begin to melt because of some disturbance. The formation of an *alas* takes only a few decades, but once formed it may remain unchanged for hundreds or thousands of years.[15]

Trade and cultural contacts have been particularly important for peoples in the north. Their mutual trade connections have crossed over huge distances. The great river systems of Siberia have served as natural channels of communication, and what are nowadays regarded as "borders" such as the Bering Strait or the Ural Mountains could with better justification be regarded as crossroads. It was across the Bering Straits that peoples of the old and the new world maintained mutual contacts throughout millenia. Reindeer hunters and herders of Pechora basin and western Siberia crossed

14 These interpretations are from Brian M. Fagan: *People of the Earth. An introduction to World Prehistory* (New York: HarperCollins 1992).

15. We heard from the biologists working in Yakutsk another interesting way in wich the permafrost is important in Yakutia: Because of the extreme continentality of the climate, precipitation is not more than 200 mm per year. Summers, furthermore, are usually dry and very hot. It is only due to evaporation and absorption from the permafrost layer that the soil retains any moisture at all; "without the permafrost Yakutia would be desert", we learned.

the Urals in both directions along regular routes. An area such as the western slope of the Urals where the research station *Voj Vozh* is located has probably never been permanently inhabited because of high precipitation and, consequently, thick and moist habitats in the summer and unsurmountable snow cover in the winter. However, it has played a role in the life of the neighbouring peoples.

The historical fact of 'otherness' which has its roots in the origin of modern society and which today takes a variety of shapes, raises an ethical question. "The query into the obligation or possibility of sustaining respect for difference without reducing the other to the same – "the ethical question" – has emerged as a logical counterpart to the question of the subject".[16] We already have some idea about what this means: one moment is communication, another moment is solidarity. There is no way of undoing the crimes and injustices that have been committed in the past. But what can be done is finding out the sources of these injustices, preventing them from being repeated, and trying to support the empowerment of the heirs of the victims. This imperative applies to people and to nature alike.[17]

I already concluded that respect for nature, and respect for people who understand nature, has a natural germinating ground in the north. Might this be true of solidarity as well? The harsh conditions mean that mutual help and solidarity has been an absolute prerequisite for human existence ever since the first hunters and nomads arrived here tens of thousands of years ago.

When we were in Yakutia we made several excursions off the capital by cars. During one of the trips the temperature was -54 °C. We traveled everywhere by two vehicles, just in case. But the real feeling of safety came from the certainty that if something actually happened, nobody would pass by and leave us stranded on the roadside.

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16 Jessica Benjamin: "The shadow of the other (subject): intersubjectivity and the feminist theory", *Constellations* 1: 231-254 (p 234)

17 It should be noted, however, that the relationship to humans is primary in this regard. As D.I. Berman once said with reference to Kolyma, one of the worst parts of the Gulag: "It is no wonder that nobody has cared about nature in Kolyma as nobody has cared about human beings in Kolyma"; see Yrjö Haila & Marketta Seppälä (eds): *Ikijää - Permafrost - Merzlota* (Pori: Porin Taidemuseo, 1995).

Artists´ projects

Sergei ´Afrika´ Bugaev

A.K. Dolven

Jimmie Durham

Ilya Kabakov & Pavel Pepperstein

Per Kirkeby

Jussi Kivi

Ian McKeever

Esko Männikkö & Pekka Turunen

Richard Prince

Ulf Rollof

Maura Sheehan

George Steinmann

— You will see that it is in vain they
Call the North the Edge
— You will see that it is Boundless...

It is precisely in the North that the Earth touches the Sky, it is there, according to the notions of the ancients, where one could "cross-over into the Sky" without difficulty. The significance of EE rests in the fact that, of course, it is the gates to infinity. Only from EE can one wind up in infinity, beyond this world, in the transcendent. That's why the EE has traditionally been defined as the "place of power". According to mythological notions, on the border outpost of EE stood bogatyrs (heroes) on guard, protecting the inhabited lands and conquering newer and newer space. They could never have existed in the Center, where there was nothing for them to do, where they were repressed and where their power wasn't allowed to manifest itself.

Therefore, they were always realized in the EE. This plot was transposed from mythology to literature, where it emerged in the story about the Odyssey. In general, any journey is always a journey toward the EE which is a magnet for the human being as the limit of his dreams and achievements. (Here, also are the Celtic notions about the "promised land" and the Jewish "Promised Land", and many others). In any case, the importance of the EE, like that of the human head, is determined by its proximity to the Sky, to "other-worldness", by the significance of the EE as the Gates with all the Powers of the Earth concentrated on guarding them. Some guards are replaced by others, Kerber is replaced by Mukhmar, but the Gates remain. In fact they create the image of the EE, not as something cozy and tamed, but rather as a place created specifically for warriors, for the training of their war-like spirits and for their communion with limitless energy potential.

Today it is clear to us that the EE is not located in some concrete spot, but rather in all spheres of human existence and activity, everywhere where a specific limit will be reached. Everything that is the limit for today, from the Guinness records to common human achievements, all comprise the EE as an inalienable part, or it imparts an "internal goal" for human existence. For example, it could be said that when Yuri Gagarin flew into space, his spaceship became the EE flying around the Earth. For the first time, the Earth pushed EE beyond its own bounds, it was thrust from the edge into the infinity of the cosmos. In the future, the Earth pushed its own EE further and further away, until it finally reached a certain limit, having sent the "Voyager" into the boundless Universal void.

Now we are observing a unique process --- the wandering of the EE in the boundless. This is the very limit of the dreams of humanity --- to advance such an outpost which would get lost in Nothingness and could not return to the Mainland. This is an anti-gravitational event --- making the EE autonomus --- and this is the "hidden goal" of humanity, which not that long ago, fortunately, was achieved. Bon voyage!

(PS. EE is the equivalent to UT (Ultima Thule).)

But before aspiring into Space, humanity had definitively fixed the notion of the EE on the Earth's surface. In a more "conscious" form, this was manifested in the Soviet program of the development of the North. On the one hand, the Gulag was created as a means for the extraction of the inexhaustible storehouse of valuable resources, and simultaneously for the pacification of the social activity of the laboring masses. On the other hand, precisely in connection with the taming of the North, there were proposals and programs of research for adapting the biological substrata (human-animal) in the extreme conditions of the North. These investigations were close in their significance to occult experiments to create a Holem. The topic of discussion was the search for a natural mechanism permitting human beings, via the animal method of winter hibernation, to survive in the conditions of polar night, a long winter, hunger, permafrost, cold,

and other conditions of the Far North. It was proposed to produce and apply this mechanism to human beings, thus equipping the multi-million masses with a most powerful weapon of survival.

With this goal in mind, scientists studied the behavioral traits of the human being in the extreme conditions of the North. As the research showed, the difficulties of adaptation in the North were primarily connected with the anomalous rhythm of Day-Night, seasonal rhythms, geo-climatic and temporal-geo-physical factors. Apparently required for adaptation were the lifetimes of a few generations and genetic transformations, assuming the modeling of specific behavior, lifestyle, food. The migrants, most likely, in the course of the first few years (likely 1-2 years) would experience a certain stimulation, the length of sleep would decrease and it would become fragmentary. Perhaps, the assessment of the environment would be mitigated, the resistance to stress and alcohol would increase. However, in the sedond period, a few different behavioral profiles would develop:

1) Northern depression and similar conditions. Unmotivated departures and freezing on the tops of hills, near lakes and lone-standing trees are possible against the background of melancholy and anxiety. Among the symptoms of depression in the North could be an increase in appetite (especially for carbohydrates) and weight, an indifferent drowsiness, vague headaches, and pains in the area of the heart. The risk of suicide for migrants to the North is significantly greater than for the settled (aborigine) populations.

2) Northern "schiziodness" was best studied by the Surgut psychiatrist Oleg Arkadievich Gilburd, who proved that this was a special form of adaptation and was wonderfully modeled by the settled populations of the North as a genetically entrenched behavioral mechanism. In this sense, "acquired schizoidness" is the best adaptational behavioral mechanism. Also observed were indifference (apathy), the dreamy estrangement in the perception of the environment, emotional frigidity and a certain delay in the manifestation of emotions, the frequent externally unmotivated sharp reactions and emotions toward insignificant irritants, ambivalence and ambi-tendentiousness (contradictory feelings and actions aimed at the same object or in relation toward the same person). Lack of will can combine with aspirations toward mutual-assistance and support. Judging by the observations, certain variants of anomalous behavior in the North are connected with one's race.

3) Special sensations and behaviors. At the base of certain psychotic symptoms of obsession in the North lies the psycho pathology of de-realization, characteristic of many migrants to one degree or another. Many speak of the sensation of the "space below Earth", having lost their sense of time but having acquired a feeling of global space. This amazing expansion of earthly, but not heavenly, space, is most likely connected with snow. For the greater part of the year, the source of light is not the sky, but the ground (snow).

4) The assessment of sexual, digestive, comfort, and other forms of behavior are almost always coloured by the "schizoidness" described in Paragraph 2) or by a depressive state. These types of observations always interested us in our research expeditions.

Hence, our trip beyond the Polar Circle supplemented the general picture of our wanderings around the borders of what just yesterday could still be called our Great Soviet Motherland. One of the unique symbols of this Greatness was the creation beyond the Polar Circle in the zone of permafrost, of a city-giant, a city-ghost, a city-cemetery --- Vorkuta. The founding and construction of this city was connected with the process of creating the New Man, whose characteristics really were unique (not yet anomalous) for types of communities dominating in the 20th century.

If you ever hear that the first prisoners, having arrived in Vorkuta in the middle of 1930's, sunk their teeth into the frost, don't think that this is a metaphor. Everyone is familiar with descriptions of the labor processes of the times of reforging and purging

(the Belomor construction site and others). The construction of the first mines in Vorkuta fits nicely into the context of the program: "We were born to make fairy tales into reality".

Added to this is the constant effect of heavy electro-magnetic radiation and the proximity to the geographic and magnetic Northern Pole. In the Vorkuta section of the "Memorial" Society, we were fortunate to speak with people who found themselves in Vorkuta in the 1930's as political prisoners. These people, having received prison sentences of 25-30 years, having worked off their entire time in inhuman conditions, did not wish to leave this severe region when their sentences were up, and by the middle of the 1960's were able to create on the Edge of the Earth industry capable not only of fulfilling the Party's orders, but also of satisfying the needs of the regional population (which had been supported during the time of Soviet power by government subsidies) by supplying many necessary component to ensure normal life activity.

This is far from the whole picture of what these people accomplished, having fully earned the name "titans". An entirely unexpected excursion around the ring encompassing the entire perimeter of the city of Vorkuta and consisting of power stations and cemeteries, demonstrated to us the power of collective body, forming itself via rigid closed structures. Memorial monuments seen by us at the cemeteries were placed by representatives of various countries who had been so bold as to divide the indivisible, erecting a monument only to the representatives of their own nationality.

These observations suggested to us the idea of the creation of a Universal Necropolis in the Polar Zone which would resolve many problems. In particular, considering the expansion of the cemetery area at the expense of economically valuable area, it seems expedient in the future to bury the dead in the Permafrost zone. In this way, having ensured the tranquillity of those who have passed into Another World, guaranteeing the preservation of their flesh in the Permafrost and in the Eternal Flow of Time, we give them the gift of hope to return from the Edge of the Earth to the Mainland.

Notes

1 The obvious relationship between these three words in the original Russian is lost in the English translation. The author suggests an etymological connection between the Greek "nos" (nose) and "nukh" (scent"). (Translator)

2 Again, the translation obscures the original somewhat. The Russian for "foreskin" consists of two words: "krainyaya plot" the first of those words meaning by itself "edge" or "extreme". It is this same word, "krainyaya" that the author uses throughout as the adjective to indicate "edge". (Translator)

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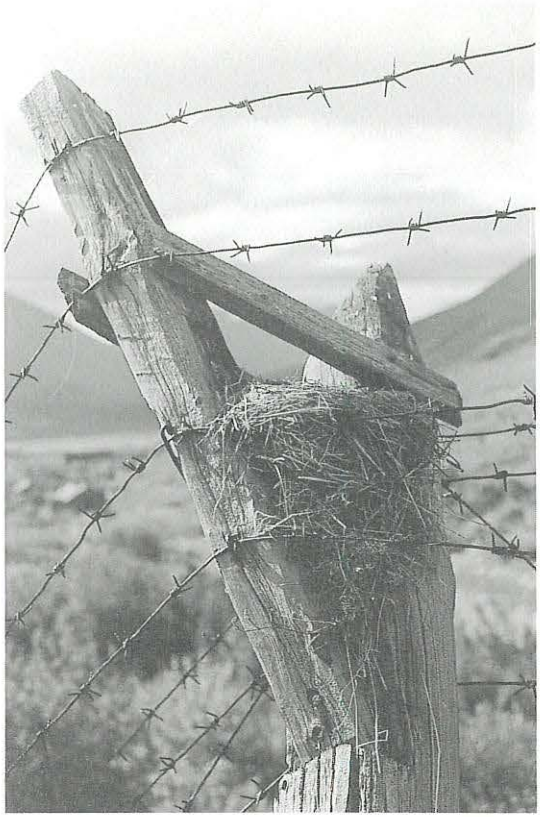
Vladimir Kulikov is Ph.D., working in the fields of physics, chemistry and microbiology.
Sergei Anufriev is a writer and theoretician, a co-founder of *Inspection Medical Hermeneutics* in Moscow 1987.

Translation from Russian: Cynthia L. Martin

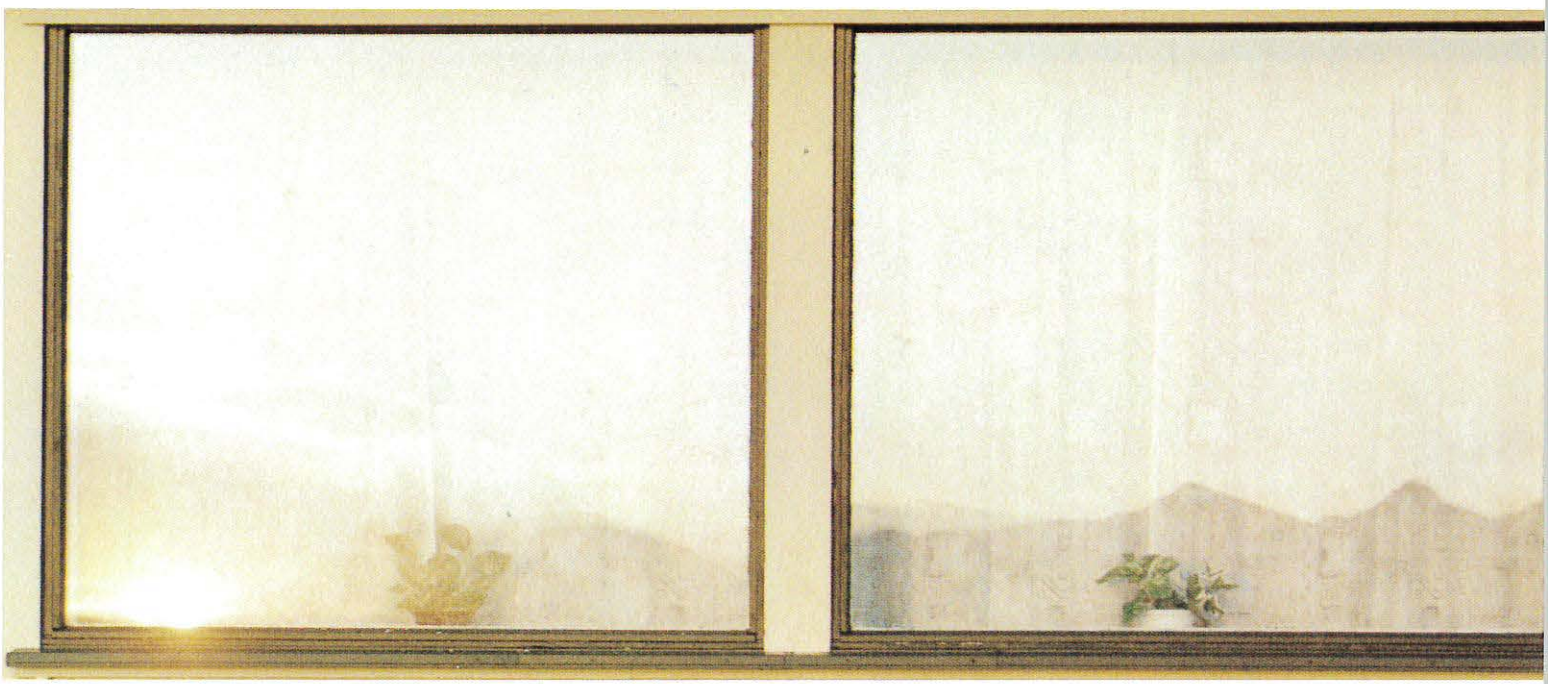


SATURDAY NIGHT
A Videoinstallation, 1996

Dancemusic: mixed by the teenagers
Sebastian Ingo Kirchner, Berlin,
Germany and Thora Dolven Balke,
Kabelvåg, Norway

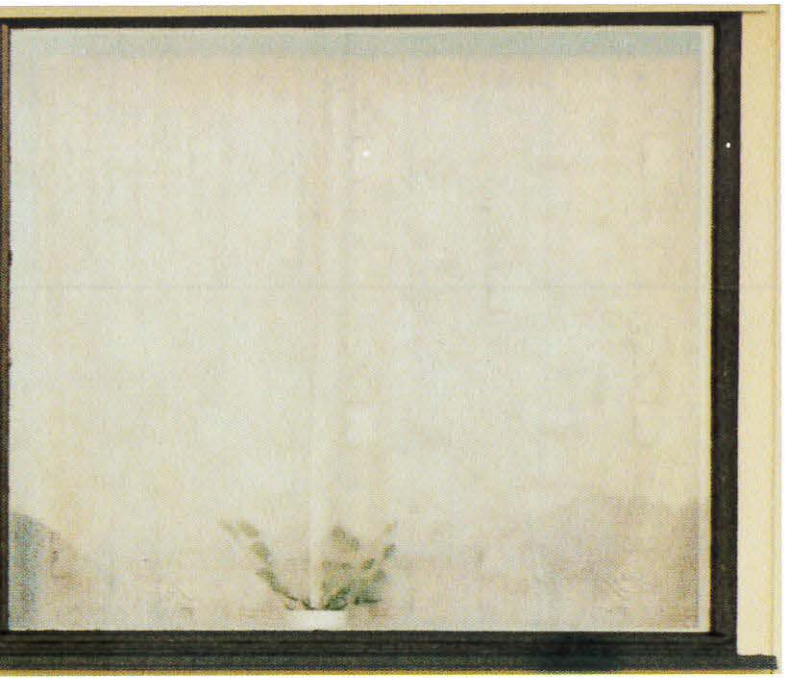
Photo and camera: Vegar Moen
Soundwork: Strype Audio, Oslo

Takk til Vicco.
Takk til the party-people in
Henningsvær and Trondheim.



It is the 5'th of July 1995 in Henningsvær. 68,2° North in Norway. Three panoramawindows are filmed from outside between twelve and one o'clock in the night. Inside the house is a party.

A.K.Dolven



Henningsvær July 1995

...you asked me about the music here. Yes, we play the same as you. (In common occasions like a wedding, unveiling a sculpture, launching a boat or if the norwegian King and Queen visit the area, they play the fiddle).
In our parties, this summer, we play like Dr.Alban "set you free" of Technohead: "I wanna be a hippie". They play a lot Dune "are you ready to fly". ARE YOU READY TO FLY-Y-Y-Y-Y-Y-Y. This is a good song for dancing. We like it a lot. I heard it was top in the charts. It seems like this is all over now.

So, the music is the same.
But walking home from a party here is a different thing. You should have seen the light up here.....ARE YOU READY TO FLY-Y-Y-Y-Y.

En la noche del sábado las estrellas brillan mas.

Hernando

samstag
(gott sei dank!)

feine häuserreihungen
ordentlich im haufen
telefonverdrahtet
fenster geschlossen

meer außen vor
land in sicht
abgestimmt die sonne
dunkel die vogel

orte für parties
passepartouts des glücks

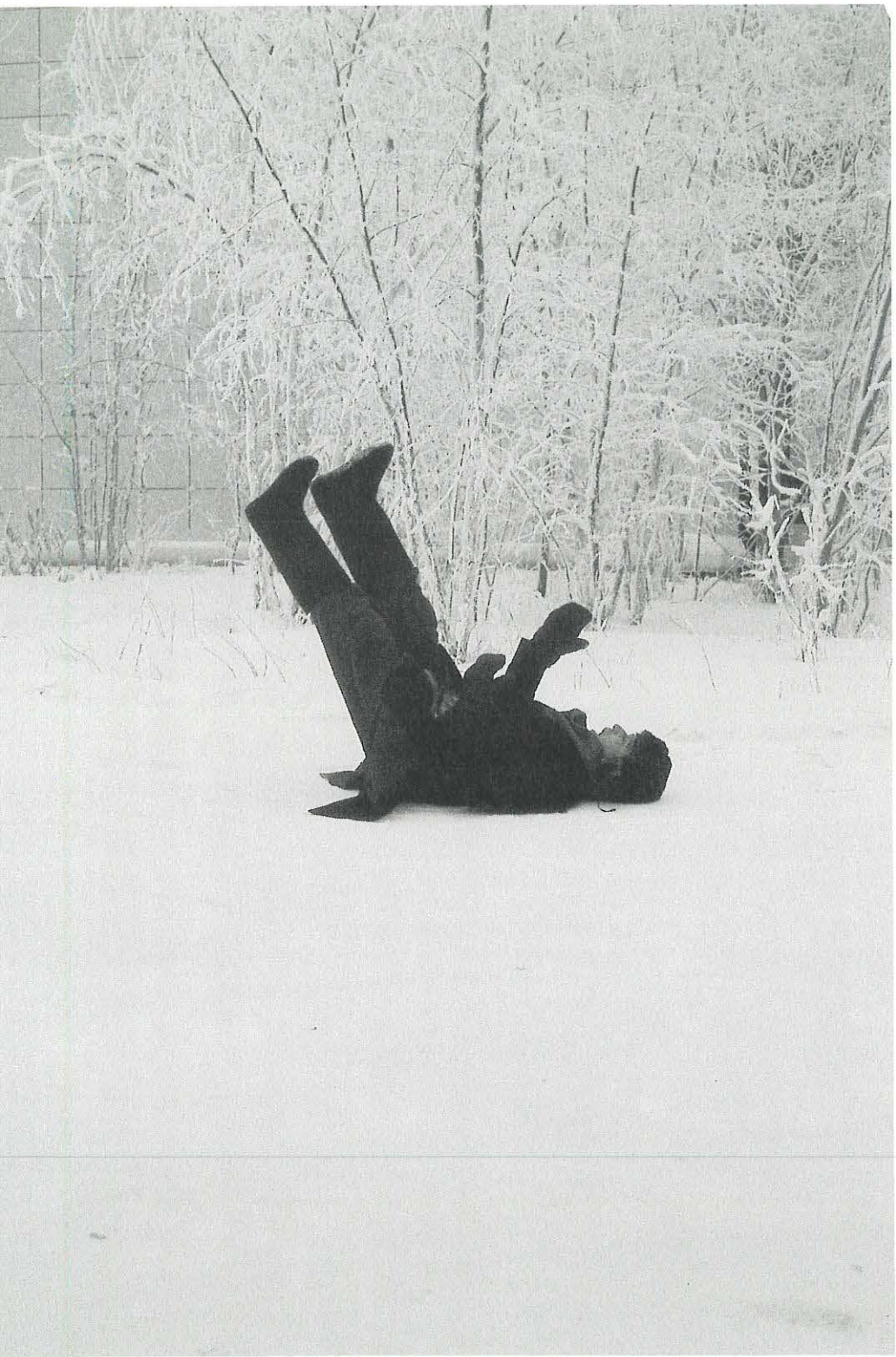
Michael Glasmeier

"And thy guitar's draught sanity" + "dirty saga hunt hung ratty AIDS" = 2+2 anagrams for "Saturday Night", which then makes 5.

Øyvind Berg

A Report on My Trip to Siberia
(The Dutch artist Henk Visch said: "If you imagined to look at God face to face, how close would you be? Maybe you would need to look in the same direction that he is looking." So I have tried to look at what the Yakutians looked at.)

A Report on My Trip to Siberia (The Dutch artist Henk Visch said: "If you imagined to look at God face, how close would you be? Maybe you would need to look in the same direction that he is looking?" So I have tried to look at what the Yakutians looked at.)



MAYBE I WILL DO NOTHING VISIBLE IN YAKUTIA

I LOST THE BOOK AND CANNOT REMEMBER HER NAME, BUT ANYWAY, I THINK SHE MOVED TO CALIFORNIA

Some guy connected with this project wrote, "as is well known, the New World did not host a human being of its own". He almost had a good excuse in that his treatise concerns the lost continent of Beringia.

My complaint is more of an investigative question about why everyone loves the story so much; I mean the story of my folks trekking over to Tennessee from Timbuktu. Isn't it obvious that neither had the Eurasian continent "a human being of its own"? In that case, why are we singled out to be spoken of that way so consistently, and so exclusively?

In the Americas the various countries always use the "fact" of our migration to deny our legal rights. Remember, I am using quotation marks to offset the word "fact" to show that similar facts about the "Europeans" are not brought forth.

Last year I was invited to lecture in Rome, and lost my courage the night before the lecture. I thought, "it is impossibly arrogant to imagine to speak publicly in Rome, where *everything* has been already said". Finally I accepted the tried-and-true method of 'bragadoccio' to encourage myself at least to the extent of offering my credentials, like a new 'cultural attache' at an embassy.

I presented to Rome, and so now to you also, the rather curious, but true, strange fact of my own history of legitimacy; that I am a *direct* descendant of the very first human being. I am not sure, of course, how many people in Rome might make a similar claim.

Now, then, let us return to migration. I was in Paris speaking with the Chinese artist Huang Yong Ping. He said that American Indians originated in China. I replied that, since that happened so many thousands of years ago, there was no China at the time. He said, "who were we then, I wonder". I said, "You were Cherokees".

Isn't it a horrible affliction that we want to know only that which we already know; that we look for constant re-assurance of existing knowledge? I am on my way to Siberia (I knew I would be, a year and a half ago, when I first flew over Eurasia) and I expect that everyone has a pre-planned agenda of knowledge to be fullfilled. People will propably want to see if I and the Yakut look like each other, and then to see if our languages are similar, etc. A long list of boring et ceteras, all completely known beforehand and none of which will help us move to the year 2017 more safely, more human-ly, more intelligently. I think that I, and we, will be *watched*, as usual; no matter how beningly.

Ilya Kabakov will be in Alaska. I wanted to write to him about an Inuit poet from Alaska, an older woman whose father was Russian. But I cannot remember her name, and anyway, I think she moved to California.

Maybe I will do nothing visible in Yakutia. That should be a chapter title:

MAYBE I WILL DO NOTHING VISIBLE IN YAKUTIA

Certainly I cannot either take artwork there and leave it, nor make artwork there and bring it back to Tycho Brahe's house in Copenhagen where we will all meet up. I will take tobacco and leave it as a private ceremony of adoption into Eurasia, but except for this sentence that will not be part of the art project. (It will instead be part of future art projects.)

I will take a small mirror that I found in the flea market in Lisboa. It reflects evil thoughts and spirits back onto themselves. If I make a staff to represent the center of the world in Yakutsk, of what wood could it be? Birch, I suppose; because birch tea is good for your eyes and because 'birch' originally means "bright" in every language. ("Kotsun' wa")

Here, in this collection of sentences which pretend to map both my thoughts and my actions, I will present to you various other projects from the recent past, which is to say, from the near future, since the project continues with Yakutia.

But first, what is "far away", and what, specifically, does it matter? How did we begin to associate "North" with "Up"? We make the association so deeply and strongly that it seems natural to us. To say that the North Pole is at the 'top' of our globe is silly. Standing on the moon or somewhere, we see that a globe, the earth, has no 'top' and 'bottom'. Not only could you imagine the South Pole was the 'up' position, you could, almost necessarily, imagine *no* 'up' position. A student replied that since the earth does spin on an axis it is natural to see one pole or the other as 'up'. But that is natural only if we assume some flat surface upon which the earth spins, and that is less and less natural to imagine (and we could as well have imagined it as rolling 'side ways' in some water-like surface.)

It was obvious to all of us for a long time that East is more properly associated with 'up', and since there is no 'real' East, only a direction, it makes a more egalitarian and processional 'up'. (For example, you will read in my poem that I live in the East Atlantic, in Belgium.)

Pre-Columbian maps from the Americas, such as those of the Aztecs, place East at the 'top' of the page.

Sequoia the Cherokee chief went South to Mexico City to seek help against the U.S. invasion. When he got there he said, "Half the world is before me, the other half behind me. This must be the center".

In the forests of Bohemia I left a staff to mark the center of the world, and included these words, "Every continent has a tree that marks the center of the world. And so does every village".

This division between "Europe" and "Asia"! As though it were really there. The reality is a million times more interesting: Eurasia is *so* big, and *so* varied that at any point there is the possibility of something new, something different.

DEAR MARIA THEREZA, LIGHT OF MY LIFE, ALMA DE MI CORAZON...

After our perfunctory good-bye kiss at the airport I got on the plane and wanted to come immediately back to you and apologize. Over and over, we let the stupidity of the world take over, and we agree to act stupid, even against each other. I am sorry, truly. I want always to give you energy and courage - you the same for me, huh? And we *must* remember, because 9/10 of the world will always act stupid. I love you. Let's drink a glass of Dao together and laugh intelligently when I'm back in Lisboa.

Meanwhile, good luck on your project to find the center of the world, or the center of the earth, or at least an efficient tourist information center.

I arrived in Prague last night and was met by an American woman. It turns out there are about 40.000 Americans living in Prague (!) I suppose all of the world wants to discover Eurasia. Took a *crowded* train to Pilzen, and Milos and a guy from Mexico then drove me to Pläsy. Guess what! This is Bohemia! (You propably already knew that.)

I got up early this morning and walked in the forest. Saw hawks, storks. But then --- beautiful coincidence! Milos told me that I should find my pole or staff, because he

wasn't sure of the size. So I went back into the forest and found a sapling --- guess what? A Linden tree! And growing in a place where it really had no chance to survive --- under a large cherry tree, so I ate 7.000 cherries.

But lemme back up and start over. Remember a few years ago I met a couple of young guys who had been part of the Mohawk resistance to the 1990 golf-course invasion? One of them, the artist Joe David, was facing the possibility of a long prison sentence, and he had asked me if, looking back at my own life, it was worth it at all.

At the time I had no answer. Only now, having left the Americas completely, can I answer: One has no choice. Well, anyway, --- his partner, Arthur Renwick, is here! In the Bohemian forests! He is basically a photographer, and took photos of me cutting down sapling to make a center of the world (now in Bohemia). He has also agreed to take a piece of the wood home with him and then send it back in time for the "Anatomy Lesson" project in Rheims.

It is already impossibly good that we found Linden wood in Lisboa, and now in Bohemia. I'm propably one of the few people who know so many different *kinds* of things about Linden wood, - not because I'm so smart but just because of different stories coming together. From my family I know that it has an inner bark that makes a strong rope, and a very good tea from the blossoms that will calm you down. (I made it for you in New York a few times.) The wood itself is soft but tight-grained, so that it is easy to carve fine details. For that reason (Do all your male lovers write lectures to you?) the Europeans used it to make wood-cut blocks for illustrated books.

That is why I like it for the "Anatomy Lesson" project! The "Anatomy Lesson" paintings show a time in art history when the world wanted "science" incorporated into painting (before that, there was basically religion, genteel pornography, and the self-gaze of portraiture). The Europeans wanted images of not cut-up bodies, but "scientists" *looking* at cut-up bodies. But it begins with a *real* mix of science. The anatomist Vesalius did careful dissections of corpses and *drew* what he saw. (He made himself *look* at what was before him, and recorded the look.) Then he published books of his anatomical illustrations which could be useful information for others. Before Vesalius's methodicalness, anyone could and did make up any theory they liked. What I mean is, Vesalius *must've* used Linden wood to make the prints for his books. Maybe even more ---Linden is the wood used to make charcoal sticks for artists. Maybe he even *drew* with Linden wood.

This place where I am staying is an ex-monastery famous for its pharmacological concoctions, then taken over by Metternich, the Prime Minister of Austria. It is surrounded by really thousands of giant old Linden trees, I bet that is the base of their pharmacy here.

Yes, you're right, it is all just goofyness, If I tried to pull it all into "meaning" it would only be sentimental meaning (or Sylvan surrealism). But that lack of point is the point of much of my work anyway - like yours. It all makes a great absurdity, doesn't it? Because it is an absurdity that *almost* falls over into meaning.

If I liked metaphors this ex-monastery could act as a metaphor for European history. But how to really use any of this Linden tree stuff in Rheims I cannot imagine. I'm so tired of making shows where one walks along looking, at first one object or drawing and then another, on down the line. It's too much like shopping, isn't it?

Well, I wish you were here. Some good people, good beer. I am at the center of the world here. Look! Look! I wrote a poem!

Much love, see you soon.
Jimmie

The Center of the World at Brussels.

PS. I forgot:

Arthur asked if I was going to the Venice Biennal. I gave my standard reply, "No! I do not approve of either nationalism or competition in art." Arthur said, "But the Canadian Pavillion is Edward Poitras and Gerald McMasters!" I felt very silly of course, but also, suddenly the Biennale had been transformed into something like a cousin's wedding that one should cheerfully go to even if one doesn't like the bride or the idea of marriage.

besos!

Jimmie

WRITTEN FOR "ART IN BULGARIA" MAGAZINE

Here at the Center of the World

(Part 2; The City of Bulgar)

(Part 1 was written in Cuernavaca, Mexico, where I lived until moving to Belgium in August 1994. It was a kind of an interview with a Cuban artist, now dead, and a Chilean artist. I doubt if there is any connection between the two parts.) Dimitre Panev asked me to write something about the situation of art today, but instead I intend to use the pages of this magazine to further my own project, which is in two parts: part 1 is to enlist people to help me become Eurasian, and travel Eurasia. The second part is to stop World War 3 from happening.

Julia Kristeva tried to explain that Stehndahl's idea of travelling around with a book (with narrative) as a mirror was part of narcissism, itself a necessary part of love. But I have been carrying around an actual mirror, not to see myself but to see where I've been; and, like Quetzalcoatl's ugly brother smoking mirror, to repel spirits that have bocome inadvertently evil. (Boutros-Ghali said that we now have a culture of death.)

I can become Eurasian; my folks left Siberia only about 20.000 years ago. Tzvetan Todorov tried to explain that Cortez became a modern man by the curious intention of discovering (and therefore conquering) America, unlike Columbus who intended only to prove that his previous knowledge was correct (and therefore force the New World to be old).

I will do a project of some sort in Yakutia, Siberia, in 1996, but it is more important that I know I cannot know or travel all of Eurasia; it is too big. Do any of you ever think to go and visit the city of Bulgar? (for example)

Perhaps I have the "Power to seduce" that Kristeva speaks of, but only by chance in chance situations. For example, I have been working (as a first effort to become both civilized and Europeanized) on both architecture and linguistics from old beginnings, from first intentions, as the central theme of my work. Then, I was invited to do a project in Vienna in a house that Ludvig Wittgenstein designed. It is a classically beautiful modern house --- simple in the way that Wittgenstein once hoped that the world was. The house is still standing not because of the foresight of the city fathers of Vienna, but because of a Bulgarian who saw that the building was about to be destroyed and acquired it. It is now the Bulgarian embassy (and they charge a piratically high rental fee to artists who show there). In the catalogue there will be one text in Bulgarian — the translation of this article. (Which I am writing in English.)

Then, Panew invited me to write something. I said to myself, "aha! connections once more begin", in the way that gives cherokees silly hope (but never resolution).

I am also making seven poles to mark the seven centers of the Eurasian continent. (The one pictured here is actually the eighth (8th), because Brussells, where I live, wants to be a financial and political center.) (One will be in Yakutsk.)

A guy from Bohemia asked me to come there, close to Pilzen where the beer is made, to do a project in an old monastery. When I arrived I discovered that the monastery had actually been a residence of Metternich, the pitiful monster from Vienna.

Because I am playing with the idea of stones --- steins --- of the Wittgenstein House, I've taken some stones from Metternich's Bohemian House to use as officially unwelcomed guests in Wittgenstein's House. (I do not want to be modern or post-modern; I want to be Eurasian!)

Oh, wait now! I have just been reading in a magazine called the New Yorker that the last Russian Tzar and his family were shot at Ekaterinburg, "about thirty miles East of the border between Europe and Asia"! What! I never heard of such a border! Who made it? How far North, and how far South does it go? Suddenly, just by reading this wierdly

typical American sentence, the world (and my hopes) has become both more simple and more complex. (The complexity arises from the idea of arbitary order, imposed by some unknown force --- perhaps the Romanov family, perhaps Stalin, or the CIA?) Oh, wait, please (!) --- no silly idea of a border between "Europe" and "Asia"; The Roman Empire invented both of them, after all, and everyone (except maybe not Deng) is dead now, and we may continue trying to find this continent. (Please?)

The magazine article also said that Anastasia Romanov had a little dog named "Jimmie", who was executed along with Anastasia.

But more important, in a separate article in the New Yorker I read that the newest Super Model is a woman from Siberia, Irina Pantaeva. She described herself as a Siberian Eskimo from Lake Baikal, and currently lives in New York, where I used to live. I now imagine that Irina and I are making a cultural exchange.

Here I must apologize to you Bulgarians because I intended to continue in the same facetious manner of the previous sentences, but anyway, I have not the stamina to be so consistently boring intentionally.

(I would like, however, to make an interruption here, concerning the English slang word, "bugger": a "bugger" in English is homosexual, but the word comes from the word "Bulgarian". The usage comes from the Roman Catholic Church accusation of heresy --- specifically the "Bulgarian Heresy", which had nothing to do with homosexuality. To the English mind, we might suppose, to break any rule heretically, such as the rule of a Holy Trinity and an infallible Pope, would automatically involve breaking the rule of sexual orientation and desire; thereby cheerfully and unconsciously erasing any debate about homosexuality being pathology, preferences or genetics. (It becomes simply a question of 'against' established dogma.)

Of course I do not mean that I think there will be a World War 3, or that action on my part would be influential, or even that I would ever know what kind of action to take. Certainly, art is of no consequence in such matters, nor even words a thousand times more intelligent than these. Everyone in "Europe" (If I imagine a 'Europe' separated from 'Asia' then I think it must be "the West", and therefore include both England and Texas, but not Bohemia or Bulgaria, which, being neither "Asian" nor "European", must be considered currently as the Center of the World.) seems to be having more babies and raising them more thoughtlessly. It looks as though humanity in "Europe" is preparing vast armies of young soldiers.

Bogomils! You who are Friends of God! Tonight let's all make love with condoms on. Why is no one saying that a future must be based on intellectuality, not on something ideological such as "generations"?

Why do not we who are intellectuals agree to be that, and demand intellect instead of denying it? Art that only mocks mindlessness contributes to mindlessness.

Irina! Why did you leave Lake Baikal? Just so that we can look at you?

As I wrote in a magazine in Paris last year, with no response, if anyone reading these words has encouragement for me, or something of interest, or simply an effective small benediction, please write to me.

Jimmie Durham
Brussels, August, '95

Europe, 1995

THE CENTER OF THE WORLD

(THE DIRECTION OF MY THOUGHT)

<DIRECT FROM MY NEW HOME IN EURASIA>
MIDDELBURG, THE NETHERLANDS
OCTOBER, 1995

(Visiteé)
"Here" is a word you might like,
In French:
IN VI SI
BI LI TE
"Invisibilité"

Drawn by the stone called
"Graphite" across white paper
By your/my hand, it is a pretty word,
And looks like and sounds like "visiteé".
It looks to be

(No words look not I look)
(See, if you receive these words
Through the front of your head;
That is 'visually', instead of laterally;
[And I want to be on your side]
You see the necessite of a , <a comma>
To see: "Words look not, I look")

It looks to be jumping quietly up,
And only half-way back down: "invisibilité".

On arrival all my words were already
(All ready [read] arranged carefully.)

I knew what I intended to say.
I had rehearsed well and knew
Rules of poetics and discursive.
Still do; the longer I am away
The more memory can create.

(For example, when I hear your story
It sounds familiar, and the next day
I imagine I had happened in it.)

Surely you must know this rhythm
Is not mine --- (either):

I might say, "Now we see through a glass, darkly,
But at home I will see my own reflection."
You will know how long I had planned
To say it.

This happens often on television:
One guy holds a gun, and says, "Give me
One good reason why I should not kill you!"
I always cry, because of course he knows
I know no reason:
He just wants me to watch tomorrow.

In the Orient, I mean, in Portugal;
That is only to say, in the Far East
Of the Atlantic ---
In the East Atlantic Ocean

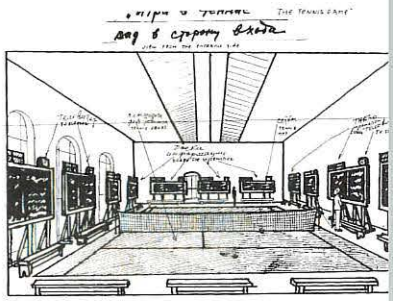
Close to the end of the world
At one time, in Portugal;
José Saramago wrote, "Do you say I am lying?"
"No", he answered, "when precision limits us
We choose words which lie for us."

Where shall we go, to the netherworld,
Like Orpheus? (Give me one good reason
Why I should not kill you!) No, I mean
Like Gilgamesh; Orpheus is sentimental.

"Don't look back!" He says. Too silly
(And who was that guy in the labyrinth?
I am at a point where I cannot find
A reason for my words, nor the thread
<Of the discourse of course>)

Suppose I were to say, to write, (And you
Know that I have been planning
To say that for several ~~lonely~~ nights.)
That I write these strings of old words
In the Netherlands?

Wait. I am writing (saying words
Inside my head so that my hand
Across the page will draw toward
Some other person irrevocably lost
In the future.) in the city of Middelburg,
Where the telescope was invented!

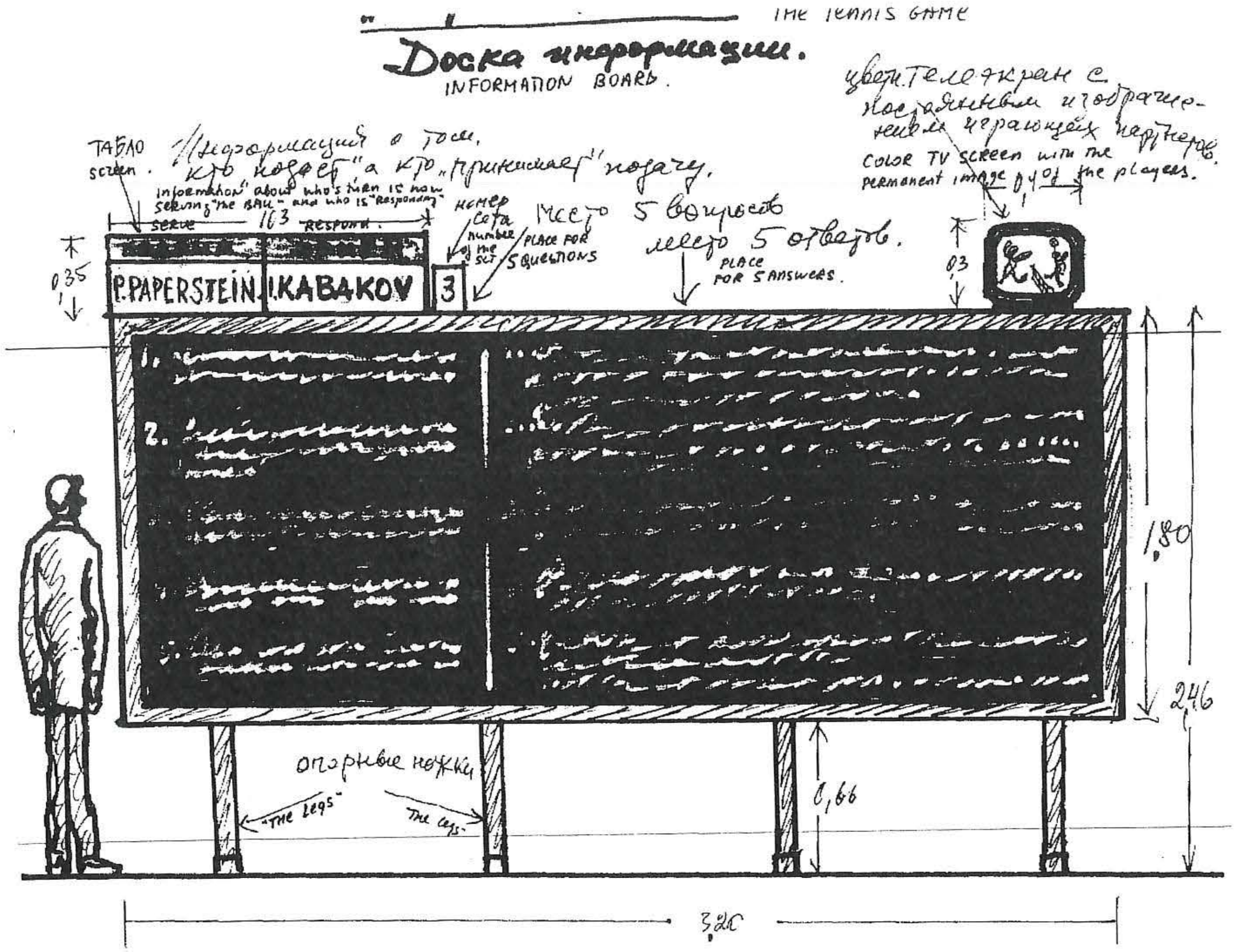


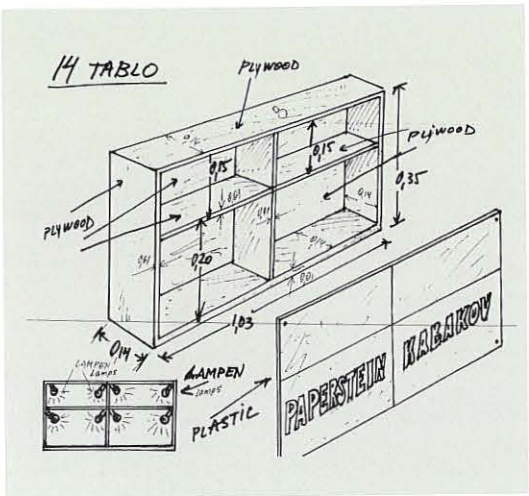
TENNIS GAME
by Ilya Kabakov & Pavel Pepperstein

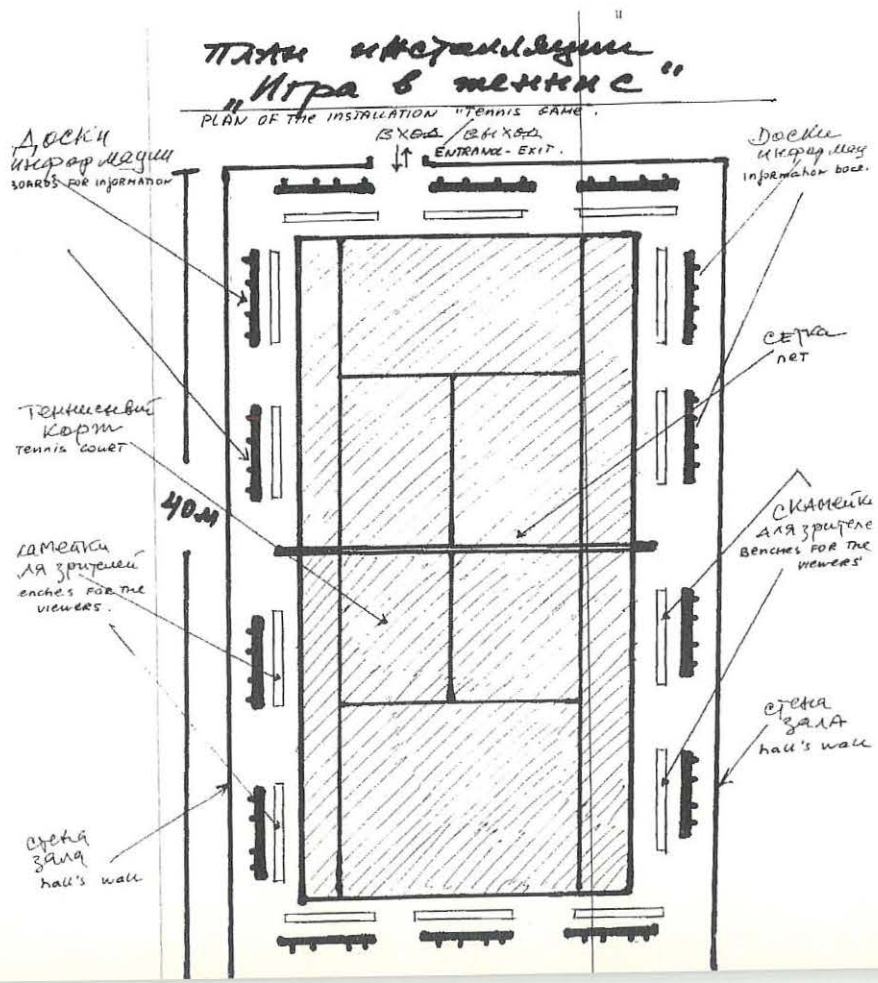
It is easy to see in the concept of this installation an analogy with Medieval disputation, which at that time was nothing but a unique kind of intellectual competition. In such a disputation-tournament, a preliminary topic was posed which was then discussed by the two partners. It was assumed that the two of them belonged to differnt "camps", to different traditions and the adventures of such a meeting were rich in sharp lunges, blows and their blocks.

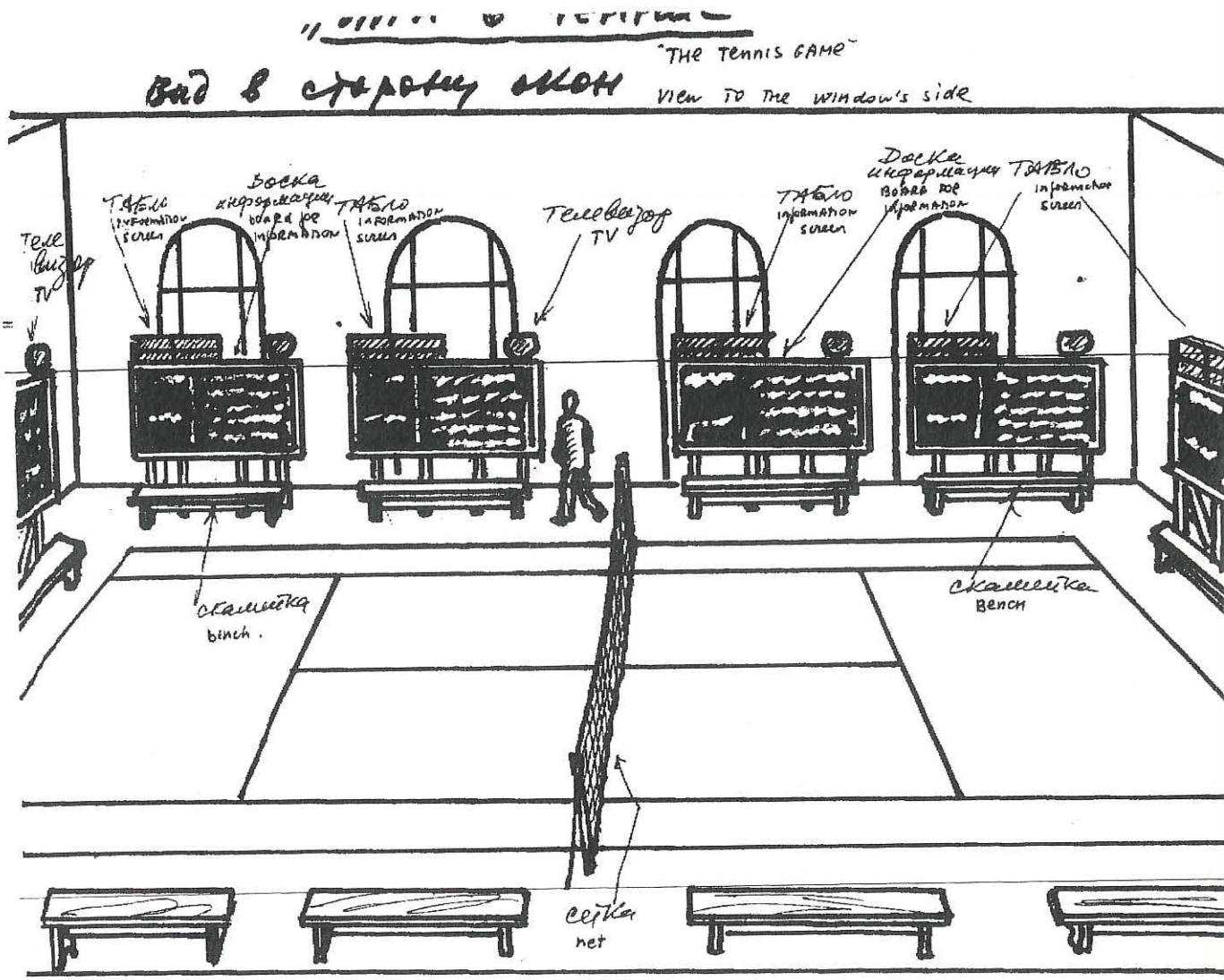
In the tournament by the name "Tennis Game", a preliminary topic also exists: "Strangers in the Arctic", and just like in a classical tournament, it — this "topic" — will be discussed from various positions by both of the "tennis players". The topic of the exhibit serving as the framework for this installation, the topic of an "outsider on foreign territory", is sufficiently close and comprehensible to both of the participants of the match, this topic has already been discussed by them rather often — we could hope that this time the battle would be uncompromising.

And where is the result of this "match", where is the victor? Here we can only quote the person who in our time resurrected the tradition of the Olympic games, who pronounced the following words: "It is more important to participate in these games than to win." This applies to the participants themselves. But what is the position of the viewer/reader in such a case? It is not nearly so obvious, and each one has to judge independently what has happened before him on the court.


THE TENNIS GAME
Доска информации.
INFORMATION BOARD.
ТАБЛО
screen.
Информация о том, кто подает, а кто „принимает" подачу.
Information about who's turn is now serving the ball and who is "responding"
SERVE
163
RESPOND.
0,35
P.PAPERSTEIN
I.KABAKOV
3
номер сета
number of the set
Место 5 вопросов
PLACE FOR 5 QUESTIONS
место 5 ответов.
PLACE FOR 5 ANSWERS.
цвет. телеэкран с постоянным изображением играющих партнеров.
COLOR TV SCREEN WITH THE PERMANENT IMAGE OF THE PLAYERS.
0,40
0,3
1,80
2,46
опорные ножки
"THE LEGS"
The legs.
0,66
3,20


14 TABLO
PLYWOOD
PLYWOOD
PLYWOOD
0,15
0,35
0,20
1,03
0,14
LAMPEN
PLASTIC
PAPIERNIK KRAKOW


План инсталляции
"Игра в теннис"
PLAN OF THE INSTALLATION "TENNIS GAME".
ВХОД / ВЫХОД
ENTRANCE - EXIT.
Доски информации
BOARDS FOR INFORMATION
Доски информации
INFORMATION BOARDS
сетка
net
Теннисный корт
tennis court
40 м
скамейки для зрителей
BENCHES FOR THE VIEWERS
стена зала
hall's wall



Sketches for the installation to be realized at the Pori Art Museum, Finland 14.12.1996-2.2.1997.

I.

I. Kabakov: Questions

1. To be a stranger in the Arctic – that makes sense. But who is native in the Arctic?

2. A trip to the Arctic – is it happiness, a curse, or something else?

3. The Arctic is most likely silence. Why should we violate the prohibition and talk about it?

4. What consequences could our conversations about the Arctic have?

5. Why does the image of something foreign, alien surface immediately at the very thought of the Arctic?

I.

P.Pepperstein: Answers

1. As far as I can recall, "natives" in the Arctic are polar bears. In general, our planet has two variations of the polar landscape, i.e. two "white voids" – The Arctic (Northern Void) and Antarctic (Southern Void).

2. A trip to the Arctic, as I understand it, is a certain "happy curse", voluntarily self-imposed – as opposed to Siberia, America, Australia and other places, from ancient times, the Arctic has been visited only voluntarily.

3. Between the Arctic (Northern Silence) and the Antarctic (Southern Silence) there is a fundamental distinction which has always amazed my imagination: these snowy-white landscapes (almost identical in appearance) conceal their own principle diversity: the "Whiteness" of the Antarctica hides the Earth, an entire continent. The "Whiteness" of the Arctic doesn't conceal anything, the "Arctic" is a fiction. Therefore, if "polarity" is silence then the southern variant of that silence is grounded silence, the "northern" variant is silence which doesn't have any grounding whatsoever, silence which doesn't conceal anything, which cannot be decoded.

4. Taking upon ourselves the role of "discursive polar explorers", we, most likely, can concern ourselves with two types of consequences of our "expedition": 1) a return (with stories about our experiences, maps that were made, etc.); 2) disappearance. In both cases, the consequences will be a subsequent expedition.

5. "Alien" is read here as "belonging to the other side."[1] "Destruction in the Arctic" resounds tautologically, almost like "destruction in distruction", "death in death", "disappearance in disappearance".

1 The play on words in the original Russian is lost in translation: the words used for "alien" and "belonging to the other side" are both adjectives formed etymollically from the same root for "side": *postoronee* and *potustoronee*.

II.

P.Pepperstein: Questions

1. "Natives" in the Arctic, as has been said, are the polar bears – they are white spots on white (just like all the other polar flora) – one might recall here Malevich's "white on white". Antarctica is populated in the same way with the distinct black figures of penguins, clearly read as graphic symbols, "letters". How is this textuality of "southern silence" connected with its conditionality, fundamentality, continentality? And how is the extra-textuality of "northern silence" connected with the drifting Arctic landscape that lacks a firm foundation?

2. "Polarity" is an earthy variant of other-planetariness, it is sort of "immanent transcendence". How is the pathetics of an "expedition to the pole" (into whiteness) connected with the pathetics of an "expedition into space" (into blackness)?

3. The Arctic is connected with a specific fear – it is the fear of cracks suddenly cleaving the "whiteness". This fear is very familiar to us, Soviet people. What can be said about that?

4. We know that the "grand whiteness" (The Arctic) possesses its own variation of color diversity, psychedelic variegated illumination – the northern lights. There are no such "southern lights" in the Antarctic. What explains this next asymmetry?

5. Why on some maps and globes don't the parallel and meridian lines extend all the way to the very point of the pole, instead breaking off around this point like a tattered string-bag? On other maps, just the opposite is true, the lines converge at this point?

II.

I.Kabakov: Answers

1. I connect this to the vividly expressed anthropomorphism of the earth. In a familiar sense, the Arctic can be viewed as the head of this creature (recall the expression: the "ice cap" of the world). Accordingly, the Antarctic is like its buttocks. The head tends toward emptiness, and its rear end tends toward foundation, toward matter.

2. In the most direct way: we are attracted to both the Arctic and to the Cosmos by two of the most profound, "ontological" passions, attractions: the desperate passion for solitude, for losing oneself in the emptiness, and simultaneously, in both places, the vague and tense expectation of an encounter. With whom?

3. Like in all of "Soviet" life, there is a complete feeling of the lack of foundation behind all daily existence, a feeling that life is like a thin crust, a film stretched over emptiness. When the crust is hard (frozen) then it "holds up" (like during the time of Stalin), when it gets just a bit warmer (like during Brezhnev, and today) then everything bursts apart, cracks, and the abyss is opened slightly.

4. Without a doubt this is connected with the fundamental notion of the "top" and the "bottom" of the earth (north-south). This is confirmed by the shining "above our heads" – up above is light, shining, stars; below, "under our feet", naturally there is nothing, darkness.

5. The entire matter rests in the fact that top of the earth and its lowest part tilt a bit, like the top and bottom of an apple, forming small indentations. On older maps and globes this was taken into consideration, and this characteristic is expressed in the absence of the grid of meridian and parallel lines at the poles. On newer maps where this is ignored, the "grid" extends to the poles themselves.

III.

I.Kabakov: Questions

1. There is a well-known incident from the taming of the Arctic in the 1920's. The famous Arctic explorer Perry was travelling alone with his dogs toward the pole. At the beginning of the third week, he sees up ahead the long figure of a person coming toward him and recognizes him as his compatriot and colleague from the Geographic Club. They pass one another without stopping, each in his own direction. Why?

2. Once again about the attraction to the pole. Why was this often movement only in one direction, why were misfortunes always encountered on the return trip, with fateful inevitability (like Scott's journey to the South Pole)?

3. Why did a race to the poles acquire such international proportions at the end of the 1920's-beginning of the 1930's? What irrational reason is behind all of this?

4. The following notion is widely known: "The great energy points of the world." (P.Parandopolus "The Power of the Star", Leipzig, 1612 and others). Do the north and south poles have anything to do with these points?

5. Both poles are points of intersection of the Earth's axis with the Earth's surface. At the same time, everyone who has been at the poles has been astounded by the extraordinary triviality, ordinarilness of that place as opposed to Mt.Everest, for example, the greatest "rooftop of the world", the actual point of the pole can only be determined by a compass.

III.

P.Pepperstein: Answers

1. The gentlemen were misanthropes, ant that's why they ended up at the Pole.

2. Despite the fact that in reality the "magnetic pole" doesn't correspond with the geographic one, in human consciousness at the Pole has been a magnet. The "iron will" of the polar explorers drew them toward this Great Magnet. In order to return, it was necessary to "turn to wood on account of the cold"[2] and cease being "iron", and in this way to be liberated.

3. The "irrational reason" for the race to the poles is the hysterical attitude of people toward dogs, especially intensified in the 1920's and 1930's. And the polar expedition is the only one realizable with the help of dogs. Criminals are also sought with dogs, and the Pole is an Empty White Criminal.

4. I, unlike Parandopulous, would prefer the expression "Great Extra-Energy Points of the Earth".

5. It's pleasant for people to find something extraordinary on the surface of the ordinary (in this case, on the surface of the snow). This is the triumph of the invisible (knowledge) over the visible (illusory) world.

2 Pepperstein is playing with the roots for "wood" and "iron" in a way that does not translate directly into English. The Russian verb used in this expression is derived from the root for "wood" and literally means "to turn to wood from the cold" or to grow stiff from the cold.

IV.

P.Pepperstein: Questions

1. Concerning the question of the meaning of life, Anaxagoras responded: "Investigate the Sund, Moon and the Heavens". Why?

2. Dying, Chekhov told doctor who wanted to put ice on his chest: "Ice isn't placed on an empty heart". What did he mean?

3. Freud described a dream of one of his patients about seven white wolves. This dream became famous. Many people have tried to interpret it. No one has explained the main thing: why were the wolves white? Still, why were they white?

4. Stalin liked to repeat: "An attempt is not torture".[3] Why did he love this proverb so much?

5. The Danish philosopher Kierkegaard requested that only a single word be written on his tombstone:"THE ONLY ONE". What was he hinting at?

IV.

I.Kabakov: Answers

1. In Anaxagoras' response, the emphasis should be placed not on the words "Sun, Moon and Heavens", but rather on the word "Investigate", that is, attention should be focused on the endeavor itself. In other words, like in the case of the polar explorers, meaning rests in the exploratory passion, not in the Arctic.

2. "An empty heart" is too pensive, pretensious. It's highly unlikely that Chekhov, who always looked for the joke and irony in everything, could actually say such a thing. You must have confused something. More likely, at such a moment he would have pronounced: "Ice isn't placed on a *cold* heart".

3. The answer can be in the same spirit as Anaxagoras': meaning, like life itself, consists in interpretations, in the potential for commentary. Gray wolves – that's veritable – it stops the imagination. Seven white wolves tie together nicely with Joseph's famous dream of the seven fat and thin cows (white wolves – black wolves), a repetition arise, a suite of visions, etc. This is good for both the patient and for the doctor's reputation.

4. This is the flip side of Anaxagoras' thought. There is no action, not in any form. Any action a person can take by his own volition will have an inevitable punishment. An "attempt" is still not "torture", but it, torture, will inevitably follow the attempt. Other favorite expressions of the same author: "Let comrade try", and "Let comrade speak his mind".

5. Without any doubt whatsoever, this is the fragment of a phrase, the beginning and ending of which must be guessed by the readers. All of Kierkegaard, his entire philosophy, is contained in this decision to use the "other": the impossibility of being oneself without the "other".

3 The Russian words for "attempt" *popytka* and for "torture" *pytka* are etymologically related. The play in the Russian original is untranslatable.

V.

I.Kabakov: Questions

1. Was Olga Stepanovna from Apartment No. 7 at the North Pole?

2. I read in a Russian newspaper from January 12 of this year that you were in Chukhotka recently with a group of artists and walked all the way to Alaska. Is that true?

3. Do you remember when we were living together in Moscow as next-door neighbors, there was man who was "a stranger"[4] living in our common hallway which was always dark. Do you remember his name? Who was he?

4. I remember that nobody liked him. Was it because he was "a stranger" or was it because he was "bad"?

5. Where did you feel more like a strange, In Alaska or in Chukhotka?

V.

P.Pepperstein: Answers

1. She says she was, but no one believes her.

2. That's a lie. I tell everyone that I was not there. But many don't believe even me. Apparently, the north is the source of the lie (since silence is always too significant),

3. None of the neighbors knew that person's name. They said he used to be a mathematician. Once near the place where he used to sleep, two books were discovered, one on higher mathematics, the other on mathematical logic.

4. He wasn't liked because he was always silent. He himself, being an ordinary human dirty creature, was neither entirely "strange" nor entirely "bad". What was "strange" (and "repulsive") was his silence – either it was deliberate or it was absent-minded.

5. I already said that I was never in Alaska or in Chukhotka. I think that I wouldn't feel like a "stranger" there: we are always "strangers" even to ourselves, we are so "srange" to ourselves that everything else in the world (place, people, things) seem like a family to us, a crowd of nieces and nephews, grandparents, cousins and grandchildren, in comparison to that individual "alienatedness" living in the very depths of our personal "I".

4 The English word "stranger" (someone whom we do not know) is more neutral than the Russian word used here, which is "*chuzhoy*" and it contains the additional meaning of someone who is "not one of us".

VI.

P.Pepperstein: Questions

1. The USSR existed for 69 years (from 1922 until 1991). The numer "69" is analogous ro the emblem for Ying-Yang

simultaneously it is the signifier for a sexual position, as well as infinity and Dao. Why did the USSR exist for 69 years?

2. That person who lived in the corridor once wrote some mathematical formulas on the wall. someone crossed out these formulas, and wrote a brief obscenity nearby. Why did that formula provoke such a reaction?

3. The heroine of the erotic novel "Emmanuel" was a mathematician. Why?

4. The USSR ended its earthly existence in 1991. Does this precise mirror image (19/91) have any significance?

5. Silence that cannot be filled with words, nevertheless, can be calculated and recorded in numbers: for example, via the calculation of the "time of silence" etc. Is it true that we live in a world where words and numbers wage a hidden battle with one another? If so, then why?

VI.

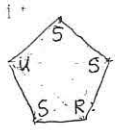
I.Kabakov: Answers

1. What you wanted to say with this complicated and sophisticated question is that there exists some Book of Fates which can be read and where we can find all the corresponding to elements of the first, second, etc. order. As is well known (to whom?), if the correspondence of the first order can be established (2=1+1), then it is difficult to do for the second order, and impossible for the third order (for whom?). As a result, the following variants of guesses remain:

4= hand
4 rose

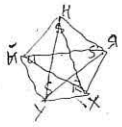
since both the first and the second equations equal 4.

2. I remember that episode well. There was a pentagram on the wall that had been cut out with a knife, inside of it were large letters.
It looked like this:



After a few days, letters and lines appeared near it:

Whoever wrote that didn't agree with the encoded political meaning of the pentagram. The reversible words "ying" and "yang" were visible at the top. I guessed who had written them.



3. In mathematical space, elements of rhythm, repetitions, progressions, symmetry, and transfinite structures are strongly expressed.

4. It has. The parabola of the existence of the USSR is strictly symmetrical. If its beginning can be calculated from 1919 (this is also symmetrical 19/91) – as some believe, then its peak flourishing "falls" on 1955, the year of Khrushchev's ascent to power, and then everything moves toward a decline; in this way the date of the end – the number 91, the reverse of 19 – could have been predicted.

5. True, but there is yet another boxer in this ring: visual symbols.

VII.

I.Kabakov: Questions

1. Why do we scrutinize a book more thoroughly when there is a picture on the left side and a text on the right, than in the reverse situation?

2. What is the difference between looking at a picture and the "reading" of that picture?

3. When we are standing in front of a painting, what side of it are we really on=

4. Do we change, depending on whether we are on this or that side of a painting? Who are we? Where?

5. When we are facing a painting, are we alone with it or does someone else appear next to us?

VII.

P.Pepperstein: Answers

1. This is connected, apparently, with the functional asymmetry of the hemispheres of the brain. It should be said that to this day this topic is considered to be poorly investigated, and it really intrigues the scientists of our times. Investigating the hemispheres of the brain, scientist studying, it could be said, the "Sun, Moon and Heavens" of human consciousness, in this way fulfilling the summons of Anaxagoras.

2. The same kind of difference that exists between "looking" at a text (for example, when a person doesn't know how to read or doesn't know the language), and the reading of that text.

3. This is one of the fundamental questions of Romantic literature of the 19th century. For the Romantics (and not only for them), a "picture" was identified with death and with "the other side". We might recall Edgar Poe's "The Oval Portrait", O. Wilde's "The Portrait of Dorian Gray", Gogol's "The Portrait", etc.

4. On "this" side of the "picture" we consider ourselves to be alive, on "the other side", dead. However, the dead have their own vitality.

5. Since standing before a "picture" is understood as a precursor to "otherworldliness", in this situation there is always a certain (or real or invented by our own consciousness) guide standing "to the side" or us, a commentator, an escort or something of that sort, without whom we simply get lost. In Zen, getting rid of this guide is equivalent, on the contrary, to liberation from the power of the "picture". The "picture", by the way, should disappear at this moment.

VIII.

P.Pepperstein: Questions

1. What is the fundamental difference between a dream and a hallucination?

2. If we consider that the majority of psychiatrists are madmen, how does that affect the prospects for treating patients? Can one madman treat another?

3. Do animals laugh?

4. Shy are hurricanes and tornadoes called by melodious female names?

5. In the last century, military personnel wore epaulettes. What does this strange fringe on the shoulders signify?

VIII.

I.Kabakov: Answers

1. The difference is in the place of their dislocation. Dreams live far away from consciousness, in the next house. Hallucinations live in the next room, on the other side of the wall.

2. In psychiatry there's not even any talk about curing, as everyone knows, all "patients" soon return to the "doctor". In essence this is the formation of a persistent classical "pair": husband/ wife, writer/ reader, etc. The insanity of both, incessantly coming to the surface without limitations, is terribly productive: the psychiatrist writes books, so does the writer, etc., in one word, it is positive creativity.

3. I understand the allusion, I'll take revenge later. If we stick to the essence of the matter: laughter is the meeting of reason with insanity, the border of this face-to-face encounter. But, are animals insane?

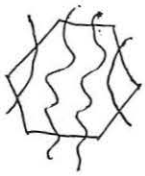
4. Woman is more reasonable than man, and her insanity is more restrained, more concealed, than male insanity. That's why when it bursts to the surface it is more frightening, merciless and destructive than in the case of a man. This has been named already from ancient times: Furiae, Erinyes, Valkyries, Willis, etc.

5. Epaulettes are remnants, rudiments of steel shoulder pads defending one from blows of the sword from above. But the time of epaulettes is not one of the brandishing of swords. Isn't this also an example of a sincere, demonstrative, shining (epaulettes are golden) insanity, and the fringe represent the rays of this shining?

IX:

I.Kabakov: Questions

1. What is this?

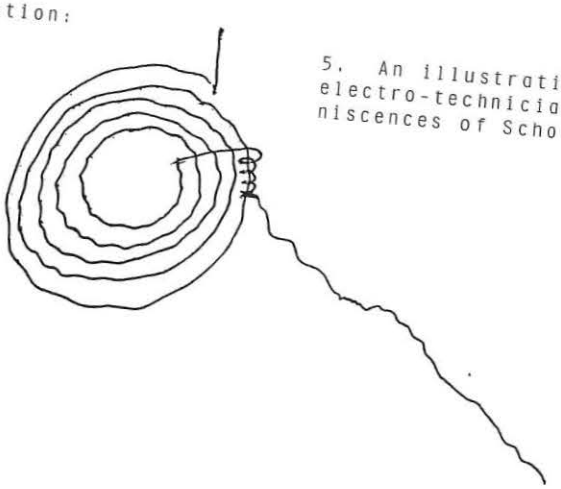


2. And this?

3. And this?

4. This, please:

5. Answer this question: What is this?



IX:

P.Pepperstein: Answers

1. The limitation of unpredictability.

2. A reminiscence of a trip to the Caucuses (a sketch from a young girl's diary).

3. An anagram of Peter Paul Rubens.

4. A snake who ate an elephant (from Saint-Exupery).

5. An illustration for a book by the electro-technician, A. Savelev "Reminiscences of School Days".

X.

P.Pepperstein: Questions

1. The Gnostic Basilides invented the word "Caulacau" supposedly representing the key to all levels of the heavens. Why this word in particular? What does it mean?

2. People atheistically oriented, in Russia say "There is no God". In the West they prefer to say "God is dead". Where does this difference come from?

3. One of the masterpieces of Stalinist art, the painting "Morning of Our Motherland" (depicting Stalin in a white tunic in the light of dawn), is really latently anti-Stalinist: Stalin himself could have noticed this dirty trick, having an elementary theological education, but he didn't notice anything – the painting was approved. Wherein lies the "anti-Stalinist" trick in this painting?

4. Was our world the first of all worlds created by God? If yes, what was God doing before the Creation?

5. Was the serpent-seducer a "talking" part of the body of the tree of knowledge (like the bubbles shouting out to Alice in Wonderland "drink me"!)? Was it part of Adam's body? Part of Eve's body? Part of God's body?

X.

I.Kabakov: Answers

Answers to questions of this sort can have the following gradations: I don't know; it seems to me; they say; it's entirely possible; that's how it really is in fact.

I shall try to apply these variants:

1. I don't know; I don't know.

2. It seems to me, that both utterances are equally oxymoronic[5] (like "bitter sugar", "hot snow" etc.). The assertion "There is no God" contains his very presence. The assertion that "God is dead" (if this is not a poetic trope) strips God of the attributes of eternity, which comprises a paradox and then the topic of discussion is no longer God. Consequently, both utterances are atheistic merely in appearance.

3. The "anti-Stalinist" in the painting is the illumination of the face and figure of Stalin by the Sun, which is impossible from a theological point of view: since Stalin is the Sun itself, he cannot be illuminated by another source of light but can only serve as that source. The painting was permitted because of the correctly selected time – morning – when the Sun-Stalin rises over the earth. This is an entirely plausible explanation.

4. In factual fact we don't know what the expression means: "This world", "Our World.

5. This question ideally formulates the activity indicated by the words "they say". This means not "who says" or "What precisely is being said", but roughly "it says", (something says), "it is said", it is pronounced, in general the very activity is *speaking*.

5 Oxymoron -- a figure of speech combining opposite or contradictory things.

XI.

I.Kabakov: Questions

1. Two ways of perceiving the world are commonly known: visual and verbal. Do other ways exist, and are they a combination of both of these?

2. There are people who are incapable of either full verbal or visual contact with the surrounding world. Where are they?

3. Visuality relates to space, verbality to extension over time. This is a truism. De Quincy spoke about the overflow, the inter-exchange between the two. How is this possible, where is an example?

4. Some consider a third way of perceiving the world as a "world of sounds"; many never leave it at all. What is the relationship of this way to the first two?

5. Where is the wider, more comfortable "tunnel" into the other world, which type of perception makes it more accessible?

XI.

P.Pepperstein: Answers

1. I would disagree with this division of perception into the "visual" and the "verbal", if only because the "verbal" ("word") falls into audio perception (of the sounds of speech) and the visual perception of the written text. By the word "verbal" it probably makes sense to understand the discursive, i.e. the perception of abstract constructions of meaning, "abstractions". More traditional is the classification of types of perception according to "sensory organs": sight, sound, smell, taste, feel.

2. Blind, deaf and mute people are such, for example. By the way, they can be taught language based on touch. Touch is, so to speak, the "base" of sensory registers: a person can be deprived of sight, sound, smell, taste, but it is almost impossible to deprive him entirely of the sense of touch (as long as he is alive).

3. I do not entirely agree with the wording, it isn't precise. "Audio" and "video" compete with one another for the right to "represent" consciousness. Consciousness contains in itself the "visual" (visible pictures of the memory and imagination), but also the notorious "voice of consciousness" commenting upon all that is visual. De Quincy used opium: in narcotic states (and not only in them), time can be "seen", space can be "said".

4. The relativity of these conceptions is visible in the popular example of synesthesia: in the consciousness of the listener, sound is decorated in color, it becomes color, etc.

5. This is unpredictable. The "tunnel" can be located anywhere at all. But it could be said that, as a minimum, what is necessary is "video" (the effects of darkness and light), as well as the sensation of movement, speed. The "audio" – music, angelic singing – is then desirable.

XII.

P.Pepperstein: Questions

1. Recalling the myth of Narcissus: Narcissus fell in love with his own "visual" reflection, but rejected his "audio" reflection – the nymph Echo. Why?

2. In Stevenson's "Treasure Island", Captain Flint used the corpse of a pirate as a pointer. What (besides a demonstration of ferocity) is the symbolic function of such usage?

3. Hamlet's father was killed by Claudius who poured poison into his ear while he was asleep. What role does the "ear" play in Hamlet's insanity?

4. Why didn't Oedipus kill the Sphynx?

5. How many teeth are there in the mouth of Zeus?

XII.

I.Kabakov: Answers

1. Because Narcissus belonged to the conservative direction in art, he was interested only in paintings (as was characteristic of an ancient Greek) and had no idea at all about the installation, where the visual object and sound coexit together.

2. A typical pictogram. It's the same as when a man and a woman are depicted on bathroom doors in airports. This recalls the depiction of the sexual organ on the sidewalks of Pompeii, with the head turned in the direction of the bordellos. This is a complete analogy to turning the pirate's head in the direction of "treasures".

3. The most direct. Hamlet suddenly begins to "hear" what is going on around him – he hears Rosencrantz and Guildensterns and others. For him, like for a prophet, it is not his "eyes that are opened to the world" but his ears. This is where the image of the flute playing on the strings of the soul comes from. This is the origin of Shakespeare's faith in the word as opposed to the deceit of "appearances".

4. It is very difficult to answer, perhaps because of esthetic considerations – chimeras, unlike today's tastes, could have appeared especially attractive (recall love for androids).

5. In depictions (both sculpture and flat) of Zeus, as far as I can remember, his mouth is half-open. That means he is saying something, most likely something angry, but his teeth are not visible. Consequently, we must turn to the records of ancient dentists – I don't have them. I pass on the question. I don't know the answer.

XIII.

I.Kavakov: Questions

1. In the visual sense, more precisely in the architectural sense, when referring to the Arctic, it is common to talk about it as a "cupola". Why?

2. And also as "the rooftop of the world". What does it cover? The same name is also attached to Mt. Everest. (By the way, its peak is in the shape of a cupola).

3. What is always meant by the word "rooftop" is a shelter, moreover, a total one. Is the Arctic such a total shelter, and if so, then in what way, thanks to which qualities?

4. Cathedral ceilings, as a rule, are divided into "boxed" or "arched". What's the difference between them, so to speak, in terms of sacredness?

5. A Mongol's yurta has a cupola structure, the Eskimos hut has a conical, vertical shape. What's the reason for the difference between these shapes?

XIII.

P.Pepperstein: Answers

1. It is believed that in the center of the cupola, where all the lines converge, is the main thing. As a rule, it is a source of light (symbolic or real), a hole, an opening, an exit, etc. The Pole, the "Earth's crown (of the head)" plays simultaneously the role of a halo – its innocent whiteness makes the Earth "holy". If the Arctic thaws (as a result of an ecological catastrophe), the Earth will lose its "holiness" and will begin to decompose.

2. I spent last night in a small room just under the roof. You, Ilya, are quite familiar with this small room and this roof – the room is located in your Moscow studio (next to the toilet).

3. Since this studio has now spent many years without its owner, our small group in Moscow exists without a "roof", in the situation of a permanent, thawing, dripping Arctic pouring directly onto our heads.

4. Arched ones imitate perspective, "centrally aimed" and pointing at the center, at the point of "the main thing", at the potential "exit". "Boxed" ones block perspective (perhaps, so as not to lead us into temptation).

5. Probably, this rests in the difference between Mongols and Eskimos. Eskimos "jab" the heavens more decisively, while the witty Mongols only touch them tenderly.

XIV.

P.Pepperstein: Questions

1. In Soviet apartments, an enormous (sacred) role has always been played by crystal (it is usually displayed in a special transparent case "for beauty"). Why?

2. Another stereotypical element of Soviet bourgeoisie life (true, more localized in time – the 1950's) was a collection of elephants of diminishing size. Why?

3. I noticed that in the bathrooms, people often hang up maps. Why?

4. Just how direct is the connection between the practice of arranging the interior of residential spaces and the installation genre in Soviet art?

5. How can the Pole be made into an Installation?

XIV.

I.Kabakov: Answers

1. The question touches upon the problem of "our residence as an installation object". Two components are definitely present in any installation: its sacred meaning (space understood as the place for sacred rites), and as a specific fantasy about something, some image, the installation serving as the repetition of that very thing. Our Home, a room in this sense, re-creates the image of a cave filled with treasures, crystal vases – diamonds shining in the corners.

2. You and I both remember well that these elephants stood on low chests on white lace doilies. Without a doubt, the chest in such rooms functioned like an altar (see Answer 1), and the elephants were like little gods, a family of minor gods, similar to gnomes, household "lares" guarding hearth and home.

3. The bathroom is the most active "total" installation in any home. Active in its fatal claustrophobia. Maps of the world, the starry sky, landscapes, serve as compensation for this state, they "liberate".

4. An attribute of any installation is the fact of its "exhibitedness", demonstration, display to others, to another, there is no other content in it. In a residence, of course, there is also this element of "display", but only to a certain degree. The effect of installations is in the hypertrophy of this "display for others" of my own personal living space, and the main thing, the "display" of it to myself. As though to a stranger in one's own home.

5. There are two ways of staging an installation. The first way – once you have the information about the place where it is to be built, and having received the layout and dimensions of the dwelling, and finally, photographs, – you then have to design and plan completely the project at home, thinking throuhg each detail, and after that you can send the whole thing to the site so that it can be manufactured there according to your sketches and plans.

The second way: without doing anything preliminary, depart for the "construction site" with the complete expectation that the place itself, its atmosphere and conditions will prompt both the idea and its realization.

With the installation "Poles" (as you call it), this second way is probably more appropriate.

XV.

P.Pepperstein: Questions

1. What is the relationship between the "esthetic experience" and the "experience of beauty"?

2. It is true that the "esthetic experience" is inseparable from surprise, from the unexpected?

3. Is it possible that the status of the "esthetic" can be attributed to this or that phenomenon entirely independent upon any states or experiences?

4. What is an "esthetic experience"?

5. The old Chinese artistic principle of "a crow on snow" is well-known in the Chang tradition. A crow on snow is drawn so many times, until the consciousness of the artist becomes "only that crow" on "only that snow". However, the very principle of "a crow on snow" remains. How can this contradiction be eliminated?

XV.

I.Kabakov: Answers

1. The difference is that you can in general experience something esthetically, or you can experience something of this sort only partially. Cezanne's still-life with apples and a still-life with apples of any Dutchman of the XVII century serve as a good illustration of this. For Cezanne, the quality of the "beautifullness" of the apples is in no way more important than the "ugliness" of the dirty wall; for a Dutchman, the "beauty" of the apples is what counts, and the wall plays the role of an "ugly background".

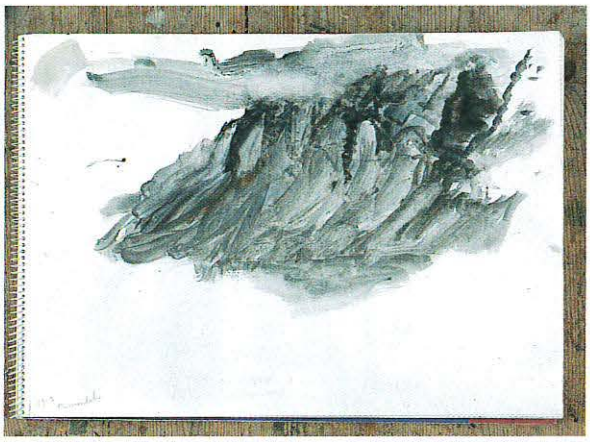
2. More likely it is inseparable from habit, from familiarity, repetitiveness.

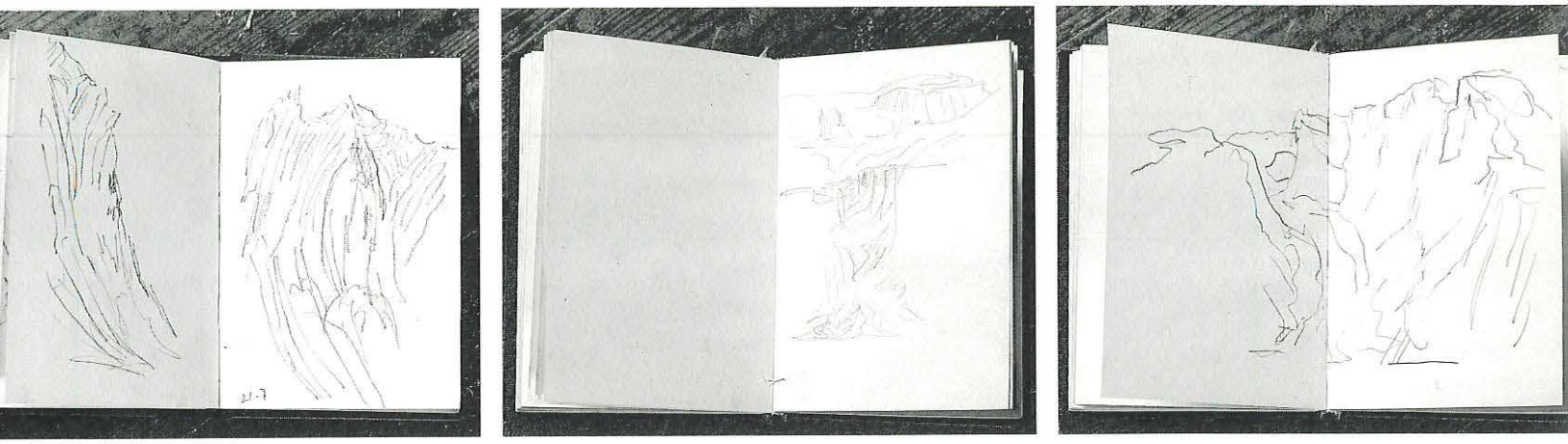
3. Only in this case of independence from these states is esthetic evaluation possible.

4. Probably, the esthetic experience is what remains when all other states and experiences are subtracted. When "something" is happening but it is happening apart from you and doesn't concern you personally in any way.

5. Contradiction in principle cannot be eliminated. Furthermore, in this story a unique paradox is concealed. A"crow on snow" is already an esthetic object, esthetic quality is already guaranteed by the subject. But it is assumed that the quality of the esthetic will be improved if the artist "projects himself" into the depiction of both of these things. The paradox is that, possibly, the "quality" of the drawing of the crow and the snow will be improved, but the very esthetic experience of the subject will not become stronger as a result.

Translation from Russian: Cynthia L. Martin





Sketches from the notebooks, 1995

Per Kirkeby, Untitled, mixed media on blackboard, 122x122 cm, 1995

Per Kirkeby, Untitled, mixed media on blackboard, 122 x 122 cm, 1995

Per Kirkeby, Untitled, mixed media on blackboard, 122 x 122 cm, 1995

An Expedition to the Little Night-River

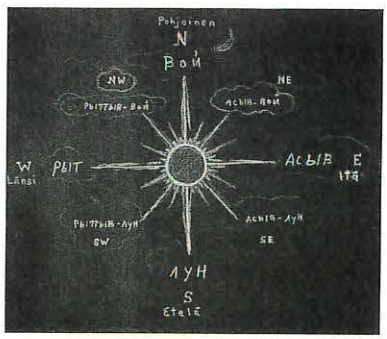
by Jussi Kivi

In August 1995, a group of Finnish, Russian and Komi biologists and artists mounted a joint expedition to the Voi-Vozh river valley in Komi, in the north-western Urals. The Voi-Vozh river runs between the Pechora planes and the Ural mountains. It is a low tributary of the of the river Bol'shaya Synya, which runs into the river Usa, which in turn is a tributary of the Pechora river. In the Komi language, the points of the compass and the times of day are indicated with parallel constructions. The small southern branch of the river is called Day-River; the northern branch is the Night-River.

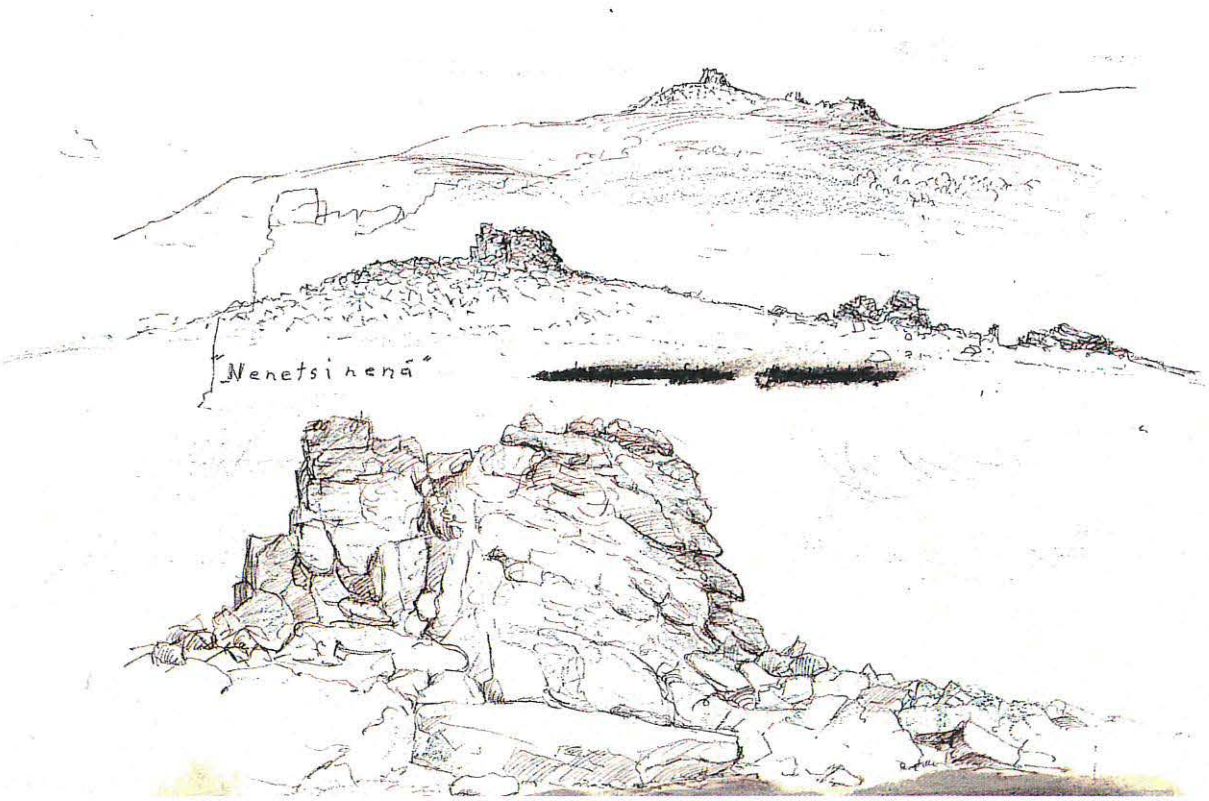
The area is closed in by thick, impassable forest, and is therefore entirely uninhabited. It constitutes the single largest area of untouched forest on the European side of the continent. This remote and lonely region is dominated by dark forests, bogs, mountains, wild animals and millions of blackflies. Here, the human species (homo sapiens) exerts minimal influence. The place therefore affords unique opportunities for observing and studying "the UNTOUCHED."

The artistic aim of the expedition was to study untouched, pristine nature as a mythical concept. This entailed viewing the expedition itself as a mythical rite converging on pristine nature. The scientific interests focused on botany, zoology, ornithology, ecology and hydrobiology. However, the environment seemed supremely indifferent to our aims.

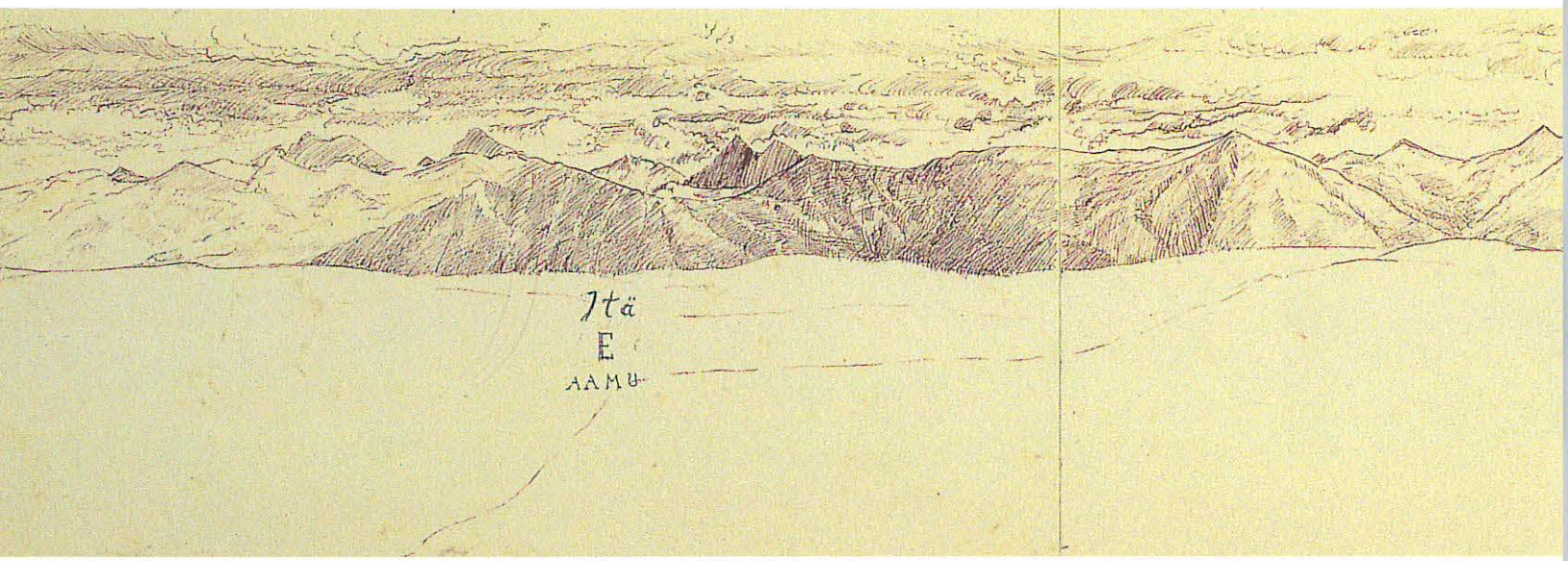
A Komi compass. Still photo from a film *Voj Vozh, a Little Night-River*, 1996



Little-Night River, Colour
hoto, 1995



Geological formations remind an ancient fortress, or a nose of a petrified Nenets soldier. Sepia, coloured chalk, 19 x 29,5 cm, 1995-96.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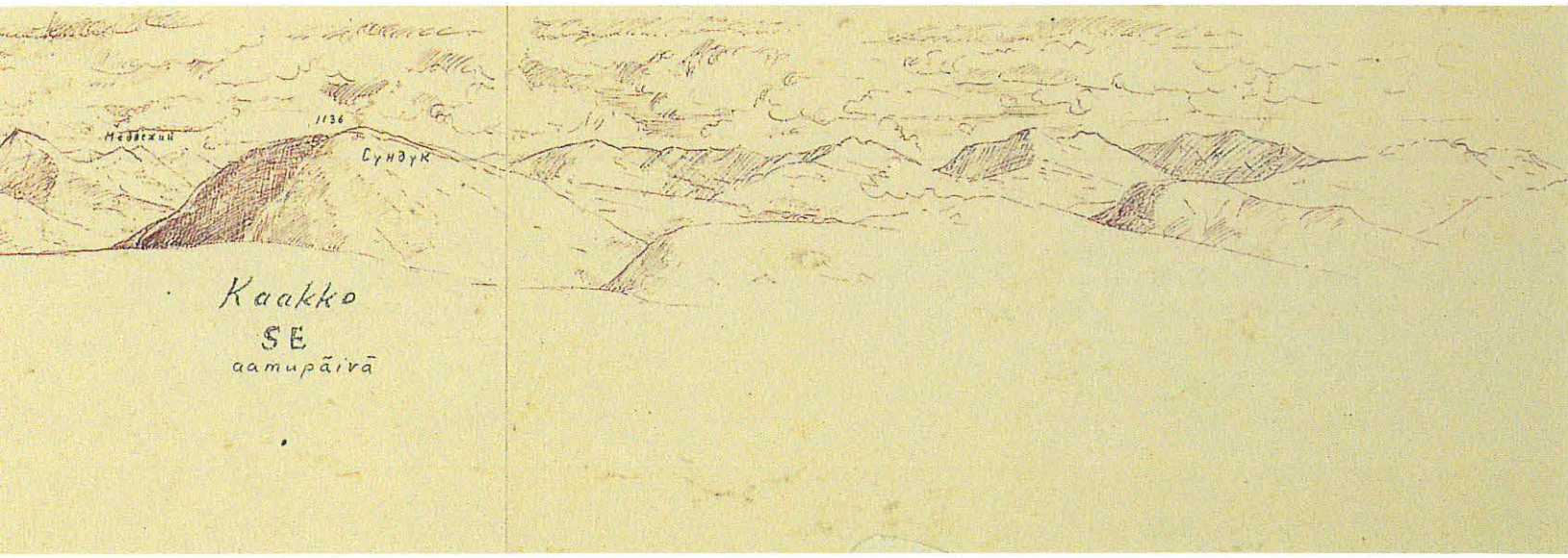


Panorama from the Urals, from north-east to south-west. Detail.
Sepia, coloured chalk, 17,5 x 175 cm, 1995-96.

OLD CAMPS

Jussi Kivi

Those who came before us and those who come after, the same crowd. On September 15, 1995, Kari, Tero, Rummukainen and Kontinen and I were on the march. We spent the night on a tall bank of the river Ivalojoki. A good spot, flat and pretty. The river flows calmly below, and gold-coloured birches and red pine trees stand on the opposite bank.

As the sun sets, we rig up the lean-to. Someone has camped here before: the scrub is littered with wooden poles that end up as our firewood. Water from the river, a fireside supper in the dusk, a bright autumn night.

LITERATURE

In the morning, I washed the soot-blackened pots and pans in the river. Matthias Alexander Castrén's book *Tutkimusmatkoilla pohjolassa (Explorations in the north)*, published in 1841, describes a winter sledge-tour along the same river.

The water travels in slow eddies. The landscape has not changed since Castrén's day; some of the pine trees on the bluff were alive then already. The autumn sun still gives a little heat; it takes an effort to imagine the reindeer and pulka flying through the blizzard.

Castrén was the first explorer to study the Finno-Ugric peoples and languages. He began his first long expedition in Lapland, and recorded insightful and sympathetic descriptions of the Sámi. He continued his journey across the Kola Peninsula to the province of Archangel on the Arctic Ocean, and on to Pechora and finally all the way to Siberia. Castrén sometimes slept in the snow, sometimes in bug-infested huts—he made his excursion on a small budget and with few companions. When he first visited the Samoyeds on the Arctic Ocean, he was stricken with consumption, and had to cut his journey short and return to Finland. Having regained his strength, he made some further expeditions to remote parts of Siberia, but he never fully recovered his health. Matthias Alexander Castrén died of consumption in 1852, at the age of thirty-nine.

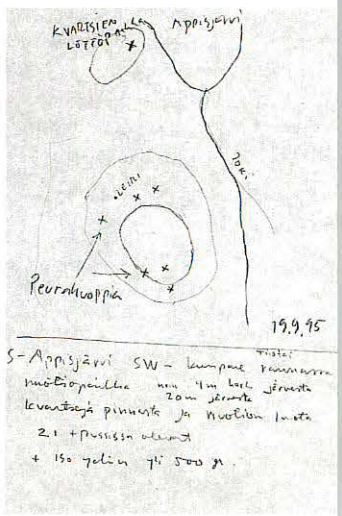
The river flows calmly. The ghost of the great explorer drifts past on a raft and greets me coolly.

"The explorer's first duty is to feel at home wherever he goes. External hardships are no excuse for shunning a suitable field of work." (M.A. Castrén, 1842)

The autumn sun is warm, but the oatmeal is almost burned to the bottom of the pan. The river water is cold in the dishwasher's hands. Rummukainen has read a guide to Lapland that advises backpackers to bring rubber gloves, to avoid freezing their hands while dish-washing.

I realise I haven't read a proper guidebook. However, a third of the books I own are boy's hiking adventures published in Finland in the 1930s, '40s and '50s. In these books, the world is beautiful and more easy to control. Evil is evil, good is good, the environment is still clean, the forests are large, and the wholesome, upbeat mood carries from beginning to end: nights beside the open fire, happy, sunlit days, raging storms. Lost treasures, robbers, adventures and expeditions in the distant forests and wilds.

The sun is warm, "How to Survive in the Woods," should I read a guidebook, should I write one.



Archeologial observations from a notebook 19.9.1995. Pencil, 13,5 cm x 10 cm

WHITE STONES

Quartz is a hard mineral that cleaves unevenly and is difficult to carve into a regular shape. However, the cleaved edges are sharp. The skilled workman could make a few sharp edges, producing a quartz tool.

The most common quartz implements were arrowheads and simple scrapers used for treating leather. The bulk of the quartz ended up being wasted in the form of shards and chippings.

As I clambered up the riverbank with the clean pans, I noticed the first chip of white stone.

Choosing a place to set up camp is based on intuition. Aesthetic and practical considerations fuse. This entails respecting tradition and paying homage to past millennia. It is also a question of artistic self-respect, pure and simple. Sleeping in a poor spot is embarrassing and exposes one to evil spirits.

Romantic notions of performing an unchanged ritual dictated by ancient custom: giving meaning to a place, grasping the meaning of a place. A good place is flat, has terrain that absorbs water, faces south, offers access to fresh water and firewood, all amounting to a reasonably sheltered and aesthetically attractive location.

The hunters followed their prey and travelled between places to fish, returning to the same waters and campsites. Certain stone-age sites were inhabited for thousands of years. Temporary sites were perhaps only used for a few days and nights, now and then.

The ground at the edge of the ridge is broken. The ridge is collapsing into the river. In the more desolate parts of Lapland, the peat is only a few centimetres thick. The would be archaeologist can manage without a spade.

I found more stone chippings along the crest of the collapsed ridge and below it. There is a terrace-like plateau next to the ridge. Perhaps this was a site of habitation and more finds are waiting to be discovered beneath the moss, or maybe erosion has washed everything into the river.

It is possible that people already lodged here during the first millennium, after the ice sheet retreated, or perhaps the first occupants only arrived a thousand years ago. All we know from the quartz chippings is that someone came here, not when. But they still tell us something.

KONTINEN'S PREHISTORIC SKI

In the afternoon we decamped. Tero found a broken ski nearby, its wood fanned out in splinters. The brand of the ski was Karhu and it dated from around the 1950s or '60s. Someone had to continue his journey on a single ski.

After we had marched upriver for a few kilometres, we found more quartz chippings on the path. I stopped to look around while the others rested. Rummukainen said there were more white stones on the path twenty metres away—another hospitable spot. I collected the finds and marked the site on the map.

The river is an old travel route and a source of fish. A few stone-age habitations have already been discovered by gold-diggers. But most of the area is a blank archaeologically.

SCRAP GOLD

Nature is already covering up the traces of gold-digging, but at the main sites, you can find all manner of things dating back to the gold rush and later periods. Further south, a few prospectors still pan the tributaries of this river.

In the heyday, which occurred in the last century, some five hundred men worked in the wilderness here, but only the first few made real fortunes.

The myth of the secluded gold-digger is more interesting than the fabled riches. A man disappointed by the world has chosen his way of life, but not his fate. In the uneventful void of the wilderness, he seeks his personal treasure, the bedrock. He is impoverished on the outside, but rich within.

September 16. We slept in a cabin dating from the gold rush. The plaque on the wall said the cabin had been restored in honour the gold-panning tradition and the men who worked in these difficult conditions.

The history of gold-digging is littered with tenacity, greed, creative insanity, hope and fruitless toil; grandiose schemes that end inexorably in ruin.

The same plaque records that the first nuggets of Ivalojoki gold were found near the cabin on September 16, 1868, one hundred and twenty-seven years ago to the day.

Rummukainen fumbles in his pack and produces a half-bottle of brandy, which we consume in honour of the anniversary, but without significant consequences.

Glory to the past ages, eternal peace to those who died for the yellow metal, praised be the fruitless toil in the wilderness, glorious work. In an advanced materialist-Lutheran society, work is the most important thing in the present life—you can always rest in the world beyond. You constantly have to justify the worth of what you do, to yourself and to others; you have to prove the value of your work. The bread you earn is not sufficient remuneration and honour: the work is a value in itself. Build until the world is filled, cut down and destroy to the last breath, by all means ask why and what, as long as you dog keep digging. Capitalism treats the individual as a dog who has to be motivated to dig, but a real dog, a wild dog, does not need to be rainwashed: it will dig for its own amusement.

On both nights, the northern lights played in the sky. Tonight they were even brighter than yesterday.

September 17. We continued along the river, then began the ascent from the valley onto the fells. A bright day and a long walk. In the afternoon we saw blue smoke from someone's fire in the fells.

At sunset, we arrived exhausted at a small pond high on a fell called Pietarlauttanen. An open view, with low, golden-yellow birches.

Near the pond, on a mound, at what seemed the only conceivable place to set up camp, we found the poles of a tepee standing, ready for use. We simply rigged up the lean-to canvas to break the wind, and slept under the open sky. For firewood, we found some fresh birch, and after some searching, a few pitchy stumps for kindling. Building a fire was easier lower down in the forest, but although I was tired, I felt a surge of enthusiasm. Perhaps I was animated by the spirit of the place, the pretty view and the evening, the dried birch branches, already reddening to a coppery colour; the people before us had used them for bedding . The fire, the view, the poles of the tepee together.

Deer hole, Appisenpalo, Inari 19.9.1995

Appisjärvi, Stone Age dwelling place 19.9.1995

The fresh, moist birch burned with a hiss, turning into hot embers. The night wind blew from the south-west; I lay wide awake in my sleeping bag for a long time, watching the stars and the northern lights. Then a light veil of cloud rose, and I fell asleep. The weather has been kind to us throughout the excursion.

One hundred and thirteen years ago, a scientific expedition led by Professor Selim Lemström came here to study the northern lights. On the fell, in the middle of the wilderness, a coil of copper-wire had been set up, with further wires connected to measuring equipment in a hut down in the valley.

On December 29, 1882, a wonderful phenomenon reportedly took place. A ray of aurora borealis was seen ascending from the copper coil towards the sky. The research continued the following winter. The "output device" was once more erected on the fell, but the phenomenon did not repeat itself, and remained a mystery.

September 18. A day spent on the move. Bright, clear, blue autumn sky. Appisjärvi is a small mountain lake: about two kilometres long and half a kilometre wide.

The shores of the lake are gentle slopes of swampy ground with tussocks, birches, a few isolated clumps of spruce trees, tundra. A fire destroyed the forest south-west of the lake over forty years ago, and the recovery has yet to get going.

We camped on a mound on the southern tip of the lake. It was hard to find a flat spot among all the tussocks, holes, stones and further prehistoric relics: traps dug before the age firearms.

In this area, the wild deer became extinct near the mid-nineteenth century, due to improving firearms, incursions by southern hunters and reindeer husbandry.

The holes are old, their edges already softened by erosion. No trace is left of the accompanying structures: guide-fences and sharpened poles.

The oldest hunting-pits may go back to the Neolithic stone age. Dating is rudimentary; more research is needed. Usually the traps were built on sandy ground and on ridges, where the ground could be easily dug. Ridges were also where deer would have had their natural paths, at least in forested areas.

We found six hunting pits in the area around our camp. North of the camp, on a lakeside hillock, beyond a sunken bog, we also discovered other interesting traces.

At the first site, we found the stones of a campfire. One of the stones was bright white quartz. Obviously, not all the quartz you find in the wilds has been left behind by ancient hunters, but this stone had been worked, and had sharp edges. The stone was what archaeologists call a core, that is, a piece used as raw material. Now it has ended up as some fisherman's or hiker's hearth.

Twenty metres higher up lay another interesting site, with traces of several fires, trampled earth, a sooty cultural layer right at the top, beer-bottle tops, this year's fish bones, broken glass and masses of stone-age quartz chippings. I gather twenty-odd specimens from an area within a few square metres, and leave about the same number for future generations.

Someone has sat here quaffing beer, heedless of what lay within view. Indeed, there was little there to be seen: just a few small bits of white stone. The hunter who once sat here crafting his arrowheads was similarly ignorant of the joys of beer.

North of the lake is someone's fishery: the poles of a permanent tepee, a structure for drying nets, a cellar dug into the bank of a stream, and a couple of boats lying on the shore.

This does not mean that Appisjärvi is swarming with people: the lake is a long way

from roads and habitations. However, the terrain on the shores of the lake is such that almost any sheltered spot also has a burned-out fire or other markings. So it is today and so it has been for thousands of years: the place looks the same and serves the same purpose as before.

PRISTINE NATURE, DO NOT TOUCH!

On September 20, we climbed westwards across Appisenpalo; the hill affords a good view back in the opposite direction. The silhouette of Hammastunturi fell looms on the horizon. This area is nowadays officially called the Hammastunturi Wilderness. The limits and the concept of a wilderness have been legally defined, with the aim of preserving the character, the environment and the traditional usage of such areas. It is interesting to reflect on the ambiguous concept of a wilderness, especially the idea of pristine nature.

Just as sinful, mortal humanity invented God as its opposite, western culture has contrasted itself with the notion of untouched nature.

The idea is a beautiful and mystical one, and also a symbol of the human mind, a Romantic concept that tells us a lot about ourselves and about our relationship with nature.

Pristine nature sells better than ever before—it sells cars, petrol, clothes and commodities, products priced below the cost of production.

The image of pristine nature is a flat cliché, but as an idea, "the untouched" is suggestive. It is a metaphysical concept, something that humans wish to see in themselves; the untouched, the unsullied, something we lose the moment we are born.

Our nature is corrupted at life's first touch, but what of the relative concept of good, of sympathy for other living beings? That is what separates us from the animals. So, is "animal" the opposite of "human"? If the human world is dualistic, we must find our opposite. I expect even hard-boiled materialists would define themselves in contrast with animals, even while acknowledging their animal nature. The opposite of "human" is in other words "nature," a lame conclusion, leading back to square one. We are part of nature and when our spirit leaves us, we are decomposed by the microbes within. Nature is not pristine. Nor are we. And if we must have our binary opposites, let them be Gods. That at least implies a certain idealism and gives nature some depth as well. If I must believe in something, from all the poor alternatives, I tentatively choose the one that offers the greatest freedom, giving the widest reign for the imagination. In other words, I believe in God, as a concept.

Some people would call this holism, but it's just the opposite of dualism, just as evening is the opposite of morning. September 20-21. We spent the night before last on the river Kynsileikkaamajoki, and on the following evening we walked to the road, and spent the night there, ready to flag down the passing bus in the morning.

Our packs were light: the stocks were low, almost finished. It was a warm evening. The others went to bed. In the darkness, the massive summit of a fell towered above the pine forest, on the left. I could not bring myself to go to sleep. I watched the northern lights along the crest of a small ridge; in the darkness, they were brighter than ever before.

Translation from Finnish: Philip Landon

New and old prehistoric relics. Appisjärvi, Stone Age camp. Broken glass, fishbones and quartz cement. 19.9.1995. Photograph.

GRADUALLY GOING MAGADAN

Ian McKeever

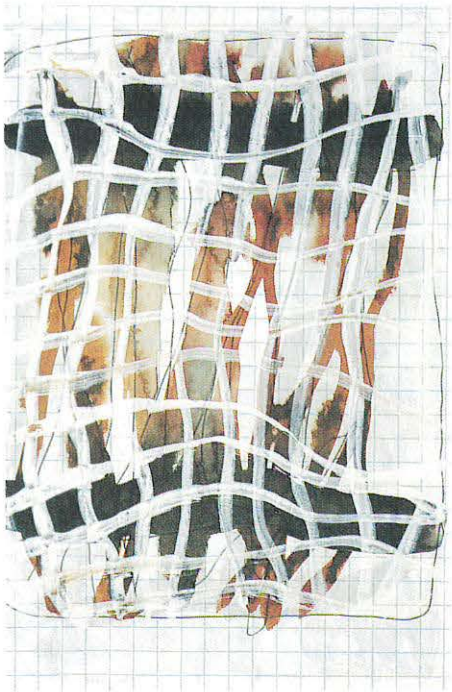
I am back in Magadan. Again sitting in the kitchen of Berman's apartment. Berman ia a scientist working at the Institute for Northern research in Magadan. The last time I was here in the summer of 92 we travelled with a group to the tundra of the northern coastal plains; Pevek and the Chaun estuary. Then amidst scientists, watching them at work I was struck by the similarities of how they go about their work and how an artist might work. Both seem to spend a great deal of time just looking and thinking around things. Engaged in the refreshingly simple activity of observation. Walking the line between passivity and reception where, if one is really lucky, insight may occur.

This time I am stuck in Magadan. Plans to travel on to the Kamchatka peninsula stalled by the weather. No flights and no one seeming to have an idea as to when there might be one. Magadan under the snow is a different place to when I last saw it. The snow suits it. Somehow its crude concrete apartment blocks begin to become a kind of architecture, as they sit up square out of their footings of white.

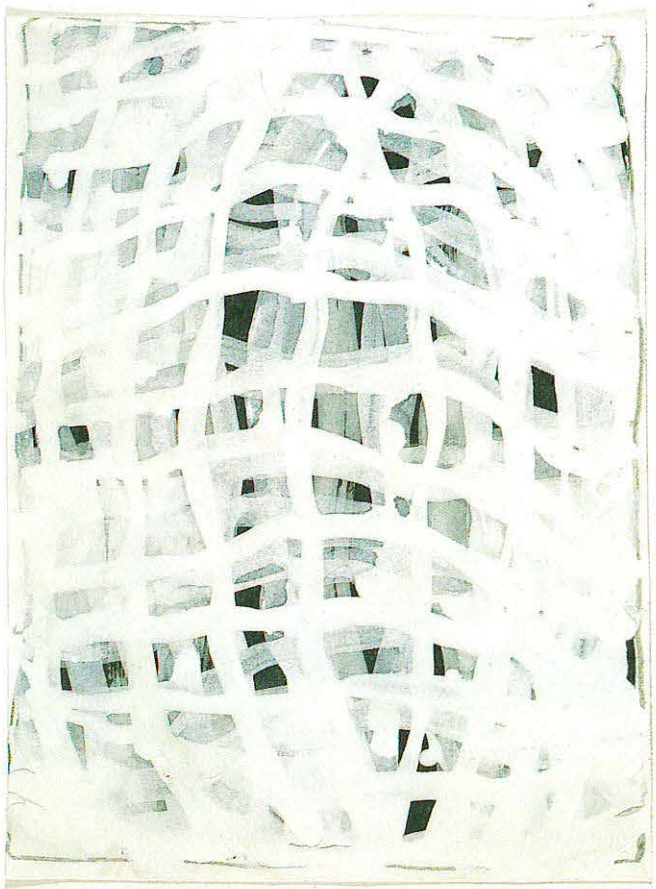
So there is a lot of hanging around and killing time, but that is a part, and often a good part of travelling. For one travels in order to be disarmed, and sometimes in those dead hours, which either have their own time, or no time at all, there is the possibility to just gaze and be open. To register those small details which make up differences. For there is an edge where cultures meet and there is a second edge where the edges of cultures meet. This second edge - of often fleeting and disconnected details - is sometimes more poignant and disarming. Moments can then appear to sneak around outside of time.

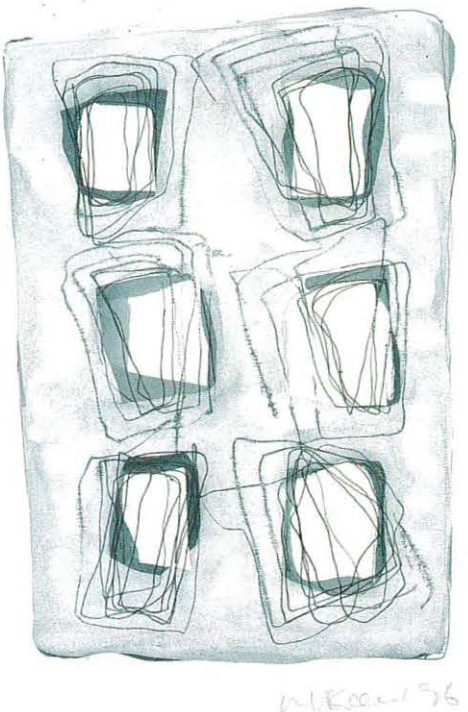
It is early one evening; we are going to visit a local artist. Walking there with that special shuffle of keeping the feet in contact with the icy ground, in order to stay on ones feet. And the dull dark early evening light against the snow. Everything rounded and vaguely silhouetted, just as in a painting by Munch. A few months earlier I had seen his paintings in the museum in Oslo, and in the room next door a group of early ikons and was struck by their connection. Thinking then as now of how his figures with their closed rounded half silhouettes become forms as the flat light of snow night freezes them into ghosting ikons.

Valera, the artist we are visiting is a landscape painter. The smallish naturalistic paintings are hung on his studio walls against a background of faded floral wallpaper. Valera has made many expeditions into the mountains of eastern Siberia and he paints plein air what he sees. He also makes videos of the expeditions, straight forward records, no frills and without art. So we spend the evening watching videos of expeditions to Kamchatka, Jack London lake and the area around Yakutsk. It is a strange sensation to be watching videos in Magadan, and I ask myself the question, what difference does it make to watch them here or at home. Then realise as the night goes on that here things are gradually going Magadan.



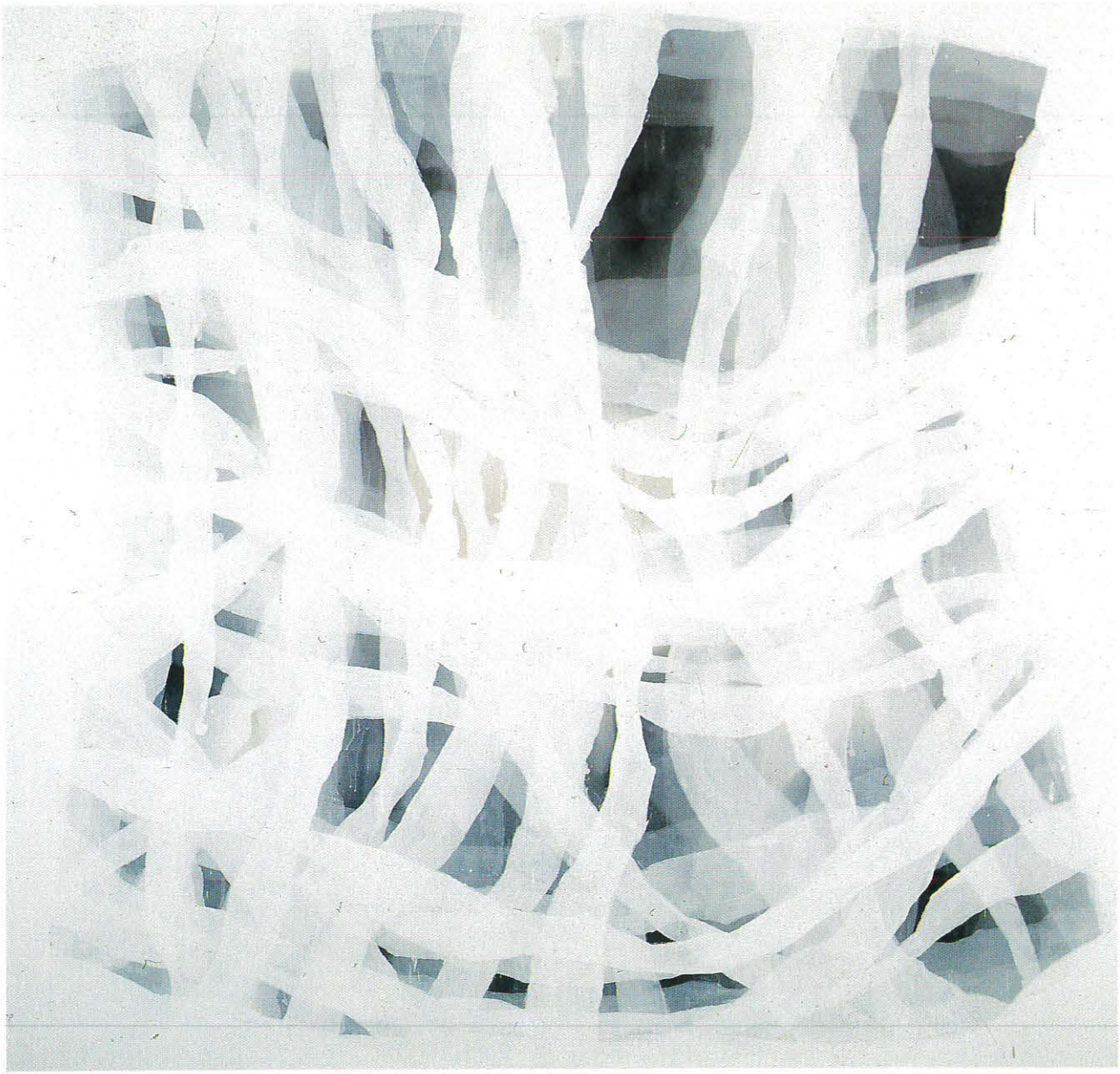
Sketches from a notebook, 1992





Magadan sketches, 1996. Pencil and watercolour on paper, 28 x 21 cm each.

Ian McKeever, Hartgrove Painting, No 3. Oil and acrylic on canvas, 250 x 263 cm, 1993-1994



Ian McKeever, Hartgrove Painting, No 5. Oil and acrylic on canvas, 250 x 265 cm, 1993-1994

Nikkeli, 1990

KOLA DIARY

By Esko Männikkö & Pekka Turunen

1989

We are at the Peace and Environment Festival in Murmansk in July 1989. This is our first visit to the Kola Peninsula. There is a mixed crowd of people from all kinds of civil organizations here: peace activists, environmentalists, political youth organizations...Mostly people from Finland and other Scandinavian countries.

The city leaves a lasting impression on us, and we decide not to waste our time at the meetings, but wander around the city instead, checking places and taking photographs. The idea of making some kind of a festival report starts to take shape in our minds.

The mystical, arctic city of Murmansk takes concrete form in the apartment buildings made out of concrete elements and in the back yards that have been decorated with used car tires, in the bread delivery vans that let out a thick and bitter smoke and in the harbors lined with ships that run with nuclear energy.

For the whole week we listen to stories our friends are telling about the northern parts of the peninsula. They have travelled to Murmansk from Norway by train through the northern town of Nickel. Their descriptions of the total destruction of the natural environment in that area convince us that a mere festival report is not enough. We decide to get acquainted with the whole Kola region and especially with the condition of its nature.

1990

When we return it is May. We begin our tour by visiting day care centers and all kinds of free time activity groups in Murmansk. We get to meet children in the midst of their play as well as brisk and sportive youth. It is as if we were circling the actual subject at hand...

One day we hire a couple of local youths to drive us around and take off for the town of Montsegorsk, the site of an enormous melting plant run by the Severonickel collective combine.

We will never forget the first impressions that struck us when we first entered this industrial hell. It was an unbelievable mix of combustion in all colours, dead forest, endless heaps of scrap, fallen down buildings, clattering vehicles, grey workers walking through the mud...

The piping that leads from the factory to the town looks like umbilical cords that provide nutrition upon which the life of the whole community depends. Or, one could also see them as a set of huge fingers that torture the whole city in the grip of an iron fist.

Mineral water, which has not been available elsewhere for months, is available in the local stores. One can also take advantage of the factory's sanatorium and go there to breathe the ethereal scents of the Black Sea.

In order to be able to photograph the decay of nature, it needs to be visible to the eye. Back in Finland everything is more hidden. The decay of nature proceeds slowly, insidiously. If anything at all should go wrong, the friendly and comforting face of the ecological consultant representing the factory appears on TV with a calming message. Here everything is out in the open. Even the colourful fence that is supposed to hide the scarp heaps, mimicking the example set by Finland, has fallen down a long time ago.

Montsegorsk, 1991

Murmansk, 1995

Murmansk, 1991

Montsegorsk, 1995

Montsegorsk, 1991

1991

We meet Anna Kharitonova in Montsegorsk. She has been picking lingon berries in the neighborhood of the factory throughout her life. Nowdays she has to walk twelve kilometers away from the factory before she can find any berries. She believes that there are no toxins in the berries. On the contrary, lingon berries have plenty of vitamins and they are a healthy source of nourishment.

We visit the factory with Finnish house representatives. We are shown those sections that are in the best condition, suitable for the eyes of a tourist. The leading representatives of the town boast that Montsegorsk has been given an award for good town planning. The citizens of the town believe that the design of the factory is brilliant, because most of the time the smoke floats away from the city.

After a week, we decide that we have had our share of this landscape mutilated by the enormous factories. Following the tide we find our way down into the village of Varsuga in the southern part of the peninsula at the White Sea.

The inhabitants of this village don't, however, have iodine tablets in the cupboards like the people in Murmansk, who are prepared to fill their thyroid glands with them in case of nuclear disaster. And not without reason. The fiords of Kola are full of ice breakers and submarines that run on nuclear energy.

The washing is rinsed in a hole in the ice, squirrel skins are a valid form of currency, food is on rations. The living standard of the villagers is improved by the salmon

in the river that runs by the village. Since the ruble has lost its value, one can buy anything with salmon.

1992

Since the Finnish companies lost the bid for renovation of the smelting plants, newspaper headlines touching the issues have totally disappeared, even though the edge of the dead forest advances ever further day by day. Nowdays the Finnish companies are interested only in exploiting the natural resources of the Barents region.

Women digging up potatoes right next to the aluminum plant in Kantalahti complain about the poor crop. Due to the yellow rain that fell during the summer, potatoes are small this year.

Sergei, who is picking orange-cap boleti, a kind of mushroom typical of the area, nods his head and seems to understand the message of our sign language. However, a stew made out of mushrooms provides delicious variation to the diet dominated by bread.

1993

After having finished six shooting trips we pack our photographs into a van and set the course towards Murmansk. During the prior visit we have made an agreement with the art museum about the exhibition.

With the help of the local environmentalists we hang our photographs in the exhibition space at the museum. We get a two fold reception. First, a local television crew criticizes the museum director: "They better go to Finland to show their shitty pictures". The next day, however, they apologize and say that they intend to produce a positive program on the exhibition.

Even some of our friends wonder whether the pictures really are from the region. People who have lived all their lives in the midst of destruction awake to see the true state of the reality around them once they see a photograph representing it.

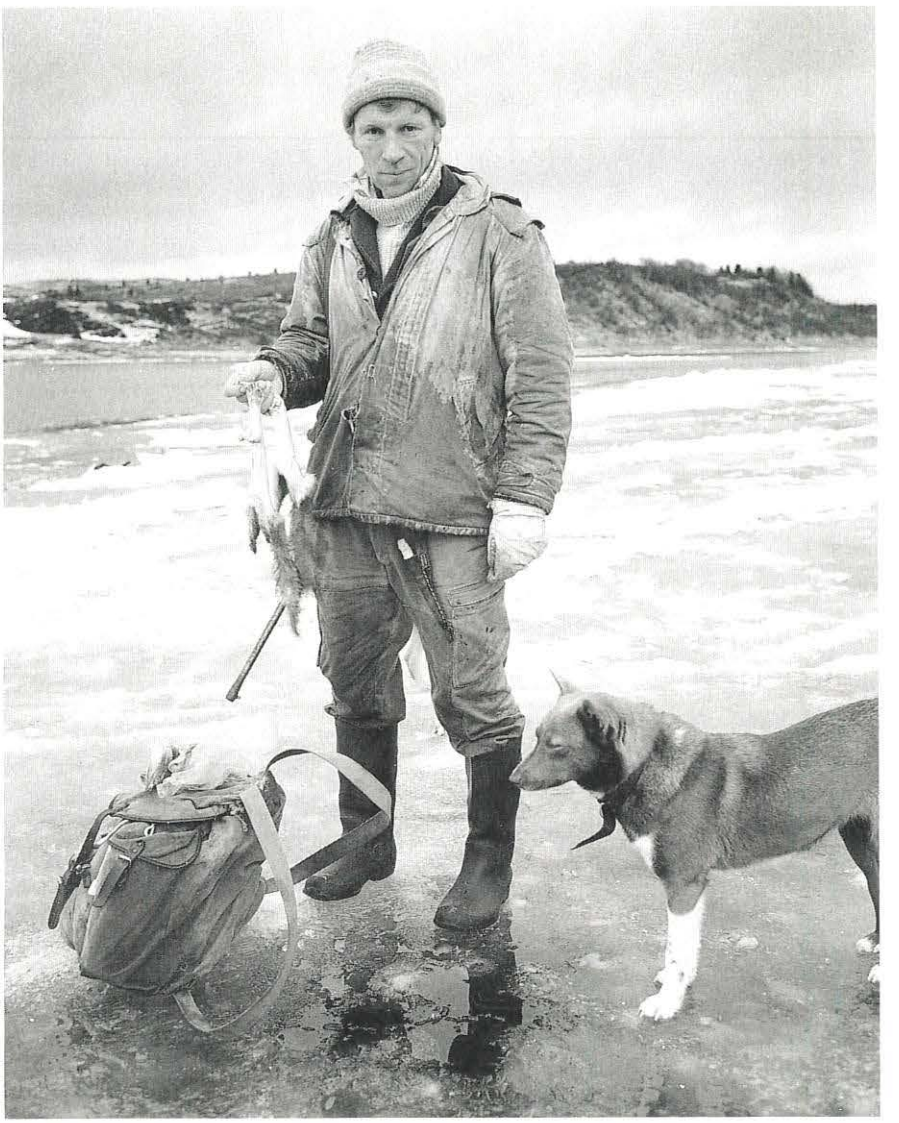
Our nature conservationist friends commemorate the anniversary of the Chernobyl incident at the museum surrounded by our photographs.

1994

Poverty affects the environment in two ways: When people don't have money to buy new things, there is no need for production, which, in turn, normally uses up a lot of raw materials and energy. On the other hand, poor regions can't afford the equipment to keep the environment clean. At times a feeling of hopelessness sneaks in. Do we have the right to voice our opinions about the problems of another country? It is said that the Germans don't have the right to interfere with our forestry either.

1995

This is the first time that we see some action at the graveyard of old ships at the harbor of Murmansk. A group of workers is gathering pieces of valuable metals from the ships. For months, they have not been paid for their work, and the extra rubles that can be made by selling copper wire are a welcome addition to the family budget. On the streets we run into little kids who are carrying skeins of electric wires on their shoulders. In the ruins of a military district people are loading used bricks into the trunks of their Lada's. Even though we are excited about this and talk beautifully about the advantages of



Varsuga, 1991

recycling, they suspect that we are spies and make us promise that the register plates of their car are not going to show on out photographs.

The secret police pays a visit to the Beltona office in Murmansk that is headed by our friend, Igor, and they confiscate all their material. It looks like they resented the "Mail Order Catalogue of Nuclear Submarines" published by the office, which presents the problems caused by the use of nuclear power and by the nuclear waste in the Kola region.

We visit the enormous factory of Apatite which produces raw material for fertilizers. Even here the production has gone down to a tenth of what it used to be in 1989. The majority of the workers have been laid off. One wonders whether one day the names of the towns in the Kola region, that have been given on the basis of the main production item in the area, will have to be changed.

We are sitting in the factory lunch room trying to cut a cutlet with a spoon and a knife. There are no forks in the lunch room, yet the yard is covered with millions of kilos of scrap metal.

In Umba, a father tries to get baby food in exchange for salmon. People want to lead normal lives; bring up healthy children in their own homes. They make money in order to be able to buy a car that gives them the freedom to move around, and in order to be able to take a vacation every now and then.

People who once were lured into the area with the temptation of higher salaries, have started to move elsewhere. Many of our friends have left the region. Ludmila, the curator of the art museum, has taken off to the U.S. Our landlady, Tanja, has gotten married with a Norwegian man and lives now in Norway. Our interpreter, Gena, has moved to Alma Ata, the hometown of his wife's family...

In the center of Murmansk the brand new Norwegian owned rainbow colored gas station and the oily puddles, that have been decorated with car tires and old car parts, grin at each other. Surely the gasoline sold by the Norwegians must be pure *City Futura*.

Our friend Ivan is irritated by men who wash their cars in the crystal clear mountain brooks on the outskirts of the city. At the very least, each individual is responsible for their own actions.

On our way back we stop by in the town of Nickel. This is the first time that we see the town when it is not covered by snow. In the factory area we gasp for air in a cloud of sulfur, and again we agree that this is by far the most awful experience that we have ever had. When we reach the Norwegian border we ask ourselves, when we are going to come back again.

1996

We read in Finnish newspaper that in the majority of the towns at the Kola Peninsula the temperature inside of the apartments has sunk to thirteen degrees centigrade due to lack of fuel to keep the heating system running.

Translation from Finnish: Juulia Kauste

Kantalahti, 1991

THE NORTHERN LIGHTS

Richard Prince

> "Night covers the snow clad earth; the stars glimmer feebly through the haze...when suddenly a broad and clear bow of light spans the horizon...heaving and waving to and fro, before it sends forth streams of light, ascending to the zenith...a vast sea of fire...a magnificent crown of light. On turning from the flaming firmament to the earth, this aslo is seen to glow with a magical light. The dark sea, black as jet, forms a striking contrast to the white snow plain or the distant ice mountain; all the outlines tremble as if they belonged to the unreal world of dreams. The imposing silence of the night heightens the charms of the magnificant spectacle. But gradually the crown fades, the bow of light dissolves, the streams become shorter, less frequent and less vivid, and finally the gloom of winter once more descends upon the northern desert."
>
> "Polar and Tropical Worlds" by Dr. G. Hartwig, p.33. Bill, Nichols & Co., 1873.

Detail of the installation 'The Northern Lights (Daphne)', 1996

I have never seen the northern lights. I wonder what it must be like to actually see them. Yet the portrayal of a thing never seen is something I've done frequently in my work. I have often envisioned a romantic reality whether a landscape like Egypt or a phenomenon such as the aurora that I haven't experienced. These sculptures are projections into something that I've learned and not about things I've experienced, but which are real and which I believe are real.

"Ultima Thule" - I have never been there but it has been a part of my conciousness since my childhood. Through pictures and stories the Arctic has been with me from my beginnings as it has been for any Canadian. The quality I don't associate with it is its variety. I just think about the Arctic as a frozen wasteland. Hence, the piece is really about that aspect of the North which is strongest to me - its frozen aspect. The summer or temperate aspect doesn't come to mind at all. To me, it is deep frozen, like Superman's cavern - eternal cold winter.

In the past I read many boy's book about Arctic adventure and more recently I have read other sources, but I remember the book that prompted my fascination with the "aurora borealis". It was the "Wonder Book of Space Stamps" and it had a picture of the northern lights in it. They were portrayed as a giant exploding fire in the heavens. The illustration was pink and yellow against a deep blue sky with a little fish boat down below in the water. Since then, I have always thought of the aurora as being a wonderful phenomenon and hence, something worth portraying. Again, I don't think it has to do with the reality of it, rather the knowing that it exists as a phenomenon. I portray it because it is a marvel. It reminds me to be marvelled by things rather than depicting them accurately or scientifically. I am more interested in being excited by the excitement and reflecting on a childlike sense of wonder and awe.

Of course it is odd, because it's not wonder and awe at the event itself; rather, it is wonder and awe at the existence of the event. Like religion, there is no tangible proof of God; still we live in wonder and awe of the God we cannot see. I depict this attitude through these absurd machines as there is no need to try to replicate the phenomenon. It is enough to suggest it in a condensed way. This thing represents the northern lights, therefore we can have a sense of wonder.

No one looking at the sculpture would immediately think of it as a landscape. The only element that is a landscape clue is perhaps the little starry light which impart a sky-like impression. That is the extent of the landscape reference. Yet it is nevertheless a landscape: a complex landscape of place, time and culture althoug constructed from the point of view of someone who has experienced this through other people's eyes.

The impact of a neolithic culture colliding with a highly developed technological society at the early part of this century was enormous. One can read accounts of that effect and one can see evidence in Inuit carvings. I can recall seeing a film entitled "How to Build a Kayak". With very simple hand tools, two men sit down and build a beautiful kayak. It was a marvellous piece of technology but was built in terms quite different from ours. One can see other aspects of the intermingling of cultures in urban life in Canada, or perhaps urban life in many places, where people with one level of culture and educational background encounter different values.

In my own sculpture, I use the imagery of machinery rather than the conventions of landscape because machinery seems very human to me. There are two different vehicles in "The Northern Lights". Tho one ancient form is the sled as if from time immemorial. In every description of early arctic exploration the pioneers talk about having to drag sleds and so they have entered into the mythical lore of that remote place.

Sleds, like so many mechanisms of transportation fascinate me because they imply both spatial and temporal movement as well as invention. An appropriate parallel would be the sleds of the ancient Agyptians which depict the sun being pulled across the sky, reflecting the idea of movement through time and through life.

The clash of cultures and the clash of technologies is especially evident in the sled unit. The natural growth of the moose antler, certainly something which is not controlled by civilization, is altered as machined bits and pieces are imposed on it. The sled itself is more directly representative of the early human cultures in the Arctic. Following behind it is a very technological device in the form of a wheeled vehicle machined from aluminum. It has the electronic controls and forms a supporting gantry for the lights. I see it as being very much like those vehicles used for lunar exploration because of its spare and mechanical aspect. The entire installation forms a circular image with the northern lights a celestial phenomenon hanging in front of an ancient moose antler. Yet all is depicted by technology derived from various examples of human craft, from the carving of bone to electric lights. The whole thing is an ironic picture, perhaps even a conceit. It is a picture - it is just an illusion. That is the central theme.

I have chosen to portray an element of a landscape which is undeniably grand and which dominates human effort and tests our will. It is this majesty that is inherent throughout nature that causes me to reflect on both our ability to feel wonder and to be aware of the transience of life. Perhaps, ultimately, the work is best seen as a vanitas piece.

Whilst working on the sculpture, I have come to refer to the sled unit as "Daphne" and the wheeled unit as "Apollo".

Richard Prince,
December, 1995.

'The Northern Lights (Daphne)', (Work in progress), 210 x 250 x 82 cm, Wood, antler, steel 1996

Wine - South - Down

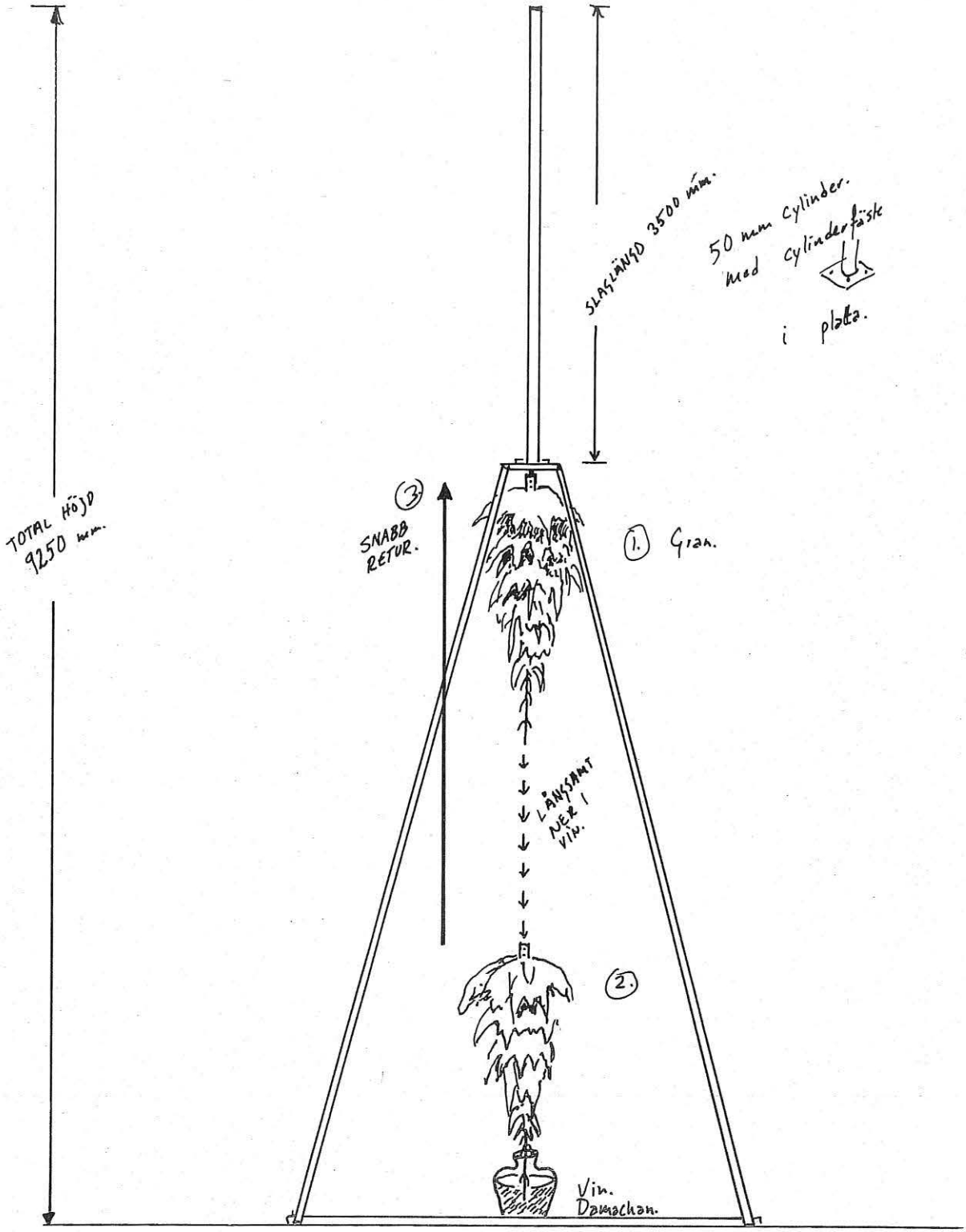
Fir Tree - North - Up

Wine - South - Down

Fir Tree - North - Up

I was thinking of a fir tree slowly being lowered from way up, down into a big glass container filled with wine, after a sip or two returning way up in high speed. Then the cycle begins again. North - South factual map with real substances reversed into the same way the map goes up and down the page.

Model drawing for the installation 'Wine - South - Down, Fir Tree - North - Up'.



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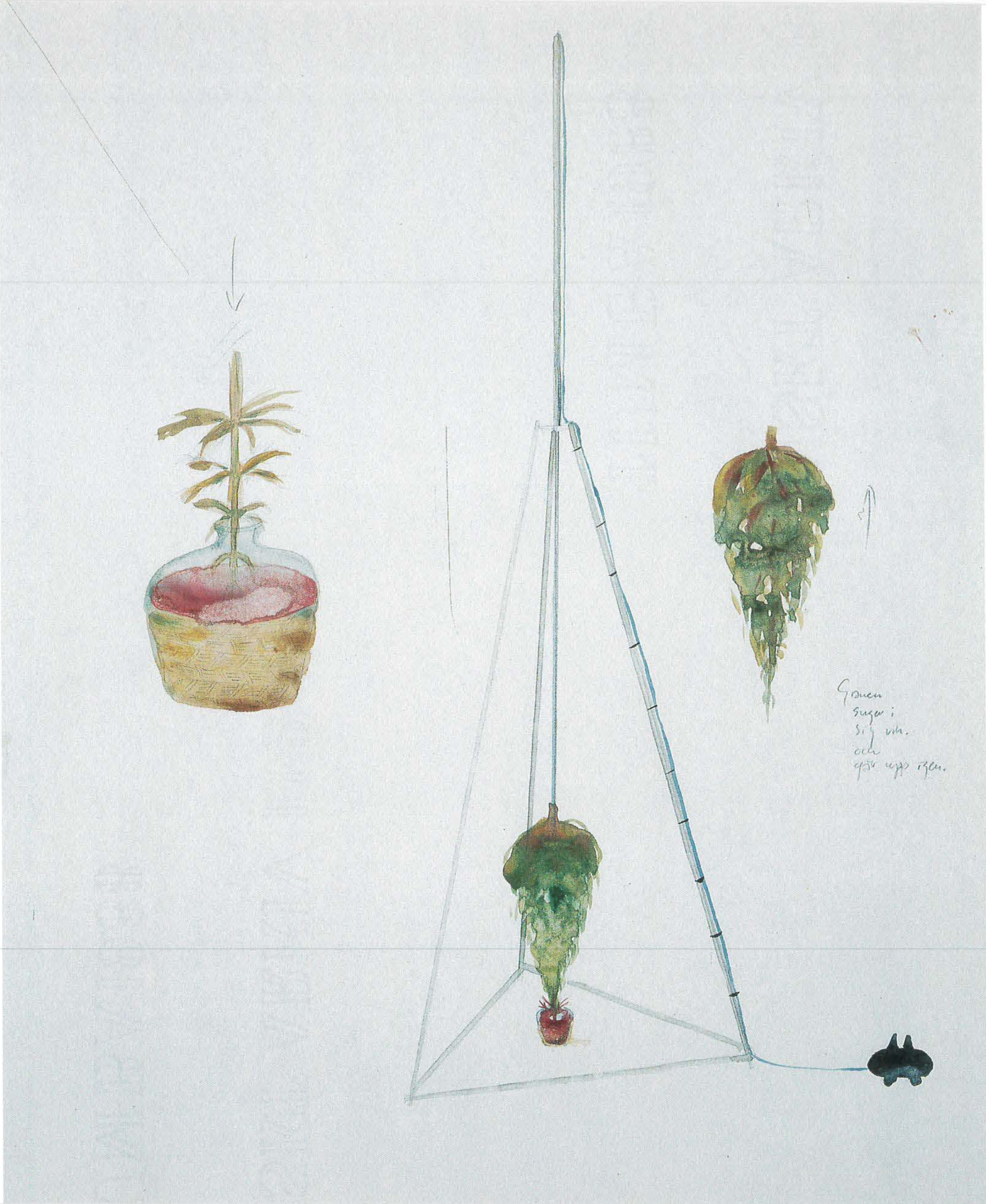
Wine - South - Down, Fir Tree - North - Up, 1996. Installation, 925 x 350 cm (sketches)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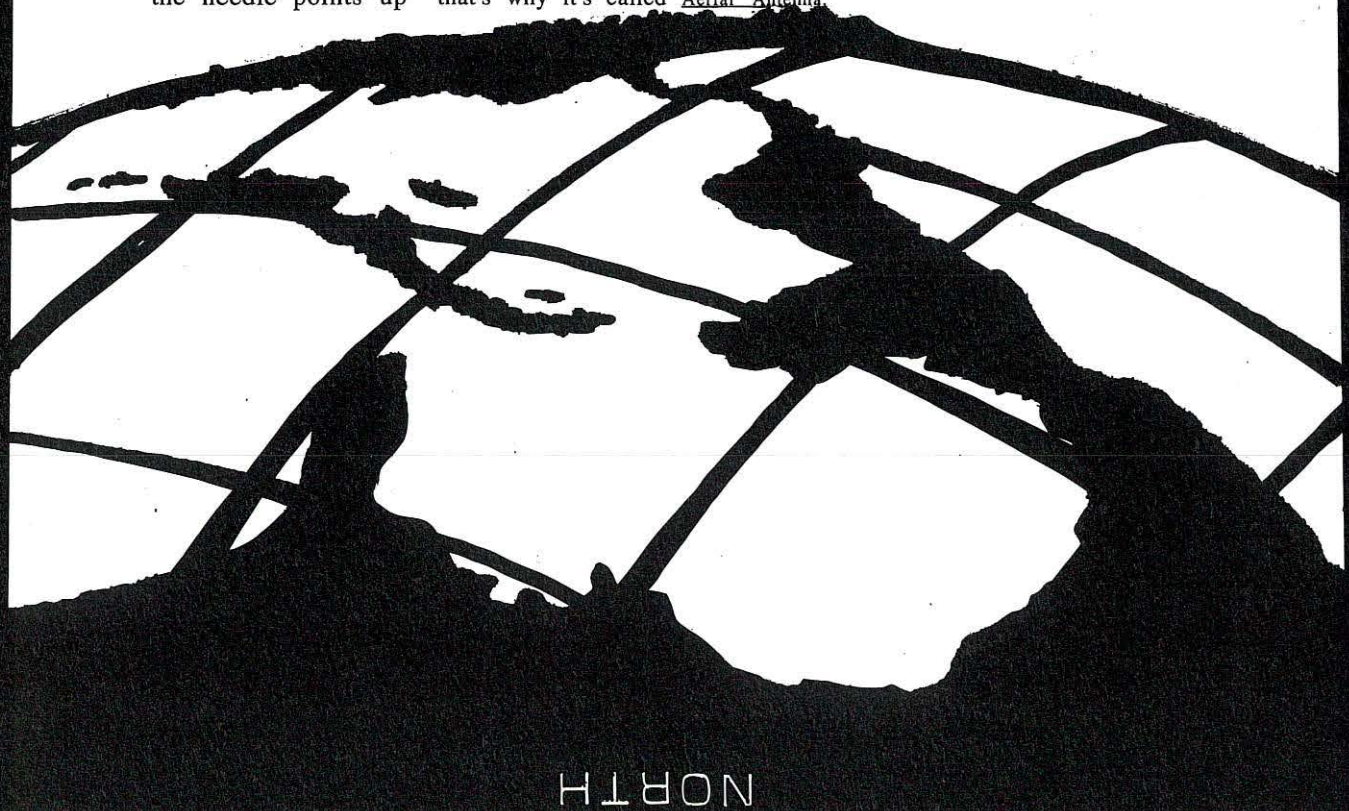
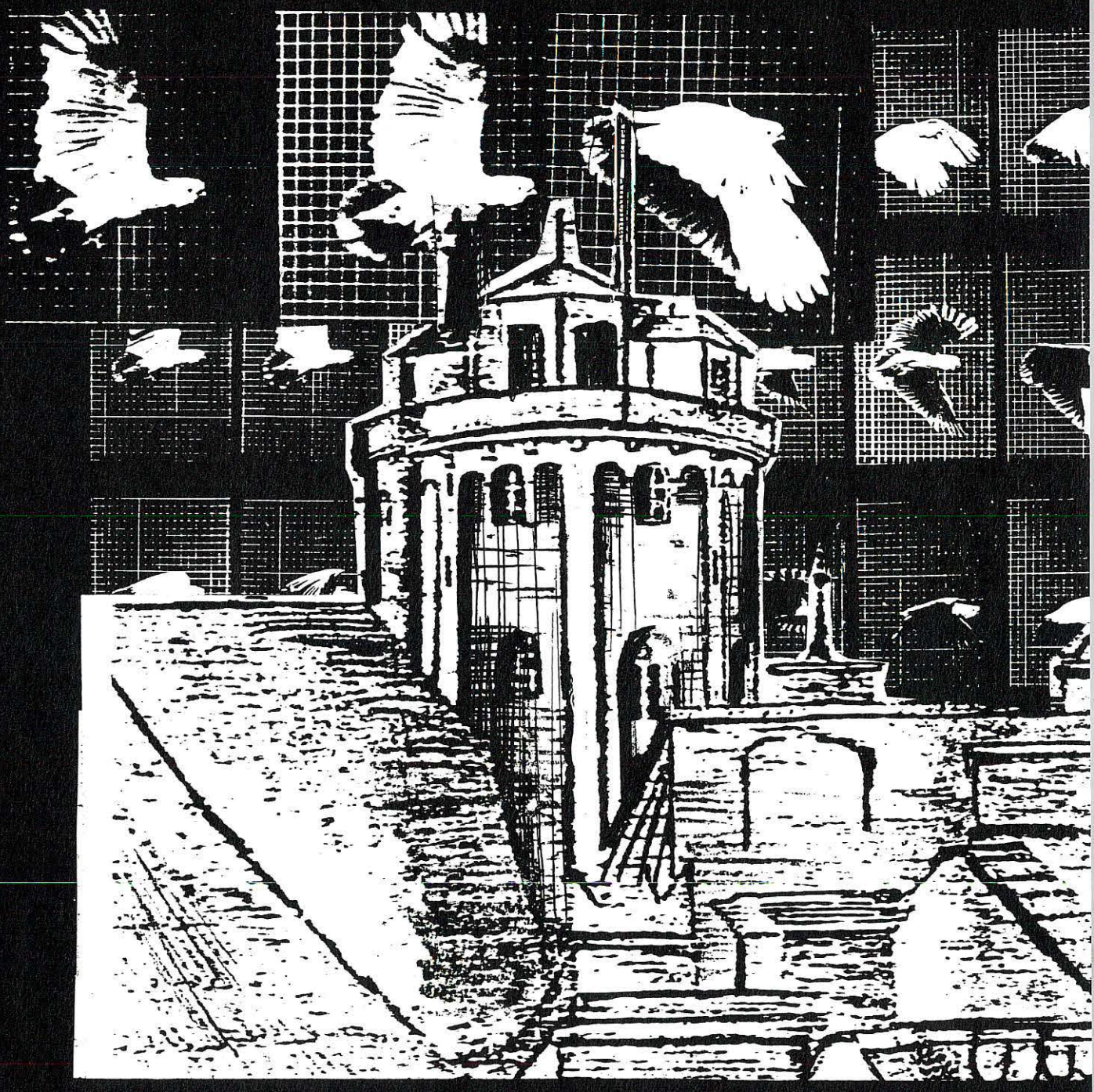
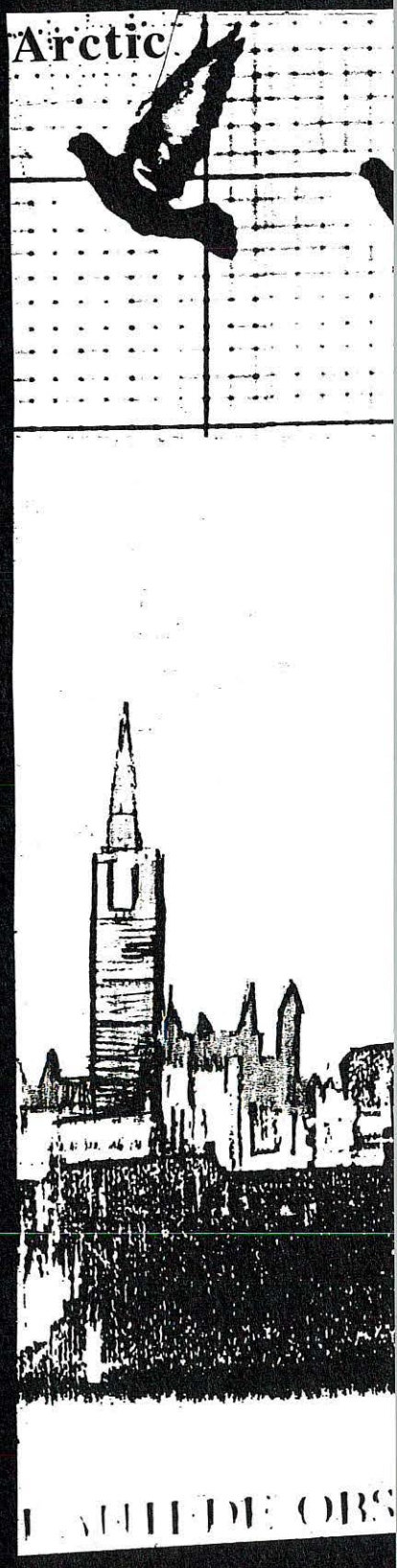
MAURA SHEEHAN

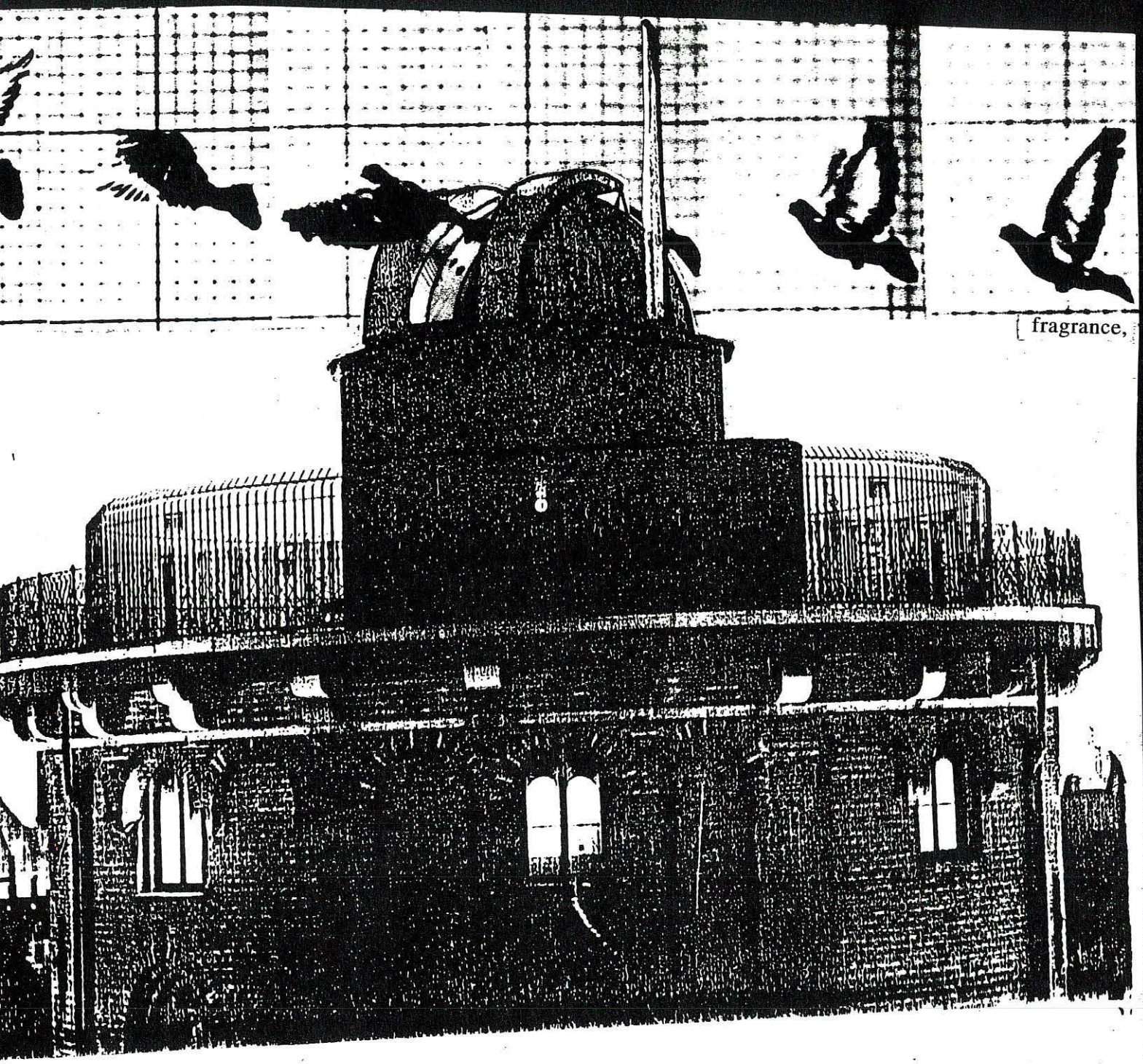
AERIAL IDEA

Picture an observatory, an overlook, a viewing post, a birds eye, like a satellite it's the most northern, up there, out of it, elevated any closer and you'd be in heaven-kind of place. To create the condition of altitude and the atmosphere of elevation with a 360 degree, around the world peek-a-boo view from an anchoring building- where you're like two miles from here, I mean there, wherever. The observatory as a launch pad, with a room that's wall to wall, floor to ceiling, top to bottom, aerialized earth, the utterly environmental fragrance. This is the Compass as context: the Cartesian cologne. And because the needle points up that's why it's called Aerial Antenna.



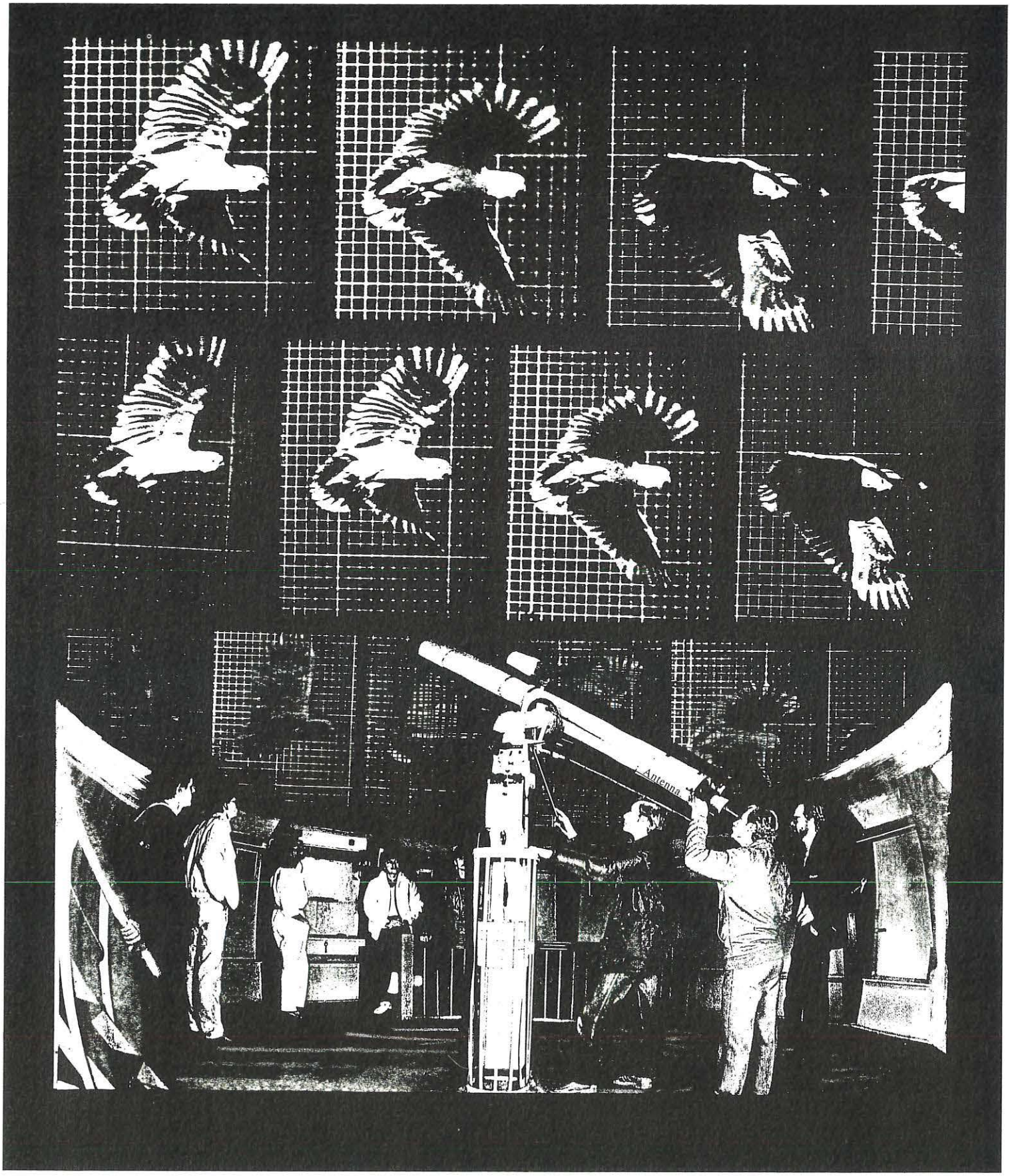



Arctic



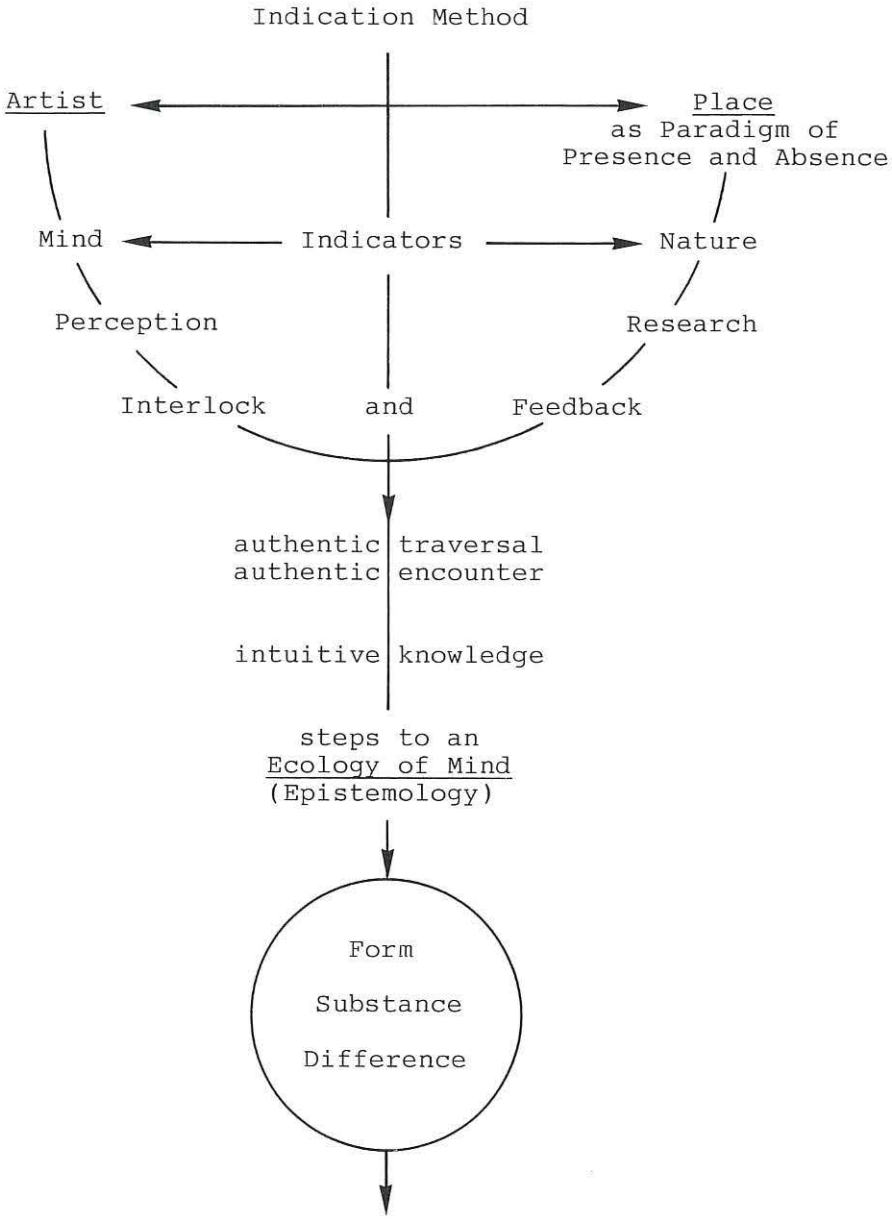
fragrance,

VATORIUM med Rundetårn det observatorium, som kan ses i dag (

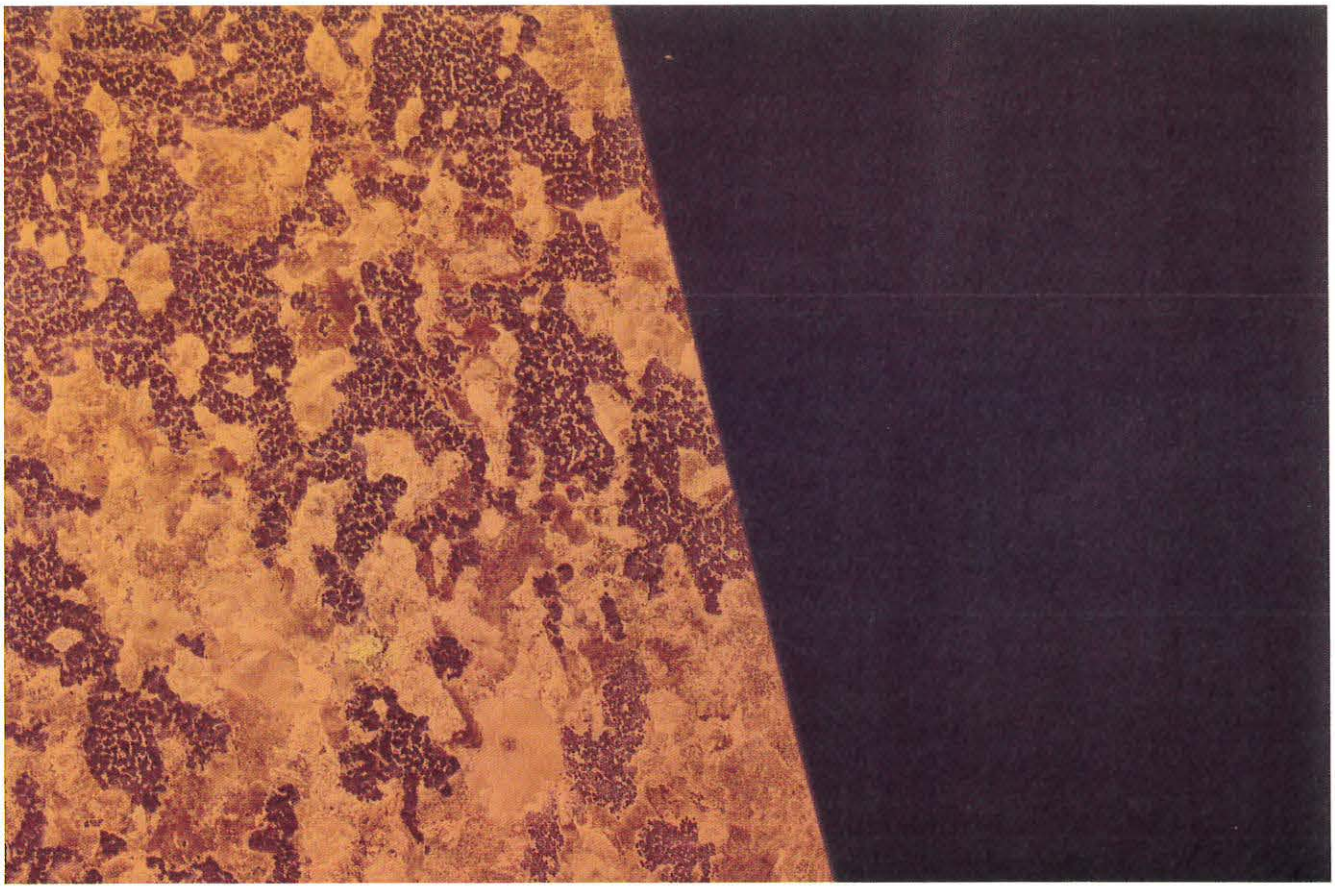

Antenna

GEORGE STEINMANN

Mind Map
George Steinmann



Selfportrait: Jesnnalvárri, Ohcejohka



Selfportrait: Teriberka, Murmansk Oblast

Shieidi

Purity through the Commonplace

Symbiosis

Parmelia centrifuga

Object 700

The Rovaniemi Process

Испытание под Мончегорском

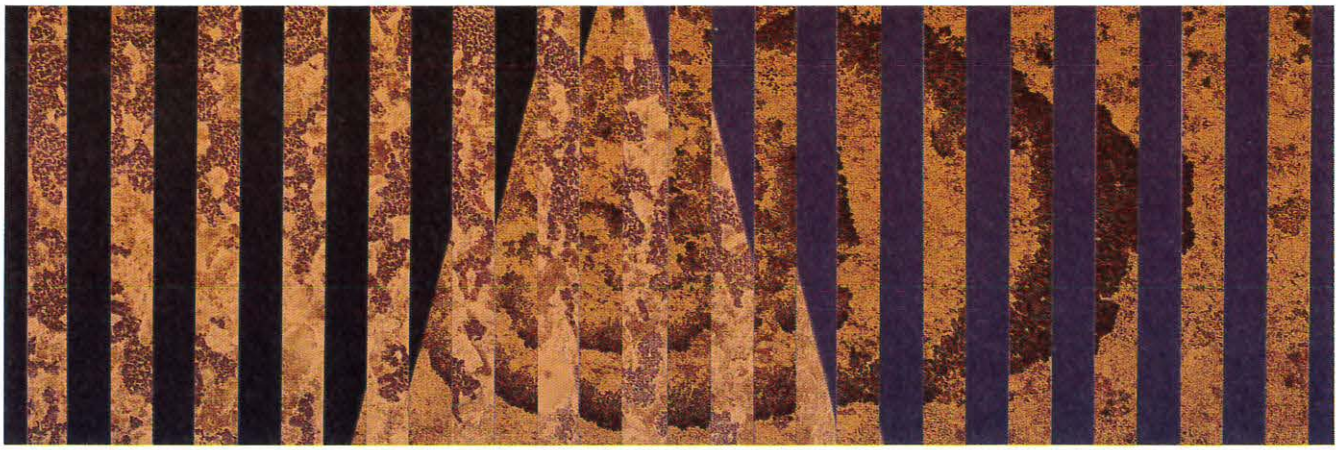
Sámeeatnama váibmosis

Form

Bieggolmmái

Cladonia stellaris

The Beginners Mind



From to Beyond

Rhizocarpon geographicum

Ruonanieida

Today's decisions and tomorrow's impacts

Мурманская Лапландия

Substance

Lichens are most sensitive

Difference

Nuclear semiotics

Indicator

Freedom from Attachment

George Steinmann would like to express his gratitude to

Mr Ahti Mäkinen, Department of Ecology and Systematics, University of Helsinki for his information about Biomonitoring of atmospheric deposition in the Kola Peninsula and Finnish Lapland.

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Tosho Yakkatokuo for his assistance during our journey and the drum solo in the tundra.

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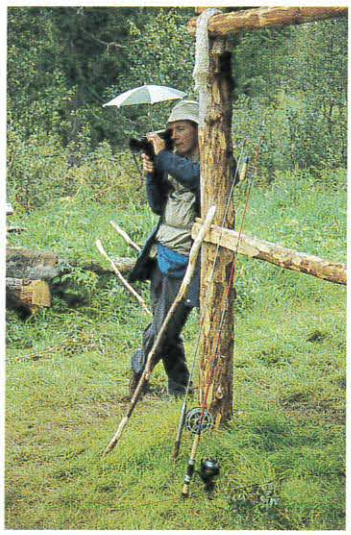

The Artists

Sergei 'Afrika' Bugaev, born in 1966 in Novorossisk, on the Black Sea, Russia. Lives in St. Petersburg.

Anne Katrine Dolven, born 1953 on the Lofoten Islands in Norway. Lives in Berlin.

Jimmie Durham, born 1940 in Washington/Arkansas. Since 1994 lived in Brussels.

Ilya Kabakov, born 1933 in Dnepropetrovsk, Russia. Lives in New York.

Pavel Pepperstein, born 1966 in Moscow. Lives in Moscow and Cologne.

Per Kirkeby, born 1938 in Copenhagen. Lives in Copenhagen.

Jussi Kivi, born 1959 in Helsinki. Lives in Helsinki.

Ian McKeever, born 1946 in Withernsea, Yorkshire, Great Britain. Lives in Dorset, Great Britain.

Esko Männikkö, born 1959 in Pudasjärvi, Northern Finland. Lives in Oulu, Finland.

Pekka Turunen, born 1958 in Joensuu. Lives in Helsinki.

Richard Prince, born 1949 in Comox, British Columbia. Lives in Vancouver, Canada.

Maura Sheehan, born in 1960 in US. Lives in New York.

Ulf Rollof, born 1961 in Karlskona, Sweden. Lives in Stockholm and New York.

George Steinmann, born 1950 in Bern, Swizerland. Lives in Bern.

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STRANGERS IN THE ARCTIC: 'Ultima Thule' and Modernity includes 12 art projects and a collection of 14 essays.

The artists were invited to make a project in the far north. They all work within the dominant western culture, and they were asked to address and deconstruct the tangle of cultural concepts associated with the Arctic and 'Ultima Thule', the old Greco-Roman concept meaning 'the end of the world'.

Several of the participants in *Strangers in the Arctic* actually visited various parts of the North, whereas others realized purely conceptual projects. Some, but not all, of those undertaking a trip were familiar with their destinations. Several excursions were made to the northern regions of Eurasia. Up until the late 1980s these vast areas belonging to the previous Soviet Union were closed to foreigners. Thus, for western people the Russian Arctic represents the *other* in a far stronger sense than comparable areas in the New World.

Essays for the publication were written by D.I. Berman, Michael Glasmeier, Kirsten Hastrup, Yrjö Haila, Lassi Heininen, Sheila Hicks, Lars Levi Laestadius, Viktor Mazin, Juha Pentikäinen, Hans Rudolf Reust, Valentina Semyatshina, Markku Valkonen and Pirjo Varjola as well as by several of the participating artists, for instance Jimmie Durham, Per Kirkeby and Jussi Kivi. The texts build upon three common elements: history, nature and cultural criticism. Taken together they form a prism through which different strains of thought associated with the Arctic are reflected to create new ways of relating to the unknown and the uncontrollable. The North has predominantly been regarded as a colony in the past, but could we possibly, in the future, get a more balanced appreciation of both the northern people and the northern fragile nature?

Ilya Kabakov and Pavel Pepperstein crystallize the very theme of the exhibition in their dialogue *Tennis Game*: "It is more important to participate in these games than to win." Everywhere, in the East and the West, in the Arctic and the Antarctic, the past comprises multiple layers. People have since times immemorial moved from place to place and made local destinies merge together. "Our history" is mixed with the "history of others" because our past has been dependent upon the past of others — whoever "we" are .

STRANGERS IN THE ARCTIC:'Ultima Thule' and Modernity, edited by Marketta Seppälä, director of the Pori Art Museum, accompanies an exhibiton of the same title organized in 1996 by FRAME - The Finnish Fund for Art Exchange, The Copenhagen 96 foundation, Pori Art Museum and Museum of Contemporary Art, Helsinki.

STRANGERS

IN THE ARCTIC

Photo Yrjö Haila