

The hidden children of Eve

Sámi poetics

Guovtti ilmmi gaskkas

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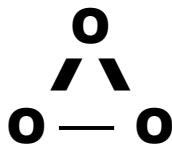
Social sciences

and

Education

University of Tromsø

2011



The symbol on the cover is based on symbols from Maja Dunfjeld's Tjaaletjimmie:

- Triangle engravings could stand for individuals... but the ornament can be interpreted in several ways... I choose to call the motif... a 'thought symbol' from åssjalommes, 'mental activity', 'thinking'. Distinctive of man is the capacity for mental activity that liberates communication. In the same way that I learned the significance of verbal expressions through emotion, i.e. the way in which they were expressed, and the metaphor that followed only confirmed the assertion, I choose to interpret this ornament based on the metaphor and my bodily incorporated understanding of it... I interpret the ornament as a symbol exhorting the use of reason. The artefact involved might tell of the context in question, concerning other people, animals and nature... triangle engravings are to be found on vietjere, the 'drum hammer' and on the wood of the North Sámi type of goavdes drum, 'bowl drums'. This indicates a traditional Sámi ornament in use over a long period of time. (Maja Dunfjeld:89; my translation)

– What I have been thinking about shamans is that they made up the very system that was crushed by modern society. In the old days, shamans were, after all, teachers and providers of daycare for children. They have started forcing us into boxed categories. We are still victims of this process of homogenization. To undo it we need fools who carry out that work despite the financial difficulties that such work entails. (Kerttu Vuolab 1998:59)

Thank God!

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Goadnil

– *When I was a boy, I could have been eight or nine years old, Eanu would take me to the river to attend to the čakča-golgadeapmi downstream. Eanu, being my mother’s brother, was the one responsible for teaching me these things according to custom. When we were done, Eanu began poling upstream when suddenly he stopped to listen. Hastily, he started poling the boat towards the riverbank where we hid in some bushes. I could see the sheriff passing by on the high tide, crossing the rapids easily with his outboard motor. Eanu, being a Christian and a Læstadian probably thought he had to justify his actions – hiding from the sheriff – to a young boy in his care, so he told me: “These Norwegians you see, they don’t know how to take care of the river the way we do, they don’t know it, coming from down south”. Čakča-golgadeapmi, the old Sámi customary drift-net fishing had been banned by the Norwegian authorities. While poling, Eanu had heard the sheriff approaching, as his boat was the only one with an outboard motor at that time. (My father, Juhu Niillas/Nils Jernsletten, told me this in 2005; my translation.)*

Here, we shall be hiding in the bushes, too. Sàmi literature is in many ways an underground phenomenon, but very much alive nonetheless. As Eanu implies, Sámi laws and oral laws aren’t written down, but they are *there*, they exist, and they are flexible, they sometimes change. Just as Sámi and oral literature for a long time existed only in the uttered word, in the minds of its keepers, where it would be flexible and often change. In order to be able to talk at all about our point of view, this point must be established; or rather, as it already exists in tradition, it needs to be highlighted here according to the law of Academy, which is still, supposedly, very much the same as the law of the river sheriff, the law of the colonial authority. An impossible position it seems, as it involves stealing back the river; we shall have to learn from Eanu: to hold on to tradition and to pass it on, to hide when we hear those engines approach. To be flexible and change the rules if need be.

In this context, holding on to tradition and passing it on involves the use of Sámi terms. This has necessitated creating a dictionary, which should be used. If, for instance, the

words ‘čakča-golgadeapmi’ and ‘eanu’ are checked in the dictionary, the definitions ‘drift-net fishing’ and ‘mother’s brother, maternal uncle; mother’s male cousin’ would appear. (Please note that terms are incorporated as they appear in the sources, not in the nominative case; the spelling has not been corrected, however wrong or outdated. The alphabetical order is according to the North Sámi alphabet.) Of course this is troublesome and highly impractical for those who don’t speak Sámi, and it’s alienating, too. In rather the same way that it has been troublesome, impractical and alienating for speakers of Sámi and other indigenous languages to have to learn the tongue of their colonizers. Such troublesome, impractical and alienating experiences need to be felt in the body, so to speak, for them to be experiences at all, and not just theory.

The shifting methods, angles and genres throughout the thesis might also alienate readers. This is all part of stealing back the river; we learned from Eanu to be flexible and change the rules if need be. Like a river then, the text changes. I cite Israel Ruong (the first Sámi professor) in using river terms to highlight these changing circumstances of the river. Alienation is as such an intentional (although possibly impolite) part of the strategy: to incorporate bodily an alienation in language, as it is indeed a valuable lesson to learn. (And those who speak Sámi, and know how to pole a riverboat upstream will know what I talk about and must surely appreciate how the lessons they’ve learned the hard way can show themselves to be meaningful.) Alas, this thesis opts for a strenuous journey up the river.

Mediation is vital to this thesis, this project of suhkkolastin since we can’t escape the burden of enlightenment. The starting-point is a belief that the symbiosis of Sámi oral tradition and literary research may mutually stimulate each other and work as a mediation, a bridging. Especially in terms of providing a context to texts, it proves fruitful to criss-cross rivers; to shift perspectives between worlds; to travel between worlds guovtti ilmmi gaskkas. Literature mediates and does not necessarily lose its validity with changing cultural contexts.

Citations make up a crucial part of this thesis and the way they are used may seem unfamiliar. I chose the citations, I put them together; more often than not I translated them. I ‘directed’ them, put them together like parts in a stage play so that (I hope) they communicate. Thus, highly dialogical and focusing on the communal, the form of this thesis opts to help highlight the importance of literature as ságastallan. To make this feature of literature visible in such a manner is part of the strategy. As such, the citations are an interwoven part of this text, not an alibi or a ‘crutch’, as often seems to be the case with academic writing. Thus, the consistency and homogeneous meaning (reflecting the individual focus) opted for within Academy is here to be opposed by the (collective) oral, in an effort of altering the paradigm. Research/science seems overall individual in its essence, whereas the oral is collective, and its storytellers act as mediums, without taking much credit themselves. Storytelling is not about merits on an individual level.

The act of opposing includes general expectations concerning literary criticism. This thesis opposes traditional research and opts for contextual rather than text immanent ‘analysis’ (as presented in the Gævnjis and Ædno section). Some alternatives emerge, only they won’t be spelt out or shouted out loud. They should appear between the lines, by the addition of context to context. Almost in the manner that stories feed pictures to our minds.

Starting-point

Treating stories as literature may seem obvious to some. In the academic and literary settings it is not so obvious: rather, stories are often regarded simply as cultural expressions, as artefacts. One example of Sámi literature might be the former yoik duels (only they will not be used in this context), a musical genre that shares its oral roots with modern rap. Adages and puns are literature in this sense, too. They are deliberate and metaphorical; they rely on people’s education and skill. If we were to limit this understanding to a merely cultural one, we would have to consider the full impact of such a view: that literature is cultural, literature is culture. Literature itself opposes such a view. Literature travels and knows no other boundaries but the mind itself. Why, then, is it the case that the *written* stories of peoples and places are to be considered literature,

whereas the stories *told* are so often reduced to mere tales? Does literature have to be in letters, have to be refined in such a way? Even when the stories are put down in writing, they're still stories. Also, why are the stories of nations only valid in writing; why do some people have a History and others not? Many things seem to be taken for granted when it comes to literature, when all we can really know about it are its effects: what it does. Literature travels. Literature crosses the natural boundaries of fells and fjords, it crosses national boundaries as well as those of the mind. Literature travels beyond the biases of mind, and it works.

– When I myself hear a story, I often wonder where it really began, who told it the first time and how was it really. By and by I have come to realize that a story has no origin or end. As soon as it's told, it starts living its own life and creates its own energy. It may wander far away, from the one to another. Sometimes a story may return to a storyteller without him being able to recognize it. So it keeps on moving, marked by the people who tell and the people who listen, and it never ends as long as someone keeps on telling it. This is the genius of the oral story. It creates a life for itself, in a way the written word never could. Thus, to write down a story is really a violation against the nature of stories. (Ing Lill Pavall 2001: 139, my translation)

With oral people, literature works like education: it raises, teaches skills, and it heals. It is a vital part of communication itself, it cannot be separated from talk, from art, from history. And literature is the bud of a people's will to live. Literature holds and reflects the world-view of a people. One can relate to a people's literature without knowing their culture. Literature may reflect culture, but in itself it is more than a cultural expression. Overall, literature reflects and relates to the human condition. Literature travels beyond culture, it will not be held by those borders. These thoughts may seem obvious to those who agree with them, but it is nevertheless important to state them here, since they go to the core of the notion of literature in particular, which is to be the issue in what follows.

Also, one could say that, since the origin of the term *literature* is related to writing, to the culture of writing, literature is in a sense then cultural, literature is culture after all. Its

values are hidden: they lie in the roots of the term. This hierarchy reflects itself in colonial discourse and is hidden to our eyes, still, this is how we see all literature, on the premise of the written. Where does this leave us?

Stories and songs, yoiks and adages, lyrics, riddles, epics – everything we grasp as literature is older than the term itself; older and oral. So it seems we need an understanding of literature that is not so much related to the written anymore, not so much bound by its borders. Sámi literature has rather recently (historically speaking) found a written form and offers such an understanding, provided one takes it seriously. Taking it seriously means on its own terms (literally speaking). This calls for ground research.

Taking the oral seriously

Are there exclusive traits in oral literature? Is it possible to refine this into some sort of method, or even theory? In the search for a bridge across the divide of the Academy and the Indigenous, I stumbled across an old friend who willingly lay down to fill the gap: Storytelling, the Oral. In getting to know him once more, another reason took over, the one I searched for and esteemed. Deeply embedded in storytelling; the crux of literature; the reason we read – it is all this and more: *ostranenje* – poetic alienation/estrangement and marvel; the double levels of connotation/communication. Another agenda of literature is (what I like to call) the *Gáhti* effect – uniting contradictions through storytelling beyond the biases of reason.

– *Gáhti* is a good storyteller. Her words hold you for hours at a time, and you find yourself surprised to see how time flies. Her stories have no beginning, no end... Popular belief goes hand in hand with grave stories of war. The (contrast) between *Læstadianism* and ghost stories is erased, and in this no man's land the harsh biblical teachings of *Læstadianism* unites with stories of the heathen *rávga*. (Vivian Aira 2001: 36, my translation)

These features are highly poetic and, when used in research as part of a method, address another reason than that of conventional research. This reason coincides with a way of understanding (the world, literature and everything else) that appears oral; original to man – that is: not enforced upon the mind. As such, the poetics of orality are the object of this treatise. Poetic licence is pleaded. Old skills are needed. In appropriating that which does not belong here, liberties with the normal rules of fact, style and grammar (and manners) are taken/stolen/volé, adopted and adapted by this writer in opting for a particular effect: bringing orality into literacy; into Academy.

Behind such age-old traditions as that of comparative literature are (cultural) values and worldviews, and one cannot simply transfer and 'translate' uncritically from a Western-made school of thought, and believe it to be valid or 'objective' in a Sámi or indigenous context. In my view, 'objectivity' in research might very well correspond with the reader's contract as a literary concept. An extensive focus on worldview, values, and epistemology is given in an effort to establish ('objective') grounds for Sámi literary research. It offers great satisfaction to be able to rely my thesis on Sámi sources alone, most of which are people I know, have met or deeply appreciate.¹ In my view, this is wisdom put down in writing by our forebears and by people still present. I only wish that I could have found some practical way of introducing all my sources properly, so that these extraordinary people and their good work could be somewhat highlighted to those unfortunate not to know.

Sámi literature is in many ways an underground phenomenon. Here, all the texts/themes are to be considered 'underground' in one way or another or center around this motif, hence the title of this thesis. A structural element is to be found in the acts of reconciling. In reconciliation between aboriginal peoples and settlers (as we know it from Australia amongst other cases/places), making awareness is the first move, followed by

¹ ...and I'm quite certain this is the very first time research has been conducted based on Sámi sources alone. (And here, I'm on the limits of decency according to Sámi conducts, as one shall not boast, something, which adheres poorly with research traditions, but very well with fellism, being an indirect method stressing the collective contribution rather than the individual one.)

taking action. Making awareness, or taking on the burden of enlightenment, places the responsibility with us the indigenous peoples, as we cannot expect others to do the job for us. Situated in science, we face a never-ending striving in fighting powerful academic paradigms. By taking action and bringing forth our own power and the power of our forebears, we partake in reconciliation. One could say that this thesis' first two chapters, *Guoi'ka* and *Gævņis*, mostly deal with the making awareness-part. Both address research by extensive criticism, although more general in the former than in the latter. The remaining parts of the thesis are overall concerned about taking action. Another structural element is to be found in "The hidden children of Eve" (in *Guoi'ka*), where I line up some specific aspects of the aboriginal experience. These features are colonial (met extensively in *Gævņis*); oral (*Går'ži*); morals (*Njavvi*); as well as spatial (*Ædno*).

In ***Guoi'ka***, we start out with the question 'Is there room for Sámi epistemology in Academy?' Being more of a hypothesis, we assume that there *is* (room), if we make it ourselves. Already relying on Sámi world-view and assuming the answer to the question is 'Yes', some powerful voices (mostly my father's) are put together to outline certain Sámi moves or modes of thought. This chapter marks the beginning stages of a method: *Fellism*, by introducing *suhkkolastin*, *ságastallan*, and *birgejupmi*, as valid *modus operandi*. Based on verbal modes of communicating, the grounds of this method is highly oral as it has dialogue in its rooting, resting on the *siida*-society's firm belief in consensus. The method is somewhat 'demonstrated' in a round-table discussion, which also serves as research criticism. This discussion concerns the concept of science and how it causes an exclusion of the Sámi from science, along with other oral/indigenous peoples. Also, the discussion suggests ways in which Sámi research would, could, should rely on Sámi skills.

The method of *Ságastallan* is put in use in the next chapter, called ***Gævņis***, which focuses on stories and research. The so-called *Stállo* sites, which are mountainous underground turf huts, by their ingenious construction techniques proved a difficult dig for the archaeologists involved when it first came to establishing interpretations, i.e. answering the questions 'who?' and 'why?' Through *Ságastallan*, the *Stállo*-site stories are put into

(colonial) context. In order to make room for Sámi epistemology in Academy, as an effort of making awareness, we clear space and air out old hurts. We face the music before we forgive and move on. This is not *nice*, nor is it pleasant. Many hard facts are put on the table as we go through the history of colonization, taxation, law and war, all seen from a Sámi perspective. Many foul words must be put in use in order to try and depict the atrocities of the Colonial Body. It is necessary nevertheless, because it enables us to advance to the next level, and take action.

In **Går'ži**, Sámi notions of literature are the matter of the ongoing round-table discussion. Sámi conceptions of literature are overall oral, apparent in the way that children are raised by stories and in the importance of yoik, amongst others. The point has been to gather together general features of Sámi concepts of literature, in order to show the width, the power and the agency of literature in a Sámi (and, at the same time, an oral) understanding of the term. Needless to say, Sámi notions of literature more than anything perhaps reflect the inherent world-view. Such seemingly different ‘uprisings’ as the damming conflict, The ČSV ‘Terror’ Poets and The happening that is called the Kautokeino Error have in many ways intertwined the roots of modern (i.e. written) Sámi literature, and are as such highlighted here, to make awareness of our own literary history and of people and poets, whom – although under surveillance of the Norwegian Secret Police – were highly capable of taking action.

In **Njavvi**, our theoretical background is outlined as Sámi notions of literature and world-view come together in an attempt to depict Sámi epistemology, all seen from a fell, on the move, and gliding by. According to good old Sámi pedagogics, although used consistently throughout the thesis, the elements won't be overly explained, and it will be more a matter of showing, not telling. Whether or not this is acceptable to Academy, is another issue. In my seeking, an overwhelming abundance of material offered itself as highly poetic, epistemic and theoretic potential for the meeting of Sámi orality and literary research. The riches of our common grounds are indeed immense. Hopefully, future literary researchers will risk paying these our oral/moral grounds a visit, as they will surely prove fantastic scenery for other journeys up other rivers. Although not overly

emphasized as such, the agenda of this thesis is also *duođastallan*: to make awareness and take action in the telling of stories as proof of land-rights, as yet another feature of orality.

In the chapter called *Ædno*, a three layer ghost story undergoes a metamorphosis as the ghost takes on metafictional proportions and becomes alive as its own negotiation. A story from the early days of colonialism, which tells of yet another Sámi hiding in the bushes, yet another storyteller being silenced, yet another part of Indigenous History forgotten. Also, the story of “The reindeer thief’s grave” is the story of resistance. It tells of how a reindeer herder shoot and kills a Norwegian fisherman and reindeer thief and buries him underground, from where he resurfaces as ghost only to pester and silence the narrator of the story. In addition, the story itself seems to resist the focus of interpretation embedded in a literary analysis. The evasiveness of the ghost meets that of the ghost story as it makes a point of the story as enigma. Here, digging for the meaning is achieved by the use of *Fellism*: different angles, all of which offer different viewpoints (some maybe more useful than others). *Diiddastallan* is used in the search for tracks, and the (this) researcher ends up actually going to the place in question, as the spatial aspects of the story called for taking action.

In *Jákka*, we simply sample some of the sachets already used to distill the essence of literature, as it has suggested itself throughout this thesis – more oral than Sámi, more universal than controversial. And, we connect the making of awareness with the taking of action so that it sounds nice (which is a justified banality, as long as it concerns poetry); so that it acts well (justified in plays and in certain strange, new methods for literary contextualisation); so that it connects through context; so that it communicates.

In *Jágaš*, accompanied by relatives,
this up-river journey simply ends
in a brook by a lake,
not far from where
it began.

Father's river
Grandfather's river
Row first to the Norwegian side
then to the Finnish side
I row across my river
to Mother's side
Father's side
Wondering
where homeless children belong
(Rauni Makka Lukkari 1996: 141)

Guoi'ka

– Names for the countryside are many and specialized. Various kinds of heights, valleys, lakes and watercourses have special terms. To take a few examples: *goadnil* is “a quiet part of the river, free of current, near the bank or beside a rock”, *guoi'ka* “a cataract (navigable by boat)”, *gævnjis* “a cataract (difficult or impossible to navigate by boat)”, *går'ži* “a waterfall”, *njavvi* “the slowly gliding part of a watercourse, usually with tiny eddies on the surface (very often with reference to large waters)”, *ædno* “a big river”, *jåkka* “a small river”, *jågaš* “a small stream”. The same penetrating specialization is also apparent in the nomenclature for all kinds of weather. (Israel Ruong 1967: 44)

Is there room for Sámi epistemology in Academy?²

– A society that holds no place for people of different backgrounds and views, indeed for different forms of culture, is a failed society. A society where people have to abandon themselves in order to adjust becomes a stereotypical and poor society. And the natural reaction of the majority concerning a small people who abandon themselves in order to adjust to the many is contempt. On the other hand, there is little glory to even a small people in being accepted by others who only do it if one becomes like them. Calculations of profitability and prophecies of the Sámi culture's prospects for the future have nothing to do with our choice now. Even if we were to go under as a people, I think it would be vital to do so with our self-esteem intact. (Juhu Niillas 1969: 92; my translation)

This is what my father said (wrote) in 1969. What he says here applies to the society of science as well: to social sciences and the humanities. Different societies have different rules and codes. In an indigenous context, it is natural to seek knowledge and wisdom; truth, from the Elders. The Elders manage the people's values, laws and morals, the art of storytelling, the world-view, the truth and the wisdom. In an indigenous context, the

² This part was originally called “Is there room for Sámi epistemology within academic knowledge production?” Given as a key-note speech at the University of Tromsø international conference “Challenging Situatedness: Gender, Culture and the Production of Knowledge”, it really marks my point of departure. (Juhu Niilasa Risten 2002a) Later, it was to be printed as “To look from a fell; where do I come from?” in Engelstad and Gerrard (eds.) *Challenging Situatedness: Gender, Culture and the production of Knowledge*. (Juhu Niilasa Risten 2005a)

Elders are the keepers of knowledge, wisdom and truth. In a scholarly context, relying on relatives for information is considered rather dubious. There are so many pitfalls concerning issues such as source criticism, objectivity, etc.

– Some Sámi are hesitant to go into the battle in a society of organisations and relate to a jurisdiction strange to Sámi way of thinking. But sooner or later we must – as a minority – admit to be the weaker part in the battle of the goods of society, unable to choose neither weapon nor means. And when we are destined to put in claims, responsibly and independently, we will no longer have to fall back on the same form of compensation as Sámi before us: to cheat the powerful whenever there's the opportunity. (Juhu Niillas 1969: 97)

It seems the Sámi learned early on to cheat the powerful whenever there was an opportunity. My father once told me how they, as children, used to tell visiting researchers all kinds of tales, fables and sagas when asked about Sámi ways. To be able to cheat grown-ups like this was evidently great fun, to see them put their silly pranks down on paper, taken as truths... (Later he would become a researcher himself and a professor in the Sámi language.)

In my view, this citation applies to the academic world as well. We can, as a minority of Academy choose *neither weapon nor means*; neither theory nor method. It has all been given to us already as parts of the fields in question: we cannot apply Sámi methods and ways of thinking directly. When we come to the point “where we are destined to make claims, responsibly and independently” we shall need no compensation. We'll need to know our society: our whole family right down to our little finger. And we need to know one fell from another.

The Burden of Enlightenment

– It is considered obvious, a ‘natural law’, that we are to give grounds for our way of living and thinking, at least as soon as we ourselves are in the company of the majority people. It is good enough that we are Sámi on the heights and in the turf hut or tent; it is

even romantic. What irritates some “Norwegians” and half-assimilated Sámi now is that some of us proclaim the right to take our Sámi background with us into today’s society along with the right to cultivate our own Sámi version of Sámi culture. This costs the Norwegian government money and to the half-assimilated “Norwegians” in Sápmi it disrupts their hard-won acceptance and raises problems that had supposedly gone. (Juhu Niillas 1969: 72; my translation)

This ‘*natural law*’, *that we are to give grounds for our way of living and thinking* concerned my father when he wrote this in 1969. The issue has continued to concern Sámi scholars and students ever since, as it causes a major problem regarding the research one is occupied with. (And I imagine this must be an overall problem facing any indigenous scholar or student.) Firstly, this matter concerns situatedness. If you choose to ‘play by the rules’ and ignore everything you have learned within your culture, you will in some way or other have to step out of the universe you grew into and refer to your people as ‘them’, thus pretending to have the ‘objective’ mind of the true scholar. If, on the other hand, you choose not to ignore your background, you may have problems situating yourself in connection with the object of your research. In addition, you will have a problem of sources: of backing up your research, as this sort of knowledge is seldom put down in writing, and oral testimony is still less approved of as source material, since it can be hard to check and doesn’t have the status of a written text set down by a researcher.

Whichever way you choose to write your thesis, you will face the Burden of Enlightenment: if you are an indigenous researcher you will have to inform your readers about your people, every banality vital to an understanding of your research. It will be your responsibility to remove the bottom between worlds. Your readers may have had years of higher education and high academic status, but all the same they are likely to be ignorant of your people’s way of living and thinking, and you will have to inform them. At the same time as presenting material that really should have been taught in primary school, you are supposed to perform advanced thinking and research. Also, since the roots of Academy are ethnocentric (paying heed to one way of thinking over another),

this goes all the way up, and you may have to justify what makes this science if you choose to rely on your people's way of thinking about the world. Indigenous researchers should always be prepared to lay themselves down as bridges for other people to step upon, as this sort of mediation requires gymnastics of the mind; the filling of widely-spaced gaps. Paradoxically, ironically enough, one might say... How do you remove the bottom between us?

One might say that the indigenous peoples who are unprivileged, poor and oppressed might be considered mute on an international, communicative level. With small possibilities of making themselves heard they are practically without representativity. The subdued group can never actually be given a voice itself, but is always represented, either in the political sense of the word or in the mimetic sense of the word: in art, in research. At the same time, there is an opening, in the text's empty spaces, in history's blank parts. By reclaiming stories and write the history of this blankness is it possible to approach the position of the subaltern, her situatedness.

One feature of literature is the opportunity of seeing humanity in the face of a single person, something, which implies a form of representation, just as 'minor literature' myths represent the nation – and every single member of it – by telling the story of the Sámi people.³ In this sense even oral literature is political, and as such becomes 'representative' in the way that it offers mimicry of 'real life'. In a sense, all literature is representative; this is its essence, since language cannot be separated from life.

The matter of representation goes together with one central internal native criticism: 'over-educated' natives who live the lives of, and together with, white people, cannot represent the 'tribe'. Supposedly, we live the 'life of white people'. Applied to Sámi conditions – or to the conditions of indigenous peoples in general – one might object that these demands concerning representativity could easily take on a conservative, not to say reactionary stance: a position of status quo designed on behalf of native peoples, monopolizing improvements to standards of living by terming them 'Western'. Such a

³ See my master's thesis (Juhu Niilasa Risten 1999: 73).

stance implies the confusion of livelihood with ethnicity, comfort with cosmology. In not believing in a people's ability and right to change, it is sentenced to the cold, dead life of the museum.

In all of the 'cases' in this thesis one might talk of silencing; of fear, insofar as we never get to a place in time where we can see the past for what it was, be reconciled and say: – Come on: let there be peace between us. The silencing goes on if we ourselves, the few indigenous with a voice, choose not to address such issues or bring them up from underground into the daylight. In conclusion, then, the style of what might seem to be a political thesis is contextualized by adding context to context: stories of a Sámi past in hiding underline the main points of the thesis, retaining a reading that is not necessarily less literary, only Other. One might ask, won't this always be dismissed as Politic, as long as it comes from down under, as long as it's voiced by subalterns situated far away from the citadels of power (of definition). 'Political' can easily signify 'biased' in this context: it is 'subjective' and far from the objectivist norms of science and research. On the other hand, being the minor in such a binary opposition may very well constitute an upbringing in shrewd tactics. For a definition of the term 'politic' my iMac dictionary suggests 'possessing or displaying tact, shrewdness, or cunning'. As aboriginal researchers, we should take on the responsibility of reconciliation and face our fears, we should our bodily inscribed knowledge of politics to our advantage and not fear to appear what the powers-that-be might conceive of as political.⁴

A life as an active, independent people

– The Sámi are a small people in a continual state of choice, just as every individual always is. The choice exists between a life as an active, independent people; and not choosing. The former demands never-ending striving. The latter may be easy, but will

⁴ As indigenous people we're always told that we're partial. When I studied journalism at college I was told not to write about the reindeer herders' conflict with the Norwegian Army and authorities on pasture grounds in Inner Troms (– advice I ignored). I was biased, supposedly, even though my family never had any reindeer. (Although we did have Stuorra-Máhtte, reanga and the siida's second according to Åsllat Sombi (1996: 105), living his life out on the fell to the extent that he never had an address of his own.)

lead to us losing our independence, and the impossibility of choosing at all. (Juhu Niillas 1969: 98; my translation)

Here, this citation applies to the norms of Academy: whether to give in to it, or not. I chose the latter, and in choosing this as a way of getting up that long river of a Ph.D. thesis, placed my trust in people before me: my people. And so the journey begins, and it starts out with language and translation, moves on to quotation, and communication. The journey starts out situated within Academy, adopting, adapting... Then we break away as Ságstállan hits us as a method.

Translation has been vital in order to bring the many adequate Sámi voices forth and have them ‘communicate’ in this context. Translation is essential in building bridges and quite a substantial part of this work has involved translating, mainly from Sámi and Norwegian (and Swedish) into English. Translating constitutes a method in itself, as it defined the way this work came into being. In the beginning I would write essays, and when I wrote essays in Sámi, as was the case with “The thief’s burden” and “Eve’s hidden children”, it would swiftly shift somewhat in character when translated into Norwegian or English. This merely demonstrated to me the possibilities and restrictions immanent in the different languages as well: in the space between them. In addition, the option of hiding behind words, which is so often the case in academic writing, was somehow diminished. To me, the poetic and mediative aspect of translating has been more important, so I have chosen to ignore the fact that translating quotations and works of art is more apt to bring discredit in the academic setting of literary criticism. Supposedly, this has to do with the potential for manipulating quotes, or so I’ve been told. If it’s true or not I cannot say, though I must admit to having been aware of this. Needless to say, really. In translation there is always interpretation: there is the inevitable choice of words, of meaning, of steering thought, of contextualizing. Any interpreter is aware of this. Here, I had a golden opportunity to bridge worlds wide apart and bring them closer by a mere choice of words. Of course, then, I would choose words closer to the context I was opting for. (Conscious of this choice; this opportunity to lead the mind by feeding it with words, I would choose ‘fell’ rather than ‘mountain’, for instance). In this way, translation has become a vital and

self-evident part of my method. Consciousness is always immanent in choice of words, whether it's in academic or poetic writing. Here, I had the chance to blend these genres quite deliberately. The Sámi mode of communication renders the direct, single-levelled form of enunciation so often opted for in research – and often mistaken for objectivity – an impossibility. (Not to say a stupidity, an insult to the intellectual capacity of the addressee.) In addition to this there is the notion of the poetic, rhythm, rhymes, in working with words. The aesthetics of language should not be underestimated, even in academic texts. Within the field of literary research there is, fortunately, some awareness of this.

My English-Norwegian Dictionary fell to pieces, literally; as early as my Master's thesis, it collapsed into three parts. When translating, the awareness of words is naturally high, cross-checking words every which way. Hence, the dictionary at the back of this thesis should be helpful. Different Sámi languages appear helter-skelter, due to the citations they're taken from. Keeping connotations open and adhering to rhythm and rhyme has been as important as retaining a close rapport with *sámegiella* and its pattern of thinking, so that it can 'shine through', even in English translations. This may cause what might seem to be somewhat odd expressions in English, perhaps odd syntaxes sometimes. In addition, some Sámi words remain untranslated: these are words that may be essential to the text and carry important connotations. At the same time, and often for the same reason, these are words that are practically impossible or hard to translate briefly, as one would need long sentences to describe them. It is fair to say that in translating, I have opted for alienation and estrangement, as well as, paradoxically, bridging and mediation. In making the reader 'learn' a number of Sámi terms, I hoped to mirror the alienation indigenous people know at the core of their being.

Even when working with foreign languages, the arbitrariness of words becomes insistent, to the point where you can never really grasp their different meanings in every context. – What can you really know? It becomes apparent how evasive words are and language is, and we can only dream of being in control of it, of mastering it. We are lost in language *in origin*, its point of departure is alienation, at the same time it offers a home for our

thoughts, it is the core of communication as we know it. And so, in time and as we grow up and learn to speak, we feel at home in our language/s, we come to believe that we master it/them.

– Translating is like building bridges between cultures. A literal translation is seldom sufficient, but neither is too free a translation. Both end up in the middle of the bridge, halfway between home and a new destination of choice. Guides are necessary to help the cultural travelers read all the new signs and begin to navigate on their own. (Harald Gaski 2006: 8)

A concept that comes into question here, as part of my method, is the notion of *suhkkolastin*. In voicing our indigenous values, skills and experiences as subaltern, we use our cultural knowledge of different worlds and become mediators. We know the meaning of words and their alternative meanings in both worlds, and although (or precisely because) these worlds differ greatly, we can connect their values and world-views in a language all can understand. Because our lives have been bridges between worlds so far apart, we have great capacity for *suhkkolastin*. We choose to interpret positively our own skills from cultural criss-crossing the mighty river separating ontologies (although earned the hard way). Thus, we take on the burden of enlightenment and take action. Relying on old Sámi strategies I make a habit (a method) of *suhkkolastin* this river, shuttling between perspectives, nations, borders, shores. This is my methodological ABC: All By Contextualizing: giving context, placing in context, creating new contexts and points of references. At the same time, trying to recognize something as the very same thing from many directions, even though it may look different from another direction. This shuttling in-between perspectives is tightly connected with *ságastallan* and *birgejupmi*, *duođaštallan* and *diiddastallan*.

– The many borders of Sámi research and ‘guovtti ilmme gaskkas’ adhere to an old Sámi strategy, which in post-colonial theory is called shuttling, *suhkkolastin* (rowing) between different perspectives. (Veli-Pekka Lehtola 2005: 2, my translation)

How to quote?

This has caused me much thought, as I have had to legitimize the way I use quotations, and I have had to appreciate why it was so important for me to use them in such a way, when this really jeopardized the project (of achieving a degree within an Academy). Such a mission presupposes a common language and the ability to mediate between 'languages' and thought (languages of thought). Heavy claims and firm brackets are laid down for whoever dares to undertake the journey towards the freedom of research. Given the limitations underlined earlier, indigenous researchers do carry extra burdens. We must adopt the language and adapt to the different rules of Academy in order to break away with it so that we can commit research on our own terms, within contexts as we ourselves see fit.

A standard quotation, typical of academic texts, is the

Outlined citation, marked by its deferring typography and strict form. Apparently, this citation tells you about formality and the factual, it tells of other texts within the same fields of research piling up behind you throughout the history of writing, back to the dawn of mankind or something very eternal. It places the text (or rather, its author) within the history of science (where we do want to be as scholars) and places it into a canon of research too heavy to argue with. This is indeed the kind of context a scholar should strive for! You are, on the other hand, supposed to argue with or comment on the essence of quotations marked like this, maybe in order to prove your place within academic history, to prove that you are indeed a worthy candidate of a Ph.D. or a dr. art. These citations covet distance from the matter; impartiality. They stand out in the text and offer some sort of objectivity. As long as there are other ways of demonstrating traceability, I refrain from using these. There's always the option to adopt, adapt and break away... Before, I did close my father and other people I know and love in these clammy brackets, but feel the need to do so no more. (Here at the end of this 'citation' there ought to be some reference as to where I've taken this from, but I really do not know where ideas such as these originate from...)

Different quotation styles are cultural of a kind, as they indeed rely heavily on the recipient's basic knowledge, upbringing and education. Here, we operate within the spheres of both Sámi and academic upbringing. Mediating between spheres as different as these presupposes knowledge of both, as well as an awareness of pitfalls, of which there are many. It goes without saying that such a task is mediative, if at all achievable.

Mediative as literature itself: grasping across gaps so wide such bridges were not yet thought of. Or so it seems.⁵

The general academic rule seems to be a striving for consistency, homogenous meaning, singular stands. This is evident in the ‘rules’ for citation. Obviously, the transcription needs to be right, the facts in order. Preferably, there is a clear-cut context wherein the citation is placed and commented upon further. Such clear-cut contexts are often taken for granted and rely heavily on upbringing: within a culture; within a discipline. As a rule, Sámi communication seems to oppose consistency as well as monotheistic meanings or singular stands. The ability to think for oneself is valued higher than clarity. Irony (in the broadest sense of the word) is and has been a persistent part of Sámi upbringing or cultural education, its shape and depth varying with the locality. All over Sápmi, irony colours communication in almost every way. Asking direct, structured questions is not part of the traditional Sámi code of communication. Likewise, it is not customary for the Sámi to communicate by revealing everything, it’s not common or proper or even polite to ‘spell it out’. Thus, the striving for consistency, homogenous meaning and singular stands seems meaningless if we are to proclaim the right to take our Sámi background with us into the Academy, and, within it, cultivate our own Sámi version of Sámi culture.

Following this mode of thought and Sámi manners, I’ve striven for a more egalitarian status of voice, not differentiating between lay and learned, author and academician. The wisdom of the Elders is the indigenous counterpart to scholarly weightiness, and wit matches wisdom equally. Writing seems to be at the core of truly owning things within the wisdom of modern world; hence we need to gather what’s truthfully written in our stories in order fully to take them back. It seems we need to get to the heart of ways of thought and decolonize the mind of written ways – the way the mind is organized. Since

⁵ .. and we seem to be biting off more than we can chew already. The point of this footnote is simply to stress the fact that the formal, “normal” system of reference concerning academic texts with their immanent hierarchy is somewhat opposed in this work. Footnotes, for instance, are of no less importance than the main text. Or, footnotes (as well as parts of the main text) might seem meaningless and out of context, displaying how the predictability opted for in academic writing is opposed by the unpredictability of Sámi orality. It may suddenly slap you in the face without warning. Obscene, mad, totally incomprehensible or complete gibberish. Seemingly.

even rationality takes on the pattern of its surroundings, we need to apply a thinking more tuned into indigenous issues – oral issues. There are ways, the question is more one of context: does it apply here, will it be understood, acknowledged, found to be valid in these circumstances, in Academy?

Integrated quotation

– Aboriginal people may lose cultural elements such as language, food and clothing, yet these are just external fragments of the culture. But if the base of the culture, the morals and the religion, is lost, the foundation of the culture is lost. And when it is lost there are no longer any basic rules in the nation to make the culture and the way of life survive. (Niillas A. Somby 1991:2)

To a literary scholar, citation etiquette seems all the more important, all the time the text itself is at the focus of attention; it is *the* focalized. Literary criticism seems to learn less than nothing from the texts themselves when it comes to life and vibrancy, vigour and wealth in words. One way of quoting is something I choose to call integrated quotation. Striving for proximity of style and unity in a text, rather than the distance so clearly marked by quotations, I chose a less academic approach by reaching for what seems more of an oral option concerning quotation. Here, the context is given and the text referred to and cited without highlighting the citations or stating page numbers. Instead, these citations reveal themselves as such in their paraphrasing language and obvious copying of style. Opting for the bringing of orality into the literacy of Academy, citations are used in such a manner that the text appears to be more of an entity, without the traditional cuts and slices. Also, in the translation of “The happening that is called the Kautokeino error” – which are court protocols from the nineteenth century (published by the Sámi writer Magnar Mikkelsen) – it made sense to have the English spelling mirror the Norwegian orthography of those days.

Different quotation styles argue differently, just as different texts do, maybe by addressing different parts of our brains, or by seducing us in different ways – as we are indeed different. (Even standard academic texts seduce, through their conventionality,

their ‘objectivity’, their weight and dusty boredom. Indeed, some seem to seduce by putting to sleep! I do apologize if this is the case here...)

Also, whenever anything is omitted from the citation itself, I put ... instead of square brackets, which seem to me too harsh somehow concerning the setting: storytelling, the oral. Similarly, I have used parentheses instead of square brackets when adding something of contextual necessity to the quotation: *(The Westerners) think that literature should be this way or that, otherwise it isn't literature.*

One rule of literary criticism is never to use the same quotation twice. Commercial have other rules, as does poetry, as do yoik lyrics – *dajahusat*; here, repetitions are more often the rule than the exception. In differing contexts, meaning changes. As a rule, storytelling favours threefold repetition, the magic trinity. I cannot see why this kind of literary effect should not be used in academic texts as well. Hence the breaking of the rule, for which I do not apologize; I do however apologize for the apparent need for two introductions, of which this is the last and the truest in context.

Another matter concerns the person quoted, which name to put. Who do I really quote, for instance, in citing a story gathered by Qvigstad (the sole Grimm brother of Sámi stories). It took me a while to see that by bending the rules I could put the name of whoever gave the story to Qvigstad originally, and thus regard Qvigstad as some sort of editor, not the author of the story. Oral literature was considered not to have authors and stories handed down were thought of as common property. (While in the general manhandling of them, the stories seem to have become Qvigstad's property after all.) Things have changed and there are many other aspects concerning this that I shall not go into. The point I do wish to make is the one that concerns credit: who do you credit when you quote, the owner of the words or the owner of the book? Considering the power issues concerning Sámi historical sources, this is a crucial point: the reclaiming of stories. In research tradition, most of the sources of Sámi history are written by outsiders. They might look differently if they were to be interpreted by Sámi scholars, that is, if we chose to make it our issue, rather than repeating the interpretations and canonizations cultivated

and recessed over the years within our fields of study, which is usually the case. Here, I shall not make this my issue as such, but rather make a point of ignoring these sources; and when I do use them, e.g. Just Qvigstad, I quote his informants, who were overall Sámi storytellers.

Reclaiming stories

– There was a poor lad of a boy who herded two goats outside the king's town. Well, then the princess wants to buy one of the goats. The poor boy doesn't want to sell it. Then the princess lifts her skirts and tells the boy: "Kiss my bottom!" Then says the boy: "You sell yourself cheap. You'll surely have a baby." A short while passed; then the princess had a baby. The king gathered all the Norwegian magnates and asked: "Who is the father of the child?" The girl didn't know of anyone who had got her with child. Finally the king was perturbed, since the girl didn't know who the father of the child was. So the king gathered sixteen men in the yard, and he who the child smiled at, he was the child's father; but the child didn't smile at any of the Norwegians. But then the child spotted the poor boy through the windows, and then it smiled at him. And the king judged: "There's the father," and he asked his daughter: "Did he do it?" But she said no. She told of how she had lifted her skirts, and the boy had said: "You'll have a baby." Then the king got angry and made a barrel with three bottoms, and then he put all three of them, the daughter and the child and the boy, into the barrel and pushed the barrel into the sea to drift and so they drift at sea. The girl wonders why plates were rattling at the other end of the barrel where the boy is, so she asks the boy: "Why do plates rattle? Do you have food?" "Yes." The girl says: "Give me some!" The boy says: "I will if you'll marry me." The girl says: "All right; but how do you remove the bottom between us?" The boy says: "No danger of that; that I will manage." Once more he asks the girl if she'll have him for a husband. The girl says she will. Then says the boy: "But I'm too poor for you, the king's daughter." The girl says: "You're not poor. You're the only one who can conjure up food now and again." And the boy thought away the bottom of the barrel between them and they got together.

They drifted on and drifted for a long time, and then they came to a haunted town. There was not a person in sight, only the town itself, food and everything. They went into

a farm where the sea hálddit came to eat at midday. The boy took three pebbles, entered the attic and made a hole so that a pebble might land on the middle of the table when the sea hálddit came to eat. Then he dropped a pebble onto the table, and then the sea hálddit ran off towards the sea. The boy got hold of one of them and threatened to kill him if he didn't give him the township. So the sea hálddit had to give him the township. The boy got the township and was a merchant and king of the area. He writes a letter to his father-in-law, the old king, that he is alive and the daughter is alive and he is king. But the father-in-law does not believe him. The boy writes once more that he's alive, "though you set me out at sea to die, me and your daughter, and now you shall come and visit." The old king writes back a letter saying he does not believe it. Then the young king writes: "Come and visit; I feel no hate, though you set me out at sea."

Then the father-in-law king mustered an army and off he went. When he spotted the town of the son-in-law, he raised the flag of mercy. Now the son-in-law king also raised the flag of mercy. "Come on: let there be peace between us." Well, he came, and they started eating and drinking. He was a noaidi, this son-in-law-king: he could do evil just by thinking of it. So suddenly the old king's drinking cup disappeared from the table. And he searched all the people of the town and passed the following verdict: "Whoever is found to have it is to be killed." Then says the son-in-law king: "You must search me too. So he searched. He did not find it. Then says the son-in-law king: "May I check your pockets?" And there it was. At that, the father-in-law king feared he might be killed: he had himself passed the verdict. But the son-in-law king was merciful enough not to kill him. (Anders Larsen 1928: 166; my translation) ⁶

How do you remove the bottom between us? How do you remove the stem that divides man and woman, lazarus and princess, rich and poor, that divides different worlds and world-views? Can it be thought away? Can what one believes to be possible simply be made possible by believing? Is it possible to alter the universe by the power of the mind? To discover the isle of Iceland by transcendental flying (as suggested in the old Norse literature)? The lazarus is a noaidi – can he steer the wind that enables the sails to defy

⁶ Just another 'Qvigstad story'? Printed in Qvigstad's compilation of Sámi stories, this story is actually put down in writing by Anders Larsen, considered to be the first Sámi novelist as he wrote the first novel in Sámi, *Bæivve-alggo. Muittalus* (1912)

the open seas? Can he show us how to conquer the past and render it present, so that we may claim the land rights to confirm a future? We need noaidit to fight the ghosts of colonialism; storytellers who can guide us and show the way out of the ordeals; researchers. The categories are not all that clear and the noaidi cannot always be trusted. You have to know who you're dealing with. The context decides and the story rules. We need our lost noaidit, we need trickster fools as guides to show us how to declare ourselves son-in-law kings and daughter-in-law queens of the area. Show us how to write those repetitive messages to finally convince the father-in-law king, the patriarch, the colonial powers, that we own this land, that it is ours. So that we may raise the flag of mercy and say: – Come on: let there be peace between us.

Stories aim at reconciliation: the bringing together of various groups, to unite nations. There is love grounding such mediation, a love shared by the approach to human nature: One is affected by characters, be they ever so strange or weird. Grounded with love, the effect of stories is reconciling past social layers, ethnic oppositions, personal prejudice: to get to know and *see* leads us beyond our old biases, just as we were guided by a wise ofelaš. This is the essence of literature, it enables us to see, it grants us the opportunity to internalize unknown knowledge and cosmology; it readies us so that we may understand people with whom we would otherwise have no relation. They may be fictive, but they carry nations, they are markings of something more, something greater than themselves. Thus, literature is mediation. This mediation is the essence of literature: it brings the distant close, makes the unknown known. It removes the bottom between us. Literature reveals, it includes; it shuts no doors.

Dialogues

– Sami culture is sitting together and speaking about things that indigenous people all over the world speak of, in our own way, in Sami. Sami culture is rowing the fjord or on the river or the lake, going hunting, cooking coffee... (It is) being under an open sky, and having time, and living. Sami culture is a way of thinking – an attitude toward life. Peace of mind is part of our tradition. (Nils Jernsletten 1992: 14)

One style of quotation I use is the standard citation at the beginning of a book, an article, telling the reader something essential about the text itself: its central theme, its perspective or goal. Such citations instruct the reader to interpret along certain lines and make connections themselves. Mainly used in fiction over the years, these citations refer to ways of understanding that seem artistic as well as connected to ideas. As such, a citation may be the text in a nutshell. Often, such citations call for an effort to confront a text's silences, the condition that makes the work possible, rather than repeating what openly offers itself to discovery. Understanding things metaphorically, or by the use of association, this way of organizing thought is utterly reliant on the receiver's background knowledge. Every chapter begins with a quotation of this style, in italics.

This use of citations, together with a certain Sámi mode of communicating, melted together as they took over and formed a method which covets an understanding that is metaphorical and dependent on association: they are the same as the opening citations mentioned earlier, only they are put together to form what hopefully appears more like a dialogue. The Sámi model of communication (*ságastallan*) constitutes grounds for a method: Involving stories, poems, dreams, *diiddat*, *dajahusat*, jokes, songs, etc., it proves a highly literary discourse and solid ground for further abstractions.

Citations like these are marked with a dash at the beginning of the sequence, such as the one opening this section. In this way, the use of citation opts to be dialogical. Hence, this may look more like a theatrical play as far as quotations are concerned, with the 'characters' being Sámi scholars and authors alike, mostly living, some dead but nonetheless vivid within the Sámi research community. Some quotations are matters of opinion; some are factual; others may be stories; others again matters of opinion expressed through stories, or facts told as stories. Some are academic, some are poems. Here, they are all utterances, all valid, given the context. In what follows, the sources are all Sámi, scholars and authors alike, from all over Sápmi and from most of the different regions. As we proceed, these dialogical 'round-table discussions' serve as research criticism, at the same time form a method, called *Ságastallan*. It has been important to me to show that there is in fact such a thing as a Sámi research community, and similarly

important to rely on this as source material. The reason for this is the aim of studying Sámi notions of literature. Given such a task it would not do to rely on the usual historical source material, which is generally written by outsiders, mostly travellers in these exotic lands. Their narrations are extradiegetic of sorts – the narrators are not part of the stories they tell.

The dialogues are set not in a Socratic garden, perhaps, but high up in the fells where the mind is free to move, centred on a fireplace by a little stream, just sitting together and speaking about things that indigenous people all over the world speak of, in our own way. To those who are situated within the Sámi academic and literary sphere it might actually work somewhat like a play, picturing the different characters talking with each other. Then again, this might seem dustily boring to those who cannot picture the participants of the ‘play’ as they have their say one by one, seemingly arguing or debating the same topic. It may all sound like gibberish talk, inconsequential, incoherent, alien. Alienation is a tool in literature as well as within Academy. In literary research called *ostranjenje* – it’s often held to be the quintessence of poetry and a crucial feature of literature as such. In Academia, alienation is likely to concern the different disciplines or fields of study. The cultural upbringing, grounding such knowledge, is taken for granted more often than not. So when a person otherwise safe and secure within a field is alienated due to cultural incompetence, the person can’t be blamed for ignorance. Again, the burden of enlightenment lies heavily on the outsider. That being said, the task of the text is to mediate: to include, to communicate beyond biases (even those of the author).

Ságastallan. Birgejupmi

– I consider the frequent conversation, *ságastallan*, and coming together as highly esteemed where I come from. – Now I have to visit my *siidaguoimmi*: – What are you up to now? There’s nothing else on my mind but to check and see how they’re doing. And when I say it like this, it’s obvious of course that this is concern, the showing of concern for your *siidaguoimmi* or neighbour – how are they, do they need my help, and so on. And the *ságastallan* that sticks in my mind the most is what a researcher called “the endless conversation” – a French researcher who studied the reindeer herding *biras* in

Guovdageaidnu. It was observed that the *ságastallan* about the reindeer work never ended, it had no end, there is always the need to talk about what we are to do next, where we are going, when we are going, and what if the weather should turn out such and such, and so on. I think concern for other people's *birgejupmi* was a big value of ours. (Ánte Mihkkal Gaup/Ingor Ántte Ánte Mihkkal: 16; my translation)

– A central term in Sami subsistence is 'birget', and in brief the term expresses how to cope. In other words it means having the material basis for a satisfactory standard of living and this is to be found in the transformation of resources to products that people need or wish to have in order to "birget". Such products may consist of food, particularly food for the fulfillment of basic requirements, but they may also be products that fulfill other needs. (Johan K.H. Kalstad: 26)

– I know a man with ten children who figured out that it didn't pay to have a steady job in highway construction. When the whole family picked cloudberries, fished the lakes, went salmon fishing and sewed moccasins and mittens for sale, the income was substantially more than if he 'worked.' But for most Sami, this form of economy is no longer feasible. (Juhu Niillas 1992: 14)

– The phrase 'birget vaikko čáhcegeađgge alde' encapsulates and expresses one aspect of Sami knowledge. The expression refers to a person who is able to cope absolutely anywhere, even on a tiny island where only a few resources are available. The expression embodies therefore a valuable aspect of knowledge and this aspect is substantiated by the image of a person on an island having the technology in their knowledge to activate and utilize the sparse resources available. The expression is a positive one, but it also contains an imperative, namely the ability to get on by very little. (Johan K.H. Kalstad: 27)

World-view and literature are to a certain extent somewhat shared by the indigenous peoples of the world. The notion of literature offered by academic institutions is indeed very distant from indigenous ways. In fact, the invisibility of oral tradition only sustains the diminishing and devaluing of its value, and as such there is a hierarchy within the

mainstream societies in which we live that only helps to continue an ongoing, non-spoken colonization. Hardly visible in research and literature at all, Sámi viewpoints have been almost non-existent in literary research, which has threaded along the paths of comparative literature and literary criticism in general, applying other people's theories and concepts, and often ignoring the oral tradition as a background to knowledge, a context by which to view the text, to highlight it. Post-colonial theories have been valued and used by indigenous researchers, since they help to highlight some of the matters involved in power relations such as these. Still, such theories, be they post-colonialism, feminism or post-modernism, can only highlight some of the ways towards awareness; only support our thoughts to a certain degree. After all, they are -isms from others' worlds and world-views. In order to be able to talk at all about the world from our *point* of view, we need to establish this point – this place from where we're viewing – as a site of importance: a place to *be*, even academically. Some such indigenous -isms have appeared, without much Sámi participation beyond a criticism of the status quo. Here, *ságastallan* is held up as a point of departure. Whether it will lead anywhere academic remains unclear. The task of this text is nevertheless to lead the way on the journey up this river in the hope that it leads to some understanding of Sámi poetics.

Here, *ságastallan* is an effort to return research to Sámi communities by treating Sámi literature (including its oral features) to an indigenous interpretation; focusing on material that already exists, from a Sámi viewpoint. Literature is communication. In order to be able to talk about communication at all, or anything else for that matter, one needs to establish a certain understanding of the content of this term. Such an understanding or significance will always be defined within a context, what we would often term *culture*. The Sámi notion of literature, of any communication whatsoever, follows the Sámi pattern of thought and way of relating to the world: it relates to the people's world-view. In order to be able to talk about literature we need to establish a mode of communication more attuned to Sámi ways, hence the symbol on the front page: the *ássjalommes*, hence *ságastallan*. Stories add context to context. Children are fed with points of referentiality: this is how they are raised. Thus they learn to see the patterns. They learn to read.

Stories are used both because of their mediative and their meditative effects. More than allegories, different from metaphors, stories come to relate to the overall topic by somehow expressing their own truth; their knowledge of the world. The background for this is to be found in traditional Sámi modes of relating and communicating: relying on and relating (to) experiences of people who went before by talking in stories and other forms of poetic utterance, thus shaping them anew – the way that oral literature works.

Ságastallan is to be considered part of a method: a system of communication that is transferable to text and text production. This partly consists of form – the use of cited dialogues, as discussed earlier. Partly, it relies on the belief in communication as a practical tool also in a societal/juridical sense, something, which goes back to the days of the siida. The word's first link derives from the noun sáhka: this means a talk or a chat; a speech or lecture; reports, hearsay, news or gossip; words, or that which is said; a story or an epic tale. The word ságastallat is a verb, and the ending –stallat has both a continuative and a frequentative meaning. Frequentative verbs express that which happens repeatedly; that which is done by several individuals and/or involves several different issues. The continuative suggests an action that goes on for a while or is being undertaken now, also that which never ends (and hence has no beginning). It is indeed an endless conversation, a conversation that never ends: there is always the need to talk. As a concept, ságastallan signifies the mediative use of dialogue in both the traditional sense and in an academic setting: a dialogic communication form that is intended to include the reader and direct 'conversations' between different sources, addressing traditional and academic thought simultaneously.

This is what I try to do: approach Sámi notions of literature through indirect questions and through ságastallan as a form of communication. But will a thesis structured according to a Sámi mode of communication meet the demands on scientific procedures, and genres? Sámi communication modes and notions of literature are interwoven and highlight the essence of literature in every form, of language itself: It has to be interpreted, it comes in the form of a riddle of sorts. This suggests a pattern of thinking that questions our surroundings on quite an existential level. Nature and people, as wells

as spirits of nature, are neither good nor bad; they can be both but it all depends. Shapeshifters and swings of nature are part of life and you need to read signs, the context of every situation before you may even begin to judge. What can you know, really?

One might also say that what I do – basing a literary study on Sámi research alone – is a matter of birgejupmi. This signifies that which we need or wish to have in order to birget, to cope, even in an academic setting, as Sámi. It might signify the material basis for a satisfactory standard of research, which then again is to be found in the transformation from orality to research. As we let the material lead the way, the abundance of our common riches inspires new ways (methods) based on old orality, old skills. It is a matter of interpreting tracks, or maybe even diiddastallat, as these features play out their characteristic in the transitoriness of snow.

Poling upstream

– We would like to have the opportunity and the time to meet each other and talk about our own future. At the present a lot of energy is spent in explaining to others why we are here, why we want to use our own language, why we do not want to give up our way of life. And why we refuse to shout “Hallelujah” to the representatives of the large countries who refer to our land as theirs, and who speak of the land as well as the lakes and rivers as resources of the state. And for whom the wildlife in the forests and mountains are riches to be “optimally” exploited. And who consider our homeland theirs. We never sold this land on which our ancestors lived for thousands of years without even leaving a trace behind them, and who did not comprehend that it could be sold for money. We should meet each other and talk about this, discover ways of communicating. Open our eyes and look back with clear-sightedness and determine what are the real threats at the present to us and to the land. We need to dispel the untrue myths in which we have learned to believe and together confront the enemy by making him visible and real. (John E. Utsi 1993: 4)

– Research must always be impartial, unconditional, unprejudiced and strive for completeness... “objective” research is only objective if it is carried out according to

certain rules which are such that if any other researcher with the same prerequisites and competence were to study the same problem and apply the same rules, he or she would also reach the same results. If one makes concrete the demand for, e.g. a research station where a Saami and a non-Saami are to examine and describe a Saami phenomenon, results could be compared. These would probably not be the same, and let us therefore consider what the reasons for this are, and also the relevance of the results for Saami and majority society. (Susanna Kuoljok-Angéus 1989: 145)

– One of the requirements for scientific research is that you should be able to control the results, either by repeating the research procedures or by having access to the basic data, which the conclusions have been drawn from. In both respects, humanistic research is fairly vulnerable. In general, the same experiments can seldom be repeated with the same set of individuals, and if the basic data are drawn from social events, they do not occur a second time under exactly identical circumstances. I think this state of affairs has important bearing on... understanding a culture: the more we look at the internal world of the individual, the vaguer the data and the further away we are from controllability. We therefore stand between the Scylla of haphazard recording of events and the Charybdis of uncontrollability. (Pekka Sammallahti 1984: 127)

– Operating on a more or less taken-for-granted set of values, norms and expectations, Academy at large usually knows very little, if anything, about indigenous epistemes, creating various kinds of conflicts with and perpetuating discrimination against those indigenous people who ‘speak through’ their own epistemes – who desire or attempt to express their views based on an episteme foreign to the mainstream academic conventions. While there might be awareness of *existence* of ‘local narratives’ and ‘truths’ (and possibly other epistemes), there is not necessarily much understanding of their meanings. This in turn can make it difficult to communicate from within other than the dominant epistemes upon which Academy is founded. Confronting ignorance can be difficult and challenging in a sometimes hostile atmosphere which does not appear to be welcoming the idea of bringing indigenous knowledge to Academy. (Jovvna-Jon-Ánne-Kirstte Rávdná/Rauna Kuokkanen 2004: 134)

– For all disempowered groups, the “scientific” nature of science and research, as defined by Western scholars, must be submitted to the ultimate emancipatory and pragmatic end results of the research. It is not a coincidence that the epistemological traditions, beliefs, and practices of those with less power tend to be dismissed as less relevant, more subjective, and “unscientific” than those of the ones holding the reins of cognitive, epistemic, financial, and political power. (Elina Helander and Kaarina Kailo 1998: 9)

– What I call epistemic ignorance refers to ways in which academic theories and practices ignore, marginalize and exclude other than dominant western European epistemic and intellectual traditions. These ‘other’ epistemic and intellectual traditions are foreclosed in the process of producing, reproducing and disseminating knowledge to an extent that generally there is very little recognition and understanding of them. In other words, it is a concept that is not limited to merely not-knowing or lack of understanding. It also refers to practices and discourses that actively foreclose other than dominant epistemes and refuse to seriously contemplate their existence. Epistemic ignorance is thereby a form of subtle violence. When other than dominant epistemes and forms of knowing are not seen or recognized, they are made to disappear through this invisibility and distance. (Jovanna-Jon-Ánne-Kirstte Rávdná 2004: 134)

– The experiences, which people (including researchers) have amassed, constitute their horizons of understanding. It is easier to understand people with the same language, culture and environmental background and it is easier to communicate and carry out research in what is expected to be one’s own cultural complex. (Odd Mathis Hætta 1996: 15)

– There are many regions in the Third world where the aboriginal peoples are minorities in their own country, without possibilities of reaching rights of self-determination, and with small possibilities of writing their own history. The situation is similar for the Saami people. The Saami society is in a state of constant change. With the firm conviction that no society exists and develops in an isolated environment, I consider it vitally important

to study the processes in the Saami society in a long-term perspective, with consideration taken to surrounding societies. (Inga-Maria Mulk: 42)

– Scientists of majority cultures have paid little attention to the structural polymorphism and internal segregation of the minority cultures. It is not at all self evident that minorities should use the conceptions of majorities when creating theories. If they do, it can mean that majorities suppress minorities ideologically. Minorities themselves are indeed experts in issues, which concern their own culture and artefacts. (Klemetti Näkkjärvi 1996: 81)

– Another thing I've been thinking about is all the information and knowledge we have, only people don't know quite how to use this today. They think it belongs to the past and is no longer of use. – Except for the researchers, who come to interview and record the Elders, only to disappear later with the knowledge and take all the credit themselves. (Jovvna-Jon-Ánne-Kirstte Rávdná 2001: 107; my translation)

– Generally, research has not been “returned” to the Sami. Sadly, much material originally told in Sami voices is now lost in the archives and libraries of the South. When Nils-Aslak Valkeapää, Sami artist-at-large, was collecting photographs for his Sami epic *Beaivi, Áhčážan* (*The Sun, My Father*, English version, 1989), he found hundreds as far afield as Paris – photographs, which were mostly unknown to the Sami themselves. Valkeapää was able to identify the people in the photographs by their dress, their homes, and their features; he was even able to name some of them. (Veli-Pekka Lehtola 1996: 64)

– Many researchers now talk about traditional systems of knowledge. Traditional systems, it is claimed, can be directly compared with scientific knowledge. What is meant here is that traditional knowledge has the same structure and value as scientific knowledge. Scientific knowledge is considered by many people to be verifiable knowledge and is based on empirical observations. A feature of scientific activities is the

development of concepts with the aid of which it is then possible to describe or explain one's observations (knowledge). (Elina Helander 1992a: 3)

– When historical events are examined from the Sámi's own vantage point, the Sámi become the centre of the events and at once the picture of a passive and sacrificing existence changes. Historical research by Sámi reveals that Sámi are characteristically an active, functional group with a clear knowledge of their possibilities to have an impact on their own situation. (Veli-Pekka Lehtola 2002: 105)

– The production of knowledge involves choices of focus and angle, elements that highlight both interpretation and presentation. In this respect, it's interesting to note how the interpretation of aspects of early Sámi history changed in character with the parallel growth of a Sámi political and cultural elite. An underlying notion in much of what has been written about the relationship between the Sámi and Norwegians in earlier days was the existence of an asymmetrical power relation, somewhat similar to what we know from historic times. Works from the past few decades have opened up a higher rate of equality, including differences in status and internal power strides in Sámi societies. Thus, aspects of the present have contributed to extending imaginable interpretation possibilities. (Audhild Schanche 1995: 47; my translation)

– When Sami researchers enter the discussion of the colonial history in the North with examples like the Komsa, they meet with exaggerated scepticism from some of their non-Sami colleagues. The main argument in this discussion is that Sami scientists cannot be unbiased about their own history. The attitude of many majority scientists seems to be that the Sami are simply not reliable as scientists where their own society is concerned. While all knowledge that has the aim of preserving and promoting the majority culture is regarded as objective and unbiased, any new way of thinking about minority history and society is by definition controversial and suspicious. (Ole Henrik Magga 1996: 79)

– Research into Saami history is obviously of great importance and especially an interpretation from a Saami viewpoint of material, which already exists. One of the most

important identity criteria lies, in fact, in a common history: in the case of the Saami people linked to a natural environment, where the way of life, traditions and attitude have been developed throughout time into characteristics which are fairly easily visible: language, dress, art and music, poetry traditions, and to those which are more indefinable: a way of thinking, viewing the world around us and values. (Susanna Kuoljok-Angéus 1989: 144)

– Much of traditional knowledge is closely connected with people’s personal experiences. I introduce the term of ‘knowledge’ as something that is connected with values. Therefore, I perceive knowledge as being part of values, and I assume that knowledge is built on values. Thus, values are here considered as the foundations on which knowledge is built and on which it rests. (Johan K. H. Kalstad 1996: 22)

– Sámi researchers also stress micro-history and the significance of kinship. They describe important periods of transition like the change in land ownership rights, the relationship between the old Sámi religion and Christianity, trade relationships, the changes brought about by World War II and the ensuing evacuation, and the language crisis faced by Sámi due to increased assimilation into the national majorities or State societies. (Veli Pekka Lehtola 2002: 104)

– Communication is a necessary predisposition for understanding a culture. I don’t think anyone would seriously consider venturing on a project on a Norwegian village without being able to speak Norwegian. In Sámi communities, this happens all the time. No wonder people grow sceptical. Language also helps one to avoid ethnocentrism. (Pekka Sammallahti 1984: 128)

– Studies of Sami made by outsiders are often studies of “nameless people”. We have been subjects for so long that research is tantamount to work for us; we are said to be among the most studied indigenous peoples on earth. A 1930’s anecdote describes a Skolt Sami family as having five members: father, mother, two children, and researcher. But where the photographers and researchers are identified by name – underscoring their

authority – the Sami are usually listed as “Lapps from Enontekiö” or “Lapp types”, who convey “traditional Lapp knowledge” or sing “traditional Lapp yoiks”. (Veli-Pekka Lehtola 1996: 61)

– Some might protest and say that my picture of the past and present is not entirely true or right but in fact, this brings us to the most important point when talking about knowledge and the picture of reality. Who owns the truth? Whose picture of the world is the right one? My picture is certainly right to me. In our society, religion, science and to a certain degree, also politics were once represented in the same institutions, the *siida-isit* and the *noaidi* (the shaman). As missionaries won the battle of religious truths, a knowledge of the physical world in our society was considered less valuable: it was “primitive”. We had to start all over again to build up knowledge in a way that was acceptable to our neighbours. In the meantime it has been the picture of the world created by Norwegian, Finnish and Swedish scientists that has been considered to be the only truth. (Ole Henrik Magga 1996: 78)

The hidden children of Eve⁷

– God had created Adam and Eve. One day, God visited them, to see how many children they had. Eve was ashamed that she had so many children. She hid them in the dirt, because they were naked and had no hair, such as they were created before they fell into sin. (Before the fall of man, Adam and Eve were hairy.) Then says God: ‘Let those who are hidden in dirt, stay hidden as long as the world lasts, and do their deeds as those who are up on ground level.’ (Efraim Pedersen 1923: 428; my translation)

This is the story of the creation of the netherworld people. These were the children Eve didn’t manage to hide from the eye of God. One could claim that we, the Sámi — and indeed all indigenous peoples on the Earth — are like the hidden children of Eve. One might make the claim that the current status of the Sámi people in many ways resembles

⁷ This part was originally written in Sámi as “Eva čihkkon čivggat” (Juhu Niilasa Risten 2005b), then translated into the Norwegian and published in the Norwegian literary online journal “Jung” (Juhu Niilasa Risten 2005c).

that of a bastard child: despised, invisible, with no claim to life; no land rights to confirm a future.

The man who collected, translated and put this and a number of other stories down in writing was the Norwegian theologian and philologist Just Qvigstad. Also a Principal of Tromsø Teacher Training College, Just Qvigstad did invaluable work collecting, editing and translating a number of stories told by people (Sámi) across a huge widespread area of Sápmi.⁸

This was in in the childhood of science, when research was reserved for gentlemen – white males of the upper classes, of more or less education. (Often, it seems, class affiliation was the only qualification needed.) These abided by scientific principles, principles that all derived from a system of which they themselves were the masters. Beneath them were the different subordinate classes, with the ‘primitive races’ on the bottom of this, supposedly, God-made hierarchy. To classify and chart Creation was what many people conceived of as (still conceive as?) science.

Within the scientific myths, the netherworld people (soon to be der Untermensch) were created. By the masters, the gods of science. Influenced by social Darwinism, evolution theories were interthwined early on within the roots of research, and mirrored the ‘everyday thought’ of the time and ordinary values of the day. In acknowledging only freeborn men of nobility with citizenship and civil rights, the subjugation of women, workers and children makes up the foundation stones of what we know and cherish as democracy today. Savages such as the indigenous peoples were hardly classified as humans, and denied the rights as citizens of the nation states. The imperial discourse referred to Genesis – which was part of its superstructure – and interpreted it to apply even to places already inhabited by people. For, in this view, humans are above the animals, they are to shape the land, till it, ‘fill the earth and subdue it’, they are to invest

⁸ – The Lapp tales and sagas printed in this volume are mainly put down in writing by Lapps (Just Qvigstad in his preface to *Lappiske eventyr og sagn fra Varanger*; my translation). Nevertheless, posterity has turned these stories into ‘Qvigstad’s stories’ and, thus, Qvigstad himself into something of a thief: a thief of stories.

in it, sow in its soil, to form the land into something new. The native didn't form it, chisel it with tools – it surely can't be his? Is it not in human nature to shape one's surroundings?

Supposedly, Einstein once said that all of science is nothing more than the refinement of everyday thinking.⁹ *Whose* everyday thinking, one might ask. Furthermore, one should question the basis of science: whose values is it based on? Can one presume science to be universal in order to be valid? And consequently: can theories, which lose their validity as soon as they enter Other cultural contexts, in some way or other be considered FALSIFIED – proven invalid and powerless?

Science arose from the division between religion and knowledge; it hides its culturally-based values in different scientific claims, such as OBJECTIVITY. In this sense, objectivity is in itself objective. There is a firm truth, which can be reached as long as you are OBJECTIVE. Objectivity is the method as well as the answer; in this lies a god's perspective, and a 'god-trick' of sorts when the researcher refuses to situate himself in relation to the objects of his research, and instead strives for a sort of omnipresent, omniscient point of focalisation which presumably is objective because he will not reveal himself. This kind of 'objectivity' is actually ethnocentrism (since it disqualifies truths other than those of the Christian and Western).

National awareness is born in contact with the Other. In meeting the Other; other ways of thinking and behaving, other values, other systems of belief and magic, superstructure and knowledge of nature – encountering this clarifies one's own way of thinking and behaving, one's own values, a system of belief and magic, superstructure and knowledge of nature. In the Sámi regions, contact with the Other often forced people into hiding, as in the days of the Čuđit.

⁹ Albert Einstein told this to student Phyllis Wright, 24 January, 1936. *Einstein Archive* 52-337 acc. to Alice Calaprice (Ed.) *The Expanded Quotable Einstein*, Princeton University Press, Oxford 2000

– It was in the time of the Čuďits’ pillaging for underground turfs in the wilderness – for people who fled before the Čuďit would dig a hole in the ground under some bushes, and the sand they dug from the hole they would carry in another direction far away, so that it wouldn’t be close to where the underground turf was. In these turfs lived men and women, with their little children in their gietkka-cradles. The turf would be deep underground, so that when a baby cried, the sound would not be heard up at ground level. The Čuďit once came through a wilderness, where there were underground turfs, or Čuďe caves as we now call them. The underground people were cooking and a woman had tied her weaving band to the roots of a young birch. While the woman was weaving, the birch moved; this attracted the Čuďits’ attention; they understood that there were people living underground, and they began searching the area for a hole in the ground. As they stood there, somebody cried underground: ‘The pot is boiling over’, and so they found them. (Jávo-Erke 1928: 596; my translation)

One might claim that there are experiences specific to indigenality: experiences, or rather *values*, that define the indigenous peoples of today. The more ‘recent’ part of indigenous experience is **colonial**. Exactly how old this colonial experience is varies from place to place. In general, it is a matter of centuries, and in certain areas, such as the South Sámi regions, where we know that contact goes even further back in time, it is important to differ between contact and colonization. The colonial experience is shared by indigenous peoples all over the world as well as by other, formerly colonized peoples (the ‘post-colonial’). At the same time, the notion of still being colonized is central to the concept of indigenality. Through many different experiments and mechanisms of suppression, indigenous peoples have been made to incorporate bodily the notion of being colonized. Language and literature were used in the colonial discourse as means of power in silencing minds, in alienating people, in raising bastard children.

Also, these experiences are verbal; they are **oral**. They come out of the mouth AND connect to verbs, to action, to stories. The very way that thought itself is organized is oral, not written. When distance is measured by a dog’s bark or the number of coffee rests, the grasping of distance measured by numbers is difficult, since it requires an

abstraction of the mind, removed from the natural context. The oral tradition contains, in addition to History, the Law and world-view, education and pedagogics, belief system and religion, as well as knowledge and skills connected to different natural occupations. The oral heritage shows itself in stories, phrases and sayings, jokes and riddles, songs and yoiks, rituals and beliefs. The northern oral tradition is part of the global oral heritage. Once upon a time, every law was *spoken*. And everything to do with society was in a sense oral. Orality lives on in different ways in different societies. Storytelling is only part of the bigger picture. Still, storytelling tells OF this bigger picture, as long as we don't belittle it. We need to listen to the stories of places in order to know their meaning, lest it be all fable and saga. We need to take them seriously and value what they tell us, as they are indeed our history and we are nothing – no people – without them.

Morals are third side to the indigenous experience, containing and touching upon all oral traditions. The connection of man to earth is one of great obligation. The spatial, the oral and the moral are interconnected and form one uniform entity. This superstructure is provided by the forebears and shows itself in the love and knowledge of nature, where landscapes are alive and stories connect to them; in all the skills of natural occupations; in our epistemology.

Last but not the least, the indigenous experience is **spatial**, connected to places, to Earth, to the ground on what seems almost a personal level. Others might easily conceive of these as romantic clichés; without substance, the terms become empty. The Sámi positioning at Stilla, Chief Seattle's speech, the overall collective ownership of land with no centralized nation-state; these, to 'the master race', easily become empty terms (they offer no meaning, hold no connotation, prove inadequate outside the cultural context). The forebears have passed on the laws and the use of land is regulated; on this the nation is grounded. The stories are our History; the language is rooted in this soil and tells of plants and animals, landscapes and ways of living using words found in no other language.

One might call colonization a way of war: the goal being the land itself and the maintaining of borders. As the borders were drawn, either by war or agreement, the mere sustaining of borders was hard, due to a lack of loyal subjects this far from the capital city. Taxation was used as proof of the territorial rights of the Crown or Czar; in some places people were taxed three times over, and thus impoverished; nature also suffered hard. In the Sámi areas, fur was the main source of taxation for a long time. Even today, the polar fox is threatened by extinction, as this was the highest appreciated fur. The beaver is extinct in these areas, most probably on the same grounds. Over the years, many different experiments and mechanisms of suppression have been put to use in order to change the love of the country and silence the Indian, whitewash the Aboriginal or make good Norwegians out of Lapps. Through alienation, identity was changed, and 'the Scandinavian Indian' became Swedish, Norwegian, Finnish and Russian. One might say that thought itself was colonized.

The Sámi were accustomed to racially-based imperialism even before the Second World War; now one kind of colonial discourse was to replace another. Nazism was in essence nothing new to the Sámi, as it was to the Norwegians, who had the guts frightened out of them by its inhumanity. In good, colonial spirit the netherworld people, Eve's bastard children, now became der Untermensch, and the master race was to be the leaders of the Third Reich. Norwegians and other colonial masters were terrified by Nazi racism and contempt for human life now that they themselves were colonized, victimized, paralysed. What one tends to forget is that racism was part of the system, and the young Norwegian nation was in fact partially racial in its constitution. Although the constitutional Jew prohibition had been abolished in 1851, waves of anti-Semitism were latent and were to bloom in the mid-war period, when Norwegian authorities sustained a rather rigid immigration policy, seeking to avoid a 'Jew problem' in Norway. The landholder law of 1902 was to ensure that only Norwegian-speaking subjects with Norwegian names could buy property in Finnmark (the main Sámi region). This law was not to be abolished until 1965. One has to recognize this as part of the social climate prior to the Second World War and acknowledge the fact that there was a policy somewhat related to that of apartheid in the young nation-state, something which may be too hard a blow to the self-

image of the nation, even today. During the war it was possible to witness the results of this train of thinking; the ‘everyday thought’ of the time, ordinary values of the day, would be mirrored and shown in their extreme consequences: a horror show, a Holocaust. Hitler’s Germany did something unheard of in colonizing the colonizers, and in so doing took colonization to its utter limit. The Second World War made up the end of (what we normally call) colonial days, with India being the first of many colonies to be freed (in 1947). What today may seem like racial dregs was the norm in those days; only after the Second World War would the opposite become the politically correct view and ‘everyone’ joined ranks against Nazism, though everyday racism would still be alive, as it is today. Since then, colonialism has found new ways through capitalism and market liberalism, in the drilling for oil and gas, in the cut-rate pricing of raw materials and commodities, in cheap production, all of it in poor countries. And some nations – like the Sámi – were never freed.

My father has told many stories about the place where he was born and grew up, Skiipagurra in Deatnu. In these stories there emerges a specific way of thinking about place.¹⁰ Everything that happens must take *place*, and wisdom sits in places through stories, through language. In an indigenous context, it is natural to seek knowledge and wisdom; truth, from the Elders. The Elders manage the people’s values, laws and morals, the art of storytelling, the world-view, the truth and the wisdom. In an indigenous context, the Elders are the keepers of knowledge, wisdom and truth. In a scholarly context, relying on non-scholars, illiterates and relatives for information might be considered rather dubious. There are so many pitfalls concerning issues like SOURCE CRITICISM, OBJECTIVITY, etc.

My father once said that there is no such thing as a good or bad story, the issue is rather: does it fit the context; does it comport? Context is important, and the work of judging context demands refined thought. It is a question of validity rather than FALSIFICATION (in the notion of ‘right’ or ‘wrong’). Here, there is a glimpse of ‘objectivity’ of anOther sort, as comparison (meaning: the normative business of ‘right’

¹⁰ This pattern of thinking about landscapes will be depicted to some extent in the chapter called ‘Ædno’.

and ‘wrong’, ‘good’ or ‘bad’) vanishes, giving ground to analytic thought in a highly refined manner. Genres are, like theories, linked to the cultures within which they exist and cannot be transferred directly to other cultural contexts, other values. My father’s words are nothing but a refinement of everyday thought. His words suggest a method of adding context to context.

My father’s words lend themselves to the criticism of the genre law itself. In his perspective, the notion of genres itself is questioned, as the genre hierarchy implies thinking in dichotomies, pairs of oppositions where one is better than the other. This hierarchy, like science, grounds itself in cultural values of some sort or another that it inflicts on literature, and this may partly explain why the indigenous oral literatures are so often diminished as folk tales and myths. Literature, with its inherent genre hierarchy, has been – and still is – part of the colonial discourse, proclaiming the rights of the rulers.

Literature mediates and does not necessarily lose its validity with changing cultural contexts, points of reference. Only, it may not comport... Literature doesn’t falsify, but it may prove invalid or powerless – out of context. Literature has power: joik has more power than gunpowder and stories can change the way people think. It may change their biases. Sheherazade knew this, when in her wisdom and bravery she took on the task of telling 1001 stories to her husband, the tyrant.¹¹ Master races, settlers and tyrants may

¹¹ Sheherazade is a heroine of the oral tradition; she demonstrates the key features of the storyteller, and of literature itself. Faced with a tyrant causing death and disaster she, the storyteller, goes into a situation, in doing so taking on the greatest task ever: to educate the tyrant, ignorant as he is of other people’s sufferings. In telling her stories, Sheherazade informs the king and tyrant-patriarch about the lives of his fellow human beings, his subjects, and gets through to him in a way that no hard fact could have ever have done. This is due to her telling of the stories; the way and the matter. There is strategy behind her doing so; one might say she has a method. She tells to live and thereby lives to tell. She is a true hero as she willingly gives her life so that others may be saved; only she does not die. The undertaking of the task is in itself a sign of Sheherazade’s immense belief in storytelling, in literature: she believes that it can save souls and it does, by her firm belief. It changes seemingly solid systems and structures, slowly and from within. Literature saves the life of innumerable maidens, as well as the storyteller herself; it saves the soul of a tyrant greedy for virgins. The patriarch-tyrant’s greed for virgins (unspoilt soil, terra nullius) is replaced with a lust for stories, she cures him more efficiently than any psycho-analyst could ever have done, he falls in love with her stories and desires them, this gives him back his feelings, his humanity – ‘only’ by the telling of stories. This is Sheherazade’s weapon: she uses literature to seduce. There is no ‘only’ about – no diminishing of – this task, rather, it should serve as an example and show us all the power, the evasiveness and sly civility of a story well told (or rather: one-thousand-and-one stories, as truly it takes time to change power structures).

change, given that they get to hear the right stories. And the hidden children of Eve must hear them and tell them, lest they remain always hidden.

– Now I can well believe that the Crown sees that the Lapps have been neglected like a bastard child, but neither can the Crown take back what it has given to the peasants. Now it is a hard thing to help the Lapps so that all Lapps can live by their reindeer, those who are now and those who are growing up. And if Lapps saw that it was possible for more of them to live, then they would marry at a younger age and increase and multiply, but when they see that no more Lapps can live, because they cannot get a livelihood, then they have to live without increasing and multiplying, unmarried and without children. And in this there is great suffering, when the claims of the body must be suppressed, and the love of the heart destroyed, and everyone who thinks over the matter understands this. And we see other races of men, how they grow and fill up the land here... And the Lapps who were the first folk here, they have not increased. (Johan Turi: 108-109)

Gævnjis

– *In the time when my father was but a boy, the Sámi lived in different buildings. Most of the time they would build a hut on the ground. But when times were dangerous, they would leave their hut and build another kind of building. Then they had merely pits in the ground and on top of this they would build a hut. And if there were to come packs of crooks they would sit hidden deep in the ground around the fire – and if robbers and rabpmere were to come at night and try to shoot them throught the tent canvas, the arrows would go high above their heads. But the structure was perhaps the same as the structure of a hut on the ground. And they would also place their huts close to waterfalls, river rapids and brooks – where the water would sing so that it was impossible to hear the crying of babies. (Gunhild Børgefjell: 202; my translation)*

Come packs of crooks

– The (placename) must come from the eternal rushing of the river – and from large and smaller brooks... An old Sámi saying ties itself to the name of this valley. The old Sámi used to say – that the rushing of the water and the whisper of the wind came as in waves, soon it would sound and soon it would die out. Then the old Sámi would say: “Sávsoen tjahke jih sávsoen vuemie”. And it must be from this that the names came to be. – Sávsoen vuemie is the Susen Valley and Sávsoen tjahke is the Susen Mountain. (Lars Børgefjell and Gunhild Børgefjell: 228; my translation)

– There was often talk of tjuvrieh – they were packs of robbers and thieves who raided, robbed and stole from the Sámi around here. Most of the time they would be two or three of them together – and according to my father, they too must have been peasants and Vikings. (Gunhild Børgefjell: 203; my translation)

– The Lapps’ *Tjudeh-* and *Karjel-*stories have the firmest basis in history. The Lapps have had real skirmishes with these people, and there are still signs of them everywhere in Lappland. The *Tsuuds* and the Karelians were enemy raiders who came to Lappland in

groups of hundreds and robbed the Lapps' property. Because of these enemies Lapps had to crawl into earth excavations and live in them. (Lars Levi Læstadius: 253)

– The Lapp's best refuge is when he can flee away and hide himself from folk. And that is why the olden time Lapps put their huts under the earth and hid themselves there. The Lapps have had many enemies and amongst others the Ruoša-Tsjuders, who wandered all over Lappland and killed everyone that they found, and took all the possessions that they happened upon. And that is why the Lapps hid silver and money in the earth, and there is still a lot in the earth up here. (Johan Turi: 185)

– Lapps themselves relate that their ancestors lived in holes in the ground because of the *Tsuudi* raids, and because these earth holes now have been discovered all over Lapland, it is probable that the *Tsuudi* raids did extend that far. From the content and the themes of stories we are able to conclude that the *Tsuuds* were the Lapps' enemies before the Karelians. (Lars Levi Læstadius: 255)

– These rabpmere, they spread out everywhere and wherever they liked in these landscapes – they built houses or huts, and there they lived for a while, these evildoers. In the old days, the Sámi here would kill and get rid of whole packs of such thieves, but some got away. That's why they were called rabpmere – and the hill where they were caught and killed is called Rabpmeretjak. East of Daranakka on a small hill, there they had their camp for some time. These were staaloeh. And the hill is called Stalodeavah. They must have been quite a few men. And from here they would roam and raid. The Sámi armed themselves: they were to attack these staaloeh and clear the land and put an end to their robber raids. The staaloeh realised they were outnumbered by the Sámi so they took off. But the Sámi overtook them on a hill at Danningan, up to this day you can see three big mounds from the staaloeh huts. All the dead staaloeh were buried by the Sámi – in the woods, underneath a fell called Raejvie-båoune from time immemorial. (Lars T. Børgefjell: 203; my translation)

– The Sea Sámi have many stories about *stállu*. Many place-names have *stállu* as a first link, e.g. *Stálonjárga* (Stállu headland), *Stálogurra* (Stállu cleft), etc. On such a place *stállu* has been, according to old stories. It is likely and many researchers claim that *stállu* was originally the name given to the tax collectors by the Sámi. The former were bullies who bestially raided the Sámi dwellings. According to the stories, the Sámi sometimes killed the *stállu* and buried him. Stállu is in other words a human... Today, though, some Sámi believe that *stállu* is a mean spirit sent by bad people to trouble others. (Anders Larsen 1947: 40; my translation)

– It once might happen that a strong Lapp would challenge a *stallo* to fight a duel. If the Lapp won, he became the master of *stallo*'s property. This consisted mainly of silver, which was called *stallo-silba*. Some Lappish families still have some of this *stallo-silba*, which has been passed on as an inheritance from one generation to another. It consists of buttons and stars or buckles, which the Lapps wear in their belts. These silver objects are very different in shape from the ones in use nowadays. It also occurred that Lapp's sons married *stallo*'s daughters or vice versa. Some time ago there was an old Lappish woman in Jukkasjärvi who traced her family to a *stallo* 24 generations ago. If we count three generations for every century, the *stallo* whom the Lappish woman claimed to be her ancestor, had lived about the year 1000 AD. From this... the reader may conclude that the *stallo* about whom the Lapps often speak, must have been old Vikings, Norwegian or Swedish raiders who had run away to Lapland and Finnmark and made a living there robbing the Lapps. (Lars Levi Læstadius: 237)

– Oh, there were all kinds of people and packs of trolls here in the old days. They would come and pester people for a while – then they were gone again – and you never knew when they would come back. They stole, robbed and raped. So the Sámi would fear them. In the evening with darkness falling everyone would be quiet, and there had to be total silence around the hut. The children were not to play in the woods – the firewood had to be all in place while there was still daylight, and the dogs should lie still and not bark. One would just sit by the fire with some petty work. This was so the thieves shouldn't

find the hut and kill people, steal and rob... Those were the Vikings... The Norwegians – father said. (Gunhild Børgefjell: 200; my translation)

Hidden deep in the ground

– There are few written sources in Sámi history. Cultural artefacts are the most important source of knowledge concerning the Sámi history of dwelling and living in earlier days. Oral knowledge and lore, passed on by generations in local Sámi communities, is as vital a source concerning the last few centuries. Lore offers depth and life to cultural artefacts, and to the landscape itself. It creates closeness and meaning unattainable by the interpretations of researchers. (Audhild Schanche 1995: 42; my translation)

– Few archaeological remains in the Swedish mountain region have drawn more attention than the *stalotomter* (Stalo-sites). The term itself is rather new. The first time someone connected the finds with stalo was by O.P. Petterson in 1913 who described these finds under the heading “Stalo-circles.” The term derived in origin from Petterson’s Saami informants, who called the sites “Stalo-graves.” Petterson understood that the remains were not graves, but rather hut foundations. However, he could not believe that these were Saami sites. As a most probable explanation he approved of the traditional Saami conception that these foundations, visible as large raised circles of soil, was traces of the homes of the giant Stalo people. Another possibility, as he saw it, was that the Saami had built these banks of soil as defence around their huts. “But against what enemy?” Petterson asked himself. (Inga-Maria Mulk 1996: 42)

– The term (Sámi cultural artefacts) resists a homogenous demarcation due to the fact that cultural artefacts, Sámi as well as non-Sámi, are the result of constant redefinition and reinterpretation. The further back in time you go, the harder it is to put homogenous, ethnic marks on physical cultural traits. (Audhild Schanche 1995: 42; my translation)

– (*S*)*talotomter*... consists of groups of foundations for huts mainly dated to the period AD 500-1500. The ethnic origin of the builders of these hut-sites has for quite a long time been a contentious issue. Common to all opinions of this matter is the attitude, that these

hut-sites are an isolated phenomenon. They have been studied exclusively in connection with their characteristic features as archaeological finds, and thus seen disconnected from their geographical, economical and social context... if we assume that the Saami within the valley of Stora Luleälv themselves utilized the natural resources of the area, then it is a matter of course that finds of foundations, hunting-pit systems and places of sacrifice in these mountains constitute a part of the Saami society. There is nothing, with regards to the location of the foundations, to their form, size or reciprocal situation, to contradict the assumption that the people once living here were none other than the Mountain Saami of the river Stora Luleälv. (Inga-Maria Mulk 1996: 41)

– It seems probable, however, that the enemy could spot their earlier dwellings from a distance, since they were above the surface of the earth; thus the Lapps had to dig themselves into the earth. From these pits in the earth there are still remains resembling cave-ins with a diameter of from approximately 4 to 6 feet. They were dug into large sandy hills, and since the smoke hole itself was at the surface of the ground and could be covered with sod, it was indeed difficult for the enemy to find the Lapp dwelling. The enemy could be standing very close and yet be entirely unaware of people living there. Their stories tell of one such hole in the ground being discovered when a Lappish wife shouted to the people in the nearest pit: 'Lend me a soup ladle!' It can be concluded from this that nearby pits were joined by underground passages. Apparently the entrance to such a pit was not close by, but some distance off in the slope of the hill; from this quarter it was much more difficult for the enemy to rush suddenly into the underground dwelling... The Lapps call them *ädnam kåätte* 'earth *kota*'. (Lars Levi Læstadius: 142)

– (T)he Saami Torkel Tomasson at the same time carried out an investigation of a group of hut foundations, and presented a different interpretation of the remains. He strongly criticized the "Germanic" theories... Tomasson dismissed Petterson's connection of Stalo with the traditional Saami name of the remains (Stalo-circles) as being too little to build a theory on. The Saami in Vilhelmina called these foundations *jähna-kåterikke* (sleeping-berths for the giants) or *stalo-gåtesai* (Stalo's hut-sites). This indicates, Tomasson says, that it was all fable and saga... Tomasson's own theory was that the foundations are

Saami remains. He based this statement on a number of facts, amongst others that they are found in the zone between the birch forest and the bare mountain, just like modern Saami camps and are of the same size, design and construction as modern camps. Furthermore Tomasson claimed that an oval or rectangular form is necessary for a Saami hut built as a bent-pole construction. (Inga-Maria Mulk 1996: 42)

– Certain folk don't think that these pits were made by men or that they ever were their homes, but many proofs have been found in them... hearth-stones, *rogtrae* and a handloom... And on the routes of the Lapp migration there are pits also, and present-day folk don't know what sort of pits they are, but they think that they were hiding places for the Lapps in the times when the Ruoša Tsjuder wandered around the land killing all the Lapps they found, till they were obliged to build their homes under the ground and live there. Only a few have been dug out. If many were examined all manner of things might be found. (Johan Turi: 21)

– It is important to know who "owns" historical and archaeological research in multicultural areas. In the North, we have many stone carvings dating back as far as 10 000 years. One of these is in Alta, and it has become internationally known. Many researchers... have noticed the resemblance between the stone carvings and the images on the Sami shaman drum. But every suggestion on our part that these pictures may have something to do with our past has usually been very strongly opposed by Norwegian archaeologists. We cannot say anything about ethnic relations in those old times so their professional argument goes. But this does not prevent editors of atlases, magazine articles, newspaper articles and tourist brochures to write and speak about "Norwegians 10 000 years ago" in Northern Norway... In this way a past that most probably is a Sami past and certainly not a "Norwegian" past in the narrow sense is stolen from us daily. And when writers write novels about people with Norwegian names in the Komsa area thousands of years ago, the theft is completed. I have heard no majority scientist objecting to this way of dealing with "the facts", however, they do react if we try to tell the story about "Sami 10 000 years ago". For ordinary people, the question naturally

arises: when and from where have the Sami come to Norway? In this way we are deprived of our past in a very clever way. (Ole Henrik Magga 1996: 78)

– Thus, the use of traits from the past in the achievement of certain goals is neither new nor, in itself, dubious. Rather, the aim and moral of the political use of the landscape's history might be questionable, and this would no doubt decide which interpretations were to be presented. An adequate example would be the Germanization of the European past during the years between the wars. (Auhild Schanche 1995: 45; my translation)

– When the Nordic Museum in Stockholm began studying Saami sites under the leadership of Manker, their investigations included hut foundations... In his work Manker reiterated the same opinion as Tomasson, claiming that the foundations were Saami remains. According to him there was no doubt that these sites were of Saami origin, and belonged to a culture of reindeer hunters keeping domesticated reindeer as draught and pack animals... The theories of Manker were prevalent until the mid 1970s, when his successor at the Nordic Museum, Rolf Kjellström, started new investigations at these locations. According to him, the basic meaning of stalo is “steel” and that the character Stalo according to this is “he who is covered with steel.” Kjellström explains this as being a name either for foreign men in coats of mail, or for the Norwegians who introduced steel to the Saami. He claims that the Stalo people were tax collectors, sent out by Nordic magnates. (Inga-Maria Mulk 1996: 43)

– Naturally, the objective of the archaeologist is to influence not the past, but the present and the future. Every human society needs to know about its history and cultural background. This knowledge strengthens solidarity and identity and at the same time, enables us to understand the present better. Archaeology is therefore not apolitical. It is actually more powerful and dangerous than, for instance, sociology and the social sciences. The reason being that the archaeologist is helping to shape the basic values in our understanding of culture. (Odd Mathis Hætta 1996: 15)

– Cultural artefacts and cultural landscapes might help to draw the inner maps which situate people’s understanding of themselves, and upon which they also orientate their lives and events. The challenge imbedded here involves looking back, at the same time as looking ahead into the future. (Audhild Schanche 1995: 47; my translation)

– Archaeological excavations of hut foundations within the source area of the river Stora Luleälv confirm the theories of Tomasson as well as the opinion of Manker; that these foundations were remains of huts of the bent-pole type... Distinguishing features that indicate Saami origin are the size and the oval form of the foundations, the location of the oval or rectangular hearth in the centre, the existence of hearth-extensions between hearth and doorway, the kitchen stones opposite the doorway, and the sleeping-space on either side of the hearth. These features point to a continuous utilization of the space in the Saami hut, whether or not the cover was skin, canvas or turf. (Inga-Maria Mulk 1996: 54)

– And as still greater proof (than Sámi place names) that the Lapps had lived for long, long ages in the same place is the pits to be found in the earth everywhere where the Lapps have been. These pits were their homes, they dug pits like wild beasts. And the greatest number of these pits are to be found on the sea-coast, and on the banks of lakes and rivers, and in those places where the animals roads pass, such as points where the great clefts in the fell sides meet, and on tracks between lakes. (Johan Turi: 20)

The singing of the waters

In most indigenous issues, oral tradition offers itself as context; as a point of reference and is a vital source of knowledge concerning the history of dwelling and living in earlier times as there are few written sources. Oral tradition may overcome the timespan of millennia. Time is no limit to storytelling. The history of the oral tradition is dramatic and violent; partly: it tells of times in which archetypes like the stállu arose, when strangers spread out everywhere, it tells of times of pillage and hiding from brutes like the Čudit, the Vikings, the “birkarlar”, the Hälsingar, the Karelians, farmers, settlers, missionaries, tradesmen, Lappologists, officials, politicians and administrators, teachers, the Norwegians, the Swedes, the Finns, the Russians, the Germans, the Nazis, the Leninists,

social democracy, the government of Gro Harlem Brundtland, 200 policemen at Point Zero – let's stop there.

Stories in general hold low status as references to historic events; minority stories possibly even more so, as they seldom reach beyond their own cultural sphere and into the spheres where the power of definition lies and where research is carried out. Stories, if treated as what they truly can be – literature and history at the same time – can both ground and highlight research simultaneously. Here, the South Sámi stories tell of double silencing due to colonial power relations: First, people had to hide from robbers and murderers pillaging their homelands. Then, when the turfs and remaining sites are to be excavated by Scandinavian researchers, the silencing goes on. Archaeological findings prove political as the colonial basis of these nation states silences aboriginal history. History has been told basically in accordance with the majority concept: by the use of their words and terms; their historical periods and methods; their world-view. These terms form the basis of a research tradition that has been overwhelmingly sympathetic: supposing that the history of the peoples of the Fennoscandia was mostly peaceful; based on trade and peaceful co-existence. According to such a view, things were fairly harmonious and the non-Sámi presence in Sápmi was basically a matter of “hunting and tax collecting”. Such terms reflect the power relations within societies that are colonial in their structure. In systems like these, science only assists in the upkeep of the status quo.

If we take the lore seriously on this point – and there is no reason why we shouldn't – it tells of history seen from a Sámi point of view, and it tells it better than most scholars trained and brained within a non-Sámi Academy ever could. It tells of hiding; it tells of ingenious construction techniques, it tells of birgejupmi due to skills. Within Academy we are trained to see things from one point of view: the colonists – and the canon within every field will be too heavy for anyone to ignore. Hence to do so, and to present the issue from an overly Sámi point of view, could easily be proven to be ‘unscientific’. The basis of science works against this, and on a personal level one might risk professional suicide. As such, the colonization goes on within Academy and within our minds.

Case is essential to the grammatics of all the Sámi languages. *Jáhna-kåterikke* might be understood as the kind of goahti or hut used in the days of the Staloeh; sleeping-berths for hiding from the giants. Similarly, *stalo-gåtesai* are not necessarily Stalo's goahti or hut-sites, just as much they can be the *ädnam kâätte*, 'earth kota' or underground goahtis built and used in the period of tjuvrieh pillaging. Instead of indicating that it was all fable and saga, the names used by the Sámi of the area should be put into context; into tradition, and interpreted according to it. Indigenous literature still holds explanations to many such, by non-indigenous researchers often considered "mysteries" around the world. The joining of research and storytelling proves advantageous to both as oral literature provides research with explanation in exchange for a lift in status.

Colonization

– Colonization of Sápmi follows the same pattern as in the rest of the world. The earliest colonization took place along the Atlantic Ocean, the Arctic Ocean, and the Gulf of Bothnia. At the beginning it was due to private interests. When authorities discovered that there were riches here, they had to be extracted. The colonization by farmers was often encouraged since a permanent population increased the nation's claim to the territory. The Swedish state did not see colonization as a threat to the Saami. The settlers were to live by farming while the Saami lived by reindeer herding, hunting and fishing. In reality the climate was not well adapted to farming, and the settlers were forced to hunt and fish to survive. Oftentimes the Saami could be pushed off from their fishing waters, where they had been since time immemorial. In Finland the Saami were driven northwards by the farmers burning the land they wanted to cultivate. By doing this, reindeer grazing was ruined, and the means of livelihood for the Saami disappeared. (Sunna Kuoljok and John E. Utsi: 30)

– The Crown has taken the land from the Lapps and given the settlers all the bogs and all the dry land. And it is even worse with the land which has been divided between the settlers in the Finn villages, where there is taxed land, because those settlers have more power over the taxed land, and in those districts the Lapps are obliged to pay however much the farm folk demand; and the same thing is happening on the taxed lands in the

Jukkasjärvi district, for all that is the Lapps' own land, just as it was the Lapps' land everywhere, even from Haparanda to here. But nevertheless, the Crown took the land and gave it to the settlers, and, little by little, they have moved the borders till the Lapps' land has grown so small that the Lapps can no longer support themselves. (Johan Turi: 108)

– Some time ago, let us say 30 or 40 years, the (Swedish) settlers came and asked politely if they could settle down and grow a piece of soil. The Lapp saw in this matter no reason to refuse the hard-working man. In a few years the settler had grown the soil round his lot and took possession of it. The inspector promptly granted a deed to the field and not only the field which he himself had cultivated, but an additional area as well. The area could, and would in most cases, surround the prolific reindeer grounds and tax land of the Lapp, who had formerly been friendly enough to oblige the settler's desire to grow the soil next to his. Then a few years passed and one beautiful day comes the inspector in charge and announces to the miserable Lapp that he no longer holds the right to the soil, which is now to be reaped by him. (Elsa Laula: 15, my translation)

– Any Sámi usage of the land for subsistence hunting-gathering and/or pastoralist modes of production does not qualify as the basis for claims of land-tenure. Such usage is a waste of land, and leaves the landscape unsubdued, under-productive, and essentially "empty". It remains for the colonizing settler to claim the land through his sweat. This observation is important in that it supports a reading of the... construction of the Sámi as essentially insubstantial and lazy drifters. Furthermore, it negates any claim they might make to take offence at... appropriation of the land. And finally, it meshes well with the... allusions to 19th century understandings of the "savage" as marginally human and as a given element of the landscape and of untamed Nature. (Troy Storfjell 1996: 5)

– Colonization of Lapland and exploitation of its resources began at the dawn of the Middle Ages and grew during the 13th and 14th centuries when trade with the Sami flourished and taxes were levied on them. Since several states claimed ownership of Lapland, Sami were forced to pay taxes to several Crowns. Missionaries and Christianization followed in the wake of trade and the levying of taxes on the Sami. The

first missionaries worked quite brutally to gain psychological, and thereby political, control over the Sami. In time, the nations that had claimed Lapland as theirs divided the Sami area up among themselves. The first stage in this division was the 1751 border drawn up by Sweden and Denmark-Norway, dividing Lapland along the mountain ridge from Jämtland to Finnmark. (Lars-Anders Baer 1982: 13)

– No one has ever heard that the Lapps came to this land from any other place. From the very earliest times they have been up here in Lapland; and when, in the beginning, the Lapps lived by the sea coast, there wasn't a single other person living here, and that was a good time for the Lapps. In olden times the Lapps lived all over the Swedish side too, then there weren't any settlers in the land, and the Lapps never knew that there were any other folk in the whole world. (Johan Turi: 20)

– A great part of Sami history lies in the continuous diminution of the Sami territory by the encroachments of neighboring peoples. These encroachments continue to threaten what is now left of the Sami territory. Neighboring nations have thus exploited not only the Sami environment but also Sami communities in earlier times, and taken advantage of the Sami economy, as well as Sami labor in many cases. Early exploitation of the Sami and their territory was the work of such figures as Ottar, the Western Nordic chief, and the Vikings in general, with their journeys to Sami territory where they conducted trade with the Sami and collected taxes from them... The "birkarlar"... lived in what was Swedish territory during the Middle Ages, exploiting the Sami and their economy. The Hälsingar, from the west side of the Baltic Sea often competed with the birkarlar in their exploitation of the Sami. In 1328 the two competitors signed an agreement on the right of exploitation in the North. (Israel Ruong 1982: 23)

– With the appearance of the colonizers the siida system was destroyed. The first big destruction of nature began in the Swedish part of Samiland where the Swedes established the mines in Nasa. Both silver and iron ore was found in the mountains. The Swedes used Sami for labor in the mines and forced them to use their reindeer to bring silver and iron to the coast. Labor agreements were enforced by punishment. If a Sami

refused to be a miner the procedure was to take the person to a lake, make some holes in the ice and drag the person between the holes until an agreement was reached. Since those days, many other mines have been started in Samiland, although with different working agreements. Many Sami who had the indigenous religion in their hearts were terrified by the way the strangers treated nature. In someplaces the mines are on sacred ground. (Niillas A. Somby 1991: 2)

– This was the time when the young Norwegian state was establishing itself and the true Norwegian nationalist spirit could not tolerate “foreigners” like the Samis and Kvens (immigrants from Finland). All measures were taken for the purpose of “Norwegianization”. Teachers were paid a bonus for good results in this national task whose clearly defined aim was to assimilate the Sami population in the course of one generation. This would not be too large a sacrifice for this important cause, said the politicians and administrators. The Land Sales Act of 1902 for Finnmark stated that no one should be allowed to buy land if he did not give up the Sami language and began to use Norwegian in his home. (Ole Henrik Magga 1996: 75)

– The Industrial Revolution was based on access to raw materials found in abundance in such places as Africa, Latin America and Lapland. Earlier, Lapland had been basically considered a worthless no-man’s land. Now it became Sweden’s depot of raw materials, the equivalent of Africa and India for England. Sami ownership of land and waters in the Sami area became an obstacle in the way of exploitation of the natural resources of Lapland – iron ore, the forests and waterpower. Powerful forces within Swedish society manipulated the law to weaken the right of the Sami to their land and waters and open the natural resources of Lapland to exploitation... Colonial policy toward the Sami was justified by racist ideology that found “scientific verification” in Darwin’s theory of natural selection and the fight for survival as applied to the human community. Advocates of Social Darwinism claimed that the Swedish culture and race was considerably more advanced than the backward culture of the Sami and the racially primitive Sami people. The logical consequence of this attitude was Swedish supremacy over the Sami people. (Lars-Anders Baer 1982: 14)

– The basis of the traditional picture of Sámi history is the research of “lappologists” who worked from the turn of the 20th century until the 1950s. Its basis was the mentality and attitudes of the recent colonists: the idea of improving agricultural society. According to this mind-set, natural peoples had remained behind in their cultural development. The primitive traits of Sámi culture were emphasized and Sámi passivity, as well. They were sacrificed to the more aggressive ways. Certain basic concepts circulated from one study to the next and became myths. A good example of historical writing founded on myths is precisely that idea that Sámi had no concept of land ownership. (Veli Pekka Lehtola 2002: 105)

– The industrial exploitation of natural resources in Sápmi has gone on for a long time. During the 20th century the pace has accelerated. The nation-states have largely based their prosperity on ore, forests, hydroelectric power and the ocean-fishing industry. This exploitation has taken place without the consensus of the Saami. Not even today do the Saami have the right of vetoing industrial projects, despite the fact that the original sources of livelihood like reindeer herding, fishing, hunting and handicrafts are constantly affected by these encroachments. (Sunna Kuoljok and John E. Utsi: 46)

– We are still colonized in the sense that we as ethnic groups are controlled politically, economically and culturally by a territorially and culturally external power. This outside threat to our existence and culture is one significant reason for our sense of community. We also share a sense of community rising from the many similarities regarding our values and ways of life. (Elina Helander 1994: 4)

– Mining, forestry and hydroelectric plants with their accompanying towns have taken enormous areas away from reindeer herding. Grazing lands, migrating routes, calving locations and Saami settlement areas have been destroyed on a large scale. Large areas of coniferous forests which are winter areas for the Saami have been subject to the ravages of modern forestry. Virgin forests have been transformed into clear-cut areas and into artificially planted forests. Most large rivers are totally exploited with hydroelectric

power plants. Complete valleys are dammed and covered with water while rapids have dried up. The spawning routes of the salmon are cut off. Rich waterways of older days are gone. (Sunna Kuoljok and John E. Utsi: 46)

– Schools have been created to realize the needs and ideals of society. School is for man, and it tries to turn dreams into reality. And of course, those who have power and authority also know what is good for the small and primitive. That's how small Sami children also learn to have a nose for money, to think of time in terms of money, of land as money, learn to strive for honour, position and status. (Áillohaš/Nils Aslak Valkeapää 1983: 4)

– The Norwegianization line in schools meant that Sámi children from their first lessons onward were to be taught in Norwegian and use Norwegian in every class. This methodology failed, to the extent that normally gifted Sámi children left school without any knowledge of either Norwegian or anything else. The few Sámi children who did break through the language barrier and actually learned something witnessed – through books – a world where nothing Sámi existed. They were to learn about civilized peoples and about *the culture*, the Norwegian culture. Every now and then we heard about primitive peoples. They were supposedly inferior people in one way or the other, either wild or kind. We the Sámi were possibly such a primitive people, of the kind sort. (Juhu Niillas 1969: 81; my translation)

– They tried to part us from all of our personal qualities. Their efforts seemed to be to fashion two hundred children into an even, grey dough, in which there were to be no noticeable personalities: no bubbles or lumps, and definitely no raisins. I gave in to this: I was no more than a number somewhere between one and two hundred. (Kerttu Vuolab 2000: 53; my translation)

– If the school is to fulfill even part of its goal for the Sámi: to create harmonic human beings – meaning people with the needed amount of self-esteem – then Sámi culture must have a more central role in the school. It is good that Sámi language is introduced for

Sámi children, but in addition there need to be themes about the Sámi and their culture, wherever it is natural. The way it is now, school books and educational TV supply the Sámi children with only a few bits of information about their own culture in the same manner as “foreign cultures”. Thus we have come no further than that the Sámi children learn to look at themselves with the eyes of the stranger, as an interesting and strange people. (Juhu Niillas 1969 : 85)

Taxation

They come
and ask where is your home
they come with papers
and say
this belongs to nobody
this is government land
everything belongs to the State
They bring out dingy fat books
and say
this is the law
it applies to you too

What shall I say sister
What shall I say brother
You know brother
you understand sister
(Áillohaš 1996: 124)

– Already during the Middle Ages the young Nordic states had discovered the riches which were to be found in Sápmi. The taxes which were collected from the Saami were of much greater value than that which the farmers of the coast could pay. The competition between the nation-states for the northern territory contributed to the interest

in the Saami as tax payers. By taxing the Saami the states considered them their subjects and could therefore claim their right to the territory. In certain areas the Saami were forced to pay taxes to Sweden-Finland, Denmark-Norway and Russia at the same time. The tax consisted of furs, fish, meat and reindeer-skin clothes. The intense taxation during the 17th century led to the substantial decrease of the wild reindeer herds. (Sunna Kuoljok and John E. Utsi: 21)

– Logging has also caused big damage to our people. In 1885 the English-owned North of Europe Land Company was allowed to clear-cut the large Nordland forests in Norway, destroying the Samiland forests on the basis of an agreement with the Norwegian government. Clear-cutting was very destructive to reindeerkeeping, hunting and to all the animals and birds. (Niillas A. Somby 1991: 2)

– In Sami cultural history, the hunting society is chronologically the most comprehensive and probably culminated around 1550, when taxation from the surrounding states was at a maximum. Perhaps the preference for governmental supervision over more or less illicit taxation routes was from then on a partial cause of the transition to nomadism, with the first public count of domesticated reindeer in 1605, ordered by Carl IX of Sweden. In 1551, Sami hunting society resulted in a comprehensive delegation to the Swedish court of Gustav Vasa, who then wrote a letter of protection and freedom for the Sami. (Alf Isak Keskitalo 1996: 45)

– Within the Saami area the early territorial boundaries (were) separating the *sijdda* areas. As a result of colonization and the claims of the nation-states, these boundaries changed. The land was now divided according to the interest of these states. In 1751 Norway and Sweden established the borders between their kingdoms. They did not take into account the Saami boundaries in the area, except for an addition to the Border Treaty. In this “Lapp codicil” it was established that the Saami would have the right to continue their seasonal migrations between countries. It was also decided that the Saami would no longer have to pay tax to more than one kingdom. As time went on, the new boundaries which were established have restricted the right of the Saami to use their land.

Throughout history, the Saami seem to have chosen their nationality tactically. They have chosen to belong to the state which at the moment was most favorable for their source of livelihood. New boundaries have often resulted in the Saami having to move, or change their means of livelihood. (Sunna Kuoljok and John E. Utsi: 22)

Law

They come to me
and show books
Law books
that they have written themselves
This is the Law and it applies to you too
See here

But I do not see brother
I do not see sister
I cannot
I say nothing
I only show them the tundra
(Áillohaš 1996: 124)

– From the beginning, the Sami were a people of hunters and fishermen. The wild reindeer was their most important game, caught in long rows of open pits, traces of which can still be seen in the Sami area. A local Sami village was comprised of one or two collective units (*sii'da*) with its own council and administration. So, the Sami community was based on *the principle of sii'da*. *Sii'da* is the term used for one or several collective units (not necessarily family members) comprising the local village that collectively used the hunting grounds and fishing waters of the *sii'da*. The *sii'da* was based on strict democratic principles and had a legal system which functioned both within the *sii'da* and between different *sii'das*, with its own special courts. The *sii'da* was responsible for the

rights of the collective, “owned” the land and its resources, decided how they were to be used and distributed. (Lars Anders Baer: 13)

– Contrary to what some influential legislators believe, the Sami have never migrated without design, either when they lived as hunters nor at the more pronounced nomadic state. (However, the beggar-Sami who were driven from the taxed lands and villages by colonizers did wander haphazardly from place to place.) (Israel Ruong 1982: 26)

– Far up in the fells in Upper Norrland our tribe has dwelled since time immemorial. Nevertheless, customs established over time past tell of how we Sámi weren't always compelled to seek our daily bread among the cold mountain peaks, remnants of earlier days show that the Sámi owned spacious pastoral grounds in favourable circumstances. With the passing of the centuries the Sámi has had to give way to the agricultural Germanic race. Peaceful, calm, reserved and always content with his share the Sámi has, without protest, left what he considered his home and inch by inch the Swedish settlers have aquired the grazing grounds, which had been used by the Sámi. Thus, they have been given the name “nomadic”, i.e. relentlessly wandering, but might not the circumstance, the fact that the weaker part would at all times have had to give way to the stronger, have caused this lust for wandering... Our people would settle if they were given the right, but they have at all times lived in an inferior position, or in other words – they have been placed outside of the law, outside the borders of general rights. (Elsa Laula: 3; my translation)

– Johan Turi, the old Sámi sage and author, relates to Sámi life, how the Sámit first fled into the mountains and woods whenever foreign peoples came to the coast where they used to live, in order to chase them away. In the forests they were able to live in many years, until persons clothed in black appeared even there. And then the Sámit could no longer flee further anywhere, so they tried to reside there as imperceptible as possible. (Juhu Niillas 1986: 28)

– Before 1613 no power had full jurisdiction over any part of Finnmark. Through the treaty of Knäred, 1613, Denmark-Norway obtained sovereignty over the coast and fiord areas. But the Saami title to land was not affected. The interior of Finnmark remained outside the sovereignty of any state until 1751. According to contemporary international law, this did not imply that the land was *terra nullius*. In this area the Saami *siidas* were considered the owner of the land... But in 1848 a new paradigm was formulated by the Department of Finance, stating that Saami land use did not constitute a base for title acquisition. Consequently, the crown was the sole owner of land in Finnmark. The new paradigm was soon adopted into judicial theory and made into law. The first of the new laws was the Land Sales Act of 1863. The act made it possible to prevent Saami in wide areas from acquiring private titles to land. One of the main intentions of a subsequent statute, the Land Sales Act of 1902 was to de-nationalize and Norwegianize the Saami. (Steinar Pedersen: 69)

– In 1886, Sweden passed the first Reindeer Grazing Act. It was interpreted by the state and not by the law, which meant that Sami ownership of land and waters was reduced to a kind of usufructuary right to the use of grazing lands for their reindeer and to hunting grounds and fishing waters. This interpretation was a result of the new ideas and outlook of the time. This interpretation of the Act, in turn, created Swedish supremacy over the Sami people, depriving them of their decision-making rights and justifying this on racist grounds. (Lars-Anders Baer 1982: 14)

– Suppose the Sami courts had been allowed to develop. Would not the Sami concept of the law have been more applicable in this context, a transcultural process? Injustices against the Sami would have been avoided and Sweden would have a cleaner legal record as a state governed by law. (Israel Ruong 1982: 34)

– We are confronted by (discrimination) in our everyday life as well as in the laws of the nation-states that deal with the Saami. Our rights have been undermined in the name of democracy. Today our rights to the land and water, which we have considered ours for the past several thousand years, is put into question. We are not many, and our land is

large. We are not making big demands. What we want is to have the right to make decisions, which affect our lives, our culture and our land. (Sunna Kuoljok and John E. Utsi: 3)

– Encroachment on hunting grounds, fishing waters and grazing lands will soon be so disastrous as to endanger both the ancient livelihoods of the Sami and the Sami as a people. This cannot be properly understood if the total development is not seen as an intercultural process in which justice, the law and the decision-making rights of the Sami must take priority if the Sami and Sami culture are to survive. (Israel Ruong 1982: 31)

– But we are still alive! All around the world indigenous people have been exterminated, dispersed or sucked into the maelstrom of the “enlightened” world. There are 300 million of us indigenous people in the world today. And basically things are the same as they always have been. We have not taken our claims for the land, nor created armies or royal courts. We have all lived in small villages, living on the land, as a small part of the larger society around us. The concept of people conquering nature is foreign to us. What a bizarre thought, to conquer mother earth who gives you life. But strangers have come to us, seeking their fortune and glory. Some have “discovered” us. And that is good since that made us perceive our miserable state, as naked children in the jungle or as nomadic barbarians of the tundra. Others found riches in our land. They are still exploiting our riches, laying everything in their way to waste, since making profits is the only thing that counts. (John E. Utsi 1993: 4)

– The Norwegian juridical system represents a clear “book-learned” culture. Even if oral tradition in principle may be valid as a juridical source, it is most unlikely to win terrain so that it can actually influence the legal condition. This applies especially when a folk tradition belongs to another circuit of language and culture. The legally trained draw their conclusions almost entirely on the basis of the inner traditions of the system... The legal system treats oral tradition as unreliable. And juridical science seems to lack methods for treating Sámi customary law, which are basically grounded in oral tradition. (Juhu Niillas 1998: 38; my translation)

– According to Sámi opinion, and also according to common sense, it should be clear that an inter-ethnic relation that began with plundering and blackmail on the part of one of the parties, and which ended up with the theory that this same party – the state – owns all land in the area 700 years later, without any kind of agreements or treaties between the parties in the meantime, cannot be judicially sound. Even less so because there is a continuous law tradition in the same state that the land shall be built with law. (Alf Isak Keskitalo 1980: 41; my translation)

– We have never been conquered in war and we have never signed agreements with any state. Most of our lands have been and still are in our use and “possession”. We have often pointed to these facts and the only answer has been that things are as they are because it is best this way or because things are as they are. This logic is not brilliantly convincing. (Ole Henrik Magga 1996: 76)

But when they ask where is your home
do you answer them all this
On Skuolfedievvá we pitched our lavvo
during the spring migration
Čáppavuopmi is where we built our goahti during rut
Our summer camp is at Ittunjárga
and during the winter our reindeer are in Dálvadas

You know it sister
you understand brother
Our ancestors kept fires on Allaorda
on Sturjeaggi’s tufts
in Viiddesčearru
Grandfather drowned in the fjord while fishing
Grandmother cut her shoe grass in Šelgesrohtu
Father was born in Finjubákti in burning cold

And still they ask
where is your home
(Áillohaš 1996: 123)

War

– The relationship between the Norwegian state, the Swedish state, the Finnish state and the Russian state, on the one hand, and the Sami people, on the other, is colonial in origin. People from outside began with trading, plundering and missionary expeditions and drew up the borders without asking our people; the states installed themselves as private owners of all land and waters. The Norwegian state launched a systematic war against our culture and language for one century, while the other states dented our existence as a people. Our people are a people of peace. We have never fought a war and as a result we have been brought to the brink of extinction. (Ole Henrik Magga 1996: 74)

– During the 17th century Sweden was involved in the Thirty Years' War. The country needed new sources of income. In Sápmi there were many riches. In 1634 silver ore was discovered in the Nasa Mountains on the border between Sweden and Norway. In 1635 they started mining the ore. It was 60 km from the mine to the smelting hut and 400 km farther to the coast of the Gulf of Bothnia where the shipping harbor was located. The Saami, with their draft reindeer, were forced to be in charge of running the transport from the mountains to the coast. Many reindeer died from exhaustion. When the Saami refused to carry out these transports there was no judicial authority which protected them. (Sunna Kuoljok & John E. Utsi: 23)

– From 1900 the Swedish state launched a policy which combined both assimilation and repressive segregation. Non-reindeer herding Sami were assimilated into mainstream Swedish society. Reindeer herders, on the other hand, were officially locked into a culture past and gone. (Mákká Regnor/Regnor Jernsletten 1992: 4)

– Saami society has never been organized into large units, and therefore never had military troops or armies. However, legends tell of how the Saami, with careful strategem, killed bands of robbers who ravaged the area. During the Second World War the Saami were conscripted in this war between nation-states. For the Saami in the east it meant that they could be forced to fight against each other because they fought in both the Soviet and Finnish armies. (Sunna Kuoljok and John E. Utsi: 40)

– The whole of our history is the history of oppressed people. And our fight to survive as people is not a fight to defeat other nations through violence, but simply to keep on living as Sámit, Indians, Inuit – as people – on the earth that our ancestors entrusted us with. We are responsible for the future generations, as well as for other people with whom we share the earth. We are the ones who always searched for peace, also when the intruders appeared. Often enough we have had to yield our space to the strong. (Juhu Niillas 1986: 28)

– The Sámi are a peaceful people. I remember as a child how the adults would sometimes talk of war. They wondered how soldiers could have the heart to kill human beings. An old Sámi knew to tell how the soldiers were given a drink so that they lost all their humanity and become terribly cruel. They no longer thought about what was good and what was bad. After such a drink would they just raid forward crying: “Oh yes, oh yes,” the others said unanimously. (Anders Larsen 1947: 8; my translation)

– When the evacuation order came, we were in Horbmá on the Norwegian side, haydrying in the field outside Erkke-Ándaras’ house, where Juhán had taken Elle-Máret for a wife. There came someone to us, I have forgotten whom, with news of the evacuation. And we took off immediately and in a rush, poling up from Vuolle Buolbmátjohka to Buolbmátjávri. At home in Buolbmátjávri the preparations were set in train. The cows and sheep we slaughtered together, and we emptied the hut. (Jávrii Juhán Niillas 1998: 11; my translation)

– The German steamer came in the fjord where Máhte Àslat's group was. A Sea Sámi from the Sievjo side had come to Máhte Àslat too, and with him was a girl. Máhte Àslat was out walking when he saw the Germans coming. Àslat áddjá ran to the goahti and said: "Now no one must go out 'cause the Germans are coming, showing their guns." The Sea Sámi said. "I'll go and have a look. Is it so certain it's the Germans?" He took a reindeer fur and ran out, the girl straight after him. Then the Germans began shooting. They killed the man. They shot his legs straight off. The girl ran a little further and the bullet cut two fingers straight off one of her hands. Then the girl stopped and the Germans took her. They didn't kill her. The girl told later about how horrible it was. They turned the father and shot him in the neck before throwing him into the remains of an old hut. Máhte Àslat had some equipment in a shed. The Germans made all the people come out of the goahti and took all the equipment from the shed and threw it into the goahti, then they burned the goahti. Máhte Àslat and the Sea Sámi girl were brought onboard the steamer. Everybody was taken along. Only the dead Sea Sámi was left there. Then they left. Those were tough conditions. If people were to be found in the fjords and in the woods, they were to be shot... Máhte Àslat áddjá told me this. (Bálsse Bierá/ Per Persen Bals 1994: 10; my translation)

– The War came to Norway in 1940, and Norwegians had their own experience of foreign rule, also in the cultural field. It contributed to a better understanding of the Sami case. Gradually the Sami organizations in Scandinavia managed to have the old discriminatory laws repealed. "We the Sami, are one people and the boundaries of the national states shall not separate us." These are the opening words of the Nordic Sami Political Program that has been and still is a strong basis for Sami initiatives. (Ole Henrik Magga 1996: 76)

– Norwegian nationalism has marked people here, too. Especially the war had an influence. A whole generation suddenly became more Norwegian than the Norwegians then. Everyone took side against the Germans. The burning and evacuation influenced strongly on the assimilation. The only ones who were spared were those who were in the fells keeping busy with looking after reindeer. They regarded everyone an enemy, whether they were the Norwegian authorities or the German occupational power. The war

even assimilated the Sámi Nazis. Today these are likely to be supporters of assimilation. (Niillas Somby 1987: 15; my translation)

– The end of World War II and the United Nations' Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 meant another turning point for the Sami people. The defeat of Nazi Germany, which revealed the consequences of the racial fixation of the Nazi ideology, outraging the world, also affected the policy of the Swedish state with regard to the Sami. Besides the fact that racist attitudes no longer could be accepted after the War, after 1948 there was no way racist values could find sanction within the official Swedish Sami policy... Today, Sweden's official Sami policy is based on the structure that originated in the racist ideology predominant in Sweden from the late 19th century until around 1948. The attitudes of Swedish supremacy then created can still be traced. (Lars-Anders Baer 1982: 15)

– The aboriginal tribes like Sámit, Inuit, Indians and others, do not have any other possibility for survival than to depend on peace. Peace in the widest sense, peace with nature, the Creation, and peace with other people, is a basic element in the tradition of our peoples. Aboriginal history is nonetheless also the history of desperate fights with weapons against superior forces. But history has also demonstrated that we have not been able to defend our place in the world by the force of arms. The American Indian battles ended by defeat, and in some cases by extinction. And moreover, the white man has used the survival fight of the native people indirectly as an argument to defend their suppression of the Indians as people. One of the means was to make it appear that the Indians shared the white American's glorification of violence. They made romanticisms and entertainment out of it in novels and films. (Juhu Niillas 1986: 28)

– Many say we are bound to disappear. We are just remnants of a primitive people doomed to extinction. Doomed by whom? By the prophets of development? By well-meaning democratic people? By knowledgeable technocrats? By informed anthropologists? Perhaps more than anyone else, we are doomed to extinction by all those who have wanted to and still want to exploit our land. They still see us as an obstruction

to the development they envision, of which we should be smart enough to become a part.
(John E. Utsi 1993: 4)

Skiippagurra burning

– We were told of how they scorched the houses further east. German soldiers had told father and other grownups about it. We children wondered whether what we heard was true.

The Germans were headed west towards Skiippagurra. We could hear the grownups discuss what this might mean. There was no way of knowing in advance.

Then one day this group of Germans came to our goahti. They were angry and gruff and ordered father and mother and us kids outside. Mother carried the youngest, Magnus, in her arms. Father brought a quilt, some food and extra bread and sheep's rib that mother had prepared. Also, he brought some coffee and potatoes in a sack. Luckily, father managed to bring our cow. We walked and ran down to the road. There we met up with the villagers.

The Germans were shooting, aiming at cows, father's horse and Nils Johnsen's ox. They said they had to scare them away since they were about to torch. Piera Jovvna and I saw how troubled father was by them chasing away the horse. We were very saddened by it, too. Mother tried to comfort father, saying how it was better for the horse to be chased away. Later on we were told they had shot some horses, but we didn't know whether it was father's.

We made our way down to the riverboat, all climbed aboard and we poled across to Ádjasuolu. We towed the cow, and it swam behind the boat. Here, the river is not too torrential. On Ádjasuolu we were greeted by Risten Elle, Nils Johnsen and his wife. They made coffee and we ate the food we had brought with us. We went to sleep in the goahti. Piera Jovvna and I were scared. But we fell asleep quite quickly because we were exhausted.

The day after we could see them burning the goahtis of Skiippagurra. We had to move on. Nils Johnsen with family poled across in their boat. Father managed to bring the cow, Nils Johnsen brought a cow as well. The two of them entered the shore on the other side of the river and led the cows from there.

We poled up the river on the east side as far as we could get. From there, we walked to the earthen hut where we were to stay for a while. From there we could see them torch the houses on Ádjasuolu that Nils Johnsen and Old-Máhte had built.

Village people had gathered outside the goahti up on the fell. They were surprised to see us coming with two cows. But naturally, they were happy about it, 'cause now we had milk.

We lived in the goahti up on the fell for two weeks. Father and I went down to Skiippagurra a couple of days after the torching when all the Germans had left. We had to walk all the way up to where our goahti used to be on the Skiippagurra marsh. We were saddened to arrive. Our homely goahti was burnt down. It was all black all around it. Father and I searched the ashes for anything useful. We found nothing.

The goahti built by father and uncle Máhte the same autumn had not burnt all the way down as it was still raw. We found nothing useful there either. Afterwards we went down to grandfather's house. This was a proper wooden house, and the Germans hadn't scorched it. We found no food. Likely, the Germans had taken it all. Then we had to walk the long way up to the goahti in the fells where everybody anticipated us. (My father, Juhu Niillas told my mother/his wife Laila Jernsletten this, 2009: my translation)

The colonial body¹²

At my father's place the earth is red with iron, red with rust. A brook runs by the spot where the house was put up after the war, the soil still blackened by the imperialist torching. New reigns, new ways. Now, levelled to the ground, the government would seize the opportunity to cultivate the land by its own means, imposing the building of houses where there used to be goahtis. These 'specially designated houses' were cheap and simple, unsuited to the climate, designed as they were by stingy city clerks down south. We used to play by the brook near the house when we were kids. The brook gave the name to the place: 'Iron-brook-field', shortened to 'Iron-field': Jernsletten. The new

¹² This part was originally presented orally as a speech called "Greed. How it made my people bleed" when I was a visiting scholar at The School of Political Science, University of Queensland in 2003 and addresses the atrocities against the Australian Aboriginals as well as the Sámi and other aboriginal peoples in general. (Juhu Niilasa Risten 2003a)

name ousted the old one, no longer in use, except by the Elders: they know it, as they know all the names of all the river valley families.

What do we share, we the Indigenous peoples of the World, so different in so many ways, in looks, in ways, in wealth? We share some experiences caused by the mechanisms of oppression, an oppression that has been all over similar to the different parts of the world. Here, I will call it the Colonial Body.

The Colonial Body will watch you from the moment you are born. It will give you a Western name, saying 'you're one of us'. It will put you in school and tell you not to talk that gibberish, not to sing those heathen tunes. It will take you away from your family when you're little, and deny you the right to learn about your own people, your own land. The Colonial Body will keep you in school until you're a grown-up, to prevent you from maintaining your culture. It will monitor your moves in case you turn out radical, it will keep files on you like you were a terrorist. It will teach you to question your background and your identity, to feel alienated from your own kind, to feel a split person, a bastard child.

But we share more than this: As Indigenous peoples of this Earth we share the connection to places like they were family members, dear loved ones, with whims of their own, personalities, faces. The faces of places would show in their spirits, and we would honour them as we would honour their other limbs: peoples, plants, animals, fish, birds, bugs: all mythical magical beings of nature. And respect the interconnectedness of all things, of relationship between all things. The knowledge of land inherited, as land itself. The laws were *of* the land, inherited. (They were not the droppings of a making-it-up-as-we-go policy, as colonial law seems to be.) The laws would be steady, rooted in ground, in the knowledge of the interconnectedness of all things, of things bigger than the present; regarding 'present' as interconnected: the wisdom of being. Things bigger than the individual, not making kings of every man that 'makes it', but respecting people simply for being people, part of earth. The laws and knowledge, ceremonies, passed on by the Elders in stories and dancing, paintings and crafts.

The stories are our 'History': valid, sacred, the laws are our moral: the word is sacred with the council of Elders – our government, the friends of fire there to keep it: letting time pass in order to get agreement, consensus. Take the time to talk 'till settled. The ways of living tied to land, to waters, dependent on it, differing with it. They wander whenever it's needed, seize the seasons as our predecessors, maintain the land by knowing it, loving it, learning from it, living by it. We should not take from the land more than we could use. We would have an economy of sharing, our families extended, communities of their own, vital to our sense of being.

My father's river valley is a border between nation states. The land doesn't seem to bother with the borders enforced on it from down south. The river curls and curves and the fell stretches out above it. Here, one could easily go astray. One has to be in the know in order to move about. To the Elders and to the people who are in the know, the land communicates. It talks only to those who will listen; those who know the land's own laws, the know-about needed to survive.

My father is an Elder of our community, although we seem no longer to be listening to our Elders. The Council of Elders has been replaced by Nordic governments, who now take care of our Elders in specially designated homes for the elderly. The government will not listen to old people's talk; to them it's all gibberish in an incomprehensible tongue. The gibberish can be heard in the asylums too, and in the prisons (all governmental built homes, specially designated) – their knowledge no longer needed, their talk unknown. Like ghosts in their own lands, kings of black holes; the vacuum caused by eclipses so great they were never covered for in any fore-tellings: The end of peoples, the end of selves.

Tourists come looking for aboriginality; they go to the museum to see exhibitions over 'real' Sámi, only they're dead. The tourists don't seem to mind, as long as it's fantastic and exotic. They don't know what to look for. They should have looked in the footpaths of the Colonial Body (under the dung), only it wouldn't be fantastic and exotic. But if

you know what to look for it shouldn't be too hard to find. But then again: how to look for what's invisible?

Let me tell you about the Colonial Body. Its feet are made of steel, insensible to the surface of the colonial subjects it's tramping on on its way to progress. Its hands are claws, like bulldozers digging into colonial land, stuffing its insatiable body with more, more, its jaws constantly crunching, never tiring of consuming, producing, constructing new images of land; altering the land into its own image: artificial, dead. The Colonial Body has no back; no back of the head, no ass, no weak points to attack. On the back are more hands, producing 'History' and 'Law' by endless writing on bleached paper, in the biggest books you ever saw. The hands write only what the mouth says, in endless monotonous monologues, like a judge without a courtroom, speaking to himself, minding no one else. There is no justice to be done, no mercy to merge to. The laws of Capitalism reigns, the laws of the freeborn men are to be obeyed.

Imperialism legitimizes the populating by claiming that the territories are empty, desolate (terra nullius), or inhabited by 'submissive races' in accordance with a social Darwinistic approach (acquisition by settlement). Here, there's only Lapps, sniffing their way from fell to fell, they are on a par with animals, and the land is empty.

The Body has a head, a heart, a dick. The head creates thoughts for enlightenment, ideas for manufacturing, arguments for an unfought war. The heart feels with its own kind, beats with the joy of making money, securing the future of its own kind. The Body's male organs (it's got two) rape the land, simultaneously spreading the sperm of dominancy, by whitening the primitive races and fucking with their brains. The colonial offspring are ghosts, invisible in their own land.

The Colonial Body stems from two Mediterranean parents: the Greek Roman father and the Jewish Christian mother. The former would invent private property and develop thoughts later to form the basics of contract theoreticians and what we now recognize as modern democracy. The latter ensured certain morals and the development of humanism.

(Although, from an indigenous perspective, 'democracy' is more likely to be a tyranny of majority than the magical wonder word it seems to be to Westerners.) So, in this dichotomy of Western cultural heritage, one could say that the values of the father fight those of the mother.

The Colonial Body is driven by greed. It relies on its own declared isms to legitimize the rape and the slaughter: capitalism, liberalism, individualism; the great isms of our time. In securing the needs of the individual 'I', the isms oppose the pre-romantic communal 'we', so basic to 'primitive' communities, even European ones.

Whenever we talk of liberalism we tend to follow the recipe of Utopism: one puts one's own ideas into a term, and by so doing, constructs a new one, which then becomes something of a magic word. We fail to see that liberalism and the ideas of equality, brotherhood and liberty, when they first emerged as ideas, applied to freeborn men solely: these were the ones with 'identities'. Women and children, tenants and slaves were mere blank sheets in their custody. In terms of individuality, 'man' equals 'men'. This is the foundation of modern democracies, this gave legitimacy to imperialism.

This is also the premise of capitalism. It builds on the ideas of liberalism and thrives on the economical exploitation of colonies, former and present ones. There would be no basis for capitalism without the forced labour of colonial work forces, without the colonial resources, or the colonial land. Capitalism is to do with accumulating wealth, sharing seems stupid within a capitalist framework, unless there is something to gain from it directly. But any monopoly must rot, and the capitalistic world might end up killing itself, in its constant rape and exploitation of Mother Earth. It might end up killing all of us.

Let's tell the story of how the World was won then, told in the metaphor of a thief, a terrorist leaving his home, a convict perhaps, set at sea. (My father told me our kin partly descends from such a convict, one of two brothers to come from Trøndelag, only to end up a sheriff in Deatnu...) He leaves behind his family (and law and morals) and sets out to

conquer, slaughter, rule the world. He is Danish, English, Portuguese, Norwegian, French, Spanish, German, Dutch. (Later on he'll use his science to survey the population growth in countries he couldn't manage to hold, and say 'This can't go on. Stop the over-population', without ever considering his own immense populating activities. Imagine for instance what the population of Great Britain would be like without the migrations throughout the centuries...)

He sets out to conquer the world. One could say that he simply wanted to spread his DNA, to use one of the explications offered to explain the male sexual drive. He needs to spread his sperm, to populate the world. And in so doing, he gets rid of some aggression, by pursuing warfare like the Vikings did, only; he doesn't leave, he stays, steals the land. The Colonial Body becomes a man doing this; becomes a Body, a machine fully equipped for the task, a school of thought, a fleet of merchandise, an army. He's European and he carries his biological weapons along with more primitive stuff like guns and cachets. He thinks he's on a mission for God, or at least that's what he'll say whenever someone questions his wrongdoings. – Someone has to save these bastards, he'll say about his subjects, his own offspring. Someone has to protect them against the Whitefella: himself. So he builds missions and reserves to fence in the natives like they were cattle, at the same time appearing to be saving their souls. Stealing their lands, their loved ones, all along preparing them for Heaven.

So we can see how he actually did bring some of his morals with him, only he squeezes them until it fits himself; changes the law to suit himself. He left the law in the land he left, now he's constructing a new law to fit the new land: his land, made in his image. This is truly individualism, liberalism for the whitefella. By migrating from his country he's escaped the law connected to it. Man makes his own rules in the colonies, as he is a thief, a beggar, expelled by the authorities of the mother country, placed here as convict, doomed to live with the primitives, the natives. He breeds with them, in an effort to make them white. He rapes them to own their land and then steals their bastard children in order to raise them himself like he knows best: by violence, neglect. By telling his-stories in his schools, far away from home.

His greed legitimizes the theft. It legitimizes manslaughter, enslavery, rape, the kidnapping of children, the starving of people put in reservations and missions, the drowning of people in alcohol. The colonial discourse relies on science and mission to support the colonial law. The colonial law supports whatever the Colonial Body might see fit for the circumstances, whatever experiment he'll try out. Like the whitewashing or 'breeding out of primitive races'. Like biological warfare (the infesting of foods and garments with diseases and poison). Like stealing children, breaking up families, replacing people. Like reserving private property, land rights, whatever, for whites only. Like denying natives the right to own land. Like apartheid. Like laws prohibiting Jews and Asian people entry into the country (former Norwegian and Australian laws, along with many other nations' laws). Like denying people jobs, houses, education on the basis of their race. Like making people feel so ashamed of their background that they deny themselves, or even kill themselves.

What were the morals like, which the Colonial Body left behind? It seems it was the very same law that would have prevented the growth of the Colonial Body in the first place. In this lies hope, as there is a way back, out of the deadly greed of capitalism and into something else, something related to an economy of sharing, which is vital if we are to live on this earth, all of us. This is the moral of the West, according to the Bible:

At the heart of the Biblical revelation is the notion of God as a God of *justice*. The call to justice is particularly directed to rulers of society and those who are privileged by wealth and power within society. They are under an obligation never to forget or oppress the vulnerable and the poor. A recurring motif in the Old Testament is God's concern for the distribution of land. God required that the land be used to establish a just society, in which everyone had equal access to the earth's fruits.

Let me tell you a story: King Ahab wished to buy Naboth's vineyard, which was next door to his palace. But Naboth, according to the ancient tradition, regarded his land as an inalienable inheritance and declined Ahab's generous offer. Ahab's wife, Jezebel, was a

foreigner with no respect for the laws of God. She believed in the prerogatives of government to acquire whatever it wishes. She regarded the land as mere commodity which could be freely bought and sold, and the fact that her Israelite husband thought to buy his countryman's land indicates that he had begun to think in this way also. Jezebel schemed to acquire Naboth's land, by the use of false witnesses, who claimed Naboth had cursed God and the king. Naboth was killed for his alleged treason and his property fell to Crown. Jezebel used the letter of the law to accomplish an end contrary to its spirit. Elijah the prophet emerged to condemn this injustice, and pronounced a curse upon Ahab's family." (From 1 Kings 21)

There are many close parallels between this story and the experience of Aboriginal people. Like Naboth, the Aboriginal people cannot agree to the European concept of private property and land ownership. They are willing to share the fruits of the land, but the idea of selling it, or buying it back, is a foreign one, for the land is our inalienable inheritance, given for our use during our lifetime. Land is a sacred trust, which must be handed on intact to our descendants. European society is either unable or unwilling to comprehend this value system, for, like Ahab, it views land as a mere commodity.

Jesus re-echoed the prophetic call of the Old Testament to return the land to its original owners, saying: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has appointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord." (Luke 4:18-19)

'The acceptable year of the Lord' referred to is the Jubilee year of the Hebrew calendar. According to the ancient law of Israel, every fiftieth year was a Jubilee, when all land was returned to its origin owners. Since the rich tended to get richer, and the poor poorer, the Jubilee fell approximately once every generation. The whole economy was dissolved, and all land was returned to its original owners, and the fifty year cycle began again. In that year, too, all slaves were freed and all debts dissolved. The Jubilee was established as the lived-out reality of the rule or reign of God, in gratitude to God for deliverance from

unending slavery in Egypt. When Jesus announced 'the acceptable year of the Lord', therefore, he was calling for the establishment of justice in the land, which meant the proper reallocation of the land to its traditional owners, and the dissolution of all debts.

In Biblical thought, the land belongs to society, not to individuals. There is no ground in Biblical thought for the rights of private ownership of land. Land is not simply a commodity that can be bought and sold for the benefit of the individuals who, in conventional law, are enabled to acquire it. Aboriginal concepts of communal land ownership are far more in keeping with the Biblical idea of the land as the gift of God to the community, than is the system of private ownership.

On this basis, one might predict that capitalism must fall. It must fall, as it obeys no rules but its own. It must rot in its own lawlessness, be conquered by communities that are stronger, simply because they are *communities*. Capitalism steals from, kills and rapes nature, and with it nature's peoples and their wisdom of it; Nature, this branch we're all sitting on, cutting it off the tree. Capitalism is suicidal, allowing the human Thanatos – the desire for death – to kill Mother Earth slowly, and with it, us. Not only us, the Indigenous peoples, but the human race. Humanity is, in its pursuit of accumulating wealth, losing its former wisdom connected to land. It must, in order to reverse the catastrophic order of the status quo, let the wisdom of nature people be heard, as it is indeed the law of the land.

Går'ži

– *The art of poling a riverboat in the current, of catching ptarmigan with a snare, or of catching salmon with a net can't be learned through instructions and lectures. Poling a boat is a skill that requires thorough knowledge of the currents in the river and how the boat moves in different types of currents. When one sets out to snare ptarmigan, one must have knowledge about the ptarmigan's movements and feeding habits in the landscape, how the ptarmigan behaves in different weather conditions, and knowledge of snow conditions. The hunter must be able to read the ptarmigan's tracks. The young pupil learns all this in working with an experienced hunter; through observing, experiencing, and through asking. (Juhu Niillas 1997: 87)*

Patterns!

– When a language dies, wisdom disappears and today, survival knowledge is needed more than ever. We are running out of oxygen. Pollution and the disappearance of jungles is changing the weather. The conditions of life are becoming worse and worse. All over the world indigenous people have passed their survival knowledge on to the next generation through oral tradition: telling stories, singing songs (or joking in our case), reading poems, playing with words, chatting and by telling jokes to each other. Oral history emphasizes love, peace and life. Every mother talks to her child with love, hoping that life will continue in that child. You don't have to read many pages of written history to realize that it emphasizes money, war and death. (Kerttu Vuolab 1994: 16)

– (The Westerners) think that literature should be this way or that, otherwise it isn't literature. We the Sami on the other hand come straight from a different kind of environment where literature isn't something that is stuck in a book, but something completely different. Our background is quite different and it has brought very many new possibilities to literature... If you consider the old literary world of the Western world, and what they conceptualize as literature, the concepts are very narrow. To me it is a great richness that there are different nations in the world which have views that differ from the Western world's beliefs of what literature is. (Nils-Aslak Valkeapää 1998: 95)

– If one leaves the Latin (and the English) for a moment and instead observes the question from a Sami language point of view, there is not necessarily a divide between the established binary opposition *litera-ture* and *ora-ture*. In Sami these terms are unified in what is usually the translation for literature, namely *girjjálašvuohta*. The term derives from the substantive *girji*, meaning “pattern” and “book”. To the noun is added the ending *-laš*, creating the adjective “patternly” (that is, something which follows a pattern or has something to do with patterns) in one meaning, and “bookly” (something which reminds of a book or has something to do with books) in the other. From the adjective *girjjálaš* one can again create a substantive by adding the ending *-vuohta*, so that the direct translation of *girjjálašvuohta* would be “patternliness” and “bookliness,” that is, something, which follows a pattern or is pertaining to books. (Harald Gaski 2004: 381)

– It (Sámi literature) distinguishes itself in two respects. First of all, we do not have, as far as literature goes, established norms and conventions, not even a written literature as our literary background. Thanks to this our literature is considerably more flexible and modern than is the case with other cultures. It has sprung straight from non-existence to modern existence. One must also understand that our literature is based upon oral knowledge that has been handed down through generations and it thus is not very easy to convert into a literary medium. Many difficulties follow from this. One of them is the question, who reads Sami literature, and a second problem is, do the readers have any ready-made model of understanding what they are reading? It’s exactly this, the absence of any prior blueprints for understanding (Sámi literature) that give the author the possibility of creating them in a completely different manner from what is the case where they already exist. (Nils-Aslak Valkeapää 1998: 91)

– What is a myth in the Sámi context? Sámi mythology is a local expression of a larger pattern of ideas, knowledge, visions, beliefs, rituals, spheres, stories and symbols. ‘Classical’ Sámi mythology... refers to a concept with a very broad content, including the myths and stories concerning gods, shamans, spirits, supernatural beings, rituals, and sacrifices. The myths of the present are exactly as they are visualized, perceived, and practised in the present. Generally speaking, today’s mythic images are constructed on

the basis of previous myths. For example, the traditional Sámi yoiks and poems can be understood in this light. But nothing hinders us from renewing old myths. Sámi mythology is not just a collection of stories and songs from the past, and it is not merely a believable theory, far removed from life. Sámi mythology is something very much alive: it is felt in the body and mind, continuously changing, expanding and renewing itself. (Elina Helander 2004b: 553)

– The content of myths can also be examined on the basis of values central to the Sámi society... Even though the female gods of the old tradition had a central place in and around the home space, and as such also highlighted the value of women, the birth of a boy was esteemed higher than that of a girl within the family. Juohksáhkká was the second daughter of Máttaráhkká, and the Sami would give her offerings, to ensure that she changed the girl into a boy in the mother's womb. In a Sámi view it was easier to manage when the child was a boy and not a girl. One wouldn't send a girl fishing or hunting. (Vuokko Hirvonen 1995: 47, my translation)

– As one can see, the Sami term for literature opens up possibilities for a much broader interpretation of what can be defined under the wings of literature than the Latin-based *litera-ture* allows, because the latter limits everything to the letter and that which is related to it. An oral narration also follows a pattern; it has its own structure, in the same way that a book has one. A yoik can have many sub-motifs and digressions, “wrinkles” in its performance, but it too is built up from a pattern, and therefore falls quite naturally into the literature term in Sami, whereas that which is primarily an oral form can have problems being accepted as a literary genre in a more limited definition of what belongs inside the framework of the bookly art's expressive forms. (Harald Gaski 2004: 381)

– One might claim that, according to old tradition, Sámi folk poetry is not divided into special categories such as máinnas, cuvccas, mitalus and myth. The Sámi word máinnas has many meanings, such as mitalus, cuvccas or spivka. (Jelena Sergejeva 1995: 40; my translation)

– In my opinion, you see, understanding literature derives to some extent from the person's background. If somewhere they have come to know and understand literature in a particular way and they have a solid background for situating it – what particular symbols are linked with it and what values it has – there they also have different expectations as to what literature contains. The sami have a different background, different values for their symbols. I for one see this as a challenge. It is possible to create a completely new system of symbolism and signification for a literature which doesn't yet have such a system. And we can see what will develop from this. To me the richness of Sami literature is that it doesn't have any literary traditions. (Nils-Aslak Valkeapää 1998: 91)

– Myths have a foundation in and a close connection to an empirical external world: the thunder, the sun, the bear really exist. Myths also have connection to the world of spirits. (Elina Helander 2004b: 553)

– Sámi literature is concerned with showing Sami strength. Sami culture has been under pressure for generations and therefore Sami writers realize the necessity of eliminating the sense of inferiority and hopelessness among their People. Literature and art are cultural factors that they try to use in an effort to shape a viable minority society, one that must be able to resist powerful influences from the outside, both from entertainment industry and the mass media. (Harald Gaski 1991:11)

– We have to see myths from different levels and angles of existence. Myths in the Sámi cultural context are patterns and ways that are measurable and easy to observe. Sámi myths also have other aspects and a deeper meaning, a dimension of depth that is less easy to grasp or observe. For instance, when a shaman or healer is active or present, then the depth dimension is open. Many myths, tools and rites connected to shamans and healers allow for an alteration of awareness and knowledge-based consciousness. Myths help to maintain cultural realities. (Elina Helander 2004b: 553)

Muitalandáidu

– To the extent that some historical truth is believed to lie beneath tales and legends, they do not belong specifically to the realm of mythology; myth is a product of the imagination. But the line between tale and myth is often difficult to define, since mythological elements are often mixed into the tales. In this respect they are usually included in mythology. Although the subject matter of Lappish mythology is not very diverse, as may have been imagined, the content of the tales is all the more rich. This is easy to understand with reference to a people whose tales constitute their history. Long winter evenings have been spent beside the campfire in the woods telling the tales that have passed from mouth to mouth and generation to generation. Though the winter evenings are long, still there are enough tales to fill the hours from seven to two. An old woman sits and relates in a sober voice what has happened in olden times; the curious young gather around her listening excitedly and closely. (Lars Levi Læstadius: 199)

– For a people living in cold, dark and frequently changing dwellings, storytelling and recollections served as a natural and often as the only form of self-expression available. The art of writing and the creation of literary works were practised only exceptionally and at a relatively late phase in the semi-nomad and nomad cultures. Nevertheless, the Sami have always been considered as true masters of the story-telling art. Their narrative tradition is particularly characterized by a great abundance of short, concise narratives, so-called *máinnas*. The *máinnas* is both a fairy-tale and a story. It often tells about ordinary Sami people and events in their lives, with supernatural powers and creatures and inexplicable phenomena involved in the story. This oral tradition has thus preserved a lot of the ancient beliefs abandoned at the adoption of the Christian belief in Lappland. Furthermore the oral narrative tradition also contains information on even centuries old historic events, although time and the numerous generations passed have set their label on the contents. (Samuli Aikio 1994: 110)

– You can see it clearly before you. He, who will gain power over you by stealing your cap. So you can avoid it. You see her walking on a sunbeam. So you know that it can

happen. Somebody got help by letting in unknown forces. This you may do too, if necessary. So the storyteller affects your life. You know it's not the first time when you experience something new. The storyteller has already shown you. Like an alert animal, you smell his presence. Then you know that, whether consciously or not, he has given you the guidance you need. You must trust him. (Ing Lill Pavall 2001: 134; my translation)

– Story telling was a highly developed form of art in Saami tradition. Stories, myths, fairy tales were passed on from generation to generation. The old fables were recounted along with legends and stories about giants and supernatural beings, about bands of robbers who were defeated. A recurring figure in these stories was Stállo the stranger, a big and strong simpleton who lived among the Saami. There are also many stories about the people of the nether world who lived in a world parallel to ours. (Sunna Kuoljok and John E. Utsi: 50)

– Over the years, you have encountered the storyteller in many shapes. Whether it's a man or a woman, old or young, close or distant – you never know. The only thing signifying the storyteller is that he touches you. He opens a door, creates an image and this remains your property for as long as you live. Your own imagination colours the stories and put them into a context. And so the storyteller and you become part of the same world. Time perspective no longer exists. Past, present and future are interwoven. The imagined is real. (Ing Lill Pavall 2001: 134; my translation)

– Extremely short stories have been used as spells. Storytelling in general has a healing effect. Stories teach people to respect their ancestors, to honor the Sun and the planets and to feel the unity of life. Stories teach the ways of the culture and help each person find his or her place in society. They teach the harmony and balance of the universe that maintains good health. They connect the elements of the upper and lower worlds. In addition, stories teach about the forces of chaos and what will happen if these forces are activated. Stories are told within the family and when guests are around. Old Sami stories

told privately by small groups of people can counteract the strong emotions that lead to accident and disease. (Elina Helander 1995: 7)

Feeding children stories

– Before books written in Sámi were published, it was often thought that we Sámi we had no literature. We had instead a very rich oral tradition. I had no books when I was a child, but I had stories, poems, jokes, fairy tales, myths, joiks, and legends. These were my books and my theater as well. My library was my family, my home and nature. And my grandfather and my mother would tell us stories from morning to night. Events that happened in the barn while we were milking the cows, as we were walking up the hill to pick cloudberries, or during the slaughtering of reindeer, were my literature. (Kerttu Vuolab 1994: 17)

– In tales, stories and experiences I was told, especially by my father, there used to be some sort of guidance. Once I did so and so, which I shouldn't have done, and therefore it went wrong. And then, you know, the person who listens learns not to push the reindeer too hard so they get weary and lies down, and so on. And things like these are grounded in our society and in the local knowledge of birgejupmi. I remember, when growing up, from incidents where people were interrelating, that you shouldn't be too quick-tempered, too angry, you should think before you talk too hard, think about how your words affects the other. I think it was a very good schooling we got from these stories and experiences. (Ingor Ántte Ánte Mihkkal: 17; my translation)

– Our people were masters of storytelling too, especially Mother and Grandfather. All around the clock and all year round we heard hoahkamiid, ádestallamiid and máidnasiid. My literary history is nothing special in a Sámi or other nature people context. Rather, it is very common. As a child I was fed oral literature, especially by my grandmothers and other Elders. (Kerttu Vuolab 1995: 33; my translation)

– When I tell my children stories they always want to hear the same stories over and over again. I used to think the repetition was vital. By and by I realised that it's the constant

variations, new nuances and little details not told before that cause the desire to hear the same stories over again. So the stories constantly take on new shapes and the children's eyes grow bigger and bigger. (Ing Lill Pavall 2001: 139; my translation)

– Women were at home with children, at cow barns and cooking in the kitchen. Our mother did not do anything without telling a story about it. When cutting up reindeer meat mother was telling stories, when cooking supper she was telling stories. While teaching us to milk the cows she was telling stories, when we went to collect hay from the fields again she was telling a story, when we were on our way to go fishing she was telling stories. All situations were occasions for stories, when collecting cloudberry there were stories. (Kerttu Vuolab 1998: 50)

– In *dárjegiella*, one says *mainazy juhted* when telling stories. Literally it means *to pour stories*. Stories were told according to the time of year. In spring they were usually short and in the long, dark winter nights they would be longer. Often, when one story ended, another was started. (Jelena Sergejeva 1995: 40; my translation)

Juoigan

Yoik is a sanctuary for our thoughts
Therefore it has
few spoken words
Free sounds reach
farther than words

The yoik is our people's spirit
allows our thoughts to soar
above the little clouds
has them
as its friends
in nature's beauty
(Paulus Utsi 1996a: 112)

– The Lapp song is *joiking*. This is a way of recalling other folk; some are remembered with hate, some with love, and some with sorrow. And often these songs concern certain places, or animals... the wolf, and the reindeer, and the wild reindeer. (Johan Turi: 202)

– The most obvious example of the need for a culturally internal interpretation technique in relation to Sami texts must be yoik poetry. The yoik is the original music of the Sami, with clearly defined parameters for production, function and practice. The concept of *juoigat* (to yoik) exists over the entire Sami region, but yoik itself is called different things in the diverse Sami dialects. It is integral to the Sami sense of community, making the subject of a yoik a part of the society. (Harald Gaski 2000: 191)

– An older Sámi woman tells of what she once experienced in utter grief and despair. First she loses her son, and then – only a few months later – his fiancée dies too. At her grave, and in double grief, the older woman can no longer control her emotions. To her own and her companions' astonishment she breaks out in a spontaneous yoik. Without inhibition she yoiks out loud, and she experiences how this gives her an outlet for her grieving. Through yoik she regains her inner strength and can go on with her life. (Gustav Kappfjell: 45; my translation)

– The yoik confirms a person's identity. 'Identity' within a Sámi society is not the primary stressing of one's individuality, rather the sense of belonging to kin and community. And so it is crucial that the people in one's society acknowledge that one belongs among them. In a person's life this is confirmed by the fact that one has a *luohti*. (Juhu Niillas 1978: 110; my translation)

– To yoik is a way of remembering. One sings to nature, to people, to animals and to different happenings. It does not have to contain words; in the sound, a person or an animal can be imagined. The yoik is often a very emotional experience for the person who sings it. The yoik still exists despite the fact that it was forbidden for many years. Earlier on it was a part of the ceremonies of the *Noajdde*. By means of the yoik the

Noajdde could get into a trance and travel to other worlds. (Sunna Kuoljok and John E. Utsi: 48)

– I’ll tell you why Sámi people adjust so easily to new surroundings, yoik philosophy explains this. When I’m down, like this *luohti*... I used to yoik it when I studied Sámeigiella here in Tromsa, ‘it’s too much snow, it’s suffocating’. Then it got easier when I yoiked, it seemed I travelled to the fell when I yoiked that *luohti*. And everything was easy. I think there’s some sort of *birgengoansta* embedded in the yoik tradition. When I’m alone, worried, I yoik my good people, my wife or my cousin, my brother, my friend. When I yoik my good friend I’m suddenly not alone anymore, there’s someone with me, and then the *luohti*’s like a friend. And that’s one explanation why Sámi people so easily adjust to new surroundings. (Ingor Ántte Ánte Mihkkal: 22; my translation)

– The ability to yoik may lie dormant and with some, the feeling of joy may cause the yoik to emerge suddenly. During gatherings or organization meetings, when the programme of the day is over, both young and old may gather for pleasant companionship. One incident of such a company is told of. In the middle of the hum of voices – the Elders’ lower talk, the jokes and loud laughter from younger circles – rises a weak yoik tune. It quickly catches the attention of the nearest circle. It is like something new being introduced. It comes from an Elder who has noticed how two youngsters are opening up to each other. This is perceived by the Elder as something joyous, something that forebodes a desired relation for the continuation of the kin’s life and work. The yoik expresses joy, at the same time as being a signal to the youngsters that the Elders desire their growing understanding and contact. (Gustav Kappfjell: 45; my translation)

– Even children are aware of the rôle that yoik plays in people’s lives, that is its function within society. A mother from Kárášjohka tells of how her son at the age of eight or nine came home and told her happily that now he, too, was reckoned to be part of their people, since Granny had made him a *luohti*. (Juhu Niillas 1978: 110; my translation)

– Being a Sami scholar in the field of comparative literature represents an interesting approach to research on Sami texts, especially on traditional material like the yoik lyrics. Yoik is a kind of chanting, the traditional vocal genre of the Sami. Knowing the cultural background of the yoik, and, at the same time, knowing the literary methods normally used for the interpretation of textual materials, may serve as a two-fold approach to Sami texts, where cultural background, linguistic skills in Sami and literary methods converge and enrich each other to understand more of the texts than knowing only one of the skills would allow. There is, nevertheless, a residue left in the text – something, which is not easily explicated through the methodical exposition of the subject. (Harald Gaski 1997: 210)

– Literature like music has changed. In other words, yoiking has transformed in such a way that people wait until yoiks come out on a cassette. Then they memorize them by heart and everybody yoiks more or less according to the cassette. In the old days, everybody yoiked and all people wanted to yoik according to their own way of interpreting it. I believe that the same thing is going to be true of literature as well. (Nils-Aslak Valkeapää 1998: 92)

– The yoik does not belong in a museum, it ought to live on as an important medium and a symbol for the Sami. To many indigenous peoples traditional singing is a part of literature, and even an important basis for modern poetry, just like story-telling creates the foundation for a lot of prose fiction. This is the case for the Sami, too. The yoik texts build on a tradition of their own, not a scholarly expressed and explained literary system of different “-isms,” but a thousand year-old sense of belonging to a place, a family, and a people. The yoik is a way of remembering – it connects a person with the innermost feelings expressed in the theme of the yoik, and may thus communicate between times, persons, and landscapes. (Harald Gaski 1997: 215)

My home is in my heart
it migrates with me

The yoik is alive in my home
the happiness of children sounds there
herd-bells ring
dogs bark
the lasso hums
In my home
the fluttering edges of gáktis
the leggings of the Sámi girls
warm smiles
(Áillohaš 1996: 121)

Let the material lead the way

– Interestingly, the northern Sami term for "word", "sátni", which in the sedentary language is exclusively idiomatic to linguistic usage, in the nomadic language also refers to the cuts in reindeer earmarks. Several marks in reindeer ears can thus be said to constitute an extralinguistic statement with syntactic rules. (Alf Isak Keskitalo 1996: 51)

– An essential part of the earmarking system is the special earmark cuts (or 'words') and the terms that refer to them. These are divided into the so-called maincuts and smallcuts. These are used uniformly from the Southern Sami regions all the way north to the areas around Inari. (Klemetti Näkkjärvi 1996: 84)

– The Sámi reindeer herder and author, Johan Turi, wrote a book so that Swedish authorities would better understand the nomadic ways of the Sámi. Turi wrote and published stories about reindeer herding activities, shamanism, healing, religious issues, women and children, underground spirits and wolves. Turi relied on the fact that a story contains potential for increased understanding. Turi also understood that there is immanence in a story, containing both information and critique at the same time. (Elina Helander 2004b: 552)

– When each separate cut (or 'word') acts as an element of the various different earmarks as a whole, the combining and placing of different cuts characterizes each earmark. This feature is mastered only by earmarking experts. With the aid of such expertise, they can then compose a model of rules concerning the (purely) physical aspects of different cuts. (Klemetti Näkkjärvi 1996: 85)

– *Duodji* comprises creative activities which are both intellectual and material, so a writer can equally well be called a *sátneuojár*, a Sami word meaning a crafter of words, or *girječálli*, a writer of books. (Harald Gaski 1997: 11)

– When considering duodji from an esthetic point of view, people see it differently, not only because everyone has their own perspective, but also because they have been taught to consider differently what suits the eye. As mentioned, the viewer is expected to know the surroundings (*birrasa*) in order to be able to fully understand what the duodji means. This point is especially essential to our own society since duodji is still alive and many people know and feel how the duodji works both when it comes to use; and socially. (Gunvor Guttorm 1995: 21, my translation)

– "Duodji" is a word in the Sámi language. It can in many cases translate into "handicraft", if one are determined to translate. The word refers both to the process itself and to the prepared product. It may also appear in an abstract meaning. Intuitively, two impressions have fastened in the rethinking of the duodji process in various ways. Firstly, the process takes place only exceptionally by the use of patterns, designs or drawings. To a great extent it is the material, the resources and the product itself in its present shape that lead the way onwards. Secondly, the completion is a matter of step-by-step. To aim and retrospectively evaluate takes time quite practically, on the other hand it is almost impossible to stop in the middle of a step. Even if the telephone rings, or somebody enters, one has to do another sweep or two with the file, or, in this setting, write or read till the full stop before a break. One cannot claim that only Sámi do things this way. But there is the possibility of a highly developed "praxis" concept within Sámi language (and

society) where language and reality interrelates, something which is hardly identified in other societies. (Alf Isak Keskitalo 1984: 23, my translation)

– I remember an experience when, as a little boy, I heard two old men arguing in a language I could not understand, even though it was Sámi and I understood the words they used. Only, the words were put together in a way that made them sound alien; at the same time there was a certain music to them – a song, poetry, but this I did not know then. The men were obviously disagreeing about something and they used adages to hit each other about the head. (Harald Gaski 2003: 179; my translation)

– One day we went fishing with grandpa behind those fells. When we had reached the fells grandpa said, “look carefully how the hills look from this side so you will recognize them when you are approaching them again from this side.” Then he said, “this fell is like a person’s life in general: when you come across a thing in life you have to recognize it as being the very same thing from many directions, even though it looks quite different from another direction. (Kerttu Vuolab 1998: 58)

– The riddles were often in the shape of beautiful, poetic verses, like this one:

What is this:

Loddi girdá

ja varra goaiku soajáin

The bird flies

and blood drips from its wings

... We have to imagine an evening with a setting sun and a boat rowing across the water. When we look at the boat from the shore, it looks like a bird in flight (so typically Sámi to see the beauty and poetic in all forms of movement!) and every time the rower takes another pull, water drips from the oar and in the light of the setting sun it seems like blood. I once had some students who read much more into this little text, which they considered to be a poem, and they interpreted it as a protest poem against war and injustice in the world – a striking example of the potential in texts of this sort, and of the power of words generally. (Harald Gaski 2003: 185; my translation)

To read the ptarmigan's tracks

– Strangely, the word for language, 'giella' in Northern Sami, might also mean a ptarmigan string trap and a lasso ring made from antler, whereas 'giella' as a term denoting language, is universal to the whole cultural field. Evidently, such circumstances can function as artistic or poetical momenta, such as in the title of the Swedish Sami nomad Paulus Utsi's poetry collection "Giella giella" ('Trap (or coil) language'). (Alf Isak Keskitalo 1996: 51)

– From time immemorial, ptarmigans have been caught in snares. One makes little fences using willow or birch twigs, setting the twigs vertically into the snow. The enclosures have little openings, where the traps are set. When the ptarmigan comes to eat from the buds of willows and birch in the enclosure and goes through an opening, it gets stuck in the snare. Every day the hunter checks the traps and removes the rime. Thus the ptarmigans are lured to the snares. But if the trees and willows are bare of snow and frost, the ptarmigans will spread out across the fells and then it would take a stroke of luck to lure the ptarmigans to these particular willow fences. On certain clear winter days in January and February, the air is coldest in the lowland of the valleys. Then the trees there will be thick with rime. But a bit further up the valley side, where the air is milder, the trees are completely bare of rime (sealli), and often there's a sharp boundary between the zone where there is rime and the zone with no rime.¹³ Then it is time for the ptarmigan hunter to wander off upwards, where there is sealli, for there the ptarmigans will gather from down the valley, to eat the buds. (Israel Ruong and Asbjørn Nesheim 1967b: 109; my translation)

– A clever ptarmigan trapper does very well for himself. In early winter the ptarmigan stop by the high fell rivers, and in the copses which stretch down from the sides of the fells, but when the winter gets colder, the ptarmigan come down to the real forest nearest to the fells, and there they stop during the hard weather. And in the early spring, when the

¹³ Sámi poetics has traditionally been thought of as 'bare of rime', end rhyme that is, something that has established an impression of Sámi literature as minor: of less worth, less value. Alliterations, on the other hand, are plentiful in Sámi poetry, since they adhere more floatingly to the structural essence of the language(s).

air begins to grow warmer, then they move up again to the highest treebelt. The *giron* (fell ptarmigan, *Lagus mutus*) is much smaller than the forest ptarmigan... just as the Lapps are smaller than the folk who dwell in houses. And the Lapps are bent and bow-legged, because even as children the Lapps must freeze. (Johan Turi: 140)

– In an interview, Paulus Utsi said that the Sami used to write in the snow, and that made him think of writing poetry. Perhaps it is precisely the transitoriness of this type of writing he had in mind when he, in one of his poems, compares the threatened state of the Sami way of life with ski tracks across the open tundra, which the wind wipes out already before the next morning dawns. (Harald Gaski 1997: 11)

– The abundant terminology in connection with snow in Lappish is better understood when seen from the ecological aspect...We shall mention only a couple of the several hundred terms that snow terminology comprises. The word *vacca* denotes the first snow in the autumn and also new snow that has just fallen on old snow. *Vacca* is actually track snow, important to both hunter and herdsman. (Israel Ruong 1967a: 43)

– To be around children, other people's as well as your own, is an obvious cultural responsibility; it is grounded in the notion of our way of being, what we share as a people – storytelling and language. We must see to it that young people are led in the right direction. This is a central value too: to *ságastallat* with children, also about things that concern them. And they will ask us about things, such things as: did you see anything, skiing in the woods? Did you see any tracks? Birds' tracks or fox? What do you think the fox was doing, where had it been and where was it going? Such *ságastallan* serve a purpose, I think, even though most grown-ups hardly think about being bonded with nature. You grow alert and notice details: how nature changes, why it changes, such things. So they ask, as I said, and many times they ask questions so difficult I can't even answer them. (Ingor Ántte Ánte Mihkkal: 16; my translation)

– When we were children, oral tradition explained nature and life. Through stories we learned to know animals, birds, fishes, flowers, trees, insects, sunshine, rain, wind, snow,

rivers, lakes and the ocean. Listening to these stories we came to know that we belong to nature. (Kerttu Vuolab 1994: 16)

Our life
is like a ski track
on the white open plains
The wind erases it
before morning dawns
(Inger and Paulus Utsi
1996b: 115)

Our greatest obligation

– The Sámi have always lived in close contact with nature and nature has affected their life. This dependency on nature and its resources has created a need to know the language of nature. One has had to pay back whenever one reaped the growth of nature, through offering. The offering expresses gratitude for what is reaped, and a prayer that one may also reap in the future. Nature has been a place for work, dwelling and rest for the Sámi. To remain on good terms with the forces of nature and pay heed to these has been obvious. (Mette Irene Hætta 2003: 191; my translation)

– The voice of nature is such that if you take too much, it tells you that this firewood won't grow again, the reindeer will die or the fish disappear. You must learn this. You must be cautious, you cannot go and empty the lake, sell the fish in order to earn loads of money. Then there won't be any fish next time you need it. And that goes for everything in nature. You must listen to nature's voice. It's not for you to decide the future. Nature does. (Tore Johnsen's anonymous informant: 35; my translation)

– People consider themselves part of the eco system and cultural utterances are closely adjusted to an ecological balance of what nature may yield, and how humans may use natural options concerning production capacity most rationally. Conversely, cultural

traditions teach us how we are to use nature and not exploit it. (Aslak Nils Sara 1978: 276; my translation)

– The core of Sami identity and that of other indigenous peoples, is that we do not merely have a right to our areas of land but we also have a responsibility for our own future and that of the earth. We Indigenous Peoples must accept this responsibility. (Elina Helander 1994: 4)

– Indigenous peoples' ecological mode of thought represents a concept of the environment that contains at least four crucial components: the environments of 1. nature; 2. culture; 3. society; 4. language. These elements are bonded as a single entity in an environmental concept that should always be assessed as one, not separately, since to indigenous peoples, changes in one of these components will cause the entire environmental concept to change. (Aslak Nils Sara 1978: 276; my translation)

– With the appearance of the colonizers the siida system was destroyed. The first big destruction of nature began in the Swedish part of Samiland where the Swedes established the mines in Nasa. Both silver and iron ore was found in the mountains. The Swedes used Sami for labor in the mines and forced them to use their reindeer to bring silver and iron to the coast. Labor agreements were enforced by punishment. If a Sami refused to be a miner the procedure was to take the person to a lake, make some holes in the ice and drag the person between the holes until an agreement was reached. Since those days, many other mines have been started in Samiland, although with different working agreements. Many Sami who had the indigenous religion in their hearts were terrified by the way the strangers treated nature. In someplaces the mines are on sacred ground. (Niillas A. Somby 1991: 2)

– Despite the global robbery that has been going on for several centuries, we are still alive. In the name of Lenin, God or Progress, indigenous people have been robbed and seduced. This continues in our day by the powers who claim to represent “the public interest”. Some of us are massacred and tortured, but more often than not, the enemy is

invisible – invisible but real, effective and often very democratic. Many of us are living on land which could be profitably exploited. Its riches are to be extracted at any cost, without anyone being accused of breaching human rights. But there will be a cost which the “wilderness area” and its people have always had to pay. (John E. Utsi 1993: 4)

– This holistic view of life means that nature, mankind and life itself are not seen as mutually exclusive phenomena. The Sámi environmental concept has a number of components, among others the natural environment and the linguistic environment. These elements are joined to a unit which must also be understood from an overall, not a fragmented viewpoint. Moreover, change in one element means change in all the other components. (Elina Helander 1992a: 4)

– Our greatest obligation is to look after the land and waters and natural resources. Here we see that the indigenous peoples have a common basic viewpoint. We consider people to be part of nature. We should use nature, not consume it. When you consume nature there is evidently no place to go. When you consider the Chernobyl disaster and other environmental disasters it is about time we reconsidered who really are the civilized ones and who are not. (Niillas Somby 1987: 14; my translation)

– Cultural traits that have been considered to be of great importance to the modern Sámi understanding of tradition, such as empirical closeness, ecological caution, peacefulness, equality, harmony and spirituality, clearly contrast with the Norwegian central myth. They are ahistorical, they mark a demarcation line towards Norwegian history, as well as the Western world, and they relate to global companionship with other first peoples. In addition, they incorporate current ecophilosophies. (Audhild Schanche 1993: 56; my translation)

– The Sámi way of life has caused a particular rapport with the tracks left by former means of subsistence. People have been in daily contact with their cultural history... Even this generation lives in an almost intimate rapport with trek-ways, dwelling-sites and the physical features of the landscape. (Ole Henrik Magga 1989; my translation)

– Sámis, in common with other aboriginal peoples, possess knowledge that has not always been valued sufficiently highly. Here I am thinking in particular of knowledge about ecology, the administration of resources, land use and such like. This is of particular importance when discussing sustainable development and the organization of traditional economic activities. We have examples from the fishing industry, the herding of reindeer and ptarmigan hunting which show that Sámi knowledge should have been used more effectively. (Elina Helander 1992a: 4)

– The concept held by the various indigenous peoples that “Our land is our life” is in the highest degree valid for Sami people in Norway, Sweden, Finland and the Soviet Union. The future of the Sami as a people and of the Sami way of life and culture is inseparable from the question of our right to land and water in the land where the Sami live. Our Sami land is literally speaking the foundation for our existence as a people and an absolute requirement for our survival as such. It is the source of natural development of the Sami economy and culture and a guarantee for future generations of the Sami of the freedom to choose a Sami alternative. (Lars-Anders Baer 1982: 11)

– The plan by the Norwegian government to construct a dam for hydro-electric power on the *Álaheaju/Guov'dagæino* River, and the resistance and demonstrations against it, began in 1968. The construction included flooding a canyon that is sacred to the Sami people and putting Masi, a traditional Sami village, under water. We Sami pointed out our rights as indigenous people saying that the canyon was valuable to our culture. We argued that there was no actual need for additional hydroelectric power. The plans to flood Masi were halted, but the Norwegian authorities continued with their plans to flood the canyon. When we realized that sensible argument would get us nowhere, we changed our tactics. We constructed a *lavvu* outside the Norwegian Parliament and began a hunger strike. Norway sent police to arrest us. Dam construction was stopped in order to reconsider the case but the government decided to continue, promising to establish a committee to examine the rights of the Sami nation. After the construction was finished, Norwegian Prime Minister Gro Harlem Brundtland admitted in public that the Norwegian government was wrong in damming the river. (Niillas Somby 1992: 4)

– It is certainly time to wake up, now that the rays of the sun have become harmful, now that water is no longer fit to drink, now that time has become money, and now that the difference between the rich and the poor is becoming even greater. Modern civilization's bright and shining light is magnificent. But it is only an empty illusion, a deception to which many of us have also succumbed. Despite this we are alive. We are no better than other people, but we are not worth less either. Without our land we are nothing. We are the land, small creatures who try to live their own lives in this land. That is why we want this land to live – we want to live! (John E. Utsi 1993: 4)

– For indigenous people, land and waters are not merely places for food and income: they provide just as much of a sense of security, of being able to live happily, and if one behaves cautiously concerning land and waters they will continue to be one of the main sources of survival. To indigenous people, employment alone can never compensate or make up for the loss of land. (Aslak Nils Sara 1978: 278; my translation)

Thank you Aslak Nils-rohkki and all you other Sámi who stood up for Sápmi, the land and the waters and the mode of thought and taught the then prime minister of Norway Gro Harlem Brundtland about sustainable development at the time of the pipeline plans in Álaheadju/Guovdageaidnu! Here's a bit of irony for you: Aslak Nils Sara wrote this in 1978, in the middle of the pipeline conflict. He and many other Sámi, such as my father, met with government authorities and the prime minister to advocate Sámi rights and call for the project to come to a halt. Peaceful activists were met with the largest law enforcement in peacetime Norway, as more than 200 police officers guarded the building of the dam. Ten years later, Gro Harlem Brundtland would head the UN's World Commission on Environment and Development and front the term 'sustainable development' in a report called *Our common future*. In the meantime, she – as a head of government – had forced through the damming of the Álaheaju/Guovdageainnu River despite the forceful civil protests of Sámi and environmentalists alike. (Later studies revealed that the electricity yielded was superfluous and that it was, and is, sold cheap – mostly to Sweden.)

...fear the axe

Many writers and poets have been central to or connected to (not to say ‘come out of’) Sámi uprisings, such as both the ‘old’ and the ‘new’ Kautokeino Errors. (I.e. the social-religious conflict between the Sámi and the Norwegian officials of Guovdageaidnu in the mid-nineteenth century, and the pipeline conflict of the 1970s). The poet Risten Sokki’s great-grandfather Aslak Jacobsen Hætta/Jáhkoš Ásllat was sentenced to death and beheaded in 1854. Both Marry A. Somby and her brother Niillas A. Somby are authors and the descendants of Mons Aslaksen Somby, who was the other person to be decapitated in 1854 following ‘The Kautokeino Error’. Marry wrote the first children’s book, originally written in Sámeigiella in 1976, and has since published poems, novels and plays. Niillas, apart from being a journalist, has written children’s books and edited storytelling compilations. Both of them took a very active part in the damming conflict – Niillas escaped to Canada when wanted by the police following an attempt to blow up a bridge used to transport supplies. They are both the children of Sombán Ailu/Uhca Ásllat/Ásllat Somby the storyteller, whom we’ll meet in the chapter ‘Ædno’. Rauni Magga Lukkari, one of the most renowned Sámi writers alive, is also a descendant of the original ‘errorists’. Synnøve Persen, a founder of the Sámi Artists’ Organization and an acknowledged multimedia artist and poet was one of the original hunger strikers during the ‘new’ Kautokeino Error. Johan Turi, renowned as the first Sámi author, relates how his father took part in the riot of 1852 (saving the minister’s life). Lars Hætta and Anders Bær were sentenced to life imprisonment and wrote their lifestories (*Muitalusat*) whilst in prison; Lars Hætta wrote other books and even translated the Bible into Sámeigiella while imprisoned. A total of 48 Sámi were accused in two trials of causing and completing The (original) Kautokeino Error; 21 of them were men, 27 were women...

This Land where the wind blows
coldly even from the South
thickens the blood
burdens the mind.

Everyone here up North may feel familiar with these words. This recognition is just as familiar to people in Northern Norway as to people in Siberia or in the Sami Area.

Deep down this deals with the fact that the centre of power lies much further south and it holds good for everyone who lives here up North. Strictly speaking this is a sort of north-south dichotomy where the message is to keep quiet. I have asked myself why I have breathing problems. And my answer is: This is my heritage. As a woman I am afraid of being burnt as a witch. As a representative of the Sami people I am afraid of being beheaded. This is ancient, maybe it is rooted in my genes? In my mind I carry a deep fear of literally losing my head, of being beheaded. It is at the bottom of everything. (Rauni Magga Lukkari 1999: 10)

I should have told
of the people
who follow the
whisperings
of their forefathers
and pass on skill
to coming generations
(Inga Ravna Eira 1999: 13)

My father's file

– Beware, you Sámi man or woman, this uncanny espionage! Always behave worthily, healthily and boldly, without giving offence. But if you wish to read a bundle of antipathetic statements, a bundle of lies, half-lies, truth and half-truths, you will find it in certain books. I know that you hurt when you see in print such an abundance of bad reviews of the Sámi people; as you know, have seen and heard, the conditions are by no means any better with some of the other people. I wish to warn you against treating all alike; but beware of those who disdain our people. Use your eyes and thoughts when you have strangers visiting. Some books are good as such, that you get it all in *one* book; but these books may cause damage as such, that they help to keep the crack open, and this is unfortunate; as I wish the crack gone – peace among all of us. (Henrik Kvandahl: 66; my translation)

Many Sámi were under the surveillance of the Norwegian Secret Police for a number of years. Norwegian surveillance made great efforts to seek out ČSV as an underground movement, and even though most of the people involved didn't really go underground, the movement (insofar as it was a movement) was underground in the sense of being invisible within the major society. Although given little attention, the espionage directed towards the Sámi people as a whole within the national state of Norway in modern times concerns our people as well as the majority population of Norway. The powers-that-be might very well still conceive such actions as rebelliousness of a sort, assuming – as they obviously must have done in the Modern Kautokeino Error (the pipeline conflict) – that there exists an underlying agenda, a quest for power. Such rebelliousness or counter-discourse may even be seen as acts of war on ontology, on values and world-views. As the story of 'The ČSV Terror Poets' shows, such rebellion or counter-action signifies totally different things to the different parties, and simply reflects the values and world-view of the parties involved; whether they help to keep the crack open, or wish the crack gone and peace among all of us.

My father was under surveillance and our telephone was bugged for a number of years by the Norwegian Security Police. After having applied for a view of his own files, my father obtained some material registered during the period 1968-1976. It is claimed that the papers sent are all that is registered on him, but they are full of blanks and not only names are blanked out. Also, there is no mention of the fact that they bugged our 'phone. The papers make a poor and rather ironic read. Rather than depicting an image of my father, it depicts his informers: shadows with busy eyes, clumsy with their Norwegian words, eager to report (gossip) and make themselves important. Provided one fails to see the irony of it, this makes the papers a potentially boring read, as they strive so hard to be taken seriously; to have something to report on. They started noticing my father in 1968, it seems. There is a report and a note on the same subject: the sixth Nordic Sámi Conference in Eanodat, August 1968. My father gave a speech entitled "Do the Sámi have a future in the Nordic countries?" and apart from this there were similarly broad talks, such as "The legal rights of the Sámi" and "The South Sámi in older Norwegian History". The four participants from the Soviet side were mentioned by name and "took

charge of the required communist injection into the conference” (The Security Police Files: Dok. nr. 5/3). Also, they “appeared to be surveyors and observers. They noted names and addresses of participants from other countries and asked people for drinks in their rooms at night.” (The Security Police Files: Dok. nr. 5/3; my translation)

According to the informers, who probably were Sámi since they did partake in the conference, the “last two speeches were given in a clear-cut “Black Power” style, with the Norwegian government and parliament being harshly criticized. Authorities from the local level upwards were accused of being slow and the Sámi of Norway and the Nordic countries were urged to uprising and demonstration.” (The Security Police Files: Dok. nr. 5/3; my translation)

Having witnessed quite a few of the Sámi conferences, both Nordic and Norwegian, throughout my childhood and sporadically later on, I feel confident that these reports are dramatized and highlighted especially for the Security police. Although informative, the Sámi conferences were, to my knowledge, not as revolutionary as suggested in the reports. The revolution would find other sources and other ways than those expected by the surveyors...

ČSV – The return of the Sámi spirit

– Paulus Utsi understood that the Sami also had to learn new techniques, and that, in many ways, they would have to resort to the arts of the non-Sami in order to be heard and taken seriously. Utsi stressed both aspects of writing; its utilitarian value on the one hand – writing as a medium for both learning and livelihood, but also, on the other hand, its esthetic dimension, writing as an art form, as literature, which in its own way can open up completely different avenues for understanding and communication than those which factual prose will ever be able to do. Utsi wanted the Sami to preserve their own language as the minority’s own voice, but also to learn the language of the majority in order to expose the majority culture’s manipulations of the Sami by means of language; they should become aware of language as a trap with which one could ensnare, but also in which one could be ensnared. (Harald Gaski 1997: 12)

Č

Č stands for the sounds of the Sami

Starting in father and mother too

It embraces all beauty –

Water, light and writings.

S

S stands for Sapmi.

It is with us at life's evening;

In our food, reindeer and all creations –

In love and in language.

V

V stands for movement,

Making the Sami People burst forth.

In adversity it had waited, patiently,

Bleeding and victorious too.

(Anders Guttormsen: 5)

– Suddenly there was this ČSV Movement that no one could have predicted. There were no rules, no official definitions, no leaders. It was just there, and it spread everywhere. We spent all our time discussing our Sami identity. ‘What is Sami politics? What is a Sami?’ There was no sleep. There was hardly any energy left to study. I would ask my students where they had gone on the weekend. They had been all over – meeting each other and talking. I started the Sami Association at Umeå. We all became politically conscious and wore Sami clothes and jewelry. We began to read the classics, Johan Turi, Pedar Jalvi, Anders Heatta, Kirsti Paltto and Kerttu Vuolab. All expressed good Sami thinking. We read the poetry of Paulus Utsi. He began to make ČSV jewelry, and the students would hang around him. The Tana Family Singers made Sami pop records and

the Youth of the Tana River recorded political joiks. All of this was revolutionary. (Elina Helander 1992b: 4)

– I remember one particular course, it was supposedly a suede preparation course. Paulus Utsi came. His course not only concerned suede and skin preparation, there were also many other things he wanted the Sámi to learn. He wanted the Sámi to start writing: it didn't matter if you wrote correctly, the main thing was to start writing. People started to yoik, too. He had the Deatnogátte Nuoraid, who held the first literature seminar in Sirbmá, come. People were to duddjot poems based on the letters ČSV, which are the three most used letters in Sámi. Many came and those three letters were more and more used as negative nicknames for Sámi. Anyone who worked in an organization would be called a ČSV. To the two people who originated this, Anders Guttormsen and Paulus Utsi, it was a good thought, but these letters became words of scolding directed at whoever worked for the development of Sáminess. (Jon Ole Andersen 1999: 26; my translation)

– We were the first generation of Samis to have a higher education. My parents' generation could hardly read or write; they grew up being told they were worth nothing and that they were supposed to assimilate, to be Norwegians. My Mother and I would be going somewhere on the bus, she would stop talking Sami and start talking Norwegian when we went through towns. It was forbidden to learn Sami history and to study the Sami language, and when their history and their language was destroyed, they lost their self-respect. It is easy to suppress a People who don't know about themselves – then you can do what you want. We began to ask each other, 'Why shouldn't we be Sami?' 'Why haven't we learned anything about our own history, our own language?' It became our policy in every situation to tell people that we were Sami. We had to build up our personal identity. We began to wear gákti. It shocked Norwegians to see real live Sami wearing Sami clothing in the middle of Oslo! (Synnøve Persen 1992: 5)

Essayists and text-stylists

My father wrote a commentary for the biggest newspaper in Norway (*Dagbladet*) in the autumn of 1975, replying to a somewhat biased and uninformed (or rather, speculative) article printed by the newspaper in October of the same year. The newspaper probably wished to keep the crack open and refused to print it, only the small Sámi newspaper *Sagat* would let him explain about ČSV publicly, it seems, and denote speculations of it being a terrorist group. As it appears, my father resists even calling it a movement:

– Firstly, on the birth of the “movement” in 1972. This year, together with the name Anders Guttormsen, points at a literary seminar held in Sirma that same year in the autumn. The (Norwegian) Cultural Council’s Committee for the Promotion of Sámi Literature arranged the seminar. There were a few young Sámi present, and they may be suspected. Moreover, Anders Guttormsen was present, a Sámi of Tana, and a Free Church preacher. Agnes Øwre was present; she has since then published a collection of poems in Sámi, where most of the poems are of religious character. Paulus Utsi was obviously the central point of the seminar, his Sámi poems are translated into French amongst other languages, but not into the Norwegian, of course! Paulus died last year. Gustav Kappfjell was also there, a quiet and reflective South Sámi poet. So, at this seminar the ČSV formula was launched. Anders Guttormsen was probably the one who was touched the most by the possibilities of the symbol, and he wrote a number of poems based on the symbol ČSV. Overall, most of what has been said about ČSV has primarily been said in the form of poems...

The “movement” is not tied to any Sámi political grouping, it has no leader and no one speaks on behalf of the movement... How can there be any disagreements when anyone can decide for themselves what to put into the statement? And how can a “movement” have little (or great) support when it isn’t tied to any political grouping, has neither leader nor organisation, and no common notion?

And now I guess I should explain what ČSV is? Is it anything at all, or not? Those who read Sámi will discover that ČSV is something. Those who will reflect about what it is can read all the poems and philosophizing around ČSV, and those of any content are in Sámi. In Norwegian there are only the written explanations, just like the missionaries and

anthropologists always wanted to explain the Sámi thoroughly, even what the Sámi say... By so doing they have qualified themselves as members of a fools' movement, which throughout has had the common notion of mastering the Sámi by such explanations and descriptions... Yes, ČSV is something. It is like the yoik, ČSV and the yoik will live on, and they are such that either you grasp them or you don't, but you cannot agree or disagree with them. ČSV – or yoik – may concern a Sámi or not. And it is irrelevant whether you are for or against ČSV or yoik. Either you yoik or you don't, and it doesn't concern the yoik whether you oppose it. – Don't either believe that what I say here concerning ČSV and yoik are explanations of them. I know of three Sámi who, without knowing about each other, wrote pieces for “Dagbladet” in order to reject these assertions. None of the articles was accepted. One of the articles was mine. Of course, you may say that this isn't “objective” or “informative”. No! My point is simply that a Norwegian journalist can write the craziest rubbish about the Sámi in a Norwegian newspaper, and it may stand as the newspaper's only “information” about the case. In my opinion, Sámi emotional fits should be acceptable as part of a mutual exchange of opinion, “dialogue” as it is called. (Juhu Niillas 1975: Dok. nr. 9/3; my translation)

– **The happening that is called the Kautokeino error (Johan Turi: 226)**

– In the mid-nineteenth century, conflicts arose between the Sámi and the Norwegian officials of Kautokeino. It might be called a social-religious conflict. On 8 November 1852 the conflict heated into hard battles. The trader and the sheriff were killed. Many Sámi died from their injuries. One was beaten to death by his keepers during his transportation to Alta. Most of the people involved in the uprising were sentenced to life imprisonment and two were executed in Alta in 1854. One of them was 30-year-old Aslak Jacobsen Hætta. He left a wife, Marit Persdatter Kurrak, and two children, Peder aged four and Mathis aged one. (Risten Sokki: 136; my translation)

– No 22 Inger Andersdatter Spein, Rasmus Rasmussen Spein's Widow, explained that it was Marit Johannesdatter whom she whipped in the Parsonage. No 24 Inger Jacobsdatter Hætta admitted to having voluntarily gone to Kautokeino, and she was Sunday Night questioned, if she would go to War, whereupon she corrected, that she was not

questioned in particular, and it was so that Aslak No 1 went from Tent to Tent and called upon People, and he did say that the Journey would go to Kautokeino, but via Mortas, and Aslak did give Warning that there would be War. (Magnar Mikkelsen and Kari Pålrsrud: 222; my translation, cont'd.)

– When they had become Christians, through the words of Læstadius, their understanding was shaken, and they began to copy Læstadius; they preached, and condemned all those who would not follow them... And they began to be so excited that they left their *sida* and began to follow other *sidas*, and they preached what they had heard Læstadius preach. But they did not remember to do anything but condemn to Hell all those who did not follow them, and begin preaching the same way they did. And when they drew more folk to them, then they grew even more severe, and their wits went farther astray. And they began to compel folk to follow them. And when they could not get them by condemning them, then they began to hit them, and to doom them to Hell, and they swore and mocked at those who would not give themselves up to them. (Johan Turi: 227)

– Accused N:30 Inger Johannesdatter Hætta, 30 Years of Age married to Accused Mons Aslaksen Sombye. She explained, that she does not share the Faith of her Husband and that of the other Accused, and was therefore forced to hear and suffer much Pain, as she on the Sunday, when the Journey to Kautokeino took place was struck with Brushwood by Marith Thomasdatter Skum since she would not come along. Partly due to this Whipping and partly due to other Causes she saw herself compelled to go along to Kautokeino. On the Road hereto she was forced to give an old Woman a couple of Blows. (Magnar Mikkelsen and Kari Pålrsrud: 148)

– But they, the Kautokeino gentlemen, did not think that they would go so far, or cherish such hate for them. If they had thought this, then they would have had their weapons in order, and even had some soldiers with whose aid they could have destroyed the whole mob; but they did not believe, not at all, that things were as they were. When they heard that they had started making war, and folk told them that they ought to get help, they answered that they had heard it all before, and that now it was no worse, nor more

dangerous. And disbelief is a thing that changes many things. And when the crazy-witted ones came to the church settlement, whose name is Kautokeino, then they began to bother everybody, and the gentlemen worse than the others. Then they beat as hard as thieving dogs. And they murdered Ruth, the shop-keeper, they chased up into a loft and stabbed with a knife in the shoulder, and killed him, and the blood ran down through the loft floor. And afterwards they burnt the whole house. And the other (the lawyer) they killed too, and burnt. And in this way they committed these sad acts. And the priest they tortured so terribly that I cannot write of it. They bound him fast and beat him so hard that he lost his senses. (Johan Turi: 231)

– When they came to Kautokeino, (Inger Andersdatter Spein) took her Child to Johannes Mathiesen, and when she came to Ruth's House, both Ruth and Bucht were struck to the Ground, and later she saw the Latter escape for Ruth's House. She did not partake in striking neither Ruth nor Bucht but later in the Parsonage she hit a Lapp woman with Brushwood, as she was forced to do so. She no longer share the Faith of her fellow Accused, and she had abandoned them on the Grounds of having seen so much Whipping and Violence against the so-called Ungodly. She saw both Accused N:16 being whipped as N:24 being tied when these came to Town. When the Autzi People came, she immediately took their Side without partaking in the Battle with them. (Magnar Mikkelsen and Kari Pålrsrud: 145)

– And it was in the church settlement of Kautokeino that they began to burn and kill folks; the shop-keeper and lawyer they actually killed. Then a Lapp managed to get to another little settlement, which is called Au□e. And they began to collect folk from the Lapp sidas, which were in the neighbourhood, and when they had got together a few folk, they immediately set off, all of them, the women too... And so the two strongest and biggest men went first. The men's names were, the one O. O. Thuuri, and the other Juffu... But then they shot at O. O. Thuuri, but probably they didn't shoot with shot, only with powder. He told how it merely blackened his furs. I have heard that from him himself many a time. I am his son, and he has told this countless times... all these happenings. And this war was a real war. Some they hit till they were unconscious, and

others they bound, by and by. And when they had ended the war and had bound them, then they sprang quickly to see if the priest was alive... And when the priest was free, he clasped Thuuri round the neck, and cried aloud; and thanked him for coming and saving his life. And so they had won. Certainly one of the crazy-witted ones had been killed in the war, but the law did not reckon that as a crime. And so they sent the bound folk to Norway, and the case was heard in Norway, at Alten or Bossekop. And it lasted every day throughout the whole winter. And some of the crazy-witted ones fled to the high fells with the whole of their *sidas*, when they saw that they were not as strong as they thought they were. And then there came an order from the Crown to catch them too, and folks set out and fetched the whole *sida* back. And the Crown sold their herds by auction. And the Jukkasjärvi Lapps bought many of those beautiful reindeer. And when, after much examination, they had the matter clear, then they condemned some of those people to long imprisonment, twelve years and six years. And two were executed because they had murdered two others, the lawyer and the shop-keeper. A life for a life and a tooth for a tooth. And some of them (the prisoners) became very learned men; and one of them has translated many books from Norwegian into Lappish. (Johan Turi: 228)

Suotna lea nanus

Sinews are strong

Ákšu vel nannoseabbo

the axe even stronger

Máttarádjá oai vi

Great-grandfather's head

Golggotmánu

On the frozen ground

galbma eatnamis 1854

in October 1854

(Risten Sokki: 8, 110)

(my translation)

– Accused N:31 Inger Monsdatter Siri, 60 Years of Age married to Aslak Olsen Sombye... She does not share the Faith of her Sons and the rest, and her Husband has only lately devoted himself to the same. Thus she has heard bad Things of her Faith and has been called a Devil, whereas her 2 Sons and Aslak Jacobsen have said, that they were

Guards of the Door to Heaven... She partook in none of the Violences, which took place in Kautokeino, and knows herself not to have laid a Hand on any Person there. Among those of Ruth's House thrownout Things, she found a Gun, which she took for safekeeping underneath the Priest's Storehouse, as she feared, that someone in her Company might use it... She saw, that the Accused N:16 was hit by Brushwood when coming to Town, and this Whipping was carried out by almost everyone in Town. She also saw, that N:29 was tied Hand and Foot. When she reproached Aslak Jacobsen for having set Fire onto Ruth's House, he answered, that Everything would be obliterated in Kautokeino or, as he phrased it, Everything would be leveled there. (Magnar Mikkelsen and Kari Pålssrud: 146)

– And when these crazy-witted ones came back from prison, then they were quite destitute, they had not got a single reindeer; and they were obliged to begin to work for other Lapps, although they had almost forgotten how to do Lapp work. But there was nothing for them to do but to try and do the work they had learnt in their youth, for they could remember that the quickest. And their families helped them, they gave them a little clothes and food, until they began to work and earn something. And some of them got married. And the priest became such a good friend to Thuuri that he wished to be god-father to his son, and he was. And Pastor Hvoslef was god-father to me, Johan Turi, who write this. (Johan Turi: 232)

Errorists and terrorists

De botkejedje suonaid
mat čatne du skirriide

So they pulled up the sinews
that tied you to the mountain birch

Du varrasuonaid čuhppe
du jurdagiid

They cut your veins
your thoughts

Du oaivi
sáddejedje Kristianiai

Your head
they sent off to Kristiania

Duottarjogažat
báhce vuhtodit
du ráhkkása morraša

The fell's small rivers
would rock
your love's sorrow

Du moraš
Jáhkoš Ásllat
bázii árbin
maŋisbohttiide
(Risten Sokki: 132)

Your sorrow
Jáhkoš Ásllat
was left as heritage
to your heirs
(My translation)

Cokkan
dološ gávtti
Guovdageainnu áiggis
muittán
bájascuoččileami
sin vuostá geat
suoládedje
čevlli, oskku
rivvedje
namaid
rivttes namaid
Áslaga ja Monssa oivviid
Sáddejedje
observatoriumai

I put on
an old gákti
from the Guovdageaidnu days
and remember
the uprising
against those who
stole
our dignity, religion
took
our names
the real names
the heads of Ásllat and Monsa
Which were sent to
the observatory

Šlivgen
Cusku lukha
ja Cree álbmoga
friddjavuođa ránu

Throw over a poncho
from Cusku
and the freedom blanket
of the Cree people

Lea	It's
lossat	hard
vázzit	to go
(Marry Áilonieida Somby: 87)	(My translation)

Doalvvuhan váimmu	Draws my heart
duohkot deike	here there
Govččadan aškasiiguin	Covers up with ice

Balan ákšus	I fear the axe
mii	that
botke suonaid	cuts sinews
ludde jienaid	crushes ice
(Risten Sokki: 124)	(My translation)

– My father remembered the Kautokeino riot quite well. No one ever said that we children would be beheaded. But it was in the air. It was much better to keep silent. It was dignified to keep silent. It is embedded in my Sami attitude to life, and it was turned into a positive quality of life. But in reality the silence was there as a substitute for being choked, beheaded or killed in other ways. Then one might be petty where one felt safe, i.e. among one's own. Man has an instinct for survival. Therefore it is important to keep silent. When injustice happens I learnt that you must keep silent. And when you turn it upside down, the silence becomes positive. To keep silent is much more dignified, they said. Then we learned to be silent. You must not chatter. I heard this many times in my childhood. It is better to be secretive. But this is a heavy heritage to carry. I lived many years to understand this. (Rauni Magga Lukkari 1999: 11)

Njavvi

– *In its apparent straightforward flow toward the sea, the river meanders and digresses, constantly changing its rhythm and speed. The rhythm changes according to and depends on its physical features, seasons as well as human activities. Swimming upstream, the salmon also has its rhythm, stopping and resting behind big rocks and in deep pools. There are countless tributaries that feed into the river, making the river stretch far away from the main current. The movement of the stream appears linear yet its various currents, rapids and eddies make it also circular. This fluid and shifting nature of the river defies fixed, clear-cut boundaries or divisions. Such ambiguity is the strength of the river – it cannot be reduced to characteristics of binary oppositions. Literally, the river, both as an actual river and as a concept-metaphor, requires us to look beyond the surface in order to see its various contexts and circumstances. (Jovvna-Jon-Ånne-Kirstte Rávdná 2004: 26)*

Is there room for Sámi epistemology in Academy?¹⁴

– I remember one occasion when fishing with grandpa not far from here. I was five or six years old, I was not even at school yet, I was so small. I had been whining that they wake me up to collect the nets. I wanted to go fishing with them. I remember well grandfather's story why whitefish and lax live in different places. It was also to teach how one has to catch whitefish and lax. Grandpa never told those kinds of stories among men. Or when guests dropped by for coffee when passing by he did not tell these kinds of stories. Usually they told us what had happened during reindeer herding trips. We were not allowed to tell ghost stories at home because our grandma was so religious. We went elsewhere to listen to them. Nor were we allowed to talk about Sami folktale creatures at home but when we went with grandpa away from home and grandma was not close by that's when I always asked: "what is a staalo, what is this and that?" Grandpa might well

¹⁴ This part was originally called "Is there room for Sámi epistemology within academic knowledge production?" Given as a key-note speech at the University of Tromsø international conference "Challenging Situatedness: Gender, Culture and the Production of Knowledge", it really marks my point of departure. (Juhu Niilasa Risten 2002a) Later, it was to be printed as "To look from a fell; where do I come from?" in Engelstad and Gerrard (eds.) *Challenging Situatedness: Gender, Culture and the production of Knowledge*. (Juhu Niilasa Risten 2005a)

tell me some stories. Usually he did not answer directly to my direct questions but told a story instead...

Once we went fishing with grandpa behind those fells. When we had reached the fells grandpa said, “look carefully how the hills look from this side so you will recognize them when you are approaching them again from this side.” Then he said, “this fell is like a person’s life in general: when you come across a thing in life you have to recognize it as being the very same thing from many directions, even though it looks quite different from another direction”... whenever I used to be somewhere with my grandfather he would tell me: “so and so is your relative through your mother, the other one through your father.” Then I asked grandfather, “What do you think I will do with all this vast knowledge about my relatives?” Grandpa answered that you need it for yourself. “When you know your own hand, you will know yourself,” was his allegory. “This hand represents your life, you yourself are the thumb, the index finger is your parents, the middle finger is your grandparents, you should know your whole family all the way up to your little finger so that you know what kind of a person you are, because you may inherit features from so far back.” I have experienced this to be true in myself, in my own life. This whole hand exists in us as different features. Sometimes Margetta is in me and I am in Margetta... I have experienced in myself many different people and the environment, which brought me up was full of conflict. I felt that I was quite a different person during the summer at home than I was at school during the winter. In a certain way I don’t experience myself as just one human being, I feel myself to be many people at once. The values that prevailed in the residential school created their own universality but when you go out to the river there exists different rules. When you walk onto the fells or into a meeting room you are again operating under different rules. We are not necessarily the same person in the fells as we are in a meeting. I think all of us have many different people in ourselves, all of us. Our whole extended family is represented in all of us. In a certain way I feel that in many circumstances I am now my mother, now I resemble my grandfather or my cousin or somebody else. (Kerttu Vuolab 1998: 52, 58)

Kerttu Vuolab is an author and a relative of mine, I feel she is in me; her story is within me, and now in you. I can picture the little girl, hand in hand with her grandfather,

walking across the fells, fishing from a boat on the vast river. I can picture her as a girl, not just any girl: picture her, even though I never saw her. She comes from my father's river valley, and like her I spent my summers there, fishing, playing, walking on the fells, picking the berries. I know what she is talking about. I carry my people with me and I meet new ones every day – I know, or think I know, what she is talking about, Kerttu Vuolab the author, my relative. Maybe I resemble her. I, too, know the universality of school and the different rules of the meeting-room. Why can we not be the same person, speak the same language, in the meeting-room, in school, in science?

Kerttu Vuolab comes from the Finnish side of the border river, my father from the Norwegian (although the same) side of the flood Deatnu. The river curls and curves, and the fell stretches out above it. One has to know the environment to be able to move about in it. Here one could easily go astray. "One has to look at oneself, too, from many sides," Kerttu says. (1998: 61)

– We are often asked questions that we would not necessarily all of a sudden think about and ponder, on our own. Questions, which have been posed from many different directions, which you are able to think about in peace and quiet. To look from a fell; where do I come from? The mainstream asks us questions, on a daily basis. Very few are being asked among ordinary Finns, the rank and file "what is it about your life that makes you into a Finn?" Imagine if they were all of a sudden asked these kinds of questions, they have never been brought up to think about them. Many times in my life I have had to ponder what it is to be a Sami. I consider it to be a rich treasure. It is an enormous treasure that one does not have to accept everything that has been given from outside as such but that you can think about things on your own, without accepting the answers given by others, one can look from different directions at whatever is going on in there, what is going on in the east. And what is more, there is the vision to what existed in the past and what will exist in the future. Being a Sami I consider myself to be a very cosmopolitan being. (Kerttu Vuolab 1998: 61)

To be on the move, to glide

I leave
to arrive
go away
to be closer

To the space of your thoughts
to your heart
I crawl
into the heart

I journey
on the sea of time
follow
the tracks of the wind
(Áillohaš 1994)

Áillohaš' (the beloved Sámi artist and author, by many thought to be an *ofelaš* – a pathfinder) journey is a poetic one and, like Gáhti, he uses the 'backdoor' to the mind, into the innermost room, i.e. that of poetic storytelling. A man of the mountains, he sails into waters where the oral is at home and where the mind is floating freely, unconstructed, free of the written way. This way is evasive, it resists grasping and categorisation. Still, we might be able to follow him, to learn, to use our knowledge and skills creatively. The journey is a way of living. As Áillohaš puts it in his polemic postcard-book "Greetings from Lapland":

– Migrating with the reindeer has been an important factor in the development of Sami culture. The wandering life is a life of freedom. There are no chains binding us to the same place. New landscapes and new perspectives also liberate the mind and thoughts. There can be no doubt that mode of living also affects personality. It may be therapy...

Nomadism captivates me first and foremost through its philosophy. By being a part of Nature, Man shows respect for Nature. The fact that the Sami culture has extended reindeerherding more into a way of life than a means of living is undoubtedly bound up with this 'part-of-Nature' way of thinking. (Áillohaš 1983: 72)

According to this philosophy you travel, you are situated within travel itself. The perspective is constantly changing, so the angle is never the same and what is true and valid travels, too, with context. No fixed point of focalisation means a freedom from the simplification of dualisms. To look from a fell; where do I come from? Always moving (or wanting to move) means always crossing gaps or open cracks of some sort, or rather: finding a way around them, given time. And if you are in the know, you read the landscape and know where to cross. You recognize it as being the very same fell, even though it looks quite different from another direction. You remember all the times before when you had to cross similar divides. You remember the words of your forebears; they are bodily inscribed over the years, over the centuries. You know your hand and you know who you are. And you know it is not impossible: somewhere here there is a way through, somewhere there is a connection. Given time and skill you might even help to remove the stem that divides different worlds and see the crack gone by the power of your mind; what you believe to be possible made possible simply by believing.

I journey on the sea of time. In the old days, the *siida* council would seek unanimity in verdicts given, by the use of time. Given time, any matter can be agreed upon, if one believes that everything is connected. The *siida* council would sit talking for days in order to reach an understanding, sometimes weeks, if the matter was grave enough. This is mediation, and it requires a firm belief in the Word; in communication between people, and in the interdependence of all things. It requires flexibility in the minds of the people involved, as they need to be able to see things from different perspectives, to cross the landscapes of the mind and resist from creating dualisms, unnecessary gaps and divides. Diversions would be vital in such a scenario; in order to see the issue in question from different sides, you would have to move in the landscape. To look from a Fell you can see the mountain from many different angles as long as you're mobile, flexible.

– Sedentary life may to many nomads consist of hopeless passivity and fruitless clock-adherence, in contradistinction to a free life in the mountains or in the "siida". The explicit rhythm and regularity of many phenomena in sedentary culture grow from the necessities of the interwoven networks and keenly tuned mechanisms of society and do not, to the same extent as nomadism pay attention to weather, snow conditions, time of year and pasture conditions. In reality, nomadic life is also time-regulated but in a much more unpredictable way than sedentary life. This is perhaps only a minor difference between nomadism and sedentarism. Since nomadism consists of herding domesticated animals – in the Sami sense reindeer – the herd... constitutes the main reference point for nomadic theory, economy, and everyday life. In sedentary culture, the farm, school, shop, office or factory; with their on the minute routines and periodical activity, may seem as almost automatic devices from the nomad's point of view. (Alf Isak Keskitalo 1996: 52)

– Mountain nomadism is an example of a flexible adjustment to the landscape, i.e. its environment. Formerly, the mountain nomad was supreme in his relationship to his environment. In the spring, with the change from winter migration to summer migration, one thing in particular called for an active and methodical adjustment to the landscape and what was happening in it: the thawing of the snow and the gradual appearance of bigger and bigger patches of bare ground. Flexibility was possible thanks to the equipment, which was perfect of its kind: the boat-sled, the pack-frame, the light portable tent with its bow-shaped poles, and skis; these were the most important implements. Another essential requirement was a sufficient number of easily handled draught and pack reindeer, which enabled the Lapps to take with them all their necessities for a self-supporting family, both house and clothes and food. (Israel Ruong 1967a: 49)

– The high fells were the stronghold for many, in the old-times, and they are the stronghold for one and another even to this day. When the Lapp is afraid he goes to the fells, and then no one can find him. He has the art of making a hole in the snow, and creeping into it and covering up the opening, and it is quite warm. And he does this often when he is out on the fells and cannot reach the tents, when there is a snowstorm. And

when he is out watching the reindeer, then, too, he creeps into the snow when it is cold, but not right in, he thrusts his feet into the snow and then he is quite warm. (Johan Turi: 123)

My home is in my heart
it migrates with me

You know it brother
you understand sister
but what do I say to strangers
who spread out everywhere
how shall I answer their questions
that come from a different world
(Áillohaš 1996: 125)

– Another thing I’ve thought of, a value I hold as I was bred within the johttisámi community: it seems so hard to tie myself to one single place all that much. Now this is where I am, and this is where I’ll stay the rest of my life – ugh! It is like imprisonment, I cannot stand it. I have to know that we can trek to the coast. If I didn’t know this I don’t think that I would birget. That is the kind of adjustment I might not be able to make. But then suddenly we’re off, through the fells, and we go far away... We are there and where we are, that’s our home, as Áillohaš wrote in the poem “My home is in my heart”. The year-wise trek I grew up with also carries a challenge. We have to adjust to each new place we come to. Nature might be changed, there might be other people and we must adjust so that we may birget and be happy there. I think many Sámi have this challenge in their blood, they like to adjust to this setting and that, this job and that. (Ingor Ántte Ánte Mihkkal: 21; my translation)

– Mountain nomadism is an example of a flexible adjustment to the landscape, i.e. its environment. Formerly, the mountain nomad was supreme in his relationship to his

environment. In the spring, with the change from winter migration to summer migration, one thing in particular called for an active and methodical adjustment to the landscape and what was happening in it: the thawing of the snow and the gradual appearance of bigger and bigger patches of bare ground. Flexibility was possible thanks to the equipment, which was perfect of its kind: the boat-sled, the pack-frame, the light portable tent with its bow-shaped poles, and skis; these were the most important implements. Another essential requirement was a sufficient number of easily handled draught and pack reindeer, which enabled the Lapps to take with them all their necessities for a self-supporting family, both house and clothes and food. (Israel Ruong 1967a: 49)

How can I explain
that I cannot live in just one place
and still live
when I live
among all these tundras
You are standing in my bed
my privy is behind the bushes
the sun is my lamp
the lake my wash bowl

How can I explain
that it moves with me
How can I explain
that others live there too
my brothers and sisters

What shall I say brother
what shall I say sister
(Áillohaš 1996: 122)

Because metamorphosis is possible

– There was a noaidi who would roam around as wolf for a long time. Later she told how it was the most wretched thing to be running as a wolf: she had to endure starvation for a long while, and cold. Sometimes a wolf will spot reindeer running on the other side of the valley, so it hurries there. When it gets to the other side they're not reindeer, only stones. A reindeer destined to be eaten by a wolf shines like a light to the wolf. And naturally the wolf will pursue it until it gets it. (Isak Persen Saba: 408; my translation) ¹⁵

Tales as such more often than not resist interpretation: how can you grasp with the rationale that, which exceeds it? Stories often seem enigmas, something will always be lacking when interpreting, analyzing. Categories flux, they are categories no more, since there are no fixed categories without the possibility of border-crossing. The world of 'myth' is not categorically distinct from the world as experienced by human beings in everyday life. As long as it's possible to be *guovtti ilmmi gaskkas*, and as long as metamorphosis is possible, 'reality' is not to be relied on. You should always question your surroundings, you should learn that early on. Interpretation is at the core of human life, it is always already embedded in language, knowledge, literature. Storytelling itself is evasive and breaks away from genre, stories resist interpretation and will not be fixed within categories. When 'magic' is indeed present in the world, everything is set in this light and it ceases to exist as such. And, for as long as mobility occupies an advanced status in Sámi aesthetics, it both defies metaphors and defines them in an impossible paradox. Just as the mind is always open to adjust to new settings, the love of mobility presses on categories as well as genres. The paradoxical logic of boundaries shows itself in glimpses, evasive to the senses.

The traditional Sámi world is a hybrid place, a land inhabited by various creatures, alive in histories and peoples' beliefs. Rather than the hiding of culturally-based values in scientific claims, one could think of objectivity as something more in line with the

¹⁵ In 1906, the sexton Isak Saba of Unjárga was elected as the first Sámi member of the (Norwegian) Parliament, and in 1909 he was elected once more, this time as a representative of the Social Democrats. Isak Saba also wrote the text to "Sámi soga lávlla", which the Sami Conference made the Sámi national anthem in 1986.

‘contract’ established between every author of fiction and his or her readers. This has to do with the fictional universe in question, which, supposedly, should not be altered, once established. For instance, shapeshifting is to be expected in fantasy fiction, but should not appear in WW II biographies. Metaphors are a product of a certain sphere of rationality, as it unites language with image. And, of course, metaphors are an essential part of the standard concept of literature. What we often tend to forget are the more ontological, or what’s often called ‘cultural’ side of metaphors: they exist within contexts and could possibly mean next to nothing outside of their ‘normal’ system of reference, having much the same relation as signifier to signified, which reveals the arbitrary nature of language. Literatures, or rather, cultures without a distinct division between the ‘real’ and the ‘unreal’ are bound to be based on other kinds of metaphors and ironies than those that do operate with such schisms.

In most of the critical uses of the term ‘irony’ there remains the root sense of dissembling or hiding what is actually the case; not, however, in order to deceive, but to achieve special rhetorical or artistic effects. In this we might recognize the noaidi and the coyote – both true tricksters of indigenality – as well as the Socratic irony. Relating irony to cultural knowledge, or better still world-view, is a crucial task here in a matter of mediation: literature (in its broadest sense) as mediation, and the enormous effort to bridge gaps as wide as those of different minds. The question of culture and cultural skills or understanding apply to alienation, which easily occur when rules change so that you no longer know them; this is what happens when you cross (cultural) borders. The (Western) cultural codes and world-view which are immanent in literary criticism cannot be ignored as long as they prevail in any reading of a text. Nor can we ignore the fact that their high status restricts Other, ‘lesser’ views, values and codes from entering the domain of literary criticism. Culture is not literature, but still it defines and reduces literature’s mode d’emploi, its agenda, as long as we are situated within the inherited monopoly of colonial discourse.

The training of children in irony called nárrideapmi stands out as part of the communication skills expected of people traditionally, and until recently (though varying

from region to region). In a world where metamorphosis is possible, where stones might be holy and dead people come to life, scepticism goes very deep. In a 'magical' world, scepticism becomes essential for survival and contextualizing is crucial. (Needless to say, 'magic' is not longer to be considered magic within a universe, where it's all natural and normal.)

Irony as such is an important part of Sámi communication and literature, as a principle of structure, underlining the pressure or charging of context upon its parts, and thus a distortion of meaning. Terms are reliant on the context to be understood, and the cultural context of words is often underestimated. The use of irony may be very complex and carries an implicit compliment to the intelligence of readers, who are invited to associate themselves with the author and the knowing minority who are not taken in by the ostensible meaning. Following the intricate and shifting maneuvers of great ironists is an ultimate test of skill in reading between the lines.

This is not to say that an understanding of irony necessarily presupposes original meaning, a 'hidden truth' behind it all. Such a line of thought would eventually favour one cultural context over another. Pursued to its logical extreme, nothing but nothingness itself is the fruit of total relativism. Irony is a troublesome category as it points to the flux of reason. What happens if irony and paradox are at the core of a society's common ground, if they indeed partake in the structuring of ontology itself? In my view, this is the case when it comes to Sámi ontology. (I haven't been able to find any references here, probably since this is not ground that has been covered in an academic – or any written – context). In addition, there is an element of unpredictability that is crucial to the world-view, to storytelling, and to this thesis. So what mode are we to pursue in order to grasp such a notion?

As it is indeed based on (cultural) knowledge, the skill in reading between the lines may take a different course in this case, one, which is more in line with ways of understanding art, for instance. The intricate and shifting manoeuvres of certain (oral) texts presuppose a reading between the lines, since the banality of saying it straight out in the open proves

an impossibility when raised within a culture where irony and different metaphorical and literary skills play such a vital role in communication. In such contexts as the Sámi, where poetic language has a high status in ‘ordinary parlance’, irony takes the form of a structural principle and scepticism goes very deep, to the extent that it becomes essential for survival and contextualizing is crucial.

In Sámi language and literature the language of poetry easily becomes the language of paradox. Paradox is immanent in storytelling and the different forms of paradox may in themselves call for lengthy theses. Binary oppositions are falsified by the presence of paradox as it hints at a third option, one that is neither/nor, either/or, one that is all in one, and a negation as well as a confirmation: ironic to its core, evasive and undefinable, it resists reason.

Through alienation, that which is known becomes unfamiliar and teaches us to see things differently; through estrangement we see things anew. In addition, we learn something about language, as the difference (or *différance*) between the naming and the named becomes apparent in this shift of position, when you see that which you know (or thought you knew) from another angle, and new meaning arises. We may even marvel in doing this – it is a marvel, seeing something for the first time, like a child. Such knowledge is poetic in its foundation, alienation is at the root of the poetic. The poetic reader searches for truth in spheres other than that of the so-called rational. Through the misty dampness of our foggy minds we seek knowledge from within, from that which we already know. Hidden within our biases, between the poles of binaries, lies the truth of *différences* in this, which truly is a third space.

Here, one might argue the need for new notions of the poetic; of literature. Heavily based in what is written, poetry and literature as terms seem – paradoxically – easily to exclude that which is oral. If there are biases (or binaries) such as the Written over Oral, Literacy over Orality, they reflect themselves, and seem rooted, in science. If orality is to have a proper place within science, science needs to reflect the oral in a less binary way. A shift needs to take place; the oral must be appropriated into Academy in order to render it

appropriate in this context. In attempting this, there's the poetic tool of alienation (often called *ostranjenje*), which breaks biases and binaries, and changes minds. This mode of understanding is much closer to the orally organized mind.

Indirect ways

What can you really know? Are there definite answers to difficult questions? In Sámi, there are no particular words for 'yes' or 'no'. The Norwegian-North Sámi dictionary lists the Norwegian 'ja' for 'yes', whereas 'no' isn't even listed in the dictionary (which is compiled by Sámi people). It could be considered improper to ask questions directly, other than in the case of children. The answer given might be in the form of a riddle: a story where the metaphoric content needs to be dissolved, interpreted. This praxis relies on the immanence of literature, containing both information and critique at the same time. An established custom, this has until recently been a both powerful and poetic part of the Sámi ordering and expression of reality.

Through *nárrideapmi*, children are taught irony – they are taught early on in life to question their surroundings, to question context. *Nárrideapmi* has to be learned early on. Usually performed in a relationship between people who know each other, it is done by the older towards the younger. The relation is a more distant one than with the mother, who is not supposed to apply this tradition, since the mother is closer, with no level of distance between. Only when the child is older can the mother use *nárrideapmi*, and then balance it so that she does not disturb the child's inner balance and dignity. Traditionally a crucial part of the Sámi upbringing, *nárrideapmi* proves an example of the skills of interpretation needed to prepare the child for life by certain means of ordering and expressions of reality. For instance, when an adult says something that is both funny and wrong at the same time, nevertheless it might be slightly right as well, and positively ironic. A child trained in *nárrideapmi* will look for clues and context and assess the facial expression of the adult – is there a hint of a glimmer in the eyes? Is it true or is it perhaps a joke? Early on one learns to interpret, to contextualize, to be sceptical. The skill in reading between the lines affects communication, as children learn to value the use of intricate and shifting manoeuvres in poetic language.

– Sámi upbringing is rich in indirect ways of being and methods that support the... tradition of guiding without force, a more egalitarian status of (children to) adults, fewer confrontations and less conflict between adults and children. Since the methods aren't direct nor openly directive there is less need for uprising or rebellion. (Asta Balto 2003: 157; my translation)

– We were not allowed to tell ghost stories at home because our grandma was so religious. We went elsewhere to listen to them. Nor were we allowed to talk about Sami folk tale creatures at home but when we went with grandpa away from home and grandma was not close by that's when I always asked: "what is a staalo, what is this and that?" Grandpa might well tell me some stories. Usually he did not answer directly to my direct questions but told a story instead. (Kerttu Vuolab 1998: 52)

–Storytelling is used as an educational tool. Let me make this indirect method more explicit, since it is used extensively, and quite systematically, in child-raising and the transference of knowledge between the generations. The role of storytelling in cultural transmission is a characteristic shared by the Sámi with many indigenous peoples. (Asta Balto 1997: 92/100; my translation)

– (P)ractices such as indirect, non-confrontational methods of control, and a stricter parental attitude to children's outburst of aggression or jealousy, are congruent with the stronger emphasis on in-group harmony that is characteristic of collective cultures. However, it is possible that these latter traits (sensitivity towards others' feelings, non-aggressiveness, and the importance placed on group harmony) arose from the strong value placed on genuine personal autonomy; i.e., non-intrusiveness and the principle of the inviolate integrity of the individual. (Anne Cecilie Jávo 2003: 48)

– Life on the dwelling-site was completely different from life in daycare. The greatest difference lay in the fact that the children were not looked after or activated by adults. They looked after themselves, they had no routines to restrict their days, they got up when they wanted, ate when they were hungry and chose for themselves whether they

wanted outside clothes on or to go cold. “Gal jávoheapme oahpaha”, as the Sámi saying goes, meaning that the silent one, who does not nag, will teach the children how to dress properly. (Asta Balto 2003: 156; my translation)

– Sámi culture is or has to this day been an oral culture. Knowledge is preserved in the shape of terminology connected to work and the upkeep of life. Traditional terminology contains technical terms and specialized expressions. The transmission of knowledge takes place gradually when growing up; the practical work and explanations are interrelated. Stories are often an essential part of transmitting and developing concepts and associations. As the transmission of knowledge is not bound to theoretical explanations supported by writing it takes more time, but then again it is closely connected to personal experience. (Juhu Niillas 1998: 36; my translation)

– Through nárrideapmi, which I characterize as a kind of teasing or playful way of being together, young people learn to master social contexts... This pattern of being together helps to develop humour, learning to separate jokes from more serious matters and teaching self-irony. Nárrideapmi tests the feelings and those parts of us that we like to keep to ourselves. Nárrideapmi can affect every side of a person. (Asta Balto 2003: 160; my translation)

– The language teems with diminutives which are used to express human nearness, kindness, intimacy and, in the case of children, encouragement. Diminutive forms with possessive suffix are usual to express love and affection between children and parents, between husband and wife and between friends. (Israel Ruong 1967a: 44)

The bridge that leads to understanding

Terms are essential to any understanding; to any way of viewing the world; to any interpretation.¹⁶ Words and terms are the material of which the notion is to be

¹⁶ We take words for granted in our everyday life and work. Words and terms that are considered to be of high status within our own cultural context tend to be looked up and learned when first encountered. Words, terms and concepts belonging to languages considered less valuable, on the other hand, might seem clichés without substantial meaning, since we are indeed ignorant: lacking the necessary knowledge needed

materialized into being: enunciated. Words as such determine world-view just as much as they rely on it: words and world-view are interrelated. Thus, to relate is to navigate somehow, to map the world or at least the landscapes wherein you roam. Languages and their use reveal how people perceive the world. Sámeigiella is a highly material, ávnnaslaš, or practically oriented language.

– Take language: it is the bridge that leads to an understanding, of life and ways of managing; of nature, from which everyone originates. The adaptation of language and words in order to understand life, where people are – this is experience. Language is one thing: you also have to look at the practical use of language and words. In this sense, Sámi can be hard to learn as it is often tightly tied to practical work. I remember once, it was so funny, we were at the school where I now work, the Reindeer Herder School, and we had invited an old reindeer herder to come and tell us about the castration of reindeer. He came, that old man, he was more than seventy years old, he came there, and said: – Well, there’s nothing to tell about here, there’s nothing here. His view was, of course, that there was nothing that tied itself to language. There was nothing but empty tables and chairs, this was not enough. So I went to fetch some antlers, and said: – Isn’t this something you could start with? – Well yes it is, bring it on. And then there was talk about this to begin with; the horn. And so the talk spread out and we came to our topic of castration. (Ingor Ántte Ánte Mihkkal: 17; my translation)

in order to understand. They offer no immediate meaning; we are unable to grasp their connotation fully, since we are outside their cultural context. One might also say that terms and concepts – however well translated – prove inadequate outside their own cultural context, but then again this is the essence of language: it exists within (cultural) frames; it needs to be learnt; it must be interpreted.

Sometimes I forget words. I know them and their meaning well enough, but they seem to vanish from my head for short periods of time. Like now, I forgot the word ----- (blank) and I know that all I have to do is look it up elsewhere in this text, because it is definitely there somewhere and it is in me, too, as some sort of bodily incorporated experience, according to my own claims, anyway. (Juhu Niilasa Risten 1999:64) The word is *colonial* (there, I remembered). It just felt extraordinary to forget such a word, and it occurred to me that if (although highly unlikely) it was to stay forgotten the whole concept simply would mean nothing to me and I would forget everything I had ever read or learned about the subject, everything I might feel I’ve lost or learned because of it. Some sense of freedom from losing, I guess. And then it occurred to me that many people do live like that, with the word *colonial* meaning nothing to them: no significance or importance in the word, no pain or even consciousness connected to it. No cuts or scars from it, in no way does it define you as a human being of this world, not even partly. So strange to forget such a word, if only for a brief second. For a brief second it was no part of my vocabulary, only a vague memory of its impact lingered on in the shadows of my mind. Free of sorts, blank -----

– One can't think of notions and concepts without the words, which they are attached to. Experience, in general, will be reported in terms of notions and concepts, the contents of words. The same goes for reporting activities: they need words as well. Finally, the world finds its expression in language. (Pekka Sammallahti: 128)

– Sami is a verbal language, both in the sense that it is an oral language and that it, as a vehicle of communication, focuses on the verb, on action. Because it is possible to change a word's meaning and focus by adding an ending to its stem, the language provides possibilities for an almost infinite number of variations. (Harald Gaski 1997: 14)

– Naturally, the language also reflects social conditions, in which the family plays a very big part. Lappish is very rich in words for kinship. Relationship by marriage is expressed in a much more specialized way than, for instances, in Swedish. The relationship between the children's and parent's generation has also special terms which point back to an earlier period when the family as a whole was very important... As regards time, the verb can express for instance that which happens once (momentary event), that which happens repeatedly (iterative event), that which happens with a certain passing of time (duration), that which implies a change (mutation) and that which implies continuity. With verbs and pronouns, in the matter of number there is not only singular and plural but also dual. Negation is expressed with the aid of a special negative verb, which is inflected. If the language is therefore unusually rich in its expressions for concrete conditions it is, like other peasant languages, poor in words for abstract concepts. (Israel Ruong 1967a: 44)

– What is it, then, that makes Sami language unique? It is, of course, 'the language of the heart' to those for whom it is a mother tongue, but it is also one of the most developed languages in the world when it comes to describing arctic nature and conditions of life in the North. Sami descriptions of landscape can function as maps, in which are incorporated topography, geography and information as to which routes are best to take. (Harald Gaski 1997: 13)

– In the Sámi dialects there is a particular abundance of and precision to concepts relating to hunting and gathering, reindeer, salmon (and formerly species of seal), snow and ice, and topography. Some of this vocabulary belongs to the older parts of the language, as do some place-names that have no parallels in related languages. (Juhu Niillas 1998: 36; my translation)

Duodáštallan: stories' bloodline to country

– Throughout the nineteenth century, the Norwegian state intensified its assimilation policies and Sámi place-names became part of these policies. The policies were part of a Norwegian nationalist policy, with no room for multiculturalism or multilingualism. In those days, such concepts were quite alien to governments. (Kaisa Rautio Helander 2004: 81; my translation)

– Place-names are a vital proof of the Sámi use of and presence in the landscape; in a way they are verbal signs, markers in the Sámi landscape. It comes as no surprise, therefore, that the use of Sámi place-names has caused clear-cut political discussions. During the harshest period of assimilation, governments aimed to erase Sámi cultural relics such as these. (Juhu Niillas 1998: 37; my translation)

– And as still greater proof (than Sámi place names) that the Lapps had lived for long, long ages in the same place is the pits to be found in the earth everywhere where the Lapps have been. These pits were their homes, they dug pits like wild beasts. And the greatest number of these pits are to be found on the sea-coast, and on the banks of lakes and rivers, and in those places where the animals roads pass, such as points where the great clefts in the fell sides meet, and on tracks between lakes. (Johan Turi: 20)

Numerous stories' bloodline to country, duodáštallan, is another warp in my method.¹⁷ Everything that happens must take *place*, and we saw many bloodlines to country in

¹⁷ The basis is the noun *duodáštus*: evidence, testimony, confirmation; character, testimonial; receipt (Konrad Nielsen I: 585), as well as the verb *duodáštít*, to testify, bear witness, confirm; pronounce (absolution) (Konrad Nielsen I: 585). The ending *-štallan* is frequentative, adding a repetitive meaning to the noun.

Gævnjis, where people remembered their homeland's stories from the times in hiding from crooks and tjuvrieh. Stories are – like place-names; archaeological findings; sacred sites; and a history of industrial use of land (such as hunting and gathering) – potential proof of land-rights, and the people who tell (of) them are often unsummoned witnesses, duodašteaddjis. In order to apply this, yet another agenda of literature, in the fight for land-rights, we should start telling these stories. A witness is believed because he points beyond himself, to what he represents.

Guovtti ilmmi gaskkas

– The many borders of Sámi research and 'guovtti ilmmi gaskkas' adhere to an old Sámi strategy, which in post-colonial theory is called shuttling, *suhkkolastin* (rowing) between different perspectives. (Veli-Pekka Lehtola 2005: 2, my translation)

– Once, in his childhood days, he had experienced something that came to mind now: his foster brother Heandarát was ill and lay in bed, sweating with fever, hallucinating and talking nonsense. Niillas would sit and watch, and had seen a similar look, like a light flickering in the wind. Sometimes the light seemed to die, then it flickered again, fluttered for a while, shone – but again became as if it wanted to die. The foster mother got advice from an old woman who knew about these things. She came with a pinch tied in the corner of her scarf, they were herbs, she said. And then she boiled it, and said that when Heandarát had drunk the concoction, he would no longer be *guovtti áimmu gaskkas*, but go to either one of the conditions. Niillas had been eager to see how it turned out. He had seen Heandarát swallow the concoction – and the excitement rose as the talking declined. Now – now – Heandarát would soon go either here or beyond. And just as he sat there waiting for what came next, watching the sweaty face hot with fever and the still fluttering eyes, he became aware of something that tied Heandarát's look to a light that, after flickering and 'fighting' the wind, is suddenly moved to a place of total silence. It changes from the trivial and restless, calmly straightens itself, grows and shines. Heandarát was normal again, hallucinated no more, ended up *here* after all – luckily. (Lars Stærk: 158; my translation)

– When an illness is caused by strong spiritual forces, a *noaidi* is consulted. A *noaidi*, or Sami shaman, is a person who has received a spiritual mandate to heal and who is given the spiritual information to go with it. The Sami believe that every person has at least two souls, a body-soul and a free-soul. When a person is asleep or in a trance, the free-soul wanders. It can travel to *jápma-aimo* (the lower world) and be unable to return home. The person hallucinates or goes into a coma. Loss of the free-soul is serious and can lead to death. The *noaidi* who is consulted goes into a deep trance and is guided by his or her guardian and helping spirits. The free-soul of the sick person is found and retrieved. (Elina Helander 1995: 7)

– It may be then that the Western Sámi spoke of that which comes after death as *ájmuo* or *nubbien ájmuo*, "the other condition" or "the other world". *Ájmuo* also means "state of mind" and in the former material, orally, the realm of the dead is often called only *ájmuo*. (Louise Bäckman 1975: 85, my translation)

– In the world traditionally known by the Sámi people, there are at least three layers of the world: (1) the realm of the heavenly deities, (2) the middle (human-animal) realm and (3), the realm of the dead. The drums found in Finland bear witness to the belief of a three-tiered world. According to the Sámi way of seeing, these realms are filled with life and spirit. A *noaidi* knows and parttakes in all these realms. In special occasions, using controlled ecstasy, he or she fetches information from these realms for the public good. (Elina Helander 2004b: 556)

– The main responsibility of the healer *noaidi* is to heal illnesses caused by the loss of a human's soul, and illnesses occurred as a result of the so-called *noaidi* arrows sent by a person in evil intent... In Skolt and Kildin Sámi *noaidi* arrows are called *njull* (Kld.) and *nuoll* (Sk.) One believed such arrows to be capable of striking animals as well as humans. The Skolt Sámi's notion of *noaidi* arrows are the most well-known: *nuolaid lue'stted* "to send *noaidi* arrows". The verb *koovštoov vad* (Sk.) has, in addition to the main connotation "to become ill", preserved the meaning "to receive a *noaidi*'s arrow". With the aid of shaman undertaking, the *noaidi* had to decide who sent the arrows and then

return them. For this purpose the Sámi of Notozero would give the noaidi a cloth and a silver coin. (Jelena Sergejeva 1997: 30; my translation)

– The *noaidi* (shamans) are healers, knowers, seers, and prophets. They are keepers of traditions, and the leaders of ceremonies. They are the otherworld travelers, protectors of souls. They communicate with gods and spirits. *Noaidi* may bewitch, turn back evil, change the weather, and stop the winds. (Elina Helander 2004a: 13)

– The noaidi would tie the coin in the cloth and put it under his head when going to sleep. In his dreams the noaidi would recognize the person who'd sent the noaidi arrow. Then one would present the noaidi with cloth and coins once more, and by the aid of this he could return the arrows... even today one hears old Skolt Sámi now living in Finland tell of people skilled in noaidi arrows – *njulltie'tti* (Sk.) – who can chase noaidi arrows out of the body by the use of massage. (Jelena Sergejeva 1997: 30; my translation)

– Shamanism was demonized when world religions grew forth. It was banished altogether during the time when political ideologies assumed power. What once was the great cultural science, with its symbols and rituals keeping the mind sane and society together, was thrown by hand on the garbage dump of history. This did not only create a break-down in the inner world, but the whole order of society collapsed. Through such historical events, shamanism has gone from being a central point to become a peripheral province of the spiritual heritage of humanity. (Ailo Gaup: 24)

– The person who had full insight and knowledge of the drum and the mystical world of its symbols was the noaidi. Only he could understand all the signs painted on the drum-skin, and only he could master the power that existed in the body of the drum. The drum gave him the ability to travel, independent of time and space. There were few people who could enter a state of trance. During a long and often painful period of learning they had gained the knowledge needed to summon spirits for help and protection. The helping-spirits were animals with whose assistance the noaidi could make his soul journeys, and the protective-spirits were dead relatives who could aid him with advice. It was from the

elders that he learned later how to use the drum. He could use it to help his community in times of crisis, but he could also use it for his own purposes, both good and bad. (Anna Westerman and John E. Utsi: 12-13)

de doidilan kokkákoláin buot	so I wash down with Coke
máhtu dieđu viisodaga ja balu	knowledge science wisdom and fear
njiellalan visot	swallow it all
dat njálgga bátnevuiddas nai	even the sweet toothpaste
geasuha mu dobbelii ja dobbelii	takes me further and further away
fuomásgeahhta doidilan eret	mindlessly I wash out
eallima buoremus oasiid nai	even the sweet parts of life
fuomásgeahhta	mindlessly
guovtti ilmme gaskkas	between two worlds
(Inghilda Tapio: 108	my translation)

Thoughts that reach space

In this world of ours we navigate by signs, points of reference. Trying to decipher life and all the apparent chaos of the world, we need codes. We have inherited ever so many different kinds of languages; all carry the wisdom and world-view of our forebears. Some apply mainly to our visual senses, some more to our audiotive sense; all of them have to be decoded, and in so doing we tend to use senses we're not even aware of. We need terms by which to grasp meaning and recognize signs, signs we recognize as significant. Some such signs are diiddat. Other signs, other languages, are to be found in the symbols on the hide of the drum: The three worlds in one, including mythical characters, in the traditional way of viewing the world they represent every aspect of life and the surroundings. One used a hammer and a ring to ask the drum when in doubt over crucial matters. The temporality of the drum, as depicted on the surface of the drum seems in fact closer to the present realities of natural science than that of the Western focus, which has been mainly on time, causing a splitting into lesser units: segregation, secularization,

specialization, science, self. As with most people living close to nature, the Sámi epistemology includes a notion of space more so than time: time as part of, and connected to, space. This notion of the space time continuum is evident in the holistic world view, where there really is no beginning, no end.

Although once burnt by missionaries the drum is still in use, albeit in a somewhat different way to that recorded by the missionaries, who called it the devil's tool. Still in use, as in works of art, for instance by the renowned Sámi artist Ándde Ivvár Ivvár – Iver Jáks-rohkki. Inga Ravna Eira, Ándde Ivvár Ivvár's niece the poet takes, in her own words, a cultural view of her uncle's art:

– Ándde Ivvár Ivvár uses the symbols of the drum in his duodji. He tries to interpret them and through this tells how people before us thought, and thus he tries to guide and offer advice. Through his duodji, Ándde Ivvár Ivvár is an ofelaš to his people. (Inga Ravna Eira 1998: 30; my translation)

– I liken myself to a noaidi. Not that I want to pass myself off as one but, in the same manner as the noaidi would, I try to reach beyond my daily physical presence. Aided by the drum, the noaidi reaches space. The noaidi would think beyond the thinking of people in general. I, too, try to go a bit further in order to make other people realize that my duodji is not only duodji, but that it symbolizes thoughts that reach space. (Ándde Ivvár Ivvár: 33; my translation)

A traveller of pain

– Even though I had long known that he could see and do remarkable things, I became very interested in what he told me. – I have seen that which lashes the boughs of the birch tree. That which sets the whole forest in motion, so that even the biggest trees quiver with pain. I could see those that did this, he said. There are not many of us that can see, he said. And this I tell only to you. His story was both frightening and unreal. Even though I often doubted the incredible things he said, his story was so full of life, sound and scent that I couldn't ask him to stop. – It is the first journey that is the worst, he said. I was so

terrified and weak. That's right, completely defenceless against all that I met on that journey. I was forced to pass dangerous and evil beings. In the kingdom of the dead I saw those who had lived here before; some of those meetings gladdened me, while others filled me with such terror that I was made completely powerless by fear and revulsion. – But all the time my guide was with me. I could always reach her, or feel her presence. And every time I sought her in my fear, she was there, urging me on. Reminding me that I could not return the way I had come. That I must go through all this. – Amongst all the horror there were also wonderful beings. Great, good powers who revealed themselves to my sight. When I tried to show my respect, they gave me the sign to continue. When I tried to get him to describe these great powers, he could not find the words. He could vividly describe all the horrible creatures he met in the most repellent detail, but the good ones were hard to paint in words.

He began to speak of icy rains, fires, rainbows, boiling pools in the ground. All this he had passed. With the help of his protector he had found the entrances, the doors to other worlds. – And, he said, in order to travel through fire one must be dead. The ability to feel pain and suffering is an obstacle. – So, for parts of my journey I was dead. With my protector's support my soul could travel in this new and strange cosmos. A world of unknown Rulers: the Rulers of the animals, of the reindeer calf, of the water, of the fat whitefish, of the leaves of the birch. They were all so great and powerful that I felt like a drifting snowflake in their presence. The most painful of all was to return to this world. Even though I was compelled, still parts of me wished to stay there. I was aware of all the pain that the return would cost me. – But, he said, that is my fate. My pains are yours, I carry them, gather them to me. Not because I want to, but because I have been chosen to do this. It is the great powers who selected me, and I must accept. I have no choice.

– And soon, when I begin my last journey, it will be you who shall take over all this. Even though I know you do not want to, I know that you, like me, have no choice. You have been chosen. Regardless of what you think, my drum will be your map to the other worlds. – You, too, will see the ones that rule the wind. Oh yes, he said, you will see the wind itself. But you have a long, painful way ahead of you. But when you have passed through all the ordeals, when you have made all the mistakes I made, and when you are considered worthy, you too will be able to talk with he who controls the winds. And

despite all the privations, all the loneliness and pain, so I expect you too will leave this world as happy with life as I am. (Anna Westerman and John E. Utsi: 16)

To me, the things told of here also apply to the scholar/writer/author/researcher condition.

As a scholar/writer/author/researcher the following could/would/should apply:

I have sensed the mover of all things, I have had an encounter with wisdom. I am one of the few to see and do remarkable things, – to remove the bottom between us.

Our stories should be filled with life, sound and scent; they could be frightening and unreal, incredible.

The first time is the worst, when you are weak and defenceless. You need a guide, someone you can trust to be there, alert the whole time.

It can be hard to find the words to tell of the good; to tell in a good way.

In attaining wisdom there is both good and bad. And there's madness. In the initiation of becoming a noaidi the rules of society no longer apply: there's the in-between madness when you are guovtti ilmmi gaskkas, in-between worlds.

The ability to feel pain and suffering is an obstacle.

One needs to be humble, a drifting snowflake in the presence of greater things.

I have been chosen to do this, I must accept it.

Noaidit made up the very system that was crushed by modern society. In the old days, noaidit were teachers and caretakers. To undo the process of homogenization and the forcing into boxed categories we need fools who carry out that work. (Kerttu Vuolab 1998: 59; paraphrased)

Ædno

– *And as still greater proof that the Lapps had lived for long, long ages in the same place is the pits to be found in the earth everywhere where the Lapps have been. These pits were their homes, they dug pits like wild beasts. And the greatest number of these pits are to be found on the sea-coast, and on the banks of lakes and rivers, and in those places where the animals roads pass, such as points where the great clefts in the fell sides meet, and on tracks between lakes. (Johan Turi: 20)*

Some stories are like barbs, like arrows: they won't let go, they stay in your mind. They float around in our innermost rooms like shadows in the dark. Are there meanings to these stories that reveal themselves directly? Are they well told? When we hear stories, read texts, there are many possible interpretations. We can choose to focus on formalities, how the story is constructed by the use of characters and different levels. We can focus on the content, and compare content to formalities. And we can focus on the new images made in our minds as we listen to or read a story.¹⁸

“The reindeer thief’s grave”¹⁹

– As a child I used to visit an old bachelor. His name was Uhca Piera and he would tell of this and that, old ghosts and such.

Once he told of an old woman at Čorgaš who had some reindeer herders. She had a herd of bucks that used to graze on a cape there, so they wouldn't be slaughtered unlawfully. She had a herder from Anár whose name was Stuorra Bánnán. Stuorra Bánnán was herding the flock of bucks there.

¹⁸ This essay was first written in Sámeigiella as “Skealmma gurpi” and published in Harald Gaski and John T. Solbakk (eds.) *Čállet Sámi Verddet. SFS 1992-2002. 10 jagi sámi fágateavsttaid ovddideamen. Sámi fágirjjálaš čálliid- ja jorgaleaddjiidsearvvi 10-jagi ávvučála.* (Juhu Niilasa Risten 2002b) Later, I presented it orally in Sámi at the Nordic Sámi Institute’s Seminar on landscapes in Kárášjohka. (Juhu Niilasa Risten 2002c) When the essay was to be printed in the seminar report, I revised and translated it into Norwegian and it appeared as “Røverbøra” in Lars Magne Andreassen (ed.) *Samiske landskapsstudier. Rapport fra et arbeidsseminar.* (Juhu Niilasa Risten 2004c)

¹⁹ The following story, “Boazosuollaga hávdi” is told by Sombán Ailu/Uhca Ásllat/Ásllat Somby-rohkki in Niillas A. Somby (Ed.) *Mu fearránat gopmiiguin*, Davvi Girji, Kárášjohka 1990.

The herd was livas, and he himself went to the riverbank to make some coffee. Then he spots three long feallá, reindeer thieves, obviously. Stuorra Bánnán throws himself into the brushwood and the feallát go towards the flock and start shooting the bucks.

The tame bucks were the ones to be shot. Stuorra Bánnán did not dare to reveal himself, for fear of being shot. It was bitter of course for Stuorra Bánnán to see that even goahtemuorgeassi was shot. They killed three bucks. They slaughtered them and headed off. The larger of them carried the goahtemuorgeassi, and when they passed by Stuorra Bánnán he shot the one with the goahtemuorgeassi on his back. The other two threw themselves down, loosened their burdens and took off. Stuorra Bánnán made a geađgeborá where he put the meat and even buried the man there. I asked Uhca Piera where is he now? He said he was probably still where Stuorra Bánnán had buried him. I didn't know whether to believe that or not.

Time passed and I grew up. We had moved across Čorgáš for many years now. Then once I came there to this place. It was autumn already and dark nights. The weather was nice when I came there. In this area the cloudberry ripen late. It was already golggotmánnu. There was a little marsh, and I sat down to pluck berries before the dark came.

I pulled loose a bundle of brush both for myself and for the fire, as I prepared to stay the night here. I had collected the herd, it was a little further from where I pulled the brush loose. A flat place without much of anything. Mostly scree.

By no means did I remember the máinnas told by that old man. I arranged a place to sleep. It was flat as a bed and almost two metres. I talked to myself and said: of course there might be a dead man here, but you can lie down there and I up here. Then I fell asleep. While sleeping I heard a person say: "Go away from my place!" I jumped up and thought: what is this? I had a torch which I used to light the area around me, but I saw nothing. I had a dog sleeping there and I wondered why it didn't hear anything. I was probably dreaming. I even checked to see if my body had gone to sleep. Then I crept under the fur once more.

Just when I was falling asleep, there was the sound of running and someone kicked me hard: “Go away immediately from my place!” Again I lit the torch and looked around me, and again there was nothing to be seen. I found it strange that I had started to dream about dead men. I turned over and said the Lord’s prayer out loud, hoping to sleep peacefully. Just when I had tucked in nicely under the fur there was a kick at my feet and so hard that I rolled over instantly. The next moment I was sitting up. It cried out of course, even louder: “Immediately, away from my place!” I grabbed the sack lying next to my head and headed off to the fireplace in fear of feeling a hand around my throat. I almost ran but thought I might perish there in the darkness in the scree if I took off. I considered heading for the branch river, but in the fear and darkness I worried I might even perish or lose my mind before reaching there.

I came to the fireplace further up, six seven metres away. Here I sat down for a while, then I grew angry and said out loud that I wanted the brush back. Then I collected myself and went for the brushwood. When I had taken the brush from the grave I also said: “You will not haunt me and I shall tell people where you are!”

I made some sort of bed by the fireplace and there I slept. In the morning when I woke up, the herd was so neatly gathered it was as if someone had collected it. I believed it to be the dead man whom Stuurra Bánnán buried in the old days.

Until now, I never got around to telling this story but it has haunted me sometimes. A couple of times I have seen a large, tall man with an enormous reindeer on his back, but he always falls and disappears. Once, he came here to my home, too. Me and Oiva were haydrying, and while we were drinking coffee here in the kitchen there was a knock on the door. I never got to say anything: he was already inside and had gone into the inner rooms. I knew who the man was and ran after him. He went to my bedroom and there he dissolved. (Uhca Ásllat/Ásllat Somby 1990: 18; my translation)

To read as a tale

The story about the reindeer thief’s grave can be read as a tale, as Sombán Áilu puts it – “the máinnas told by that old man”. If we are to follow this line of interpretation we might seek advice from Russian formalism, which was based on the studies of Russian

folk tales. Here, it is suggested that we look for helpers and opponents, intention and trials in order to find the ‘moral’ or meaning of the tale, given there is such a thing.

“The reindeer thief’s grave” is divided into three parts, according to the different plots. The protagonist or ‘hero’ of the first part is Stuorra Bánnán. He is alone on the cape, his only help is his weapon. It is quite obvious who the antagonists or opponents are in this part of the story: the three thieves who shoot the bucks. Stuorra Bánnán’s goal (his intention) seems to be herding the bucks; this is a herder’s work: to watch and protect reindeer. Stuorra Bánnán’s ordeal starts when the feallát come and start shooting the bucks. Should he dare to reveal himself, or will they shoot him, too? Three bucks they kill and slaughter before they leave. Stuorra Bánnán shoots and kills the one with the goahtemuorgeassi on his back. Then he makes the geađgebora, where he puts the meat and even buries the feallá.

The second part of the story is the longest, and here the storyteller is the protagonist, the ‘hero’. He has no human helpers, but help is to be found in the protagonist’s mind. Anger seems to be a helper of sorts: Ásllat dares to face his own fear the moment he bucks up to go and fetch the brushwood. The opponent of this the second part is the ghost, as well as the fear of ghosts, and the fear of losing his mind in the darkness. The goal seems to be to herd in peace, which means to oust the ghost and make sure that it doesn’t disturb people in the future. The trials consist of the voice, the ghost’s triple command, which both frightens him and orders him to leave.

The third part is short. Here, there seems to be no help apart from Oiva, his fellow worker, who might be said to represent the Sámi community: society, as the haydrying is a traditional Sámi undertaking, and as such repeats the reindeer herding of the two previous sections. Again, the goal is to live in peace. The opponent is the “large, tall man with an enormous reindeer on his back”. The trial is this man and the fear he creates.

All in all, fear seems to be a major obstacle, an immanent opponent throughout the story, and thus part of the trials. The fear of losing one's mind in the darkness. We can set up a simple model where this is evident.

	First part	Second part	Third part
Protagonist	Storra Bánnán	Ásllat	Ásllat
Helper	the weapon	anger	fellow man
Opponent	the feallát	the ghost	the man
Trials	the feallát, fear	the ghost, fear	the man, fear
Goal	to herd in peace	to herd in peace	to live in peace

It seems the tale changes level of some sort, there is a change, a movement from the first to the second part. The change takes place where what is on a material (*ávnnaslaš*) or concrete level in the first part becomes immaterial (*ávnnasmeahttun*) or abstract in the second part.

The first story has a clear plot: The feallát arrive, they shoot, slaughter and run. Storra Bánnán shoots one of them and buries him in an area of scree. The plot is on a concrete level. Then there is a change: the weapon of the first part changes to anger in the second part, object into emotion, arms into anger. The opponents also change: the three thieves 'change' into a ghost, and the fear of this. The work (the goal) of the first part, watching the flock of bucks, stays the same in the second part, only it develops into a darker undertaking as well: the ousting of ghosts. In addition, the three feallát are substituted by three commands. In the third part there isn't much help, apart from moral support from his fellow man, and the goal seems to be a simple one: to live in peace (without fear). Here, the opponent and ordeal are one and the same: the man (the storyteller doesn't even call him a ghost anymore). It is unclear what kind of apparition this is, whether this is on a material or an immaterial level. (Is there perhaps a third alternative?) What is clear is the immense fear caused by the apparition, a fear that silences the storyteller for decades.

According to Russian formalism, the goal or intention is connected to desire: it is a desired object as well as an object of communication. Aided by this model, the relation between the actors and the desired object should be somewhat clarified. A few problems arise, though, as we start to look into the matter.

That which is desired is at the core of the story and seems closely related to the moral, provided there is any moral at all to be extracted from the story. As we have seen, the goal seems to be connected to the land at every level (provided by 'land' we mean its resources, its animals and plants), in all three parts.

In the first part the connection to land is concrete: herding; in the second part it seems more abstract: ousting ghosts; in the third part it is abstract again: to live in peace. But we should not forget the spiritual side to landscapes (which will be elaborated shortly), of which the ghost in this story is an unquestionable part, like it or not. Both the reindeer herders' desire is seen in their efforts to guard the herd, which might be called 'protecting' the land, if we view the reindeer as part of the landscape.

There is the problem, again, of this quarrelsome ghost, which is undeniably part of the landscape as well, imbedded in it, buried there. As such, the ghost is part of the desired object, part of its own desire, an impossibility that only highlights its evasiveness. Desire is aroused in relation to, in fact shared by, opponents: the ghost and Norwegian fishermen (who very much want the land and its riches). We seem to be approaching a thematic level of interpretation, but the use of a model meets with limitations as the ghost's evasiveness resists categorization and makes it shift categories constantly, blowing up the structure from within, before it evaporates.

Abstract levels

Storytelling is all about making images, pictures in the mind. We travel in our minds, go to those places, stand in front of them as our ancestors did long ago. That way we can see what happened there long ago and recall the knowledge of our ancestors.

– The storyteller gives you images to carry within – of a person, a swamp, an incident or a dog. You know what you’ve heard so well that you will never be mistaken when you meet it yourself. If twenty years pass before you see Darrevuomev with your own eyes, you always knew what it looked like. It’s just like meeting an old friend after many years. Recognition hits you. And you know that when you place your foot upon the soils of Darrevuomev, you have done this before. The storyteller gave you this gift, and so fantasy becomes reality. And over and over again it is confirmed that the good storyteller is never wrong. The only demand is that you allow yourself to enter his story. (Ing Lill Pavall 2001: 135; my translation)

– Many texts cause pictures to rise in my mind and many pictures give birth to texts. I create texts and pictures myself. I do not experience them to be different. I think they are two different sides of the same phenomenon. If I ask myself in what context I have learned the oral tradition and in what circumstances I learned to perceive visually, well, they are not separate stages... The oral tradition and visual perception were formed at the same time, I cannot tell which one came first. There I was listening to the stories... There they came, the pictures and stories giving birth to one another. (Kerttu Vuolab 1998: 57)

The story has no other levels than abstract ones, one might say, as it exists in the *mind*. This is where the pictures appear. Nevertheless, the place in question is highly concrete and one could go there if one wanted to. Furthermore, the fact that the characters have names and were real persons (supposedly) makes it less of an abstraction. Also, one might claim that there are distinct levels in the story, as one finds both abstract and concrete incidents, as well as different periods of time.

The story’s first part seems to invert the second. Concerning periods of time, three specifically differentiated temporalities appear in “The reindeer thief’s grave”. At the same time, the parts mirror each other. The first occurrence is told to Uhca Ásllat in his childhood – “As a child I used to visit an old bachelor”. The story itself takes place in what seems a mythical time, a time when legends arose and tales were created. “Once he told,” may be seen as a version of the classical fairytale entry “Once upon a time”.

Nevertheless, the events are depicted as real.²⁰ Goabdesájgge, drum-time, is an approximate historic time (Johan Albert Kalstad 1997: 16). It has *been*, but in the story it becomes more of a mythological time, the time when myths were born. Our collective memory of this time is bleak, it has become a dream, perhaps as we reinvent it; stories and place names, the songs – yoiks, have to a great extent lost their significance, together with the relics, the drums, that were burnt in the colonial time. Here, there are no historically known persons: although the story provides us with Stuorra Bánnán’s name, it might be hard to trace him in the regular historical sources such as church books, tax lists, and so on. (If at all trackable, the man’s Sámi name would probably have been ousted for some Norwegian name, or possibly be misspelled). The occurrences, the plot, are related in a typical fairytale fashion; the language is economic, abrupt: to the point and centred on events. Between the first and second part, the storyteller gives his opinion: “I didn’t know whether to believe it or not.” The story seems diminished by this; it becomes ‘just’ a myth. At the same time, Sombán Áilu’s thoughts are our thoughts. We don’t know whether it’s true or not. Really, this isn’t even relevant, one might claim, as long as it’s well told.

The second occurrence is experienced by Ásllat as a grown-up: “Time passed and I grew up”. This period is in Lule Sámi tradition called ‘the time when one had to hide the drums’ (Johan Albert Kalstad 1997: 16; my translation). The events of part two are ‘real’ in the sense that the storyteller is real and living, we know his name, when and where he was born, whom he married, etc.²¹ Now, the feallá’s spectre appears to make claims on the land. Where he had come to steal reindeer before, he now appears as voice, loud and demanding; and as a foot, with which to kick away the subject – the Sámi. By the end of

²⁰ Terms like ‘real’ and ‘reality’ are relative, of course, and might be seen in rapport with (the illusion of) objectivity central to science and hence social sciences and humaniora. Do we mean ‘real’ as something that can be sensed and thus verified, or ‘real’ in terms of valid, relevant, in context?

²¹ – Sombán Áilu or Uhca Ásllat was born in Kárašjohka 12 November 1913. Sombi Ásllat and Bikkan Ovlá Biret were his parents. Bikkan Ovlá (Ole Ravna) is famous for having accompanying Nansen across the Greenland ice-world a hundred years ago. Uhca Ásllat grew up on the Lágesduottar. This was also his home and workplace throughout his life. He has moved with reindeer in Čorgaš, Johkamohkki and Rákkonjarga. In winter he would herd the flock in the Deatnu forests and fells. Uhca Ásllat married Ivvár Káre, and they have four children. As a young man, Ásllat also served in the war. This has stayed in his memory, and often he tells of events from his war service. Ásllat and Kárin have also yoiked on the record “Ean máššan”. Here, many of the popular yoiks of their day are presented. (Niillas Somby: 10; my translation)

part two Ásllat tells the ghost: “You will not haunt me and I shall tell people where you are!” Still, he doesn’t get to tell the story until he’s an old man: “Until now, I never got around to telling this story”. He carried the story within him his whole life, even though it sometimes haunted him. The ghost seems to have silenced him, made him speechless. Uhca Ásllat is a storyteller and here he says something crucial about the status of storytelling through the ages.

Part three mirrors and summarizes the first two parts. This part is short and in an economic, abrupt language somewhat more modern than that of the fairytale. The story is closer in time, something, which makes it more perceptible: “A couple of times I have seen a large, tall man...” Also: “Once, he came here to my home, too.” Here, the circumstances are quite different to those of the first part: it is a man who comes to the home, not a ghost. Ásllat drinks coffee with Oiva in the kitchen, the herder is not alone out in the dark night. The hero is awake and has company, he can’t possibly be dreaming.

What’s in a name?

Words, terms and names may have several levels of meaning, all which can be used in literary interpretations. Given that we are open to such meaning in names, both the protagonists’ names and the place-name may shed light upon a more thematic interpretation. ‘Stuorra Bánnán’ seems to derive from *bánne*, which means both a son and a real man, also, ‘a fine fellow’. In other words, some sort of hero, or rather, an antihero, if the meaning is ironic. It seems that *bánne* and *bojá* share connotations: they are both some sort of hero (in their own eyes); this may also have a mocking meaning to it. In many ways, Stuorra Bánnán seems a typical (national) hero. – He is our forefather and his name is known to us through the story. (The feallát on the other hand are unknown, nameless characters – inhumane, inhuman, bringing death and fear.) This could have been a national epos. Only, does one need the national *state* in order to create such hierarchal canons?²² Must a construction such as a national epos be held by a centre that *can* hold?

²² According to Sigbjørn Skåden, there has been a canonic development in 20th century Sámi poetry (2004)

There is a connection of sorts between the first part and the next: Stuurra Bánnán is replaced by Sombán Áilu/Ásllat Sombi/Uhca Ásllat, who are one and the same man. Sombán is the family name, the same as Sombi or Somby. Áilu and Ásllat are versions of the same name and Uhca Ásllat is like a nickname: Little Ásllat. (Our hero may even have had more names according to custom, both from his mother and his father.)²³ One version of the Somby name is *Bojá*, which means ‘one who is a very fine fellow.’ The second part of “The reindeer thief’s grave” takes place when the storyteller is a grown-up: the hero is a man and a *bojá* out alone in the dark night. In the third part of the story the ghost is in fact the man: he is the one who acts, although his name is not known to us.

– Old tax list sources suggest that the Sámi used no surnames, only first names... Christian first names appear little by little as official names. This change was strongly influenced by missionaries and governmental policies. Sámi first names were disdained by the missionaries and regarded as heathen: instead, they would use biblical names when christening Sámi. The Sámi use of names lasted for quite some time, as it was tied to the nature belief system. It was customary to christen the children anew and give them Sámi names after the baptism in church. Christening and Norwegian names were thought to be disadvantageous to the child in terms of wellbeing and progress. Rather, it was thought to cause sickness and ill health in children. (Aage Solbakk: 139; my translation)

– In old times, it was customary among some Sami to connect names with sickness. The Christian names that were given people as part of the sacrament of baptism were thought to make people ill, therefore a Sami naming ceremony was arranged after a child had been baptized in church. Sometimes the spirits would tell the Sami name to a *noaidi* during a ceremony and sometimes the mother would be told the name in a dream. This Sami name “washed away” the Christian name. The child’s Sami name was handed down

²³ For instance: My father’s Sámi name is Juhu Niillas, from his father Juhán. Although they share the same mother and father, my father’s younger brother is known as Mákká Regnor, as he calls himself by his mother Mággá. A person might have different names in different contexts.

– In everyday speech it was (and still is, within Sámi speaking communities) common to use a grandfather’s or grandmother’s first name, add the first name of the father or mother and finally the person’s own name. (Aage Solbakk: 141; my translation)

in the family. In connection with the naming ceremony children would also receive a "namma-guolli" or guardian spirit. (Elina Helander 1995: 7)

– Sámi surnames appeared in the authorities' tax lists by the end of the seventeenth century. To begin with, there are not many such names, but there was a gradual increase throughout the eighteenth century. Surnames such as Aikio (Aichio), Bæivi (Peifue), Falle, Guttorm (Gotor), Joks (Jux), Sarre (Sara), Sombio (Somby), Vuolab (Wuolabb), etc., became increasingly common. These names were initially Sámi first names that gradually became used as surnames... So-called nicknames (additional names that describe personal characteristics and defects) were also used as surnames. Examples here are *Utsi* (small), of which a Norwegian form is *Lille*, and *Banne* (*bánni* = a son, a real man). (Aage Solbakk: 140; my translation)

– It was required that all Sámi children be baptised by clergymen. Therefore, Sámi children received Christian names, consequently identifying these children as members of Church congregations and members of states under the rule of kings. However, Sámi children were often first given a traditional Sámi name and an identity unique to Sámi culture. Thus, many Sámi possessed two identities. The first identity, often kept secret, located a person within a specific Sámi clan-circle. The second, ecclesiastical identity was used as an official identity in juridical and other state business. (Louise Bäckman 2004: 35)

The place-name itself might tell us something, if we are to interpret such things as place-names with regard to a story's meaning. The place Čorgaš itself appears to be somewhat like the times related: a mythical place, peaceful and yielding, although not abundantly, a down-to-earth paradise of sorts. The growth of northern soils is small but rich, like its miniature plants. In the first part of the story the place is described swiftly: Čorgaš is a cape where the herd is livas and resting, there is a river. Here is everything one needs as long as one is economical and not greedy and covetous like the feallát. In the second part, time related may be said to coincide with the time of assimilation: it is autumn now and the nights are dark, but still there are berries in the marshes: "In this area the cloudberries

ripen late”. The land still yields growth, it’s still alive and the forces of life still persist in the marshes, in the waters of the rivers.

The place name Čorgaš may derive from the word čorga, which is an adverb meaning “cleanly; tidily; carefully; nicely; economically: jákka gol’ga hui čor’ga – the river floats very neatly (it follows the river bank without exceeding it), boccuk manni hui čor’ga – the reindeer went very neatly (without spreading out too much), čor’ga val’det suiniid – picking up the hay carefully (so that nothing is left of it).”²⁴

There is a clear imperative connected to the adverb čorga. The simple word seems to hold a central meaning, as it reflects certain values shared by a people and held in language, to the extent that one might even say it hints at a moral. In this sense, values and the moral seem to connect to the name, the place, and thus the story.

Another meaning of the word refers to the accusative -čorgi, of which -čorgaš is a diminutive form. The word is a dialect form, used mainly in Deatnu dialects. It relates to time: “in certain expressions of time, Kautokeino only iggja-čor’ge – the night itself, in the most restricted sense, itself: dalve-čor’ge – winter itself, gässe-čor’ge – summer itself, iggja-čor’ge – night itself.”²⁵

Hence, in an interpretation inspired by these two meanings of the term čorgaš, the place-name as such would both depict and describe the place as clean and nice and economical, orderly. This story is set on no random occasion. This is a place of immanent value; it carries a people’s innermost and crucial asset as people: their moral. In addition, it points to itself and highlights itself as something central: existing in time, time as much as place – in fact both. As self, the place constructs itself as an entity capable of communicating. Again, let’s not forget the troublesome ghost, highly capable of communicating (loudly) as it orders people about. As such, it ‘materializes’ as a place with a soul: a loud, active, kicking, evasive, invasive self.

²⁴ Konrad Nielsen *Lapp Dictionary. Based on the dialects of Polmak, Karasjok and Kautokeino*, The Institute for Comparative Research in Human Culture, Universitetsforlaget, Oslo 1979 (1932-1962) I: 419

²⁵ Konrad Nielsen I: 419

The soul of the land

– The aboriginal tribes like Sámit, Inuit, Indians and others, do not have any other possibility for survival than to depend on peace. Peace in the widest sense, peace with nature, the Creation, and peace with other people, is a basic element in the tradition of our peoples. Aboriginal history is nonetheless also the history of desperate fights with weapons against superior forces. But history has also demonstrated that we have not been able to defend our place in the world by the force of arms. (Juhu Niillas 1986: 28)

One way of communicating and getting along with places, or rather spirits of the landscape, is to ask permission. One can communicate with the land as self, one can offer gifts, ask for permission, settle with it. But not out of force or through violence. One has to settle with the spirits, the land's soul, even though some are hard to settle with. Seemingly, the storyteller does this. Talking to himself he says that "of course there might be a dead man here, but you can lie down there and I up here". This is his way of asking for permission, it seems. Still, he seems to be annoying the dead. To the herder, who lives and works in these surroundings, this is home, his *siida*. He is at home: he knows what to do, all the rules of co-existence as well as how to manage on these stony grounds. He has inherited the knowledge needed for survival. Through generations before him he knows this place.

– One gets to know places in the same way that one gets to know people – by being with them over time, by doing things together, by listening to them and being sensitive to their state of mind. This constitutes relations, not only between people, but between people and places. (Juhu Niilasa Jorunn 2004: 50; my translation)

– Places may be considered *selves* in two different meanings of the word. The land may be *an active agent*: it has a soul and can communicate with people, for instance by giving them good or bad fisherman's luck, reindeer luck and health. But landscapes may also be understood as *storytellers* with stories of their own, stories relating to interactions with humans, animals and other beings. These stories can be heard provided one opens one's

senses, relying on one's own experiences and perception in order to understand the meaning conferred by custom and tales. The place's story, the interaction of the permanence of natural features and the changes of the seasons, may be perceived as texts offering a basic beat to the storytelling, which people narrate to each other in order better to understand both their own life-stories and those of their kin, which over the generations has become set in the landscape. (Juhu Niilasa Jorunn/Jorunn Jernsletten 2004: 56; my translation)

– In ancient Sami beliefs, all sites in nature had their own genii, some of which have an established position in Sami stories. (Samuli Aikio 1994: 112)

– Humans must also settle with the pasture grounds, with the trekways, the pasture places, places of residence, the fells, and with the region and reindeer Sámi environment in total. All such places have spirits with whom one needs to settle with (soabadit) somehow. Both the territory and other creatures are spirits. Sometimes these spirits and protecting spirits are called *háldi*, *ulda*, *eatnanvuoláš* or *máddu*. To ask permission and give blessing are ways of settling with the land and its protecting spirits. (Nils Oskal 1995: 96; my translation)

– People have powers even when they're dead. The ghosts are alive, even though they are buried... You should never pose the dead questions, rather tell them that you want peace and quiet, and that they should go back where they came from. You must control your nerves: if you're scared you'll accomplish nothing, the most important thing is to get angry and drive them away. (Gáhti told Vivian Aira this 2001: 37; my translation)

– The spirits of the dead would linger around the tent grounds where they had died. And for this reason people would rather not place tents on old tent sites, for fear of spirits. (Oddmund Andersen 2004: 131; my translation)

– Some corpses are very bad at haunting and frightening folk, and not only the place where he died is haunted, so that folk see and hear the dead man, and it lives again

everything that it did in its life, and it *joiks* and shouts to the dogs, and makes all sorts of gestures. (Johan Turi: 91)

– No one should disturb the dead. They could scare the people who bothered them out of their wits, so that they went insane... Anyone who annoys the dead might be scared out of his wits. I remember when I had seen the old graves at Gieddesuolu and returned at night, the old Sámi would tell me: ‘Tonight you will have company’. (Anders Larsen 1947: 45; my translation)

– **Those who believe in *diidas* will live by *diidas*. (Tore Johnsen: 36; my translation)**

If we choose a life as an active, independent people, in the context of Sámi literary research, there is another feature of our ontology, which proves itself useful, namely *diiddastallan*, which involves both signseeking and foretelling. Our ontology colours our opinion: objectivity as such is impossible. The reading of signs and interpretation is, needless to say, at the core of any literary research. This is always already bound to be a contextual action, dependent on points of (cultural) reference. We should look at ourselves, our many ways and skills and beliefs, too, from many sides. See our own trekways, the contours of the fell as it was before and as it is now. Use our old beliefs for what they’re worth in this day and age, look at them positively and believe in them enough to take action and refine them, let them live on in new ways, new settings, new contexts. Thus, we recognize the fell from many different angles and know our own hand, all the history and knowledge passed down to us. The wisdom of our forebears is there; it is here, still present among our people, even written down, sometimes. Refined, abstracted and placed in a modern context, *diiddastallan* is useful to literary research also due to the part it plays in contextualizing.

– For that matter, there is a verb *diiddastallat*, which derives from the word *diida*. This verb might help to shed even more light on the phenomena. *Diiddastallat* is translated by Konrad Nielsen as “paying heed to old superstitions, believing in signs, etc.” *Diiddastallat*, thus, does not seem to imply an active retrieval of spiritual phenomena, as for example the term *noaidástallat* (to commit shaman sorcery) seems to do. Rather, it is

about ‘taking account of’ notions or omens revealed in nature without ever being sought out by humans. (Tore Johnsen: 37; my translation)

– Diiddat are based on popular conception and belief... Diida is often translated into the somewhat negatively loaded word superstition. If confronted by the question do they really believe in diida, the respond is most likely to be negative. Still, acting in accordance with diida gives a notion of security and safety, and as such diida is on the borderline of what people do and don’t believe in. Diida informs and offers knowledge of the future. (Mette Irene Hætta 2003: 189; my translation)

– Maybe *diida* is best explained as a belief bound to a certain phenomenon. Then it can, as the dictionary suggests, describe certain phenomena that may be interpreted as *omens* of something that is going to happen (or has already happened). Examples of such a *diida* might be that of a fox crying towards the houses, which is an omen of death in this place within a year, or of the magpie bringing the message of guests soon to arrive, or that of a clear starry sky on New Year’s Eve as the sign of a rich cloudberry year in the coming summer. The other type of *diida* also concerns concepts connected to certain phenomena, which justify certain praxises or taboos. The *diida* tells you what to do and what not to do, in a manner of speaking. The notion of *guoržu* in connection with reindeer bones, and what you should do in order to avoid the negative consequences of this, is an example of this kind of *diida*. Also, the notion of asking for permission to spend the night would be a *diida* as such. (Tore Johnsen: 36; my translation)

– When people are wandering, herding or travelling, they must ask permission to rest or stay overnight. (Nils Oskal 1995: 102; my translation)

Words connected to land seem central to the story. Words like *brush*, *brushwood*, *scree*, and especially *goahtemuorgeassi* and *geadgebora*, seem to be important terms. These words belong to the landscape. They represent life and death, the good and priceless as well as the bad and unmentionable, simultaneously. They are more than mere terms, they are symbols. At the same time, they assist in establishing the notion of the land as active

in the story: the land is active, the earth alive. (In a somewhat dislocated reading of the text, the woman who owns the bucks Stuurra-Bánnán herds might even be our primitive mother; she might even be Mother Earth.) It's a time of year when the land still yields growth and berries are ripe. Though this far north, the growth is small; the plants miniature; Arctic. The place is alive and the forces of life still persist in its marshes, in the waters of its rivers. When the goahtemurgeassi is shot an important part of the herd is gone, since he pulls the tent sledge needed for the journey and is, as such, a means of transportation. Also, there is an obvious symbolism to this – as the goahtemurgeassi pulls the weight of home, both goahte and siida: of society. Though mobile, goahte is warm, organized, even holy.

– The most common dwelling place for the nomadic Saami was the *goahte*, a simple, light and practical year-round dwelling place. There are two types of *goahte*. The permanent *goahte* is covered with turf. The mobile *goahte* is a light-weight construction, consisting of poles and a tent fabric. There are unwritten rules about how to behave in a *goahte*. Without these, family life with many members would not function. Each member of the family and every item have their specific place in the *goahte*. In the middle of the *goahte* is the campfire which gives warmth and light. Opposite the door is the kitchen. This place used to be considered holy. One of the gods of the *goahte* lived underneath. (Sunna Kuoljok and John E. Utsi: 32)

Geađgebora is where Stuurra Bánnán put the meat and buried the feallá with the goahtemurgeassi on his back, after shooting him. Thus, geađgebora (or simply *bora*) seems to be an important, though less positive term than goahtemurgeassi.²⁶

– The connection between depot and sacrifice and between bone-hiding, bone-graves and sacrificial sites is complicated, and it's hard to establish clear-cut categories. The demarcation lines may be between permanent sacrificial sites and more irregular sites of sacrifice, and between those of a social group, those of a family and those of a person.

²⁶ ”Borra (geađgebora), cavity in a scree (covered with boulders) for hiding somethg. in, or a pile of stones for hiding somethg. in, esp. for storing meat (generally ill-gotten) out-of-doors.” (Konrad Nielsen I: 233)

The differences might also concern which powers one communicates with. (Audhild Schanche 2000: 273; my translation)

– I have also heard of bora. Bora is something that is not good. I do not want to talk about it here. In reindeer herding as in any other livelihood there are parts that aren't good. Here, I do not want to mention such bad things. (Káren Márjá Eira Buljo 2002: 144; my translation)

– Some of these pits have been used for storing meat, and some have been trap-pits... Old Lapps have found proof enough that these pits were used as graves too, and so the present-day Lapps daren't visit them, or dig in them to see what they contain... they are afraid of these pits. It has often happened that a Lapp has slept in such a pit, and then a ghost has appeared and spoken to him and told him to go away. And the ghost's face looked like reindeer moss, wrinkled and grey, and it said: "You must not lie and sleep on me!" And if he didn't obey the first command, the ghost gave the order a second time, more sternly; and there are folk alive at this time who have seen these spirits. There is a place on Cape Vuoskonjarga where there are many of these pits, and from one of them a man was ordered to go away, and the ghost told him that he had been murdered and buried in that pit.²⁷ And so the Lapps are afraid of these pits and daren't dig in them or sleep in them. (Johan Turi: 21)

Story and nation

– Let's think about the notion "minority". I don't think there has been anything of the sort in official record and literature before the 19th century when compulsory education was established in many countries. This means that minorities are an outcome and a consequence of national states, the ideals of the national romanticism era: the fatherland, the nation, and its one and only language. (Pekka Sammallahti: 129)

²⁷ Gielas Siida still uses this place for overnight rests. It takes them 4-6 days to move the herd along Duortnosjávri from Njuoravuopme to Patsajækkel, and out of the five places where they use to camp overnight are only two where the herd is livas throughout the night without any herding. Vuoskonjarga is not one of them. (Gielas: 2001)

The past is a well-worn path first travelled by the forebears. The past has to be constructed with the aid of stories. It is history constructed without authorities, and, provided they seem plausible, they are considered equally valid. As long as we have stories connected to places, we have a history. We are bound to this place through time, through pictures – images of the past that can deepen and enlarge awareness of the present. Our stories are mythical, they are of the past and of the present – they are modern. Stories make up history for people without written sources of their own. If we trust, confide in and seek refuge in our stories, we give them authority. Indigenous people all over the world share this – as long as a people’s history is held by oral tradition, its structure, themes and world-view won’t find their way into History books, not before the people themselves are able and willing to do the work. The question is whether people really have a History if it doesn’t reflect their own image of time, the world and everything. And/or, whether History as such is able to reflect features as alien to its own structure such as those of an oral people. *Muitaleaddjit* like *Ásllat* are *duodasteaddjit*, confirming stories as History in an indigenous context.

If storytelling means feeding the mind with pictures, then interpretation involves abstracting these, telling the story anew. Based on what we have found so far, it makes sense to interpret “The reindeer thief’s grave” on a political or national level. What happens to the hero is at the same time what happens to a whole nation. Earlier on, we established land itself as the desired object.²⁸ Events are depicted through pictures and metaphors, events we know especially through storytelling: colonization and resistance. Only now, we view the periods in a historic perspective, stories as the history of a people without History. The place-time continuum connects stories to places and memories to places, and in our minds and through our images time is dislocated, time is out of joint. Time dissolves and evaporates. When we’re there, in this place whose stories we know we forget time; we’re suddenly in this other time, which is not necessarily the future.

²⁸ We know for a fact that Sápmi, Sámi Land, was ‘the object of desire’, that her neighbours fought over her (as in the Calmar War), they fought over the right to call her their own, to mark her as their territory, we know they taxed her and impoverished her, as they and others did in great parts of what today is called ‘the Third World’.

On the basis of the interpretation so far we tell the tale once more. In days of yore came some whitefellas/feallát – settlers and representatives of the colonial masters – to Northern Sápmi. When the feallát come, they are an advancing nation. They are thieves and missionaries, teachers and tax collectors. They are many and inhumane: the herder knows them to be killers. The herder fears the thieves and hides in the brush, in the undergrowth. Ferociously they take from the herd until they're satisfied. To the herder it is bitter so see, of course, that even the goahtemuorgeassi is shot. The loss was great: they took the goahtemuorgeassi, who pulled the mobile, Sámi home, and with it a way of organizing both family and society; our gods; a direction for the future: how are we to move on from now on? Still, the threat is a concrete one and can be met with, and settled by, a gun. The herder shoots the feallá who carries the goahtemuorgeassi. One of them dies for the sins of the communion and is placed in an unknown grave. He is not buried properly. The thief's blood, his body, is hidden away in a way that somewhat resembles a sacrifice, it is given to the land as sacrifice, together with the three bucks. He is left there in the scree, as a spirit, tied restlessly to this place. Has the feallá by any chance polluted Čorgaš our old place and home, so that we can live in peace no more? Has he stolen our history by leaving his bones here, for archaeologists to find? When the feallát come and take the land, do they ask if this is someone's camp ground, such a good spot with water nearby, sheltered under the shoulder of the fell? Surely, they must see that it is pasture land – do they ask who fertilized the fields in generations past, who drank from the river before them? Do they not see see themselves as strangers here, strangers who spread out everywhere. Have others not thread these fields before them? Have others not watched their children die here, their joys being born here? Do they see nothing but that which is to their own advantage?

Then, some time later comes another herder to that same place. Of brushes he makes himself a bed. A ghost orders him: – Go away from my place! and frightens him out of his sleep. The ghost has a voice, it has legs for kicking. These parts make up a human, *a nation's limbs*. It has partly materialized, whilst in the scree it is spirit, spectral. Only after three such commands does the herder leave the place, but then he gets angry and wants his brushwood (the forest and fields, the land?) back. He fetches it and returns to

the fireplace where he falls asleep. When he wakes up the herd is as gathered as if it had been collected by someone. The herd is again resting and peaceful. A new order seems to have taken over. Something has changed overnight. Whose order is valid now? Whose interpretation, and whose reality?

When the ghost comes back as a man it has a firm form. When it appears again as a man, it is imagined and material at the same time. He runs both our lands and our minds. A mighty picture has arisen of the victim, a horror, a new order. Man, ghost, human image. A ghost to seek our innermost, invade us, only to melt and disappear, apparently. He has made his way into the house without any effort and goes straight to the inner rooms. There he evaporates and is gone.

We must interpret in order to understand. On a national level, through a political perspective, it gives meaning in a present context: “Until now, I never got around to telling this story,” it is said in the story’s epilogue – we never got to tell our history and sometimes it has haunted us. Also: “A couple of times I have seen a large, tall man with an enormous reindeer on his back, but he always falls and disappears.” The large, tall man has not finished what he started. Once, he came here to our home, too, we never got to say something, he was already inside and had gone to the inner rooms. We know this man and run after him. He goes to our bedroom, where he vanishes. The wheel has come full circle.

The nation is an abstraction, as is the story: it is imagined and exists in people’s minds. What forms the nation is that which we imagine we have in common. Storytelling is mediation between many different voices. Stories are the history of people ‘without’ history, and we should trust and lean on our myths. If storytelling is about offering pictures to the mind, then interpretation is about abstracting these and looking at the different parts. The story connects to land in the mind; the nation is also imagined in our minds. Both stories and interpretation forward something that is common to human beings. On this basis, meaning is born by our own images. If it stumbles we should look at the different parts of the picture, lift them up, feel them.

Storytelling, literature, is – like the nation – connected to places of sorts, only these are places of the mind. If we carry stories in our minds, which connect to places, then we have a history: We are bound to these places, through time. Our stories belong to the time of myths and days of yore, and they belong to the present (they are of today). Through images they tell of the things we know and feel, especially through our storytelling: they tell of colonization, resistance and survival. So, could it be that the ghost goes into this picture as well, both as an abstraction (a symbol?) and at the same time part of land and reality, in much the same way that everything could be depicted on the face of the drum?

Wisdom sits in places: both that advised by the place itself and also what we know over generations concerning how we should live. The story in question here is tied to Čorgaš. The story offers advice on how to live in peace with nature and people. The spirits are part of the landscape: do protecting spirits have ethnic identities, any consciousness (of self) whatsoever? The ghost doesn't seem to mind about values and tradition, but it does haunt Ásllat, even though he asked permission to spend the night. One might assume that a pact has been established when Ásllat suggests that he'll tell people about this incident, then neglects his part of 'the deal' and doesn't tell anyone until years later. The fact that the bucks are peaceful and collected the next morning might support such a reading. But according to the Sámi original, this interpretation seems fairly implausible and as such only proves the importance of context and points of reference.

The thief's blood may be 'polluting' Čorgaš so that the herder can live in peace no more: the remnants of crimes committed are a reminder of a constant threat. We must all take the blame for this blood spilt on the land. Even though it was a matter of resistance, we took part in the crime. Our ghosts, our fears are present at the heart of the land, in the innermost room: feallá is watching us. (White)Feallá is watching us and there's nowhere he cannot go. With him, our goahtemuorgeassi – mobility, home, rules, society, gods, the future – is held hostage, tied together in a bundle, colonized. It is too heavy, he cannot hold it up, he always falls and disappears. He melts into the land only to come back as a spirit *and* a man: real.

The oral text is like a weave; the life of the people, knowledge passed on from mother to daughter, from generation to generation. The weave is consistency, it is text as well as life; it is the text-life of a people. It ties together the world as it was according to the old tradition, the old cosmology, with the present. The weave ties people to a greater connection: to the past, as well as present and future; to a collective knowledge. The myths enunciate themselves as a weave, connected to everything, when we remember our stories as wisdom; the knowledge, the ability to see the present time; how everything is connected.

– Once a man was walking by himself in the fells; then he was spotted by Čuđit, who started chasing him. The poor man fled up a hill and saw a hole in the ground. The man crept into the hole. A spider went in front of the hole and spun a weave as big as the hole. When the spider was done making the web and had gone, a Čuđi reached the hole and saw the spider’s web; then he passed by and went on to his friends. Because of this there is still the diida among the old Sámi that you should never kill a spider, since it has saved a human life. (Johan Johnsen Aikio: 150; my translation)

Always falls and disappears...

– As a young man, Injga-Per Ivvár would follow the herd together with another herder and trek across a fell pass at Čorgaš. Here, a crowd had gathered to steal reindeer – they were shooting the animals right at this narrow place where the herd had to pass. So the herders asked the sheriff’s officer for help. They were told that of course the people had to shoot, but they should watch out so that they weren’t shot themselves. (Ánde Somby told me this in 2006; my translation)²⁹

In “The reindeer thief’s grave” a specific movement happens frequently; people fall and disappear in some way or other. In the first story this comes as a result of shooting, and the fear of shooting: Stuorra Bánnán “throws himself into the brushwood” when the

²⁹ Uhca Ásllat’s youngest son, Ánde Somby, tells a story one day during a lunch break at the University of Tromsø. The story is about his great grandfather Injga-Per Ivvár, Iver Persen Porsanger, who was a reindeer herder. He was born in 1890 and was the father of Uhca Ásllat’s mother.

feallát arrive, hiding out of fear of being shot. Stuorra Bánnán ‘falls’ himself into the brush, onto the ground where he ‘disappears’. Shortly afterwards he shoots the largest feallá and kills him; now it is the feallá who falls and disappears – into the realm of the dead (and into ground, where he is buried). And then: “The other two threw themselves down, loosened their burdens and took off” – it’s the two feallát who hide from Stuorra Bánnán from a fear of being shot, now it’s their turn to disappear from the scene.

In the second story Ásllat lies down and falls asleep; he ‘disappears’ into a world of dreams. When he hears the ghost’s command, he jumps up, lights his torch and checks his body: has it gone to sleep, is it numb? For the second time Uhca Ásllat lies down, creeps under the fur and the dreams take him away (– he ‘falls’ and ‘disappears’). For the second time he hears the ghost’s command. Ásllat lights his torch, turns around and says the Lord’s prayer out loud, “hoping to sleep peacefully”. Just as he lies there neatly tucked in for the third time, “there was a kick at my feet and so hard that I rolled over instantly. The next moment I was sitting up.” The third command is heard. Ásllat snatches the bag and disappears from the scene.

Ásllat says in the third part: “A couple of times I have seen a large, tall man with an enormous reindeer on his back, but he always falls and disappears.” The man seems to be a koaili: a big, ugly man. A somewhat funny word, it nevertheless reflects Sámi aesthetics of small as beautiful. Also, all the brutes of Sámi history would have been likely to be ‘big, ugly men’ in the eyes of the Sámi.

The ghost arrives as man at Uhca Ásllat’s home in the time of haydrying: “He went to my bedroom and there he dissolved.” One might claim that this last event is summarized, if suddat – ‘dissolve’ – is seen as a movement of both falling and disappearing at the same time. Here, two events are summarized into one, a couple of times. The third movement of this part is the last incident to be related.

Stuorra Bánnán, the bucks and the feallát all fall and disappear, as in a war of position, when men throw themselves onto the brush and shoot each other. Ásllat falls and

disappears, kicked away by the ghost. Towards the end, the ghost is a man who evaporates in the innermost room. The uncanny is stirring, floating like shadows in the dark. Who is this man?

Let's call him *Ávnnal*.³⁰ The third part is the tale of the tale – or rather: *barb*, *ávnnaldat* in Sámi.³¹ This part appears abstract and real at the same time, and it defeats dichotomies through dislocation, by introducing a third polarity that blows up the binaries: The ghost materializes and becomes a man. The twist here expands the uncanny feeling of part two and leaves us in a limbo between doubt and faith. Right between the material (*ávnnaslaš*) and the imagined and immaterial (*ávnnasmeahtun*), the inexplicable reveals itself and stings us – we don't know whether to believe it or not. Still, it stays with us – like an arrow hard to take out due to the *ávnnaldat*. *Ávnnal* is the one who 'supernaturally' intervenes the text and thus moves itself to our world. (This obviously being a 'modern' point of view, where one can talk of such things as the supernatural: in a traditional Sámi context it is, rather, a matter of different levels of this world...) *Ávnnal* is at the same time *ávnnaslas* and *ávnnasmeahtun*. He is material in the form of text/story/structure – he is something to work with in the hands of a good *sátneduojár*. And he – or it – is immaterial, inexplicable, evasive. To us he would seem frightening, since we don't know his nature, we don't understand him and his evasiveness is threatening. That which can't be categorized is threatening to our very existence, since we order the world in our minds by the use of categories, words, terms. *Ávnnal* moves between the lines, between the worlds, like a ghost. In an inexplicable way he mediates between different spheres of thought, of text, of context. On the basis of the material, pictures are created, pictures that stick to one's mind, raising doubts about what we know as real. *Ávnnal*: the thing that stings, that stays. And alienates.

³⁰ He resists the baptism, it threatens his spectral existence: Books are falling from the bookshelf as I write this, attacking both the keyboard and me. Come to think of it, iMac has been rather unco-operative recently – ghost in the machine... Here, in my office, my 'inner room', even!

³¹ *Ávnnal* is, as far as I know, no normal name. *Ávnnaldat* means 'barb', let's just say Barb was his mother and call him Barb *Ávnnal* in accordance with Sámi naming customs. With the alliterations of the Sámi terms *ávnnaslaš*, *ávnnasmeahtun* and *ávnnaldat* lost in translation, something else came in instead.

Searching for tracks

– North of *Levsse*, northeast from *Báisvarri*, on the other side of the *Gáhpa-ávži* stream, sits an old *sieidi* stone, named *Gáhpa*. In the past, the stone was a powerful *sieidi*. *Biehtár-Pávvel*, who has passed from this world, used to herd reindeer there. *Pávvel* was once resting with his herd, not far from the stone. And at midnight, an old woman came, chasing him away. *Pávvel* was so frightened that he ran home, hardly looking back, never returning to that place again. *Gáhpa-áhkku* said to him that she forbids reindeer herding there, because the animals trample lichen into the earth, littering her earthen home. The old spirit woman keeps milk there, deep under ground... Years passed. Then I, Aslak Sombi, was herding reindeer near the old *sieidi* stone. Then, a person appears. Strange – my dog did not bark, and the reindeer did not stir. A woman moves through the herd. Suddenly, when she came near, she shouted, ‘Listen boy! Take your herd away!’ The woman was old and clad in reindeer furs and worn-out garments, and her hair was worn and partly fallen away. The old crone claims the reindeer tread the soil, spoiling her milk, stored there, underground. But oh, I had no plans to leave that place! ‘You shall see, boy, what comes of this!’ said old *Gáhpa-áhkku*. So she spoke, turning, leaving. Oh damn! How the herd exploded then, running in every direction. I thought: There are wolves near, molesting my herd! It was March, many years before the war. *Gáhpa-geadgi* was a *sieidi* place no more. I was curious if she left any tracks behind. I decided to ski around in overlapping circles, searching for tracks, but I did not find any. And further on, still I found nothing. Not even a fox’s print. (Àsllat Sombi 2004: 22)

Some literatures, like that of the Sámi, have inherent metaphors: things considered real would in a ‘normal’ system of reference belong to the imaginary world. Live metaphors dislocate themselves to a point of no meaning, but still they exist. Still there is literature, literature comes alive in *ságastallan*, in stories, in modern poetry. In a Sámi conception, mythic figures still have a place within the world-view, to the extent that the metaphors are alive and kicking. The world between is a world of irony where metaphors truly live and one might think there was really little need for their bleached shadows. In THIS view one is naïve to believe only in what can be tested, seen, known. What can you know, *really?*

Everything that happens must happen *somewhere*. The location of an event is an integral aspect of the event itself. Here, it seems the goal of both the heroes and their opponents is connected to desire; land *is* the desired object. The feallát want the land and its riches. The herders' desire is evident in their effort to defend the land for themselves. Our stories are our history, only they are forgotten: hidden, and with them the values and morals connected to stories and place. A new order has taken place in the colonial night. Our ghosts now reveal themselves in the heart of the country, in our home's innermost room.

We started out searching for tracks, formalities, patterns. The story seemed an enigma, always something was lacking. It is as if the story itself resists interpretation. It alienates in ever so many ways. And when you think you've grasped something, it drifts away, averts itself, dislocates itself. The story is evasive, it is itself a ghost-Thing. It seemed to be more of a context: points of reference were needed in order for me to rest my case. So maybe, chasing these enigmas, we should travel to the place of the event told of in order to seek out the ghost and face the dark and incomprehensible, go there on our own and ask to spend a night there, and see what comes out of it. Thus the story changes and new images appear. So I decided to go to Čorgaš on my own to spend a night there, in that place Sombán Áilu told of. Thus the story is interpreted, or rather put into context one last time as I see this place. The storyteller takes me there along with his son Niillas Somby and his friend Fjodor. To me, hearing Ásllat tell the story out there on the spot changes it, and new images are created. I am intent on staying there overnight, alone, right there in that place Ásllat tells of. This is my short diary of that night. Compared to my expectations, that place was crowded.

Irján-čorgi

– At last we arrived. Suddenly, as if we had stumbled onto the place. The weather was nice when we came there. The old man, the storyteller, had stumbled the long way across this stony place, he seemed to have no ligaments, he didn't fall even though he stumbled. His whole life he has walked these fells, his legs know the way. At 89 years of age he is quite fit, but the eyes are not so good anymore, it is hard to walk these stony grounds.

Now we are here and at last we get to eat, make a fire and some coffee. And most of all: see the place with the little river running by; what it's like. Niillas and me have both wanted to come here to see it for some time now, Niillas longer than I. His father promised to bring him here and coming straight from Canada, his home away from home, the time is right. Also, it's fine since Niillas wants to film his father in the fell while telling stories. The young Sámi taxi driver from Lujávri is also here. In his view, these are overgrazed grounds, too little brushwood; too many reindeer have been grazing here, he suggests, he is a reindeer herder, too. Where he comes from the trees are big as big-bellied people, he tells me with his arms. It is Fjodor who pulls loose the brushwood and makes the fire, who makes the coffee, fries the bacon. It is a good fire, they eat, drink their coffee, then they go. Fjodor doesn't understand why I am to stay behind. When they are gone I wonder why myself. The place seems peaceful. The weather is nice. It is autumn already and dark nights. It is already golggotmánnu. I eat the salty fish that Niillas gave me, drink the coffee Fjodor made and think about the last words Ásllat said to me before he went: You have to be firm. When they are gone I say out loud who I am and that I will stay the night. I cannot decide where to put the tent: on the grave (as Niillas suggested) or not? Why am I here? Should I disturb the ghost so that I get to see it, or should I hope to sleep peacefully? I do what seems proper to me according to custom: I set the tent a couple of metres away from the place where the grave supposedly is. I write "supposedly" and now, as it gets darker, I feel the fear...

I already had guests. As I was preparing for the night I had to go, and went to the scree where I sat down. As I sat there I saw a herd there at the other side of the little lake. It is nice to see animals as long as there are no people accompanying them. I've never seen any ghosts and do not fear them as much as I might fear people. People are worse than any single wild beast, as I told the old man when he left. When I'm back in the tent and nicely tucked into my sleeping bag I see the herd again, coming from behind a summit, also, I hear bells close by in the other direction. Then comes a big herd ten to twenty metres above me, they come and come and I see a light too in the fell, coming closer. In the herd there are calves and females, varihat and bucks. I spot a limp, white geaset. Behind it comes a grey, large-antlered buck, the maņuš.

As soon as the flock has disappeared behind the summit I hear a motor approaching. A four-wheeler appears at the summit, and a dog. The bike comes closer but the river is between us. The dog comes alone to greet me. Its master waits at the summit, a big-bellied koali, the herder. No need to fear him, he doesn't seem very mobile or at all able to get far without his four-wheeler. The dog sniffs my fingers and especially the salty fish on the dead fireplace. It shakes itself and, when its master calls, it runs after him. Goodbye!

It is getting dark and I am tired. I will have some soup from the thermos and then maybe I shall get to sleep. I hope for a peaceful night. Just me and my thoughts. My fears, maybe they are my ghosts. Do I dare to sleep, when dreams are pulling at me? I think of Jesus, forty days alone in the desert. All alone. Without going mad. It gets windy. The skies are blue and pretty, it doesn't seem like it's going to rain. It's so dark I cannot see to write. And I don't have a torch. It's late and the night is approaching. If only I was calm, certain it would be all right. Our Father, who art in heaven... Soon it will be too dark to see anything at all. I have to go, again, and I must plan for the night. I don't know how dark it gets, all black or just so that I won't know whether to believe or not what my eyes tell me: that there are movements in the dark, floating shadows. Strange. And with every gust of wind my ears catch sounds that do not seem to belong here. The little river suddenly starts to sing.

Just when I'm about to fall asleep there is a sound no more than a metre from my head, a loud rustle outside the tent that does not belong here. I feel the blood rush as my body freezes and I lie dead still. In the moment I hear that sound I know what it is: I left the bit of salty fish by the fire, on the brushwood. The fish was wrapped in tinfoil and whoever it is who's come to eat it rattles with it for a while without making much sound. He accepts the offering and gives thanks for it in the shape of almost artificially bright blue, coiled droppings; I see them the next day just outside my tent door. There are plenty of blueberries and reindeer droppings here at Čorgaš, but no cloudberry on the marshes. In the morning when I wake up I collect the tinfoil demolished by that fox-shape. I pack

my sack, wet from the rain all through the night. Yesterday was a beautiful day, today it's raining and windy, colder. Maybe yesterday was irjón, the last summer day. As I walk the scree towards the road I disturb a flock of reindeer grazing. Lazily they move on. I'm not cold until I reach the road, now the snow is blowing sideways through the air.

The one who picks me up and takes me home is an old feallá. A big-bellied koaili, a limp man who doesn't seem very mobile or able to get far without his car. He tells me he's rheumatic. All the way home he tells me stories about this land of his, about horse tracking on century-old paths, about the tough life at sea, where his son drowned. About settlers' hardships in hostile surroundings over the centuries. And I listen to his stories and histories and I see the land with his eyes, this image I grew up with. And I must look far beyond the road and houses and towards the fell and out to the fjord in order to see that which also is and was. This place I know only from seeking it out, from it seeking me. I'm cold, I shiver in his heated car. I'm wet through. I shrink. I dissolve. Will it always be like this?

Jåkka

– Over there in the West Fells there is a wild mountain called Frøyningsfjellet. There runs a brook, Garsejohke – which splits the fjell in two by a wild and steep valley – with cliffs and fells on both sides. In the valley sides there are a number of caves. In the old days some tjuvrieh would live in one of these. And they were a great nuisance to all the Sámi in the area – for they stole whatever they came across – reindeer, tents, food and tools, fishnets full of fish – everything. But nobody knew how many they were, since no one had seen them all together. And no one knew where they lived. One day something happened, which made people anxious. An old woman went to put on her shoes. When she had put on her right shoe she sighed heavily and said: “The first thief is on!” And when she had put on her left shoe she said: “The other thief is on me”. Those present understood right away that this meant something particular, but no one knew the meaning. Since they were all dressed they ran out immediately – and right on time it was, since the camp was being raided by tjuvrieh. They all ran to the woods for safety – even the old woman. But an old man was too slow. He was caught by the robbers and killed. And so they robbed the camp and stole anything useful. (Maria Vesterfjell: 205; my translation)³²

The other thief on me

Although always hidden deep in the ground throughout the centuries, we the hidden children of Eve seem to need the orality and perspectives of ‘guovtti ilmmi gaskkas’ more than ever in this and age. Our literature needs it, our culture needs it, our children

³² But there were some Sámi who hid in the fells and guarded the tjuvrieh to see where they took the catch. And so they found out about the cave by Garsejohke. There they lived. But they were many – so no one dared follow them – so one never knew exactly which cave they lived in. The Sámi were not the only ones to be pestered by the thieves, so too were the peasants. But then there came a captain to Bindalen. He was ordered by the military to go east in the fells. But this captain was lost and never to be seen again. A Sámi girl later found an army boot not far from Garse lihpie and the Sámi took the boot to Bindal, where it was recognized and the owner known. Then the bailiff came with an expedition of eleven men from the hamlet, all armed with guns, and so they went through the valley by the brook. The Sámi led the troop. They followed narrow ladders in the mountain and descended steep fells – and suddenly they saw some crooks down by the brook. When these spotted the troop they walked a narrow path, climbed a ladder to one of the caves high above the brook and pulled the ladder up. The expedition camped there. Eventually, the tjuvrieh had to give in and come out – and as they climbed down one by one they were shot. From this time on the Sámi in this area were left in peace. (Maria Vesterfjell: 205; my translation)

need us to take care of them as best we can, and then we can't just feed them other peoples' stories and hope for the best. The hidden children of Eve must hear their own stories so they know who they are, lest they remain always hidden. Along with our greatest obligation they are far too valuable and we need to start taking responsibility and trust in our old ways and wisdoms, we need to take action. Even master races, settlers and tyrants may change, given that they get to hear the right stories.

Now seems to be the time when *we are destined to put in claims, responsibly and independently* as my father put it in 1969 (Juhu Niillas: 97). The traditional rules of the school and the meeting-room no longer monopolize knowledge production as we enter it whole-souled, collective, cosmopolitic. Now's the time to oust the old ghosts, our old fears, and declare ourselves son-in-law-kings and daughter-in-law-queens of these academical fields. In line with Johan Turi, the first Sámi author, we write these messages, we try to convince the living discourse of the colonial powers that we own this land, too; that it is ours, too.

There's always the fear. Of tjuvrieh; of packs of crooks. Of feeling a hand around the throat. Of getting one's head cut off. Of perishing there in the dark in the scree. Of losing our minds in fear and darkness before reaching the fireplace. Of surveillance and uncanny espionage; of error; of terror. Indigenous people can't afford to sleep. There is always the risk that someone might come and take you over piece by piece even more so than before. And just when we're falling asleep there is the sound of running and someone kicks hard: "Go immediately away from our place! We are building a dam here. We are making artillery ranges for NATO here. This is where we'll make the new road. This is where we'll build the cabins."

In reconciliation, we vent the truth about the atrocities of the colonial body, only to move on to a place in time where we can say: C'mon, it's peace. In order to do so we need to lay ourselves down as bridges and trust in literature: in its capacity to mediate. Although we don't always know the meaning right away, we should trust the storyteller and her stories to mean something particular. Even though she talks what might seem gibberish

nonsense, her old age offers wisdom of old ways and ontologies. Maybe we don't even need to know the meaning, as long as we take action and act upon her words of wisdom.

Our ofelaš must pay heed to tradition in the sense of old skills, strategies and ontologies, because 'guovtti ilmmi gaskkas' is where our wisdom is kept somehow. This constant shuttling (in-) between worlds ensures her the wisdom of different perspectives. To be on the move, to glide, to look from a fell... New landscapes and new perspectives liberate the mind and thoughts. Suddenly we're off, through the fells, and we go far away. There are no chains binding us to the same place. The perspective is constantly changing, so the angle is never the same and what is true and valid travels, too, with context. And if you are in the know, you read the landscape and know where to cross. You recognize it as being the very same fell, even though it looks quite different from another direction. You remember all the times before when you had to cross similar divides. You remember the words of your forebears; they are bodily inscribed over the years, over the centuries. You know what you've heard so well that you will never be mistaken; if twenty years pass before you see Darrevuomev with your own eyes, you always knew what it looked like. It's just like meeting an old friend after many years. Recognition hits you. And you know that when you place your foot upon the soils of Darrevuomev, you have done this before. You know your hand and you know who you are. And you know it is not impossible: somewhere here there is a way through, somewhere there is a connection. Given time and skill you might even help to remove the stem that divides different worlds and see the crack gone; peace among all of us.³³

To know the meaning

I see our fjelds
the places we live
and my heart beats
all this is my home
and I carry it within me
in my heart

³³ In this section, Kerttu Vuolab (1998: 58), Áillohaš (1983: 72), Injgor Ántte Ánte Mihkkal (21), Ing Lill Pavall (135), Anders Larsen (1928: 166) and Henrik Kvandahl (66) have a meeting on some fell.

I can hear it
when I close my eyes
I can hear it

I hear somewhere
deep within me
I hear the ground thunder
from thousands of hooves
I hear the reindeer running
or is it the noaidi drum
and the sacrificial stone
I discover
somewhere within me
I hear sound whisper shout call
with the thunder still echoing
from rib to rib

And I can hear it
even when I open my eyes
I hear it
(Áillohaš 1996: 124)

Times have changed. It is no longer considered obvious, a 'natural law', that we are to give grounds for our way of living and thinking, at least as soon as we are to be ourselves in the company of the majority people. Now, it seems we can be Sámi not only on the heights and in the turf hut or tent; where it is even romantic. If we are to take our Sámi pattern of thinking into Academy, it means airing it out, 'cause a Lapp's no good unless the wind's blowing in his nose. He can't think quickly between four walls. But when a Lapp is out on the high fells, then his brain is quite clear, and if there was a meeting-place on some fell or other, then a Lapp could state his case quite well... As soon as there is an

opening it's our own responsibility to proclaim the right to take our Sámi background with us into today's society, along with the right to cultivate our own Sámi version of Sámi culture.³⁴ Who else could do it but we ourselves? It would make us researchers become more like mediums or storytellers, not taking much credit ourselves, as orality is not about merits on an individual level. Also, it would make us 'political' within the spheres of science. Everything we do is political (collective?)... Even our clothes are provoking.³⁵ Still, we have to start risking it, in order to depoliticize it. *To cheat the powerful whenever there's the opportunity* means to adopt, adapt and break away with structures; it means turning things upside-down, and overturning power structures by taking things back: Reclaiming stories, knowledge, language. By making the material immaterial we take action and help move literary criticism away from criticising and unto open fells and fjelds less judgemental. We need to find somewhere within us a voice to whisper, shout, call. Out loud.

In taking back and overturning (adopt, adapt and break away with) things there is alienation ahead for Academy. It will be faced with the evasive unheimlich when challenged by Other languages and knowledge's, as well as its own superstructure turned upside down, twisted and made anonymous. Academy needs this in order to develop, and it knows that it needs it. The centre cannot hold. Any monopoly must rot. Is there room for Sámi epistemology in Academy? If Academy is willing to let go of the law of the colonial authority, there could be, but this involves stealing back the river.

We shall have to learn from Eanu. Eanu can teach us to pole up Ædno, the river of poetics before this our upstream journey ends in a brook that evaporates, dissolves and is gone. Eanu teaches us these things according to custom: to hold on to tradition and to pass it on, to be flexible and change the rules if need be. In this context, holding on to tradition and passing it on involves the use of Sámi terms, skills, and worldview.

³⁴ Here, my father (1969: 72) and Johan Turi (19) have a little chat

³⁵ As Ánde Somby experienced once: he was smoking a cigarette outside the Norwegian Parliament building in Oslo, wearing his gákti, when a woman approached him, asking: – What are you demonstrating against? (Ánde Somby told me this in 2004; my translation)

So we invite Stuurra-Máhtte, reanga and the siida's second to come and tell us about the material. He comes, that old man, he must be more than a hundred years old by now, he comes, and we give him something that ties itself to language. Empty tables and chairs, rooms and houses is not enough, that's nothing to tell about, in the old man's view there's nothing here that ties itself to his language. Inside the classroom of Academy there is nothing but empty tables and chairs, this is not enough.

We go out of the classroom and onto the open fells and fjelds and find a goahti and a geađgeborra and soon the talk spreads out and the material is made immaterial. We watch the goahtemuorgeassi, the calves and females, varihat and bucks, there's a limp, white geaset and behind it comes a grey, large-antlered buck, the mađuš. The old man seems to know them all. And he knows the place and all the place-names, he tells us about co-existence with the landscape; our people's use of and presence in the landscape. He turns out to be an expert on words as he tells of how each separate word acts as an element of the various different earmarks as a whole, how the combining and placing of different words characterizes each earmark, he's even able to compose a model of rules concerning the (purely) physical aspects of different words. We let the material lead the way and soon we talk about duodji and how he understands it, what the duodji means and how it's a process mainly without the use of patterns, designs or drawings, how the material, the resources and the product itself in its present shape leads the way onwards, how the completion is a matter of step-by-step. We ask him about language: the lasso ring made from antler; we ask him about language: the ptarmigan string trap. We ask him about track snow and he explains some snow terminology terms, he reads the ptarmigan's tracks for us, he writes in the snow. He throws us some riddles and uses adages to hit us about the head. We are like children and he uses oral tradition to explain nature and life. Through stories we learn to know animals, birds, fishes, flowers, trees, insects, sunshine, rain, wind, snow, rivers, lakes and the ocean. Listening to these stories we come to know that we belong to nature.³⁶

³⁶ Ingor Ántte Ánte Mihkkal (2001: 17), Uhca Ásllat (1990: 18), Juhu Niillas (1998: 37), Klemetti Näkkäjärvi (1996: 85), Gunvor Guttorm (1995: 21), Alf Isak Keskitalo (1984: 23; 1996: 51), Israel Ruong (1967a: 43), Harald Gaski (1997: 11; 2003: 185; 2003: 179, (Kerttu Vuolab (1994: 16)

Jågaš

– *One summer some years ago we decided to go and look up our relatives at Buolbmátjávri, whom we had barely met before. In our company was your brother Jørn, my brother Johan and a couple of his sons too, I think, and maybe my youngest brother Regnor. Anyway, we drove all the way up there in our cars and when we came to the lake we shouted across it, and we could see the people stirring on the other side. We thought we recognised our relatives, no one else lived there besides them anyway, and we expected them to cross the lake to fetch us in their boats. But instead, we were surprised to see them rowing across the river and away from us. We quickly gave up shouting and soon there was nothing left to do but go back the way we came from. Later we heard that they had recognised their relatives ‘the researchers’ and had hidden in fear. And come to think of it, we were all scholars. (My father, Juhu Niillas, told me this in 2006; my translation)*

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Dictionary

ENG	English
FIN	Finnish
FRE	French
GER	German
GRE	(Ancient) Greek
KSÁ	Kildin Sámi
LSÁ	Lule Sámi
LSO	Lule Sámi, old ortography
MYI	my invention
NSÁ	North Sámi
NSO	North Sámi, old ortography
NOR	Norwegian
RUS	Russian
SKS	Skolt Sámi
SSÁ	South Sámi
SSO	South Sámi, old ortography
SWE	Swedish
TSÁ	Ter Sámi

Aarborte SSÁ	Hattfjelldal NOR, a village on the Norwegian side of the border
alde, ald' NSÁ	on; upon
Anár NSÁ	Inari FIN; Enare NOR; a municipality on the Finnish side of the border
Autzi NOR, Au□e NSO	a small village between Guovdageaidnu and Karašjohka
ádestallamiid NSÁ	mimicries
áddjá NSÁ	an old man; a grandfather
áhkko LSÁ	an old woman; a grandmother
ájmuo SSO	state of mind; that which comes after death; the realm of the dead
Álahadju/Álaheadju/Álta NSÁ,	
Alten/Alta NOR,	
Alattio FIN	municipality on the west coast of Finnmark, Norwegian side
áimmu, áibmu NSÁ	world; sky; air; weather
árpa NSÁ	a brass ring used as a pointer or a die
Ávnnal MYI	a name; the ghost in the machine; the text-Thing?
ávnnaldat NSÁ	a barb
ávnnaslaš NSÁ	material; concrete
ávnnasmeahtun NSÁ	immaterial; abstract
Barb Ávnnal MYI	a name: Barb's child Ávnnal; the ghost in the machine
bánna NSÁ	banishment, excommunication
bánnán NSÁ	a name; a characteristic deriving from 'bánne'
Bánne NSÁ	a surname corresponding with bánne; bánni
bánne, bánni NSÁ	a son; a real man; that fine fellow (boasting, praising; nickname); some sort of hero (Konrad Nielsen <i>Lapp Dictionary. Based on the dialects of Polmak, Karasjok and Kautokeino</i> , The Institute for Comparative Research in Human Culture, Universitetsforlaget, Oslo 1979 (1932-1962) I: 129)
beaivi NSÁ	a day; the sun
Billávuotna NSÁ	Billefjord NOR, on the Norwegian side of the border
biras, birrasa NSÁ	around something; environment; reindeer herding ground
birgejupmi NSÁ	survival (knowledge); here, part of a method that involves relying on indigenous knowledge
birgengoansta NSÁ	the art of survival
birget NSÁ	to manage; to cope; to survive
'birget vaikko	

čáhcegeađgge alde' NSÁ	the ability to get on by very little; being able to cope absolutely anywhere (Johan K. H. Kalstad: 27)
birkarlar SWE	Pirkkalaiset FIN, a group of Swedish and Finnish traders and trappers who, for approximately 300 years, explored, colonized and governed the forest area extending from the eastern coast of the Gulf of Bothnia to the Northern Norwegian hinterland. In 1277, the Swedish kings gave the Birkarlar the right to exploit this wilderness, amassing furs and fish and levying taxes on the Sami population. In return, the Birkarlar paid a tribute to the royal treasury. These frontiersmen had Norwegian and Russian counterparts with whom they shared the tasks of subduing pagan tribes and developing the river and portage routes. They brought significant revenues and commerce to the advanced centres of Scandinavia and northeastern Europe. In 1552 Sweden's King Gustav I Vasa revoked the Birkarlar's taxing rights in the area in favour of direct royal control and the frontier company passed from the historical scene. (http://www.britannica.com/eb/article-9015370/Birkarlar)
bocčuk manni hui čor'ga NSO	the reindeer went very neatly (without spreading out too much) (Konrad Nielsen I: 419)
bojá NSÁ	“one who is a very fine fellow” (Konrad Nielsen I: 218)
Bojá NSÁ	a version of the Somby name; a surname corresponding with bánni Bossekop NOR
Bossegohppi NSÁ	one of the three villages that constitute the modern town of Alta, Norway
bora NSÁ	a cavity in a scree (covered with boulders) for hiding something in, or a pile of stones for hiding something in, especially for storing meat (generally ill-gotten) out-of-doors (Konrad Nielsen I: 233)
Buolbmátjávri NSÁ, Polmakvannet NOR, Pulmankijärvi FIN Cape Vuoskonjarga ENG	a lake in the Deatnu Valley, on the border of Norway and Finland west of Duortnosjávri NSÁ; lake Torneträsk SWE on the Swedish side
čáhcegeađgge NSÁ	a ‘water rock’, a rock in a stream or in water generally
čakča-golgadeapmi NSÁ	drift-net fishing (in river) (Konrad Nielsen II: 171)
čearru NSÁ	flat highland area with little vegetation; a fell
čihkkon čivggat NSÁ	
Čiesti NSÁ	Veidnesklubben NOR, on the Norwegian side of the border
čor'ga NSO	cleanly; tidily; carefully; nicely; economically (Konrad Nielsen I: 419)
čor'ga val'det suiniid NSO	pick the hay up carefully (so that nothing is left behind) (Konrad Nielsen I: 419)
Čorgaš NSÁ	the Nordkyn Peninsula NOR on the Norwegian side of the border
Čorgaš-čorgi MYI	where we live (in our minds, in literature), forever telling stories, where words are animated, a world between worlds guovtti ilmme gaskkas.
-čor'ge NSO	in certain expressions of time itself, in the most restricted sense: dalve-čor'ge – winter itself, gässe-čor'ge – summer itself, iggja-čor'ge – night itself (Konrad Nielsen I: 419)
ČSV NSÁ	”Show Sámi Spirit”; a literary ‘movement’; negative nicknames for Sámi
čuđe, čuđit NSÁ	packs of thieves roaming Sápmi in the old days (thought to originate from Russia; the region of Karelia; or Sweden, alternatively), corresponds to SSO tjuvrieh
cuvccas NSÁ	a legend; a saga; a (funny) story
dajahusat NSÁ	yoik lyrics
dalve- čor'ge NSO	winter itself, in the most restricted sense relating to time (Konrad Nielsen I: 419)
Charybdis GRE Sicily	a mythical sea monster noted by Homer; a whirlpool off the coast of
Dagbladet NOR	one of the biggest newspapers in Norway

Danningan	near the Sávsoen valley, on the Norwegian side of the border
Daranakka SSO	a fell near the Sávsoen valley, on the Norwegian side of the border
Darrevuomev LSÁ	Tarradalen NOR, on the Norwegian side of the border
dárjeigiella NSÁ	Ter Sámi language, spoken on the Kola peninsula
dáidda NSÁ	art
Deatnogátte Nuoraid NSÁ	The Youth of the Tana River, a popular folk rock group
Deatnu NSÁ	Tana NOR, Teeno FIN: the highest-yielding salmon river in Northern Europe; a border river of Norway and Finland; a beautiful river valley and home to many of the sources in this thesis
der Untermensch GER	“Under Man;” subhuman; a person considered racially or socially inferior; a term used in Nazi racial ideology
différance FRE	a term coined by Jacques Derrida combining two senses of the French verb <i>différer</i> (to differ, and to defer or postpone) in a noun spelt differently from <i>différence</i> but pronounced in the same way
diida, diiddat NSÁ	a sign; a belief bound to a certain phenomenon; ‘old superstition’
diidagoansta NSÁ	the interpretation of signs
diiddastallan NSÁ	a method that involves the interpretation of signs and paying heed to tradition
diiddastallat NSÁ	to work magic; to practise witchcraft
duođaštallan NSÁ	a method that highlights the bearing of witness (through storytelling) and relies on the testimonies of Elders and storytellers; part of Fellism
duođašteaddji,	
duođašteaddjit NSÁ	a witness, a soothsayer
duođaštit NSÁ	to testify, bear witness, confirm; pronounce (absolution) (Konrad Nielsen I: 585)
duođaštus NSÁ	evidence, testimony, confirmation; character, testimonial; receipt (Konrad Nielsen I: 585)
duddjot NSÁ	to make, create works of art, handicrafts, literature
duodji NSÁ	applied art/works of art, handicrafts, literature
duojár NSÁ	someone who performs duoddji
duottar NSÁ	‘fell (country), tundra’; etymology: the fell, a mountainous formation
often	with a curved summit rising above the tree line, is one of the major features in the natural environment of the Saami. The North Saami name for it is <i>duottar</i> , which means not only an individual piece of high ground but also a whole area of fells. The word has corresponding forms in most of the Saami languages, although counterparts appear to be missing in Ume and Ter Saami... It has been suggested that the original early Proto-Finnic word might be related to a number of words in Samoyedic languages meaning to tramp or to travel. The word has been borrowed from Saami into Finnish, where it has the form <i>tunturi</i> , and into Russian, where the word <i>tundra</i> means a treeless area of vegetation north of the forest line. Through Russian this originally Saami word has passed into a wide number of other languages (e.g. Finnish, Swedish, English and German). (Irja Seurujärvi-Kari, Ulla-Maija Kulonen, Risto Pulkkinen (Eds.) <i>The Saami. A Cultural Encyclopaedia</i> , Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura, Vammala 2005 p.77)
dålle SSÁ	a bonfire
Enodat NSÁ	Enontekiö FIN, a municipality on the Finnish side of the border
eanu NSÁ	mother’s brother, maternal uncle; mother’s male cousin
eatnanvuoláš NSÁ	underground earth spirits; the netherworld people; the subterranean;
feallá, feallát NSÁ	a North Norwegian fisherman
Fellism MYI	my method
Fennoscandia ENG	region in Europe, incl. Scandinavia, Finland, the Kola peninsula, and Karelia
Gáhti LSÁ	a Lule Sámi storyteller (corresponds to <i>Karen</i>) of Svernjunnjá LSÁ

Gáhti effect, the MYI uniting	(Pålsommerseth NOR) evoking feelings through storytelling beyond the biases of reason and contradictions by addressing a reason that coincides with a way of understanding that appears oral; original to man and not enforced upon the mind. These features are highly poetic and make up an essence of literature, which enables us to see; it grants us the opportunity to internalize unknown knowledge and cosmology; it readies us so that we may understand people with whom we would otherwise have no relation, and know places we have never been to.
gákti NSÁ	the traditional Sámi costume, the national Sámi costume
gal jávoheapme oahpaha NSÁ	the silent, the one who does not nag, will teach the children how to dress properly (Asta Balto 2003: 156)
geađgeborra, bora NSÁ	a cavity in a scree (covered with boulders) for hiding something in, or a pile of stones for hiding something in, especially for storing meat (generally ill-gotten) out-of-doors (Konrad Nielsen I: 233)
geađgi NSÁ	a stone
geaset NSÁ	a calf born late in spring or early summer
Giela giela NSÁ	to trap (or coil) language; Paulus Utsi's poetry collection of 1974
giella NSÁ	language; a ptarmigan string trap; a lasso ring made from antler
giella-čorgi MYI	'language itself', relating to time, close to meaningless as it's alienating due to lack of periods and capitals and because it breaks (away) with expectations in a free and 'artistic' manner with emphasis on form, opting for a placetime in language where content and form are finally one. Also, Giella-čorgi is alienating due to the text's different levels and sub-levels, parenthesis upon parenthesis, going in and in, down and down, up and up, seeking contexts in all directions simultaneously: bewildering, confusing. Alienating. And, Giella-čorgi is alienating due to the general playing with orthographic rules etc like-this-one-here-right??!! AND TAKING LIBERTIES IN LANGUAGE, BEING CHEEKY, PROVOKING, RUNNING AWAY WITH LANGUAGE
gietkka NSÁ	a cradle in which the child can be carried
girdá, girdit NSÁ	flies; to fly
girji NSÁ	a book; a pattern
girječálli NSÁ	'a writer of books'
girjjálašvuotta NSÁ	literature; "patternliness"; "bookliness," that is, something which follows a pattern or is pertaining to books (Harald Gaski 2004: 381)
giron NSÁ	the fell ptarmigan, <i>Lagus mutus</i>
goabdesájgge LSÁ	drum time; the time when drums were used
goadnil NSO	still water without any current, near the bank or by a stone in the river; backwater; back eddy (Israel Ruong 1967: 44)
goahte LSÁ, goahti NSÁ, gâtesai SSO, kâätte LSÁ	'earth kota' ENG; dwelling place of which there are two types: the permanent, which is an earthen hut covered with turf; and the mobile, which is lightweight and consists of poles and a tent fabric (earlier: skins or woollen blankets); hollow, cavity or room of a specified kind; lair; den; uterus; womb
goahtemuorgeassi NSÁ	the reindeer buck who pulls the sledge with the tent poles (Konrad Nielsen II: 153)
goaiku, goaikut NSÁ	drips; to drip
goavdes SSO	bowl drums
gol'ga NSO	floats (the river floats very neatly)
golggotmánnu NSÁ	October
guoi'ka NSO	a cataract (navigable by boat) (Israel Ruong 1967: 44); rapid(s)
guoržu NSÁ	one who has the evil eye, a bird of ill omen (Konrad Nielsen II: 225)
Guovdageaidnu NSÁ	Kautokeino NOR, municipality on the Norwegian side of the border

Guovdageaidnu days, the ENG	The plan by the Norwegian government to construct a dam for hydro-electric power on the <i>Álaheaju/Guov'dagæino</i> River, and the resistance and demonstrations against it, began in 1968... We constructed a <i>lavvu</i> outside the Norwegian Parliament and began a hunger strike. Norway sent police to arrest us. (Niillas Somby 1992: 4)
guovtti ilmmi gaskkas, guovtti áimmu gaskkas NSÁ gässe- čor'ge NSO	between two worlds (or skies, 'airs'); confused; having visions summer itself, in the most restricted sense relating to time (Konrad Nielsen I: 419)
gævnjis NSO	a cataract (difficult or impossible to navigate by boat) (Israel Ruong 1967: 44); big rapids with falls in a large river; as proper name: Great Falls (Konrad Nielsen II: 284) in the Deatnu River a waterfall (Israel Ruong 1967: 44)
gâr'zi NSO Haparanda Hábmer LSÁ háldi, hálddit NSÁ	Hápmir NSÁ, Hammarøy NOR, on the Norwegian side of the border underground earth spirits; the netherworld people; the subterraneans; protecting spirits Helsinki FIN/ENG; Helsingfors SWE
Helsset NSÁ hoahkamiid NSÁ Horbma NSÁ Hälsingar SWE iggja-čor'ge NSO	hints, miniature stories a village in the Deatnu river valley, on the Norwegian side people from Hälsingör, Denmark the night itself, relating to time in the most restricted sense, (Konrad Nielsen I: 419)
ilmmi, ilbmi NSÁ irján NSÁ irján-čorgi MYI Ipmil NSÁ ja NSÁ, jih SSÁ jápma-aimo NSÁ javoheapme NSÁ Johkamohkki NSÁ johttisámi NSÁ joik, joiking NOR joik has more power than gunpowder ENG	world; sky; air; weather the last summer day the last summer day itself, a certain expression of time God and the world of the dead; the lower world the silent; the quiet one the town of Jokkmokk SWE, on the Swedish side of the border 'nomads'; reindeerherders; literally: 'moving' or 'trekking' Sámi juoigan NSÁ, yoik SWE
Jukkasjärvi SWE Juleveatnu LSÁ juohke NSÁ Juohksáhkká NSÁ	a word play on the 1980 Norwegian Eurovision Song Contest contribution song/joik called "Sámiid ædnan" (Sámi land) municipality on the Swedish side; Johan Turi's homeplace the great river Stora Luleälv, on the Swedish side of the border every the second daughter of Máttaráhkká, a (female) god to whom the Sami would give offerings, to ensure that she changed the girl into a boy in the mother's womb (Vuokko Hirvonen 1995: 47)
juoigan NSÁ jähna-käterikke SSO Jämtland SWE jågaš NSO	the traditional Sámi way of singing; yoik 'sleeping-berths for the giants' (Inga-Maria Mulk: 42) a county on the Swedish side of the border a small river (Israel Ruong 1967: 44); stream; the wavy blue stripe down the middle of a woman's komag-band (Konrad Nielsen II: 413)
jákka NSO jákka gol'ga hui čor'ga NSO	a river (Israel Ruong 1967: 44) the river floats very neatly (it follows the river bank without exceeding it) (Konrad Nielsen I: 419)
Karašjohka NSÁ Karelians, Karjel NSO	Karasjok NOR, on the Norwegian side of the border (people from) the region of Karelia, former Russian, today under Finnish jurisdiction
Kautokeino NOR Kautokeino error, the ENG	Guovdageaidnu NSÁ, on the Norwegian side of the border The happening that Johan Turi calls the Kautokeino error (226) describes the conflicts which arose between the Sámi and the

	Norwegian officials of Kautokeino in the mid-nineteenth century (Risten Sokki: 136)
koaili NSÁ	a big and ugly man
komag NOR	gápmagat NSÁ; Sámi moccasins; brogues
koovštoov vad SKÁ	to become ill; to receive a noaidi's arrow (Jelena Sergejeva 1997: 30)
Kristiania NOR	the former name of Oslo, capitol of Norway
Kven, kvener NOR	kveeni FIN; láddelažžat NSÁ; an ethnic minority in Norway descended from
	Finnish (often Sámi) peasants and fishermen who emigrated from the northern parts of Finland and Sweden to Northern Norway in the 18th and 19th centuries. In 1996 the Kvens were granted minority status, and in 2005 the Kven language was recognized as a minority language in Norway.
kårså LSO	valley (Lars Levi Læstadius: 258)
káte SSO	goahte LSÁ, goahti NSÁ; an earthen hut; a dwelling place; a home
Lapp Codicil, the	the Lapp Codicil of 1751, often referred to as the Sami Magna Carta is an addendum to the Strømstad Treaty of 1751 that defined the Norwegian-Swedish border. This special codicil formalised the rights of the Sámi to continue with their traditional migratory reindeer herding across the newly formalised border between the then Danish territory of Norway and Sweden. The codicil constituted explicit recognition by the Nordic states of Sámi rights to land and water.
	mobile home which is lightweight and consists of poles and a tent fabric (earlier: skins or wollen blankets)
lavvu, lávvu NSÁ	Ifjordfjellet NOR, on the Norwegian side of the border
Lágesduottar NSÁ	is; to be
lea; leat NSÁ	animal's rest (lying down), resting position (Konrad Nielsen II: 537)
livas NSÁ	a bird
loddi NSÁ	the town Lovozero on the Kola peninsula, on the Russian side of the border
Lujávri NSÁ	
border	
luohti NSÁ	a yoik; a song
Læstadian, Læstadianism ENG	a follower of Lars Levi Læstadius; a Christian Sámi movement
mainazy juhted TSÁ	the telling of stories; 'to pour stories' (Jelena Sergejeva 1997: 30)
maņuš NSÁ	the last in the herd
Masi NOR, Máze NSÁ	a Sámi village not far from Guovdageaidnu
máddu NSÁ	gigantic mythical animal from which the animal species in question is supposed to be descended" (Konrad Nielsen II: 611); the ancient mother of a certain species; a species-protecting parent; origin; root (fig.); the first known ancestor of the family
	knowledge, skill (Konrad Nielsen II: 649)
máhtu NSÁ	story/stories, fairytale(s)
máinnas, máidnasiid NSÁ	the Sámi narrative art; the art of storytelling
muitalandáidu NSÁ	a story
muitalus NSÁ	the lifestories of Lars Hætta and Anders Bær
Muitalusat NSÁ	<i>Turi's Book of Lappland</i> by Johan Turi
Muitalus sámiiid birra NSÁ	guardian spirit received by children in connection with the naming ceremony (Elina Helander 1995: 7)
nárrideapmi NSÁ	a kind of teasing; playful way of being together (Asta Balto 2003: 160)
njavvi NSÁ	the slowly gliding part of a watercourse, usually with tiny eddies on the surface (very often with reference to large waters) (Israel Ruong 1967: 44); a stream; small rapids in a river; a lane, lead, which does not freeze even in winter
njull KSÁ	noaidi arrows (Jelena Sergejeva 1997: 30)
njulltie'tti SKS	people skilled in noaidi arrows (Jelena Sergejeva 1997: 30)
noaide, noaidi, noaidit NSÁ,	
noajdde, noajdde LSÁ	

nåjde SSÁ	a mediator between the spiritual world, the world of the dead and the world of people; a shaman
noaiddástatallat NSÁ	to commit shaman sorcery
Notozero RUS	a township south of the Kola peninsula, on the Russian side of the border
nubbien ájmuo SSO	the other world or condition; the world of the dead
nuolaid lue'stied SKS	to send noaidi arrows (Jelena Sergejeva 1997: 30)
nuoll SKS	noaidi arrows (Jelena Sergejeva 1997: 30)
oahpaha, oahpahit NSÁ	teaches; to teach
ofelaš NSÁ	a pathfinder, a guide and counsellor
ostranenje RUS	poetic alienation, when that which is known suddenly seems unfamiliar so that we see things differently, anew
Point Zero ENG	'Nullpunktet' NOR, the site of demonstration against the damming of the Áлта/Guovdageaidnu River
rabpmere SSO	thieves
Rabpmeretjak SSO	a hill near the Sávsoen valley, on the Norwegian side of the border
Raejvie-båoune SSO	a fell near the Sávsoen valley, on the Norwegian side of the border
Rákkonjára NSÁ	reindeer herding district/siida No. 7, on the Várjjat/Varanger peninsula, on the Norwegian side of the border
rávga LSÁ	draug NOR; sea monster
reaŋga NSÁ	reindeerherder; (farm etc.) manservant, man, hand (Konrad Nielsen III:535)
roggik NSO	a hole; ditch, depression; hollow
rogtrae ENG	suovvamuorra NSÁ, 'smoke pole', a cross pole below the smoke hole, upon which the iron pot chain hangs
-rohkki NSÁ	someone deceased
Russian formalism	an influential school of literary criticism in Russia from the 1910s to the 1930s. It includes the work of a number of highly influential Russian and Soviet scholars who revolutionised literary criticism between 1914 and the 1930s by establishing the specificity and autonomy of poetic language and literature... The movement's members are widely considered the founders of modern literary criticism... Russian formalism was a diverse movement, producing no unified doctrine, and no consensus amongst its proponents on a central aim to their endeavours. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russian_Formalism)
Ruoša-Tsjuders NSO	Russian Čudit NSÁ
ságastallat NSÁ	to talk, converse
ságastallan NSÁ	a talk; conversation; communication; here, a method involving the use of stories and other oral expressions pedagogically, for making points etc; part of Fellism
Sáгат NSÁ	a Sámi newspaper, mainly in Norwegian
sámegeiella NSÁ	Sámi language(s)
(the) Sámi, Sami, Saami, Samis etc ENG (supposedly)	...all mean the same (only the spelling differs in English due to a lack of consensus) the indigenous people of Sápmi, i.e. Northern Scandinavia and the Kola peninsula
Sápmi, Sámi eadnan NSÁ	Sámiiland, Lapland, the Sámi area
sátneuojár NSÁ	'a crafter of words' (Harald Gaski 1997: 11)
sátni	word; cuts in reindeer earmarks
Scylla GRE	a Homeric six-headed sea monster; a rock shoal on the Italian side of the strait of Messina
sealli NSÁ	rime
Sheherazade ENG	a legendary Persian queen, the storyteller of <i>One thousand and one nights</i> ;
sieidi NSÁ	sacrificial stone
siida NSÁ, sijdda LSÁ,	

sii'da NSO, sida NSO siidaguoibmi NSÁ soabadit NSÁ soadji, soajain NSÁ	home; society; reindeer herding unit; territory a siida companion; a person from the same rural community to settle (with), reconcile with, agree upon, arrange a wing (also fig.: a sleeve; part of fjord or big river where the reindeer swim across;etc), from the wing
spivka NSÁ staalo, stalo NSO, stállu NSÁ, stállo LSÁ, staaloeħ SSO	a joke originally tax collectors, bullies who raided the Sámi dwellings, today thought of as mean spirits (Anders Larsen 1947: 40); “steel” ‘stállu’s silver’
stallo-silba NSO Stalodeavah SSO stalo-gâtesai SSO stalotomter SWE Stáigu NSÁ Stilla NOR	a small hill east of Daranakka, near by Sávsoen vuemie ‘the staalos’ hut sites’ Stalo sites; ‘Stalo-circles’; ‘Stalo-graves’ Steigen NOR, on the Norwegian side of the border the place of demonstration against the damming of the Guovdageaidnu/Kautokeino river valley on the Norwegian
Stora Luleälv SWE suhkkolastin NSÁ	Juleveatnu LSÁ, the great river on the Swedish side shuttling (as in post-colonial theory); rowing (between different perspectives); here, part of Fellism, a method based on an old Sámi strategy
Sávsoen tjahke SSO Sávsoen vuemie SSO terra nullius	the Susen Mountain, on the Norwegian side the Susen Valley, on the Norwegian side a Latin expression deriving from Roman Law meaning “nobody's land” i.e. “empty land”, applying the general principle of res nullius to real estate, in terms of private ownership and/or as territory under public law. Modern applications of the term terra nullius stem from 16th and 17th century doctrines describing land that was unclaimed by a sovereign state recognized by European powers. This modern term refers to a specific application of the concept of res nullius. During the era of European colonialism the doctrine gave legal force to the claiming and settlement of lands occupied by "backward" people, where no system of laws or ownership of property was held to exist. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Terra_nullius)
Thanatos GRE	death drive; the desire for death; in Greek mythology, the daemon personification of death
tjahke SSO Tjudeh, Tsjuders NSO	a mountain, a fell Čuđit NSÁ, packs of thieves roaming Sápmi in the old days (thought to originate from Russia; the region of Karelia; or Sweden, alternatively), corresponds to tjuvrieh SSÁ
tjuvrieh SSÁ Troanddin NSÁ Tromsa NSÁ Tsuuds, Tsuudi NSO	thieves, corresponds with NSÁ čuđe, čuđit Trondheim NOR, a coastal city on the Norwegian side of the border Tromsø NOR, a coastal town on the Norwegian side Čuđit NSÁ, packs of thieves roaming Sápmi in the old days (thought to originate from Russia, the region of Karelia, or Sweden), corresponds to tjuvrieh SSÁ
ulda, ulddat NSÁ unheimlich GER Utsi NSÁ vacca NSÁ	underground earth spirits; the subterraneans; the netherworld people uncanny a surname translating as ‘small’ (Aage Solbakk: 140) the first snow in the autumn; new snow that has just fallen on old snow; track snow, important to both hunter and herdsman (Israel Ruong 1967: 43)
varra NSÁ varihat NSÁ vietjere SSÁ Vilhelmina SWE volé, voler FRE	blood two-year-old reindeer males a drum hammer (Maja Dunfjeld: 89) a town and municipality in Västerbotten County, on the Swedish side steals, to steal; flies, to fly

vuemie SSÁ	a valley
vuohki NSÁ	way; manner, as in <i>Sámi vuohki</i> , which is best translated as ‘Sami ways’, that is, way of being, way of living, mentality and values, i.e. Sámi culture (Harald Gaski 1997: 10)
Vuolle Buolbmátjohka NSÁ	the lower parts of the Buolbmat/Polmak (border) River
yoik SWE	juoigat NSÁ; to sing
ädnam káátte SSO	‘earth kota’ (Lars Levi Læstadius: 142)
ædno NSO	a big river (Israel Ruong 1967: 44), as in the proper name Deatnu NSÁ, Dædno NSO
åssjalommes SSÁ	mental activity; thinking; meaning; idea (Maja Dunfjeld: 89); the frontpage of this treatise



ISBN xxx-xx-xxxx-xxx-x