

Culture Contact in Evenki Land

Inner Asia Book Series

Edited by

David Sneath
Caroline Humphrey
Uradyn E. Bulag

VOLUME 7

The titles published in this series are listed at brill.com/ias

Culture Contact in Evenki Land

A Cybernetic Anthropology of the Baikal Region

By

Tatiana Safonova and István Sántha



GLOBAL
ORIENTAL

LEIDEN • BOSTON

2013

All photographs included in this volume are owned by the authors.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Safonova, Tatiana, author.

Culture contact in Evenki land : a cybernetic anthropology of the Baikal Region / by Tatiana Safonova and István Sántha.

pages ; cm. -- (Inner Asia book series ; volume 7)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-90-04-23306-5 (hardback : alk. paper)

1. Evenki (Asian people)--Russia (Federation)--Baikal, Lake, Region. 2. Evenki (Asian people)--Russia (Federation)--Baikal, Lake, Region--Social life and customs. 3. Baikal, Lake, Region (Russia)--Social life and customs. I. Sántha, István, 1968- author. II. Title. III. Series: Inner Asia book series ; no. 7.

DK759.E83S24 2013

305.8941--dc23

2013013231

This publication has been typeset in the multilingual "Brill" typeface. With over 5,100 characters covering Latin, IPA, Greek, and Cyrillic, this typeface is especially suitable for use in the humanities. For more information, please see www.brill.com/brill-typeface.

ISBN 978-90-04-23306-5 (hardback)

ISBN 978-90-04-25423-7 (e-book)

Copyright 2013 by Koninklijke Brill NV, Leiden, The Netherlands.

Koninklijke Brill NV incorporates the imprints Brill, Global Oriental, Hotei Publishing, IDC Publishers and Martinus Nijhoff Publishers.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, translated, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without prior written permission from the publisher.

Authorization to photocopy items for internal or personal use is granted by Koninklijke Brill NV provided that the appropriate fees are paid directly to The Copyright Clearance Center, 222 Rosewood Drive, Suite 910, Danvers, MA 01923, USA.

Fees are subject to change.

This book is printed on acid-free paper.

CONTENTS

Illustrations	vii
Acknowledgements	ix
Introduction	1
1. Companionship and <i>Pokazukha</i> : Flexible and Stable Elements of Evenki Culture	26
2. <i>Pokazukha</i> in Public Life: The Bugarikta House of Culture	48
3. <i>Manakan</i> and <i>Andaki</i> : Gender Distinctions and Personal Autonomy Among Evenki	68
4. Evenki People and their Dogs: Communicating by Sharing Contexts	86
5. Hunting: Ethos and Adaptation among Evenki and Buryats	100
6. Perpetual Outsiders: Local Chinese Ethos in Baikal Region	118
7. Evenki Land and Walking Mind	136
Conclusion	167
Bibliography	175
Index of Authors	181
Index of Subjects	183

ILLUSTRATIONS

Figures

1. Young hunters: catching	18
2. Young hunters: holding	19
3. Repeating after adults	20
4. Evenki castrating a calf at Irgichi's winter camp	28
5. Evenki distributing objects to sacrifice and consume at the annual ritual	36
6. Bugarikta House of Culture	52
7. Nadya with Ivan, Nadya's colleague, Volodya and Natasha before the High Water Ritual	70
8. Mira with Nadya's puppy	90
9. Taiga Buryats hunting for bears	102
10. Evenki driver preparing a <i>vezdekhod</i> to transport nephrite from the mine	130
11. Stills from video footage of Irgichi walking	141

Maps

1.1. Topography and Infrastructure in Bugarikta	150
1.2. Topography and Infrastructure in Mawut	151
2.1. Roads and Paths in Bugarikta	154
2.2. Roads and Paths in Mawut	155
3.1. Companionship and <i>Pokazukha</i> in Bugarikta	156
3.2. Companionship and <i>Pokazukha</i> in Mawut	157
4.1. Movement of Evenki Children in Bugarikta	160
4.2. Movement of Evenki Children in Mawut	161
5.1. Movement of Evenki Dogs in Bugarikta	162
5.2. Movement of Evenki Dogs in Mawut	163

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The anthropology we present here is not an entirely rosy account of our experiences in Evenki land, but we think this book changed our lives for the better. We would like to thank all of those whom we met in the field and who were both nice and awful to us. Their influence on this book is substantial.

Without the intellectual support that we received from various scholars this book could not have been written. In particular, we are grateful to Roberte Hamayon, Mihály Sárkány, Finn Sivert Nielsen, Nikolai Ssorin-Chaikov, Piers Vitebsky, David G. Anderson, Heonik Kwon, Nurit Bird-David, Peter Schweitzer, Katalin Uray-Kóhalmi, György Kara and Caroline Humphrey for giving us the encouragement to develop the arguments that appear in this text, and for the letters of recommendation, reviews of chapters, feedback on presentations, and the occasional look of reassurance that they provided.

We received important comments and questions from many anthropologists and friends who showed interest in our work. Discussions with them advanced our analysis and helped us to refine our thinking. For this, we are especially indebted to Joachim Otto Habeck, Joachim Görlich, Aimar Ventsel, Olga Ulturgasheva, Marc Brightman, Vanessa Grotti, Art Leete, Brian Donahoe, Kirill Istomin, Csaba Mészáros, László Lajtai, Virginie Vaté, Olga Porovoznjuk and Anton Kramberger. It is an honour and a joy to be a part of this intellectual generation and community.

With no small measure of patience and skill, our editor Tristram Barrett helped us to polish our manuscript. Although we wrote this book in English, the first draft certainly benefited from Lisa Nové's rendering of our more blatant Eastern Europeanisms into conventional English.

This book also had its victims. We did not always spend enough time with our parents and children, but we highly value their love, emotional and intellectual support.

At various stages this project was supported by grants and fellowships from the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology, Halle/Saale, Germany; Ministry of Culture and Education of the Republic of Hungary; Wenner-Gren Foundation, Chicago; Hungarian Scientific Research Fund (OTKA), Budapest; Mobility Fellowship (European Union-Hungary); Marie Curie Intra-European Fellowship; Keizo Obuchi Research

Fellowship, UNESCO; Young Scientist Fellowship, INTAS, Brussels; Institute of Advanced Studies, Graz; Eötvös Fellowship, Budapest; and the Tatiana Foundation, Ulan-Ude, Russia. We gratefully recognise their support.

The arguments that we put forward here were previously published as articles (Safonova and Sántha 2007, 2010a/b/c/d, 2011a/b/c, 2012), but they have been substantially modified in the writing of this book. We thank the publishers for giving us permission to use them in the present work.

INTRODUCTION

This book offers an understanding of culture contact through the lens of ‘cybernetic anthropology’ that we develop by drawing on the work of Gregory Bateson. The focus of this book is on Evenki, an indigenous group of hunter-gatherers and reindeer herders who occupy a vast terrain in Central and Eastern Siberia but who share this territory today with the numerous and diverse incomers. Contacts with these outsiders are important and, we argue, constitutive. This includes not merely contacts with such outsiders as ourselves and other anthropologists — although we submit that ethnography is a form of culture contact. We would go as far as to suggest that Evenki culture is to some extent a product of contact with outsiders. We define this process broadly as that of ‘culture contact’, and our goal in this book is to chart how these contacts are manifested, what is ‘culture’ in this contact situation, and if culture articulation and manipulation can be seen as serving strategic ends. Finally, if it takes at least two cultures to sustain the concept of culture contact, what are the forms of this cultural co-existence? Can it be described as a dynamic equilibrium?

We also aim to reintroduce and broaden the cybernetic approach in anthropology. Cybernetics – the study of communication and automatic control within natural and mechanical systems – is something of a niche subject in anthropology. It builds on Gregory Bateson’s pioneering research in the 1930s; this approach has been used particularly in studies of local ecology and ritual in Papua New Guinea where Bateson worked but it rarely travelled outside this territory. In our view, Bateson’s theoretical language can be usefully applied to study the ethos of hunter-gatherers, state-society interactions, and culture contact in the daily lives of the inhabitants of the Baikal region of Eastern Siberia.¹

Evenki: Egalitarian Nomads

The Evenki are one of a number of hunter-gatherer groups living in the Russian north. Numbering around 30,000, they speak a northern

¹ Baikal region is a fictionalised name for the area around Lake Baikal that straddles Irkutsk *oblast’* and the Buryat republic of the Russian Federation. Local place names and names of informants have been changed throughout the text in order to preserve the anonymity of our informants.

Manchu-Tungus language and live as small dispersed groups in camps and villages over a vast area that extends between the Yenisei River and the Pacific Ocean.² They occupy the taiga, a belt of pine forest that separates the pastures of the steppe to the south and the vast permafrost of the tundra to the north. Winter temperatures can reach as low as -60°C and although the last ten years have seen increasingly hot summers there is not a single month when the temperature does not drop below 0°C at night. Mosquitoes and other pests are a perpetual nuisance. There is limited infrastructure, with roads, bridges, telephone networks and emergency services almost entirely absent.

Despite the changes wrought by population decline, language loss, sedentarisation, collectivisation, and the ultimate collapse of the Soviet system, the Evenki have succeeded in maintaining their distinctive egalitarian and animistic culture. Indeed, this book is in no small part an attempt to understand the practices by which the Evenki have managed to remain Evenki in the face of such changes. Although we discuss these at length in the following chapters, it is worth addressing here three aspects that shed light on this issue; egalitarianism, mobility, and contact with people from other cultures.

Practical Egalitarians. As with many hunter-gatherer groups across the world (Lee & Daly 1999), egalitarian relationships are the basis of Evenki social organisation. Some elements of egalitarianism occur in all communities including hierarchically structured ones. Instances of egalitarianism are rather frequently romanticised in western writing and their association with ideals of freedom and higher emotional being have inspired various utopian projects – intentional communities, anarchist movements, communism.³ Unfortunately, such selective interest in idealised forms of egalitarian interaction limits the possibility of understanding the nature of egalitarianism in its practical accomplishments. We therefore advance a systematic analysis of the components of Evenki egalitarianism that penetrate into all spheres of action. We believe that such an approach

² The 1995 census puts the Evenki population at 29,900 in Russia. A further 35,000 Evenki live in northern China (NECEP 2012). Before the advent of Soviet power, the Evenki lived in small groups of up to ten people and they were dispersed over a territory of greater than 1.5 million square kilometres. Sedentarisation and collectivisation resulted in the Evenki living close to or in villages populated by Russians, Buryats, or Yakuts. The resulting concentration of 200–300 Evenki in any given area, however, does not in any way imply that they form a homogenous Evenki community.

³ Indeed, as Nikolai Ssorin-Chaikov (2003) notes, the Evenki were sites for the application and verification of Marxist ideas about 'primitive communism'.

enables us to formulate a more accurate and subtle model of egalitarian social organisation, which better reflects its flexible and unstable nature.

Evenki society maintains its coherency through mechanisms other than the techniques of planning, management and governance with which westerners (and Soviet and Russian social engineers) are familiar. The activities of Evenki are coordinated not by rules, regulations, commands or other verbal forms of communication, but by the skill of ostensive communication and the experience of involvement in common activities, a process we refer to in the book as companionship. This aspect of communication is a practical consequence of the egalitarian organisation of Evenki society, which, understood in all of its complexity, presents a living alternative to the western hierarchically structured form of social organisation.

Mobility. One of our key findings in this book is the extent to which movement plays an important part in the maintenance of Evenki culture. Hunter-gatherer communities are usually very mobile and the journeys they undertake in a year may amount to many thousands of kilometres. Modern hunter-gatherers, even when sedentary, manage to spend most of their time travelling, hunting and foraging in the vast territories surrounding their villages and camps. The Evenki of Baikal region are a fine example of such a mobile ethos. During our time in the field, the everyday routines at camps and villages consisted of either packing and preparing for various journeys to the central settlements and the taiga or waiting for visitors and welcoming returning travellers. Sometimes journeys would consume most of a family's resources, expending quantities of petrol and time without bringing obvious benefit to the family. Yet the emotional reward of movement seemed to outweigh any material losses.

Previous approaches have studied movement as either part of a subsistence strategy or as a form of cultural transmission. Robert Kelly (1995), for example, proposes that the most common goal of movement, besides changing locations, is to get information about the current and potential state of resources in given environment. This echoes traditional concern with the environment and resources that are used by hunter-gatherers, but Kelly also hints at his subjects' adaptation to new forms of mobility and foraging, such as when hunter-gatherer routes depend on centres and settlements where unnatural resources can be found: petrol, alcohol, the services of bureaucratic and educational institutions. On the other hand, researchers who have considered mobility not as part of a subsistence strategy but as a form of cultural existence have instead looked at narratives about movement (Kwon 1998, Legat 2008), the embodied skills of

walking (Tuck-Po 2008, Widlok 2008) or 'communities of practice' (Lave & Wenger 1991).

In the framework of this research we tried to combine the strengths of these approaches and study patterns of Evenki mobility as embedded both in the local socio-ecological system and the cultural system of Evenki hunter-gatherer ethos. Both approaches have helped us to examine the tacit processes of cultural transmission and socialisation, but we discovered that mobility may also be a device that helps to maintain a culture and counterbalance factors that would otherwise tend towards assimilation. Although we do not do it in this book, it may be useful to compare research on other hunter-gatherer communities in the light of this finding.

The Evenki are very interested in all possible means of movement and travelling. New forms of transport may enable them to move faster and carry more, but this has paradoxically encouraged the Evenki to lead more stable, localised and less nomadic lives. New forms of transport engender new kinds of dependence on the outside world, either in the need for petrol or in the control of more powerful means of transport by outsiders. The Evenki still employ traditional modes of transportation such as reindeer and horses but they are no longer so intensively used as when there were no cars, *vezdekhods* (large all-terrain vehicles with caterpillar tracks) and tractors. For as long as the Evenki do not themselves own these new means of transport, horses and reindeer will be essential components of their life in the taiga.

The most secure form of mobility for the Evenki is walking. Walking integrates all aspects of the Evenki ethos, connecting body, mind and environment. As we discuss in more detail in the following chapters, by walking together the Evenki teach their children to be autonomous persons, to coordinate their actions with others – humans and animals –, and to experience the Evenki landscape. The embodied experience of walking is a 'pattern which connects' (Bateson 1979: 8), enabling Evenki culture to be transmitted.

Evenki mobility is a mechanism both of cultural preservation and adaptation. New resources such as alcohol, petrol, and money provide new opportunities for movement and paradoxically facilitate not only acculturation but also the maintenance of Evenki culture. The quest for these resources becomes a new challenge, and as the resources become trophies in new forms of hunting they are assimilated into the matrix of Evenki culture. Routes may change, forms of transport may vary, but the basic organisation of movement remains the same. It is so deeply connected to

the Evenki sense of self that it reinforces the Evenki ethos. Changes in the outside world do not therefore lead to dramatic changes in the constitution of Evenki culture.

Culture Contact. Imperial and Soviet policies of sedentarisation, placement of children in boarding schools, expropriation of reindeer, and campaigns against kulaks and shamans all threatened the status of the Evenki as an independent cultural group. At the same time, the Evenki have been increasingly exposed to contact with Russians, Chinese, Buryats and Yakuts. Nevertheless, Evenki culture endures even in places where the Evenki language is all but lost.⁴ Evenki people have also managed to successfully incorporate new technologies – chainsaws, all-terrain vehicles, and so forth – into their everyday existence without fundamentally altering their way of life. If as Gregory Bateson argues, there are three possible outcomes to culture contact (Bateson 1972: 65), then in this case, contact with other local cultures has led not to the assimilation or elimination of the Evenki, but to their persistence in dynamic equilibrium with the larger community surrounding them.

Early ethnographic accounts (e.g. Shirokogoroff 1929; Lindgren 1936) also attest to the fact that different groups of Evenki managed to retain their animistic worldview and safeguard their egalitarian ethos in the face of institutional and political pressures. Practically, we have come to regard Evenki egalitarianism and their animist epistemology as two sides of the same coin. Evenki animism implies that they can interact on equal terms with other humans, animals, and spirits. The Evenki do not seek status or dominance and they will undermine any attempts to demonstrate authority. In contrast other neighbouring groups such as Buryats, who are frequently the only eligible marriage partners and colleagues, insist on patriarchal relations and appropriate displays of subordination. The Evenki are surrounded by such hierarchically governed societies and have evolved a complex strategy of communication and interaction with neighbouring groups to mediate relations with them. We discuss the specific mechanisms – ‘secrets’, *pokazukha*, ostensive communication, frame-switching – by which the Evenki we met interacted with outsiders whilst avoiding integration into the hierarchical structures imposed by Buryats, Russians and Chinese. We argue that the Evenki were successful

⁴ We estimate that up to thirty people spoke Evenki language in Bugarikta and another thirty in Mawut. This represents less than ten per cent of the Evenki population in these areas. In everyday life, Evenki language was rarely spoken, and then only in certain contexts such as when drinking.

partly because they were able to manipulate outsider understandings of Evenki culture. It was precisely through such instances of culture contact that the Evenki were able to avoid assimilation and maintain their autonomy.

Soviet and Hungarian Traditions of Evenki Studies

The authors of this book come from, and to some extent are writing against, specific intellectual traditions of research into Evenki culture. Various factors have resulted in the systematic exclusion of whole domains of Evenki social life from the ethnographic accounts of both Russian and Hungarian researchers up to the present day. Ethnographers consistently avoided topics with emotional dimensions and never published accounts of their personal interactions with Evenki. Descriptions of real characters were banished from scientific literature and could be found only in fiction.⁵ As a result we do not have many materials to which we can refer in connection with the topics that we address in this book. Indeed, it is the systematic absence of such topics as intimate family relations, alcohol consumption, aggression and the bamboozling of state agencies that created the niche for this book. By not citing previous ethnographic accounts we inevitably repeat the pattern of exclusion, but we exclude such topics as shamanic rituals, material culture, hunting technologies and kinship terminology in favour of our own experience of Evenki life in all its social and emotional richness.

The bias in scholarship on the Evenki is primarily a result of the role that fieldwork played in the personal biographies of both Russian/Soviet and Hungarian ethnographers. Whilst for Soviet researchers fieldwork was

⁵ Books written by Evenki or other Siberian peoples are rare but represent the only sources for the ethnography of emotional life. See, for example, Tekki Odulok's *Zhizn' Imteurgina* (1936) about the Yukaghir and Dzhansi Kimonko's *Tam gde bezhit Sukpai* (1950) about the Udehe. These novels mostly depicted dramatic circumstances, such as starvation, extreme poverty, prostitution, or slavery, which indigenous people experienced during first decades of twentieth century. Galina Keptuke's book about the Evenki, *Malen'kaya Amerika* (1991) is a nostalgic account of the author's childhood but it also contains descriptions of poverty, alcoholism, murder, suicide, and other social problems that the Evenki faced in Soviet times. Her description manages to balance the beauty and cruelty of Evenki life, and reflected insights from our own fieldwork experience, such as the role of walking and the rhythmical character of nomadic life. A range of films was made about the Evenki during the Soviet period but these were directed by Russians, so they represent an outsider's perspective on Evenki culture. See *Dersu Uzala* (1975, dir. Akira Kurosawa), *zloy dukh Yambuya* (1978, dir. Boris Buneev) or *Drug Tymanchi* (1970, dir. Anatolij Nitochkin).

problematic because all data gathered by ethnographers (including personal diaries) were controlled by the state, the majority of Hungarian researchers could not even access the field. We present below an outline of the Soviet and Hungarian traditions of research into Evenki and other Siberian hunter-gatherer groups, with references to key works for those who might wish to orient themselves in this intellectual sphere.

Soviet ethnography grew out of pre-Soviet traditions that are firmly based on the writings of Vladimir Bogoraz (1904–9), Lev Shternberg (1999) and Vladimir Jochelson (1905–8), who conducted their fieldwork whilst exiled in Siberia. The anti-state image of ethnography and field research was seen as a progressive trend and supported during the first years of the Soviet state, at which time such researchers as Lev Vygotsky and Alexander Luria planned expeditions to Central Asia to study herding cultures (Luria 1976). But this enthusiasm was abruptly dampened during Stalin's repressions, when scholars such as Bernard Petri (1930), Erukhim Kreinovich (1973), Glafira Vasilevich (1969) and Innokentiy Suslov (1931) were imprisoned or killed and others (among which Jochelson, Sergei Shirokogoroff [1919, 1929, 1935], El'pidifor Titov [1926; Arsenev & Titov 1928] and Ivan Lopatin [1922]) escaped abroad. Indeed, fieldwork on the frontier territories sometimes provided the opportunity for escape. These troubled years left their traces on the Soviet anthropological tradition. Extended fieldwork was an exception. All personal relations were suspicious and people tried their best to keep personal information off the record.⁶ This ideological climate took its toll on scholarship of the Evenki. Most scientific accounts addressed a specific period – the turn of the century – and were based on theories that Friedrich Engels had drawn from Morgan (cf. Semenov 1966; Anisimov 1971). One innocuous way of writing about the Evenki was in the genre of anthropological linguistics. Several splendid dictionaries and grammars were assembled and issued throughout the Soviet period (cf. Vasilevich 1958; Romanova & Myreeva 1962, 1964).

Soviet ethnography was strongly influenced by the theory of ethnogenesis, a theory that aimed to explain historical processes of cultural development (cf. Turov 2008). This was an official theoretical and methodological justification for not studying *contemporary* processes of resettlement, collectivisation, and other changes that might engender a critical attitude towards state policies in Siberia. Works in this paradigm are full of

⁶ Colleagues at the Siberian Department of the Leningrad Kunstkamera, for instance, recall that after her return from the Gulag in 1952 until her death in 1971, Vasilevich never spoke about her personal fieldwork experiences.

ethnographic and folkloric details taken from real life (cf. Voskoboynikov 1958, 1960, 1967; Mazin 1984; Tugolukov 1985). It is no surprise that these researchers found themselves presenting Evenki culture as a fixed object rather than investigating its dynamic elements. Recent ethnography tends to follow the Soviet pattern although it is no longer so replete with ideological clichés and may be highly informative for non-Russian researchers who are interested in an overview of Soviet scholarship on the Evenki and other hunter-gather peoples of the Russian North (cf. Nedyalkov 1997; Artemova 2004; Sirina 2004, 2006; Turov 2010).

Hungarian interest in Siberia has always been connected to the widely held belief that Hungarians originated in the East. Anthropological research conducted by Hungarian Orientalists and ethnographers was most commonly an exercise in so-called ‘mental colonialism’, the illusory appropriation of eastern territories as proto-homelands and places of origin. Such endeavours were morally and financially supported by both the public and Hungarian state, and even today it is still easier to gain support for fieldwork in Siberia than in other areas outside Europe. Hungarian ethnographers who wanted to work in Siberia or other parts of Asia were tasked with providing materials to support this basic origin-myth, which could be only partly proven by archaeological research.

Most researchers paid lip service to the idea that they were working on the origins of the Hungarian nation even if in practice they were involved in independent research. This trend was already in evidence at the beginning of the twentieth century. When György Almásy (Georg von Almasy) conducted extended fieldwork in Kirghizia he wrote that although the myth of Eastern origins had been useful to obtain the necessary resources for the expedition, it had no impact on the scientific output of these expeditions (Almasy 1902, 1911).⁷ Other scholars thought differently. Benedek Baráthosi Balogh conducted research on Sakhalin Island and along the Amur River Delta among Manchu-Tungus people at the beginning of twentieth century (Baráthosi Balogh 1910, 1996; Wilhelm 1999). His relations with state authorities were made problematic because of his involvement in the Turan movement, a movement initiated in the pages of Hungarian journal *Keleti Szemle* (*Eastern Review*) in which scholars advocated the construction of a Ural-Altaic language group that would extend from Hungary to Japan. Baráthosi became one of the leaders of this

⁷ Incidentally, Almásy was the father of another famous researcher, Africanist László von Almásy, who became the prototype for the main character in the film *The English Patient*.

ideological movement, supported the Whites during the Russian Civil War, and ultimately inspired a separatist anti-Soviet agenda among ethnic groups on this territory. As a result he was no longer permitted to conduct fieldwork in Siberia and even had to leave the materials on shamanism that he had gathered in Vladivostok in 1918.⁸ Baráthosi was not the only Hungarian researcher who was prohibited from conducting research in the Soviet Union. Specialist in Mongolian studies Louis Ligeti was also not permitted to enter the Soviet territory after his expedition to Inner Mongolia between 1928–31 (Ligeti 1933). Until the mid-1950s all Hungarian researcher were suspected in supporting the Turan movement and were not able to conduct fieldwork in Soviet Union.

After the suppression of the Hungarian Revolution in 1956 some Hungarian researchers paradoxically got their first chance to conduct research in Siberia.⁹ Vilmos Diószegi conducted field research there in the late 1950s and early 1960s, and later studied shamanism in southern Siberia and Mongolia. Although his movements were strictly controlled, he was able to access archival materials and even travel within the region. He tried to continue the work of Baráthosi among Manchu-Tungus people on the Amur River and even planned research among the Evenki in Yakutia, but these plans were never realised. Alongside Baráthosi's materials, the data on shamanism that Diószegi copied and brought back to Hungary now form the core of its archives of ethnographic materials on shamanism (Diószegi 1968, 1972). This archive is still the main source for Hungarian publications on the topic.

The work of Katalin Uray-Kóhalmi on the Khamnigan people, a Manchu-Tungus people living in Mongolia, was based on fieldwork she conducted in Mongolia in 1959. She published a number of articles and books on Evenki language and folklore (Uray-Kóhalmi 1959, 1997). Orientalist György Kara also played an important role in Hungarian scholarship on the Evenki (Kara 2006). Indeed, until the mid-1990s, Budapest's Eötvös Loránd University was the only university in Europe that could boast two specialists in Evenki language. Nevertheless, research was conducted according to the same pattern that evolved in Soviet ethnography; writers avoided personal details and descriptions of actual persons,

⁸ During previous expeditions, Baráthosi collected many unique shamanic items, which can nowadays be found in the ethnographic collections of museums across the world.

⁹ By relaxing restrictions for Hungarian researchers, the Soviet Union was effectively declaring Hungary's full integration into the Soviet bloc.

and all emotional aspects of life were omitted. Without enough fieldwork to produce original monographs, ethnographic texts remained relatively abstract.

In short, despite a long tradition of scholarship, Soviet/Russian and Hungarian research on the Evenki contains very little detailed description of the behaviour of people in ordinary situations and circumstances. Although researchers were able to collect rich ethnographic data, we cannot glean any information about the emotional aspects of Evenki society, elements that we attempt to foreground in this book.

Cybernetics of Culture Contact

As we argued above and in our opening paragraph, this book represents an attempt to go beyond the classic scholarship on Evenki and apply a Batesonian cybernetic approach to our materials. As a theoretical language, cybernetics has a lot in common with animism. Both apprehend social and natural events in the same terms. The difference is that for animists this way of seeing the world is self-evident whereas for cybernetics it is an intellectual enterprise that works against the grain of more common ways of thinking in the West, which tend distinguish between natural and social phenomena and view the world as a consisting of distinct entities that act upon each other rather than as a set of relationships between properties (see Bateson 1972, 1979). Cybernetics seeks to understand whole systems without making such a priori distinctions between natural and social and by examining things as inherently relational. As Bateson puts it:

Language continually asserts by the syntax of subject and predicate that “things” somehow “have” qualities and attributes. A more precise way of talking would insist on the fact that the “things” are produced, are seen as separate from other “things,” and are made “real” by their internal relations and by their behavior in relationship with other things and with the speaker (Bateson 1979: 64).

It is therefore particularly appropriate that cybernetic anthropology should be applied to the study of animistic epistemology and the egalitarian social organisation of peoples that differ substantially from European cultures. A cybernetic approach enables us not only to describe the characteristics of egalitarian social relations – such as the absence of hierarchical social groupings or weakness of authoritative institutions like chieftainship –, but also to describe the patterns whereby these relations form a self-corrective system. This focus on the pattern of relations means

that it is possible to identify difference between Evenki and other societies despite the fact that their institutions may superficially resemble those of other societies. Put simply, egalitarian social organisation may look very similar to other forms of social organisation but it exists differently.

As Bateson demonstrated, cybernetics is a non-hierarchical language that can be used to describe patterns of self-correction within individual, social, and ecological systems. Cybernetics thus provides us with a methodology to study the unique patterns of egalitarian societies without imposing our own folk interpretations of adaptation and development on them. This opens up the possibility of making broad comparisons between egalitarian and hierarchical communities freed from such dichotomies as centre/periphery or modern/traditional that are intrinsic to our hierarchical epistemology. If we were to try to understand Evenki society on the basis of such dichotomies we would not expand our knowledge, but instead narrow our understanding of the Evenki within the limits of our own hierarchical epistemology.

In practice the Evenki cannot be entirely egalitarian – there is no pure egalitarianism, just as there is no purely hierarchical system. To study Evenki egalitarianism therefore requires that we examine examples of social interactions and identify the extent to which these might be associated with egalitarianism or hierarchy. We argue that in keeping with their egalitarian ethos the basic strategies of Evenki sociality are not so much for establishing, but for avoiding hierarchical relationships.

The main claim for carefulness here is the need to keep in mind the difference between life and the model. As Bateson wrote, paraphrasing Alfred Korzybski “the map is not the territory” (Bateson 1979: 30). The relational epistemology of the cybernetic approach that we use in this book requires us always to maintain the distinction between information of different logical types. Our account of Evenki life is not the same as our experience of Evenki life; they are of different logical types. As the reader reads this text he or she may risk mixing these two levels, accepting the map as territory, just as we risked mixing our account for reality when we wrote this book. The only way to overcome this tendency is to resort to another level of abstraction and consider how our experience of fieldwork influenced us in such a way that we wrote this particular account, and conversely how our production of this account has influenced our perception of our experiences. The reader faces a similar enterprise in establishing how the experience of reading the text influences him or her to form a particular opinion, and how this opinion consequently influences his or her reading of the text. By introducing this caveat, we merely wish to be explicit that

our generalisations about Evenki society have been influenced by our experiences prior to, during, and subsequent to fieldwork. Scientific generalisations are inevitably products of such unconscious processes of attribution.¹⁰

There are some features in our description that will appear very familiar to Western readers and this will mean either that the organisation of relationships among Evenki people shares common patterns with the culture in which the reader lives, or that the reader's culture shares common patterns with that of the authors. At least one of these assumptions must be true, and this should provide our readers (and us) with an incentive to consider which is the correct one. Is the reader's feeling of familiarity an illusion, a product of his or her preconceptions, a misplaced assumption on the part of the reader that he or she actually knows the Evenki? In order to answer this question, one must consider the patterns that connect Evenki life, the authors' account of this life, and the reader's interpretation of it. Cybernetics provides the tools for such reflection.

For ease of understanding an at first difficult language, we present below some of the key tools of cybernetics as we use them in this book.

Communication. The process of creating information ("difference that makes a difference" [Bateson 1972: 272]) through redundancy, meaning, pattern, predictability and/or the reduction of the random by restraints.

Culture contact. The contact that occurs between members of two communities with different cultures that possess unity and consistency in the behaviour of their members (cf. Bateson 1972: 64).

Double bind. The experiential component in the genesis of paradoxes that occur when information of different logical types is confused by a recipient (Bateson 1972: 276). The classic example of double bind is found in the interaction between a parent and child, described by Bateson (ibid. 236), in which the parent switches the frame of interaction every time the child reacts and which may lead to schizophrenia, the disintegration of the child's self. This occurs because the child experiences an irresolvable sense of paradox by not being able to correctly perceive signals of different logical types – messages and metamessages (messages about the

¹⁰ Bateson himself most accurately described this process in the epilogue to the second edition of his book *Naven* (Bateson 1958: 280–303).

message). More generally, Bateson explains that “various sorts of ‘double binds’ are generated when A and B perceive the premises of the relationship in different terms” (ibid. 323–324).

Ethos. A culturally standardised system of patterns in the instincts and emotions of individuals. Ethos is an observable unity and consistency (i.e. a pattern) in the behaviour of a group.

Feedback. The effect of an event at any position in the circuit on *all* positions in the circuit at later times. Feedback is possible in systems based on closed chains of causation, in which causal interconnection can be traced around the circuit and back to whichever position was chosen as the starting point of the description.

Logical typing. Hierarchical ordering of information into different logical levels. For example, a set is of a higher logical type than its members; a name is of a higher logical type than the thing it describes; and a metamesage is of a higher logical type than the message about which it communicates information (cf. Bateson 1979: 247).

Metacommunication. The – usually unconscious – generation and reception of implicit metamesages that provide context which allows messages to be interpreted in particular instances of communication.

Schismogenesis. The progressive differentiation between groups that is characterised by the mutually promoting actions of both parties. In symmetrical schismogenesis the mutually promoting actions of A and B are essentially similar (e.g. boasting). In complementary schismogenesis the mutually promoting actions of A and B are essentially dissimilar but mutually appropriate (e.g. bullying) (Bateson 1972: 109). Unchecked symmetrical or complementary schismogenesis can lead to the collapse of one or both parties.

Self-corrective system. An ensemble of objects and events that responds to change within the system in such a way that the system corrects for this change, either towards homeostasis or the maximisation of certain variables. The mental characteristics of such a system – response to difference, processing of information, self-correction – are immanent, not in some part, but in the system as a whole (cf. Bateson 1972: 315–6).

Why Bateson and Cybernetics?

There are many personal reasons why we have written this book as a work of cybernetic anthropology. These are to do with our tastes and the process of communication between the two authors. But there are more systematic reasons for this choice; even if as participants of the process and as mere subcomponents of the system that produced this book can never be fully sure that we know the whole story. In the following short section we will try to understand why we somewhat inevitably came to choose cybernetics.

When we first met, we had both just begun to read the work of Gregory Bateson. Tanya had encountered Bateson's work in Bielefeld University where she was studying at that time, and István at the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology in Halle/Saale, where he held a postdoctoral fellowship. Both authors were equally unfamiliar with Bateson's work, which had been excluded from the Russian and Hungarian traditions of social science in which they had been trained. In this respect Bateson became a common ground or, rather more, a common lack of ground, a gap which both authors tried to fill. Cybernetics became a common language precisely because we were both equally unsure of our grasp of it. Talking about cybernetics was not only a process of learning and appropriating these concepts, but also of creating a common approach. At some point, our interest in cybernetics became a shared identity, and our publications in Russian and Hungarian were acknowledged by reviewers as attempts to introduce Bateson and cybernetics to these audiences.

Our common distance from, and our attempt to get to grips with Bateson's ideas was not the only factor that determined our adoption of the cybernetic approach. Our sympathy with Bateson is a mystery that we still do not quite, and perhaps, do not want to understand. This sympathy is always difficult to explain to others. The cybernetic approach is probably so enigmatic and appealing to us because it was developed in the West as a tool to understand *us*, citizens of socialist regimes. Cybernetics was used as an optic to identify the weak points, and the most intimate and hidden dreams of those living on the other side of the iron curtain.¹¹ Nowadays, with the Cold War having receded from the horizon,

¹¹ See Peter Mandler (2009) for discussion of how Mead and Bateson were involved in the Cold War study of international relations, and Nikolai Ssorin-Chaikov (2008) on attempts to apply a cybernetic approach to 'culture and personality' research on the Soviet enemy.

cybernetics is frequently viewed in social science as a somewhat quaint relic of little practical use. But, as potential subjects of this instrument, as citizens of the unknown country whose unfamiliar reactions were modelled with the help of cybernetics, we cannot simply ignore this approach. To some extent cybernetics belongs to us and we belong to it, like the bullet that becomes part of the body it kills.

Obviously, cybernetics did not kill the Soviet Union, but it did contribute to the making of a world in which the Soviet Union no longer exists. Although cybernetics can be seen as a leitmotif of liberal anthropology (Rapport 1997) it was not opposed to Marxism, but rather Marxism could be encompassed and understood within a cybernetic framework (Wilden 1972, pp. 390–394). Cybernetics is an attempt to understand the other, and eventually oneself,¹² but it does not carry ideological preferences. In this respect we use cybernetics as apolitically as possible within the frames of this book, trying to avoid judgements concerning the contents of the political forms that existed and are now developing in Siberia.

By using cybernetics to study Evenki, Russian, Buryat and Chinese people we have tried to avoid simply applying this method as an instrument to construct a new enemy. Yes, there is always a danger that because cybernetics was deployed to imagine the Cold War enemy, the method itself can produce stereotypes and exotic pictures of the population under study. But the extensive fieldwork on which we rely, and which was precluded during the Cold War, helps to mitigate this danger.

This book is a response to the lack of an articulated cybernetic approach to the understanding of the contemporary world. We feel this lack on two levels; firstly, as scholars from intellectual traditions that did not have access to the conceptual tools of cybernetics; and secondly as people who live in the world of the cyborg. Cybernetics has seen its greatest application in computer science, as an attempt to describe the world in terms that are meaningful for and give place to computers. With this task accomplished, cybernetics has receded into the background of daily life. It is present in the numerous technologies that encompass and facilitate our lives, but we no longer need to think cybernetically since computers do this task better, faster and more effectively. We are immersed in a world of cybernetic feedback loops without realising it, just as the anthropologist inside the submarine is immersed in the ocean and does not recognise the

¹² Mead explicitly stated that while cybernetics was considered as an instrument for understanding the enemy and for fighting the Soviet bloc, its most important target was American society (Mead 1968, p.3).

sounds of this ocean (Helmreich 2007, p. 630). In this book we propose to see the world of hunter-gatherers living in Siberia cybernetically, to show how many things we actually share with these people, and how our own lives can also be described cybernetically.

Non-Illustrative Ethnography

Despite our preference for the cybernetic approach, we have attempted to reduce and control the tendency to use our fieldwork materials as illustrations of a theory that we might wish to demonstrate. We have a preference for the cybernetic approach but we do not seek to prove its applicability or to demonstrate that the world is cybernetic (the reader will find ample critique of cybernetics in the conclusion); it is merely the language with which we are most comfortable. If the reader does not agree with the premises of cybernetics then he or she will find enough ethnographic material in this book to consider the events and situations we describe in light of other theories.

The uncommon presentation of information in the frames of non-illustrative ethnography may be difficult to accept. First, we have tried to preserve a sense of Evenki social organisation in our account and to provoke readers to change their perspective to accommodate this. A consequence of this approach is that we do not seek to focus on particular aspects of Evenki culture, such as shamanism, ritual, etc., nor do we gloss over difficult aspects of our time in the field. In presenting our findings to academic audiences, there were a number of debates about how we used Russian words such as '*pokazukha*' ('putting on a show', a form of performativity that we discuss extensively in chapter two), and made no bones about discussing incidents of violence and drunkenness. We feel that attaching negative or positive connotations to these terms and behaviours is already an act of understanding based on a hierarchical pattern. For the Evenki, such terms or descriptions do not have the power to offend or degrade someone's position. Words do not provoke a change in mutual status but instead involve people in a debate, a companionship, in which people are engaged in something together. We used our descriptions to involve people in discussions and we were satisfied to find our presentations turn into emotional and interesting debates, very much as the Evenki themselves would like.

Second, in the frames of non-illustrative ethnography the materials usually used for illustration – such as photos, film recordings, and

maps – require special attention. Although several photographs illustrate this book, we used these photographs for other purposes. We took over 18,000 photographs and 120 hours of film recordings. Before starting a chapter we would assemble our photographs and footage and scrutinise them closely. When writing about dogs we studied photographs with dogs. We did the same with children, walking, and *pokazukha*. We evolved the categories about which we wrote in the course of studying these visual materials.¹³

To illustrate this approach, we present three such plates devoted to the topic ‘children’, discussed in chapter four. The first two plates reflect the categories ‘catching’ and ‘holding’. We were interested in the way Evenki children learn to be aggressive. Our photographs showed that the main partners in this process were not parents but peers and animals, mainly dogs. After we assembled pictures with Evenki children and dogs we noticed two phases of the games that they play with each other: instances of children catching the dogs and instances when they held them. We then looked at other photographs with children and found that most of their interactions with other people are based on the same pattern of catching and holding.

The third plate presents photographs in which children and adults engaged in the same action. These photographs were taken in different circumstances and only later did we recognise the associations. There were no photographs in which children did anything under the supervision of adults. This third plate thus portrays how Evenki children learn by imitating adults who neither prevent these attempts, nor intrude or verbally advise them.

Fieldwork

The following study is based on materials collected over successive visits to neighbouring areas of Baikal region between 2004 and 2009. The authors spent a total of sixteen months in Mawut and Bugarikta districts: two months in Mawut in 2004 followed by a further ten months in 2008–2009, and four months in Bugarikta in 2006. The Evenki of Mawut district are

¹³ In our use of photography as a fieldwork method, we drew inspiration from Gregory Bateson and Margaret Mead’s *Balinese Character* (1942). In this work, the authors sought to turn the relationship between text and photographs upside down by making compilations of photographs and writing short summaries to illustrate the categories depicted in the photographs.



Fig. 1. Young hunters: catching.

Orochon Evenki, ('reindeer herders') while those of Bugarikta are *Murchen* Evenki ('horse rearers'). In both cases we lived on camp outside the village within a family group. Further ethnographic materials relating to the Ekhirit Buryats and Evenki of Irkutsk region were collected over a two-year period between 1993 and 2006. The Ekhirit Buryats of this region migrated to the taiga from the steppe, are shamanist and now breed cattle on the lands west of Lake Baikal.

In Bugarikta, we stayed in an Evenki family that features prominently in this book. We lived with the shaman, Irgichi Ivanovich, and his wife Grandmother Katya on their camp and helped (as best we could) one



Fig. 2. Young hunters: holding.

of their sons, Ivan, and his wife Natasha with the household and cattle. Ivan and Natasha's three children – seven-year-old Volodya, six-year-old Nyura and Mira, a girl of three – completed the household. Our stay at the camp was not always happy and our hosts frequently tried to send us away. It took us a lot of time to recognise that they were not trying to exclude us from everyday life but, on the contrary, to show us their way of life, their desire to be on the road and to travel whenever possible.

Tony Crook (2007) has argued that the texts and theories that anthropologists develop carry not only the traces of their experiences with informants, but also the marks of their collaboration with colleagues.¹⁴ He calls

¹⁴ Crook used the example of the theory of schismogenesis that Gregory Bateson developed among the Iatmul people of Papua New Guinea (Bateson 1958). Crook turns our



Fig. 3. Repeating after adults.

the product of this process the ‘textual person’. In order to clarify the kind of textual person that emerged in the writing of this text, we feel it appropriate to comment personally on our field experience and how it related to what we did after leaving the field. Our personal relationship in the field later became an integral part of the thoughts and emotions that made up this textual person.

attention to the fact that the theory of schismogenesis applies not only to the rituals of the *latmul*, but also to the development of interpersonal relations in the love triangle between Bateson, Reo Fortune and Margaret Mead. The fusion of competitiveness and complementarity that forged the relationships of the anthropologists was reflected, and rediscovered, in the ethnographic materials.

Fieldwork was the beginning of our common life and collaboration, and we subsequently continued living in the same way that we had done with the Evenki. The divide between life in the field and life afterwards became porous. We applied Evenki strategies to our academic fundraising and 'hunted' for grants and positions. We collaborated intensely with each other throughout analysis and writing, forming an academic conjugal unit. We also took advantage of every opportunity to travel and live in different places. These strategies gave us the chance to meet people, engage in 'companionship' with other scholars and maintain our personal sense of academic autonomy. Writing this book was both a product of the isolation of our nomadic academic lifestyle, and our attempt to overcome it.

We had several discussions in the field about what we thought we were doing right and wrong. These discussions helped us to come to terms with the gap between our aims and what we ended up doing in practice. Afterwards we realised that the most interesting episodes happened spontaneously and could not have been planned. We had intended to study several topics but as the materials we collected seemed rather uninteresting and unimportant, none of them became the final focus of our research. Considering that the Evenki first gave anthropology the word 'shaman' we were initially eager to study Evenki shamanic ritual, but the rituals we witnessed gave us material about all sorts of things except shamanism. We were also interested in the interaction between rangers and poachers, but we found it impossible to distinguish the one from the other. We tried to stay with Irgichi's family for as long as possible, but when we left we realised that travelling was the only way to conduct fieldwork among the Evenki.

It was through our mistakes and failures that we finally saw what was going on around us in the field and were able to perceive the real issues of our research. Certain insights flew in the face of all we knew about anthropological methodology and presented us with an opportunity critically to interrogate certain of these assumptions. Here we review issues relating to four such assumptions: trust, provocation, participation and filmmaking, and finally the right of local people to materials collected among them.

Establishing rapport and gaining the trust of informants is usually considered vital to anthropological method. Anthropologists usually stay in the field for at least a year to establish close relationships with their informants. This strategy is based on the notion that trust is a consequence of long-term intensive interactions, although locals might not share this idea. Time played no role in the development of trust between our Evenki

informants and us. Sharing common activities, however, made us slightly less strange and more accepted. Our relationships to people with whom we occasionally undertook a common activity – fishing, digging potatoes or erecting fences – were closer than to those with whom we lived for several months but did not share any common tasks. Even so, these close relationships were no guarantee that our new friends would help us if we asked in advance. Everything happened according to circumstance, not as a result of the steady accrual of trust in our relationships. This insight forced us to change our understanding of trust, and our fieldwork strategy changed dramatically.

In some cases provocation might provide the only means of entering fieldwork as a human being. Anthropologists, who prefer to avoid open conflict and broken ties with local people, do not usually favour this strategy. Notwithstanding, an anthropologist's eagerness to express an opinion contrary to an informant's or to raise a question that otherwise would not be asked – for example, about the quantity and quality of food one is given – might be the only way to provoke a reaction and be recognised as a person. Without engaging in such a manner, one risks never fully participating in the cultural devices that coordinate personal interactions.

Because the Evenki with whom we interacted had no interest in giving interviews and because we had very little time to write our field-notes in the evenings, we decided to record everything we could on video. We always had a camera in our hands but we could not always use it as planned. A camera signifies observation and not participation. As participation is the only condition of communication with Evenki, we found ourselves having to oscillate between roles. Most of our recordings are uncomfortable to watch because in order to remain 'in' the situation, the cameraman constantly switched from observer to participant. All efforts to do otherwise failed as the Evenki brought the cameraman into interaction with them. For instance, during a ritual when all men make a sacrifice by sprinkling and drinking vodka, István was offered a glass and encouraged to do the same. István thus had to change hands and drink, and these motions were recorded. The life that we tried to record was full of such important moments when observation was not a possibility. We spent a great deal of time on the road, in a car or on a boat, which prevented recording or left us with incomprehensible footage. The camera became an instrument that recorded not only what happened, but also our status and our position in the situation as participants or observers.

Once Ivan objected to being filmed when he was drunk. We subsequently tried to avoid filming people drinking. In the evenings, we began

by showing our materials to the family with which we lived. It became a kind of duty to film the tasks of the day and to show a sort of newsreel to those who could not participate. We once caught ourselves censoring episodes from the recordings that risked arousing conflicts. We realised we had started filming not for ourselves but for our informants, and at that moment we had to decide to whom these recordings belonged. From this point forward we stopped showing our materials to our hosts.

Overview of Chapters

The chapters of this book appear in the order that they were written. Various motifs recur throughout the book and certain stories are re-described in different contexts so that different relationships become visible from the same source. In some ways, this is a reflection of the complexity we encountered in the field and the fact that the self-corrective circuits that we describe operate at several levels simultaneously. The contents, causes and effects of particular elements of behaviour and practice can only be apprehended in relation to other practices and forms of interaction. We have therefore eschewed structuring the material into specific discussions of gender, ritual, friendship, business, private and public behaviour, even if discussion of these topics occurs throughout the text. We tried to avoid focusing on any single phenomenon and instead described it as part of a whole. Nevertheless, for ease of reference, we provide an overview of the topics discussed in each chapter below.¹⁵

Chapter One is something of an embryo for the whole book in that it contains within it all the motifs and ideas that we develop in subsequent chapters. It is also the most complex because it presents the Evenki ethos least fragmentarily. It is closer to the complexity of real life than to scientific description and subsequent chapters act as commentaries on this initial gambit. The readers will get a first impression of how different phenomena – socialisation, alcohol consumption, aggression, gender distinction, ritual and public and private behaviour – relate.

¹⁵ The ethnographic materials for chapters one to four come primarily from fieldwork conducted in Bugarikta. Subsequent fieldwork in Mawut confirmed our conclusions, but we decided not to complicate our initial accounts by introducing new materials to the chapters. Chapters four and five also present the results of fieldwork conducted among Ekhirit Buryats in Irkutsk *oblast'* between 1998 and 2006 and chapters five and six both use material from Mawut region. Chapter seven presents a comparison of materials obtained in both Bugarikta and Mawut regions.

Chapter Two presents the context in which Evenki culture comes into contact with other local cultures and the Russian state. It does not deal with the Evenki specifically but with the structure of *pokazukha*, a form of image-management, performed by Russians and Buryats at the Bugarikta House of Culture.

In Chapter Three we discuss the question of gender, how this is differently articulated in egalitarian and hierarchical societies and how culture contact between these societies modifies the Evenki articulation of gender. As such, it provides commentary on egalitarian patterns of behaviour, forms of cohesion in egalitarian social organisation and strategies of interaction with strangers.

Chapter Four has its origins in a question posed to us by a Buryat shaman: how do the Evenki communicate with their dogs? This chapter is devoted to issues of communication between humans and nonhumans and the socialisation of both children and animals. Here we again address the process of culture contact, especially in the way that outside impressions of a culture can become self-confirming.

Chapter Five continues the comparative approach of the previous chapter and discusses the question of the adaptation of ethos to local ecologies. The activities of hunting and business are studied in relation to the persistence in the ethos of Buryats living in the taiga and an Evenki businessman.

Chapter Six picks up where the fifth chapter left off, it discusses cases of business and friendship between Evenki and local Chinese people in Mawut region and how this culture contact unfolds diachronically. We discuss how seemingly unsatisfactory series of interactions between Evenki and local Chinese ultimately produces stability in the whole system of relations over time.

Chapter Seven discusses the practice of walking as the epitome of Evenki ethos. After discussing how the experience of walking unites Evenki body, mind and landscape in Evenki land, we present maps of Bugarikta and Mawut to demonstrate coherence in the Evenki experience of this land. These maps enable one to see patterns of Evenki ethos as it is manifested in the Evenki landscape that are common to both regions, and that we posit are part of Evenki life more generally.

The concluding chapter presents something of an auto-critique of the cybernetic approach through which we attempted to view culture contact in Evenki Land. We do not therefore seek to revisit or summarise the points that we have made in each of our case studies, but rather offer our reflections on the limitations of and methodological issues associated with this approach.

This book may be of interest as a description of contemporary Evenki life but this was not our primary aim. The persistent question that guided us through the book was 'how?'; how do these people adapt and relate to the world? Our description therefore focuses not on practices themselves but on how these practices changed life or helped to maintain its stability. We did not intend to identify the 'objective features' of Evenki or any other culture. This book is not about presenting a stable picture of a culture, it is about stable patterns of change in cultures. It is provoked by our astonishment at finding order in chaos, and our observations at how seemingly random events are connected by a regular pattern. It is this pattern which connects that we found at the heart of 'Evenki culture'.

CHAPTER ONE

COMPANIONSHIP AND *POKAZUKHA*: FLEXIBLE AND STABLE ELEMENTS OF EVENKI CULTURE

The Evenki of the Baikal region of Siberia have a centuries-long history of contact with other communities including the Chinese, the Buryats, and the Russians. As indigenous hunters living in the contact zone between the steppe and the taiga, the Evenki have proved very adaptable, both as peaceful traders and in times of conflict. Yet the tremendous changes that occurred over the course of the twentieth century with the imposition of the Soviet state in Siberia engendered equally dramatic change in their livelihoods. The Evenki lost their freedom to roam the taiga and were compelled to work as cattle breeders in state collective farms. It would be easy to assume that this switch from hunting to cattle-breeding would have led to fundamental changes in – if not the total eradication of – their social organisation and way of life, but this has not proved to be the case, at least not in the way that certain Marxist accounts would posit.

In this chapter we provide an account of the mechanisms by which we believe Evenki society has managed to remain a stable and discrete entity despite changes to their livelihood and the culture contact to which Evenki have been subjected over the past century. We argue that certain features of Evenki social organisation have enabled the Evenki to integrate into Russian and Buryat society while at the same time permitting them to refuse assimilation and maintain their ethos as hunter-gatherers. In the following discussion we shall begin by highlighting companionship and *pokazukha* (a form of display put on for the benefit of outsiders), two key mechanisms that act to maintain the Evenki ethos in their relations with both Evenki and strangers. We view companionship and *pokazukha* in cybernetic terms, using concepts pioneered by Gregory Bateson to examine how Evenki social processes combine to form a self-corrective system (i.e. one that is able to maintain itself through time).

In order to demonstrate the importance of these two mechanisms in Evenki society, we shall examine aspects of Evenki socialisation, particularly how children are brought into their first experiences of companionship and *pokazukha*. We shall then discuss what we identify as three 'ritual situations' to further explore and demonstrate the dynamics of these processes and the contexts in which they occur. We analyse in turn

an annual gathering of Evenki families, a ritual commissioned by local Buryats, and an experience of high emotional tension associated with the presence of bears.

Almost without exception we observed that incidents of ritual, violence, or drunkenness, occurred in interaction with strangers. We therefore propose an explanation of how these three frames – ritual, violence, and drunkenness – serve to mediate culture contact and the perpetuation of Evenki ethos by obstructing communication rather than facilitating it. In the course of this chapter, we hope to demonstrate how such a frame of interaction has helped the Evenki to maintain their distinctive egalitarian ethos and social organisation in spite of the fact that they no longer hunt for their livelihoods. To understand the remarkable endurance of ‘the Evenki’, we analyse their social relations among themselves and with others in the terms of cybernetics, a field of study that emerged to examine systems and their regulation. We view Evenki society as a self-corrective system comprising different circuits of communication within and outside of the system. The following argument sets the tone for much of the rest of the book, so we shall follow Bateson’s advice not to shy away from the task of analysing such complex realities as self-corrective systems (Bateson and Bateson 1987: 144–143). In the following sections, we identify and discuss the two key circuits that operate within this self-corrective system: companionship and *pokazukha*.

Companionship

Like many hunter-gatherer communities, Evenki social organisation is highly egalitarian and companionship is one of the key means by which this egalitarian ethos is maintained. We follow Thomas Gibson by defining companionship in the following way:

The idiom of companionship implies that social actors come together as autonomous agents to pursue a common goal. They are not obligated to cooperate because of some ascribed relationship based on shared kinship substance or shared locality, nor are they obligated to cooperate with specific individuals because of imbalances in previous transactions: companions cannot be in debt to one another. It is shared activity in itself, and amicable sentiments generated by habitual cooperation, which constitutes the basis of the relationship. The activities that provided the rationale for the relationship in the first instance gradually become only a means of expressing a deeper sentiment of fellowship and amity (Gibson 1985: 392–393).

For the Evenki, then, companionship is a form of participating towards shared ends without obligation, debt, or instruction. It is the ideal form of interaction and relationship with others, in which they engage when hunting, travelling, or working on their farms.

The Evenki do not admit to any kind of hierarchical division. An individual's task has no relation to that person's social standing, and participants in any activity should be involved in the action completely and equally. The Evenki also do not like boasting and poke fun at anyone who attempts to do so. Quite to the contrary, they enjoy underlining a person's failures – as Katya did whenever Tanya did household duties –, but they do so with a smile so as not to be demeaning. In light of such ingrained opposition to hierarchical forms of integration, participating in companionship enables one to be included in society while at the same time retaining one's autonomy. The orientation of Evenki sociality and action around this ideal of companionship is incompatible with the hierarchical structures found among Buryats and Russians, and is therefore incomprehensible to these outsiders.

Evenki egalitarianism is also evident in the division of labour, which is done so as to prevent potential competition or rivalry in the accomplishment of any joint action. Evenki divide their tasks in accordance with two



Fig. 4. Evenki castrating a calf at Irgichi's winter camp, an example of companionship.

principles, gathering and distributing. In the framework of companionship, people work with one of these principles so that the one complements the other. The division of labour in Evenki society is very flexible. While there are certainly tendencies for women to cook, clean, milk cows, and so forth, and for men to fish, herd, and chop wood, all men can and do milk cows and all women can and do chop wood. The flexibility and substitutability of people and tasks ensures that the Evenki are horizontally interdependent, rather than integrated into a hierarchical system. In cybernetic terms, this division of tasks can be seen as a form of complementary schismogenesis in which specialisation does not lead to suppression or subordination but rather to the mutual interdependence of actors.

According to Bateson, schismogenesis is “a process of differentiation in the norms of individual behaviour resulting from cumulative interaction between individuals” (Bateson 1958: 175). In other words, the term schismogenesis points to the processes by which people modify their behaviour as a function of the behaviour of other parties to an interaction. Bateson himself found that the concept could be applied to describe phenomena at many levels, from an arms race between two states to the internal conflict of a schizophrenic. He identified two forms of schismogenesis: symmetrical and complementary. Symmetrical schismogenesis occurs when direct interaction between two parties provokes successive changes of the same kind in each of them. In an arms race or a boasting contest, for example, one party reacts to the provocations of the other by repeating its own provocations, to which the other party reacts in the same manner, and so forth in an escalating cycle. If it is not disturbed by external factors, this escalation will ultimately lead to the collapse of relations or even the destruction of one or both parties. The same outcome can occur in complementary schismogenesis. The difference is that while parties react as a function of the other’s reactions, their actions are complementary to each other. The most common example of this is in a dominance-submission interaction, such as between parent and child, or in bullying; the more one party dominates, the more the other submits, which then provokes an escalation of dominating behaviour on the part of the first party. In certain situations, when one form of schismogenesis occurs in relation to other such processes, these processes need not end in collapse of relations, but may instead interact, the one potentially neutralising the destructive tendencies in the other and creating a steady-state system (Bateson 1972: 126). In *The Division of Labour* Émile Durkheim (1933) describes just such a situation, in which specialisation of one cohort of workers leads to the specialisation of others

(complementary schismogenesis), producing mutual interdependence of the parts, and resulting in the unfolding complexity of modern society.

Schismogenesis, then, need not lead only to the collapse of social relations, but can also be the basis of a whole social system. The idea of schismogenesis can be an especially useful way of studying such a flexible and dynamic social organisation as that of the Evenki, which is focused not on the reproduction of stable distinctions – gender, age, or kinship roles – within Evenki society, but on assuring the flexibility and autonomy of its members and their capacity to accomplish activities together.¹ Furthermore, judicious use of Bateson's concept allows us to relate social processes occurring *within* a given group and those occurring *between* that group and others, such as in the situations of 'culture contact' that are the subject of this book.

In cybernetic terms, companionship can be seen as a form of sociality that balances insistence on autonomy (an insistence that could itself cause breakdown in relationships, a form of symmetrical schismogenesis) with the need to coordinate mutual actions (dividing tasks; an activity that could tend towards hierarchy and consequent breakdown in relationships through complementary schismogenesis). Participants in companionship compete with each other in speed and skill but this does not lead to collapse because the tasks they perform are different and complementary. Symmetry between people is thereby counterbalanced by complementary practices. Companionship therefore balances two kinds of schismogenesis, both of which could lead to the breakdown of a relationship if left unchecked. The resolution of these two tendencies within companionship gives stability to the system and prevents escalation of either symmetrical or complementary processes.

Pokazukha

Companionship is quite a precarious achievement for Evenki and this ethos can be fundamentally transformed in the course of dealings with outsiders who do not share the Evenki commitment to egalitarianism. During public events Evenki may feel obliged to present an image of their culture for outsiders. Representatives of the Evenki (i.e. the local intelligentsia) create an impression of a stable culture comprising a

¹ This flexibility is a component of hunter societies more generally, as discussed by, e.g., Thomas Gibson (1985).

constellation of material artefacts and patterns of behaviour preserved from the past, as opposed to the dynamic and ever-changing reality of Evenki life. We refer to these displays, the presenting of illusions as reality, as *pokazukha* – a Russian term coming from the verb *pokazyvat'*, 'to show' – and argue that they provide a buffer between the Evenki community, which depends on equality and flexibility through constantly changing and flexible companionship, and other societies that are accustomed to more rigid and hierarchical forms of organisation, such as kinship or bureaucratic institutions. The examples of *pokazukha* that we discuss later in this chapter are drawn from various ritual situations that we experienced. We believe that by paying attention to the context in which these rituals occur we can gain new insight into the role of ritual in Evenki life as a form of *pokazukha*, a way of mediating culture contact.

Shamanism has long been considered to lie at the heart of Evenki culture (Shirokogoroff 1935) and when we began research among the Evenki we laboured under this illusion. But we soon discovered a somewhat different reality. Shamanism is at once everywhere and nowhere in Evenki communities and it can be performed by anyone, just as Evenki can perform different tasks as the need dictates (at one ritual in which Irgichi was performing for a film camera, we heard an Evenki declare angrily, "Every Evenki can perform this ritual. It is nothing special!"). That a figure such as Irgichi assumes the role of shaman, we believe, is rather more determined by the expectations of the outside world than it is by the intrinsic needs of Evenki. The shaman is only called upon to perform rituals in the presence of outsiders. Shamanism and rituals help the Evenki to negotiate and maintain relations with outsiders because within the frames of performance and ritual, direct communication is blocked and participants are freed from the need to interact with others.

The idea that ritual is essentially a communicative process was for a long time a mainstream in social anthropology and the cybernetic approach that we apply here developed out of this idea (cf. Bateson 1958). So intuitively it would make sense to look at ritual, and by extension culture contact, as a communicative situation. But we would argue quite the opposite: culture contact is a situation of non-communicative interaction and it is the impossibility of communicating in ritual that is so fruitful for culture contact. Communication here is understood in its broad sense, not just a transfer of knowledge from one person to another but as a process through which people influence other people (Ruesch & Bateson 1951). Here we would agree with Caroline Humphrey and James Laidlaw (1994) who formulated their critique of the communicative approach to ritual on

the basis of phenomenology. Humphrey and Laidlaw argue that in ritual a person both is and is not the author of his or her actions. In the ritualistic mode of action, it is therefore impossible for others to perceive the intentions of a person based on that person's movements and actions. Ritualised actions cannot be understood as communicative because the relation between an action and the intention behind the action is transformed. Similarly, we see that the impossibility of an individual communicating and behaving meaningfully is at the core of the reality of ritual as opposed to other realities, such as everyday life, play, behaviour under orders (as in the army), or scientific reflection (Schutz 1945). This is not to say that communication is not important. Indeed, moments of non-communication are very powerful if we see them in the context of an ever-communicative world. In cybernetics, such moments can be described as double binds, situations in which messages and metamessages (messages about how one is to understand the message) are in contradiction with each other and there is no possibility of resolving this contradiction. Bateson's analysis of trance and schizophrenia as reactions to such double bind situations can be interestingly compared to Humphrey and Laidlaw's phenomenology-inspired discussion of ritual. Ritualised action creates a double bind in which one receives messages (actions) but not information about how to understand these messages (intentions). Phenomenology and systems theory therefore offer complementary perspectives on the same issue: the problem of intentionality can be seen as parallel to the problem of metacommunication.

Pokazukha as a Pattern of Behaviour with Outsiders

Pokazukha is the most important pattern of behaviour towards outsiders that children acquire during their childhood. When children leave for school at the age of six or seven they have already been taught to conduct *pokazukha*. Their first experiences of *pokazukha* are usually connected with the activities of the local House of Culture, which is run by the members of the local intelligentsia and hosts an annual event at which Russians, Buryats, and Evenki display their national traditions. As the ones most able to show outsiders the 'real' Evenki way of life, the Evenki intelligentsia are by definition the most skilled organisers of *pokazukha* in the village. Six-year-old Nyura, Ivan and Natasha's daughter, had already visited the village and performed at one of the annual festivals of the House of Culture. These occasions were her first personal experience of

representing Evenki culture. When she subsequently moved to the village to start school, we witnessed an astonishing metamorphosis in this young girl. Prior to living in the village Nyura only spoke a local Buryat dialect at home, but after only a few weeks in the village school she started speaking Russian. Her behaviour, like her appearance and manners, changed dramatically, from a little 'hooligan' (Russian, *khuliganka*) to a well-bred girl. She played this role with enthusiasm. At the same time, she established her first self-initiated relations of companionship with other children of the same age outside her family. She enjoyed these relations, which seemed much more interesting and important to her than her previous family life at camp. She told us that her new friends were all hooligans like herself. School is a place where Evenki children can practice both companionship and *pokazukha*.

When Nyura started her career in the village as a future representative of Evenki culture to outsiders she to some extent became a stranger to her own family. As a deaf child, her brother Volodya was destined to stay at the camp and lead his life as a 'real' Evenki. Unafraid of cold and hunger, an excellent observer and a violent hooligan, he was already thought of as a 'real' Evenki, and had a good chance of becoming one of the 'last Evenki' – like his aunt Nadya and grandfather Irgichi –, figures that Nikolai Ssorin-Chaikov calls "icons of authenticity" (Ssorin-Chaikov 2003: 168). Although they are presented as autonomous figures, such individuals are in fact the most dependent in an Evenki community; they suffer from a weak social position and rely on outsiders who generally do not respect them.

Evenki are generally indifferent to the outsiders they encounter (most often Russian or Buryat bureaucrats). They try to avoid communication with them, and escape relationships that would subordinate them in any way. However the 'last Evenki' cannot avoid such contacts and must represent 'Evenki culture' to outsiders. Irgichi, a shaman, and his daughter Nadya, a ranger on the local nature reserve, are examples of such characters. In their official functions, they are obliged to interact with Russians and Buryats, and perform *pokazukha* accordingly. During our fieldwork, we witnessed how flippantly they assumed this role and used it to their advantage, laughing with other Evenki at the outsiders they engaged in these performances. Irgichi for example would laugh when watching our recordings of the annual ritual at which he had played the role of an authoritative leader and even claimed to be ten years older than he actually was in order to appear more experienced.

The Evenki intelligentsia who live in the towns and cities and tie their careers to the state and to its cultural projects face a more difficult

situation. They inhabit a predominantly Russian and Buryat environment and cannot retain an emotional distance from their patrons. These individuals return to their villages periodically to take part in public events and to organise the presentation of these events to the outside world. While they themselves may not be sure that what they perform is 'real Evenki culture', they are much more interested in the smoothness of the performance than its authenticity. As we shall see below, the seriousness with which members of this city-dwelling Evenki intelligentsia approach these cultural events means that they are not able to participate in companionship with local Evenki. This leads to conflicts with their relatives, who exclude them from interaction and obstruct their attempts to impose their will on the situation. The activities of the intelligentsia are seen as *pokazukha* by their local relatives, who are very sarcastic about their endeavours. But at the same time locals appreciate these efforts, and this appreciation is shown in the gifts of meat and dairy products that local Evenki willingly provide to their town-dwelling relatives.

The Annual Ritual

The annual ritual of an Evenki community is both a pleasant and a scandalous affair, and one in which companionship and *pokazukha* can be seen to operate simultaneously. During our fieldwork we were able to observe one such occasion, a ritual at which the spirits of several Evenki families were celebrated. This gathering was planned for a sunny day at the beginning of June. It brought together most Evenki in the region, from local villages and camps, their Buryat spouses, and even relatives now living in the city. In all around sixty people came to the gathering as well as a Buryat television crew and we two anthropologists. Whereas local participants engaged in this ritual in frames of companionship, the members of intelligentsia worked to create *pokazukha*. Both streams of action coexisted but gradually came into conflict with each other until they ultimately collapsed. In the following section we describe the social interactions that occurred during this gathering and the conflicts that ensued. We pay particular attention to analysing the dynamics of companionship and *pokazukha*, as well as the ways in which alcohol animated this gathering.

The group that we were accompanying assembled in the village of Bugarikta, the centre of Bugarikta district. Having already opened up the vodka for the road, the group of Evenki piled onto a tractor with two trailers, and started out towards the place in the taiga where they were to conduct their ritual. To add to the excitement, they chose to take a route

that involved crossing the River Alama by boat, rather than using the bridge further downstream. Twenty men and women (some of whom were by this point quite drunk) found themselves trying to cross the fast-flowing Alama by boat; some ferried it back and forth, others loaded provisions for the ritual into the boat, or kept it balanced while they crossed. The feeling of risk inherent in the situation heightened the sense of fun and companionship. At this point, the ritual seemed to exist only as an abstract destination animating the companionship that surrounded this journey. It was even rumoured that the ritual had already been completed and they could return to the village.

Other groups of Evenki also made their way to the sacred place. Irgichi the shaman travelled alone by foot and by boat from his winter camp. He is usually an unassuming, somewhat deferential character, but in this instance he appeared remarkably serious and self-confident. The reason for this soon became apparent. Members of the Evenki intelligentsia now living in the city had also arrived at the gathering, bringing a professional camera crew with them from the capital of The Baikal region. They intended to make a film about the annual ritual for a television station, and had asked Irgichi, as 'the last Evenki shaman', to conduct a ritual for the camera. This performance was pure *pokazukha*; it was an unscripted display, performed for outsiders and in a reverential manner. Irgichi and his assistants went up to a birch tree, he said a prayer and sprinkled vodka on the ground for the local spirits. He then drank the remaining vodka from a wooden cup and threw the cup to the east. The cup fell upside-down, and that was a sign that the spirits had accepted this initial sacrifice. The camera crew then asked an old woman to sing an Evenki song for the camera. She did so with a picturesque landscape of snow-covered mountains in the background. None of these performances were initiated by local people, and without the camera they probably would not have taken place at all.

Following the completion of the ritual for the camera, everyone moved to another location where they were to give offerings to the spirits. Each family had brought a collection of offerings – milk, tea, vodka, sweets, and cigarettes – creating an impression of abundance. These things were gathered together, sorted, and distributed among the participants. Women took ribbons – symbolising each family – and tied them to the branches of sacred trees decorated with a bell and the iron mask of the ancestor shaman. Irgichi and his three helpers seemed to play an equal role in these preparations. They then prayed, giving offerings of milk, tea and vodka by splashing them on the ground.



Fig. 5. Evenki distributing objects to sacrifice and consume at the annual ritual.

Having completed the sacrifice, people sat drinking and eating together in small groups. As a group, the intelligentsia remained apart from other participants until the end of the gathering. They were fully occupied with organising the performances for the camera. Companionship and *pokazukha* existed side by side. Indeed, the presence of the film crew may have facilitated the feeling of companionship. Irgichi's eldest son and future shaman, Jargal, told us that the camera was meant that people were not competing in drinking and the atmosphere was more convivial than usual.

This atmosphere of convivial companionship of this occasion was interrupted as soon as the vodka started running out. People stopped sharing vodka freely and started drinking as much as they could. The group of Evenki intelligentsia started worrying that the local Evenki would spoil the *pokazukha* and tried to boss people around. These efforts palpably increased the tension and the whole affair risked boiling over.

The tension finally broke with a small episode between an old woman, Pelageya, and a young man, Slava. Both Pelageya and Slava were absolutely drunk when Slava knelt and tried to perform a prayer on Pelageya's shawl. Pelageya was scandalised by this and appealed to others to remove him from it. People started swearing at him, and Slava reciprocated in kind before damning them all, and storming off into the forest. The intelligentsia were very upset and tried to play down the incident. István was told to

stop his filming and not to go off after Slava, who was at this point wandering around in the forest. One of them even appealed to Irgichi to try to prevent István from looking for him, and tried to involve him in their moralising, declaring that the amount of vodka at the next annual ritual should be restricted to avoid such an embarrassing situation from disturbing future performances of 'Evenki culture'. As the camera had run out of film the intelligentsia stopped trying to prolong the *pokazukha* and they became just as angry and aggressive as everyone else. Irgichi ignored their attempts to involve him in a scandal and behaved as if nothing had happened. He alone continued to act in the frame of *pokazukha*, and at the same time he began to identify himself more with the locals than with the guests from the city.

It was clear that the peaceful coexistence of companionship and *pokazukha* was over. The intelligentsia went off to the village with the camera crew with plans to visit the House of Culture in Bugarikta, and relax at the local *arshan* (Buryat, 'spa'). For other participants, the atmosphere around the ritual was very fruitful for developing relationships between persons who rarely see each other. A group of young boys and girls were playing football and Slava was among them, showing no embarrassment at his previous behaviour. Older Evenki arranged possible future activities with each other. A guest from the neighbouring region of Mawut arranged for Irgichi to conduct a healing ritual for relatives who had not been able to attend. At the same time, spouses started playing off against each other; women flirted with other men, while their husbands became aggressive and violent, ready to cause a scene over the behaviour of their wives (see our discussion in chapter three).

The group of Evenki intelligentsia did not form companionships with the local relatives; their organising of the *pokazukha* and the overbearing manner in which they tried to maintain it excluded them from such relations. Seriousness and self-importance are essential for performing a successful *pokazukha* with strangers but are no basis for forming relations with locals. Indeed, over the course of the gathering locals and Evenki from the town mostly succeeded in avoiding all communication with each other. If the above example of a ritual situation demonstrates that *pokazukha* and companionship can co-exist within one situation as separate and mutually balancing processes, it has also shown that the *pokazukha* created by the local intelligentsia is essential to the Evenki community. While Irgichi's performance of a shamanic ritual for the camera created an illusion that this ritual was conducted according to old traditions, it was in fact an improvisation. As we discuss in our next

example, such instances of *pokazukha* create a buffer between Evenki and the outside world.

'High Water'

There are certain critical moments when the equality and autonomy of companionship is endangered by external factors. In this section we discuss a situation in which Evenki companionship was impeded, first by incorporation into Buryat hierarchical structures, and second by a natural obstacle that obstructed their movement and prevented them from participating in the shared tasks that constitute companionship. The behaviours that occurred in this situation reveal much about how Evenki strive to maintain a sense of autonomy and equality within the frames of both companionship and *pokazukha*.

Annually, the Buryats who live on Evenki land commission the spring-time ritual *mikhulain tayilgan* (Buryat, 'at the sound of the first cuckoo') to pray for water. To the Buryats, a traditionally hierarchical and cattle-breeding society, this is the first in an annual cycle of rituals relating to the land. It incorporates Evenki people and spirits into the hierarchical structure of the Buryat world, and ensures that the Evenki speak for them in order that they obtain the right to live on Evenki land for another year. It is considered a male ritual; men are supposed to pray to the female spirit of water living in the mountain. For the Evenki, who have no need to contract with their spirits, this ritual is an opportunity to obtain free vodka and spend time away from their duties at camp.

In June, as part of the state's campaign against tuberculosis in the area, the whole extended family with whom we lived were collected by minibus to participate in a mandatory annual X-ray examination in Bugarikta. Taking advantage of their presence, the local Buryat elders requested that Irgichi perform the ritual. He assented to their request and, with his daughter Nadya the ranger, her Buryat colleague, and István, picked up the vodka from the bridge over the Alama and headed deep into Evenki territory towards the site where they were to perform the ritual. In order to get there, they had to cross the River Sukhaya, but with the exceptionally late spring snow melt and rains the waters of the usually dry Sukhaya had become torrential. The river was impassable and the group was forced to camp out at the nearby weather station overlooking the river. In the event, the Evenki were stranded for three days during this 'high water' (Russian, *bol'shaya voda*) situation with a case of vodka, waiting for the waters to

subside. It was raining heavily and they could do nothing but drink vodka and talk. The Evenki usually enjoy the sociability inherent to travelling together, but in this situation, the atmosphere of companionship that we had felt on the journey descended into a state of aggression and rivalry. The more they drank, the more rivalrous they became. Prevented from going onwards and with no focus on which to cooperate and establish companionship – it seemed quite ludicrous to perform a rain ritual in a flood –, their sociability was disturbed. This state of aggression and rivalry continued until they had drunk the last drop of vodka.

Once the vodka ran out, the most impressive moments of these few days occurred. Nadya and her Buryat colleague both tried to wade across the river, whilst Irgichi and Ivan tried to row over it. Each of them pitted themselves against its torrential waters, attempting to overcome nature and not subordinate themselves to it. The Evenki behaviour in this situation contrasts strongly with the atmosphere of Buryat rituals, in which one is supposed to subordinate oneself to nature, not attempt to overcome it. It was a strange kind of ritual situation, emotionally fraught, and in which ecstasy was experienced not together, but individually and simultaneously. Rather than an experience of collective effervescence (Durkheim 1995), this event fostered a feeling of collective autonomy among the Evenki participants.

If one looks at the fractiousness of those three days by the river, and the strivings when the vodka ran out, in the context of Evenki involvement in a Buryat ritual, it is possible to see that their behaviour was a reaction to their incorporation into the hierarchical sociality of Buryats. Within this hierarchy the Evenki were subordinate; they had been instructed *by* Buryats to beseech Evenki spirits *on behalf of* Buryats. Having accepted vodka and endangered their companionship by placing themselves within a hierarchical order between civilised Buryats and uncivilised nature, the Evenki were in an emotional context in which they felt that they had to highlight their autonomy and be violent and aggressive to balance the system.

The actual performance of the ritual was not done in the Buryat way. Both Irgichi and his son Ivan were too drunk to conduct the ritual, so they lay on the ground while the children Volodya and Bayirka imitated it.²

² This was a classic situation of *pokazukha*. The children had never been taught the ritual, but had learned it by observing and imitating adults. Although there was no secret or sacred knowledge to be transmitted in the ritual – only patterns of behaviour –, the adults pretended that their children possessed some esoteric knowledge, as they

They planted three birch stakes into the ground in a line and tied ribbons to them. They then collected wood and set a fire on one side of this line, sprinkled milk onto the birch stakes and the fire, lit cigarettes in its flames and gave them to Irgichi and Ivan.

Despite the fact that the ritual was not done in the Buryat manner, as far as both Evenki and Buryats were concerned the ritual had been performed. For the Buryats, the fact that the Evenki had performed this ritual gave them a place on Evenki land. For the Evenki, the ritual situation included more than just the performance; it also included the drinking and striving against the river. The ritual situation encompassed the whole emotional experience in which Evenki attempted to overcome their entanglement in Buryat hierarchy and the block on companionship provoked by the high river waters. First, they drank Buryat vodka and entered into competition with each other, thus overcoming the complementary schismogenesis brought about by their being commissioned by Buryats to complete a ritual. They then entered into competition with the river, thus transforming a situation of symmetrical schismogenesis – i.e. fractiousness between Evenki – into a competition between them and the river. In this manner, they were able to restore autonomy, equality, and companionship to the group.

Drinking and Aggression: Risk-Taking as a Source of Balance

Having noted the presence of alcohol and aggression in the above two ritual situations, we feel we must devote a few words on the place of these factors in Evenki sociality. Risk-taking is very important for the Evenki because it is one of the most effective ways of engendering equality, autonomy, and solidarity in the accomplishment of a common task. In this respect hunting is the prototypical form of risk-taking, but since Soviet times hunting has been restricted or even prohibited.

Nowadays, the only source of risk in everyday life is drinking, which ends in quarrels, aggression, and dangerous encounters. We have heard numerous stories about people who died in car accidents while driving when drunk. Other stories involved violence between family members or

themselves did when conducting rituals in the presence of outsiders. This pretence could be a reaction to expectations, and the enthusiastic tendency of outsiders (including anthropologists) to seek secrets and verbally articulated knowledge within Evenki shamanism.

friends, siblings killed or injured, murdered spouses, and so forth.³ Some Evenki have spent several years in jail as a consequence. All of these dramatic incidents occurred while drinking. Yet drinking is not perceived as a problem for the Evenki, precisely because it exposes them to risks that they would not otherwise face in their sedentary lives. To some extent, then, drinking in Evenki culture is a substitute, if not entirely satisfactory, for hunting.

Drinking provides Evenki with a sense of independence. Drunkenness gives a feeling of *manakan* (Evenki, 'a feeling of autonomy, of being unself-consciously free') because it prevents communication or cooperation with other people. However, this feeling of autonomy is paradoxical as it depends on alcohol to be produced. There is also another contradiction present when drinking in company; drinkers compete with each other so as not to be any less intoxicated than each other. When the alcohol begins to run out, this contradiction becomes obvious. At that moment aggression and rivalry supersede the peaceful state of drunkenness. Drinkers are therefore not really independent because in their desire to be *manakan* they compete with each other to become more intoxicated. People suffer from a double bind (see glossary) between symmetry and complementarity: they try to achieve a state of autonomy by entering into symmetrical relations with each other; but they equally depend on alcohol to provide this feeling of autonomy.

Drinking alcohol is also a form of companionship in situations where risk is desired. Embracing risk is important because by preventing subordination, it balances the whole system of action. When people hunt or drink they decide with whom they will go based on the possibility of symmetrical relations with potential partners. The most important thing is the possibility of sharing risks in such a way that all companions take part and none try to avoid the danger. In hunter-gatherer communities sharing risk is important to achieve trust in a partner (cf. Ingold 1999: 399–410) and it is a constituent part of Evenki companionship.

A number of studies argue that attitudes towards aggression vary between cultures (Harrison 1989, Clastres 1989, Scheper-Hughes 1992). The classic Western understanding of aggression as a natural artefact to be regulated by society by punishing transgressors does not apply to societies that are organised on egalitarian principles and do not use punishment in their socialisation. The Evenki are not afraid of violence, although they

³ Although we do not discuss the incident in this book, we have direct experience of one drinking session that almost led to the hanging of a man.

find it no less painful than anyone else. Aggression is not used to suppress others or assert power. It has a different function, closer to the role of war-play rituals in Papua New Guinean societies (Roscoe 1996: 662–663). For the Evenki, aggression is a symmetrical process that takes place mostly between people who might otherwise be disposed to a relationship of domination-subordination. Most incidents happen between siblings of different ages, children and parents, or husbands and wives. We witnessed that after incidents of drunken violence between Ivan and Natasha there was a revival of love between them; they would spend the whole of the following day together sharing their tasks.⁴ Evenki families need such critical moments to support companionship relations in their new occupation as cattle breeders. Following such instances of aggression, Ivan and Natasha go to the bathhouse together and a new cycle begins. This peaceful routine lasts until the next drinking session, by which time people have become tired of their work routine.

Aggression is frequently directed towards sober people. It is very important that the object of aggression keeps the incident in the frame of symmetrical schismogenesis – i.e. escalating equal responses – and not to allow it to fall into complementary schismogenesis – dominance-submission –, although this may be very dangerous for the sober partner because the drunken aggressor does not control himself or herself, but is said to behave like an angry bear. We were told that we should never be afraid of drunken or aggressive Evenki. Nevertheless, we found it difficult to get used to such scenes of aggression and only after some time did we learn to behave properly, mostly by avoiding communication with drunken individuals.

When Ivan returned drunk from the village late one evening, Irgichi went off with a spade, as if to clear drains. Katya, who could not leave the house, watched television and acted as if she were too deeply involved in the broadcast to notice anything else. We would avoid conflicts by going for walks through the forest and along the river in the evening. The day after such an incident is peaceful and quiet. The sobered individual shows some shame over the previous events and there is great relief. Following

⁴ Christina Toren found another form of this mechanism in relations between husbands and wives in Fiji. Toren showed that drinking sessions and family violence switch symmetrical relations that developed during dancing parties between men and women into complementary ones, which are more appreciated by the community. Although the cases are somewhat different, the important point here is that love and violence are not exclusive, but that the one can support the other (Toren 1999).

one occasion, Ivan told us “*my lyudi*” (Russian, “we are [all] people”), and with this our relations of symmetry were emphasised.

The Bear: Nature as a Source of Balance

In the previous two examples, we have discussed how local Evenki maintain a balance between themselves and outsiders – such as local Buryats and members of the Evenki intelligentsia from the city – in situations of *pokazukha* and companionship. In the following example, we analyse a situation in which the Evenki may also engender a competitive relationship with nature in order to provoke change in their own daily pattern of activities, as when making the shift from winter to summer tasks.

The annual cycle of household tasks is based on the opposition between summer and winter; each period is marked by the complementary processes of gathering and distributing. In the summer, Evenki activities are mostly oriented towards gathering provisions – grazing their cattle, making hay, fishing and hunting –, whilst in the winter – when none of these activities are possible – they distribute these provisions; sharing and consuming all that has been gathered in the summer.

One of the critical points in this system is the shift from winter to summer activities. The process of gathering begins with the journey to the summer camp, where the cattle can graze in the pasture (the fields around the winter camp are reserved for haymaking and are not used in summer). In 2006 the winter was unusually long. It snowed into the middle of May and it was difficult for people to break out of their winter activities. Although food and fodder were running short, and it was high time to make the move to the summer camp, the weather would not permit it. The long winter also provided a good excuse to postpone summer work and to remain in winter mode, even if this situation was not sustainable.

The egalitarian social organisation of the Evenki – based on working in companionship rather than coordinating by instructions – meant that nobody could order the change from winter to summer activities. The Evenki needed something with which to compete in order to provoke this transition. They could not compete with each other because this would exacerbate already existing tensions between different households. So they had to find an outside counterpart with which to compete, that would mobilise them and push them to start the migration. If a system is influenced by an external factor, the Evenki consider it possible to negate it by applying the same factor against itself, such as when they fight fire by

means of smaller counter-fires, respond to aggression with aggression, or declare that they prefer to be hungry when they have no food. In their shift to the summer regime, the Evenki sought symmetrical – competitive – relations with a counterpart which had also suffered from the prolonged winter and was itself struggling to start a new regime of action: a bear.

The word ‘bear’ is generally taboo among Evenki, but as the winter wore on the whole camp started talking excitedly about bears. Nadya had sighted a male bear on the neighbouring hillside. He had awakened from hibernation and was suffering from hunger, weakness, and cold. Bears are considered to be very dangerous during this period because they look for food everywhere and are unafraid of people. But there was not enough food either for the bear or for the cattle. This period was fraught with emotional tension. It was a veritable ritual situation, a moment on the threshold of two regimes of action, and in this context the bear took on especial significance. As we heard Nadya, Ivan, Irgichi, and Katya discussing at the winter camp – thereby establishing the symmetry between bears and humans –, humans and bears were competitors because the bears would try to kill cows or sheep. In telling stories about bears, people also identified them with humans; saying that without fur they would look like men, and that they even drink alcohol (they eat ants and become drunk from the formic acid) and become aggressive just like men. People would often tell stories of coming across such drunken bears. Men started to play on this similarity, and started behaving like bears when they were drunk. They walked like bears, growled, and shook trees to show their anger. Nadya even referred to the neighbouring bear as *dyadya Misha* [Russian, ‘uncle Mike’], the way one might talk of a good neighbour.

The most popular topic of discussion at the camp in the middle of May was whether or not someone had seen a bear. Ivan surveyed the neighbouring mountains and hills with binoculars every morning. We listened attentively to the roars and sounds from the forest at night. Bear tracks were the most precious and interesting of finds. People were both afraid and happy. Without instructions, Ivan and Natasha started to herd the cattle every evening before they went back to camp. They started to gather their belongings and put the land around the camp in order. The shift from winter to summer was beginning. It was an important moment and the figure of the bear as a competitor, a symmetrical partner, had helped people to summon their strength and change their pattern of behaviour. Within the week, Ivan and his family, along with all their cattle, had made their way up to the summer camp. Meanwhile, the bear went up

into the mountains where the grass was beginning to grow. The moment of crisis was over for both bear and people.

Peter Dwyer, an ecological anthropologist who uses a cybernetic approach, describes a similar phenomenon in which discussion of events in the natural habitat helps people to change their own behaviour and change synchronously with natural changes. He describes the situation in which the Etolo people of Papua New Guinea use the idiom of '*sugua mai*' ('pigs ate') "to link pigs, complaints, feasts, and the availability of sweet potato and sago starch" (Dwyer 1990: 173):

From July people said these words to each other and to us; sometimes they rubbed their bellies for emphasis. [...] [I]t acted to transform the potential ambiguity of a pending and progressive reduction in yield to an unambiguous message of presence/absence. It did this for all the people in the community. *Sugua Mai* was a message, created by the people, and sent to themselves, that elicited two categories of response. If people had not already initiated new gardens, they responded by doing so; if they had commenced a new round of gardening, they accelerated the rate of work. And, also, they responded by committing more time to processing sago palms so as to have flour on hand through the period when old gardens were failing and before new ones flourished. By these means *Sugua Mai* contained fickle behavior; it did so by resynchronizing behavior directed at producing food and, in this way, maintained a theme of sameness in the food-producing system – it imposed stability upon the form of that system (ibid. 173–174).

The situation with the bear produced a similar outcome, transforming the ambiguity of the overlong winter period into an unambiguous message of transition to summer activities. Although this situation is not ritual in a traditional sense, we nevertheless feel justified in considering it to be a ritual situation. Following Frederik Barth (1961: 152–153) we can equate these episodes with rituals because of the effect they had on people. This situation was a moment of synchronisation with their environment even if participants did not interpret it as a ritual and the event had no clear boundaries but was interwoven with everyday routines. Nevertheless, people experienced emotions that were aroused without concrete cause and which could not be explained by the flow of routine events. We did not know why people suddenly became active and felt excited. At no point did they mention that they were anticipating moving to the summer camp. In practice they did not intentionally make the transition, but rather they found themselves having already made it. There were no ceremonies or directly prescribed actions. The meaning of actions did not change, people were doing the same things as they did before, but the context changed. The move to summer camp was a move into the wild,

life away from civilisation, without electricity or communication with the outer world. Just as the excitement of travelling helped the Basseri of Iran to remain nomadic despite it being no longer economically viable (Barth 1961), this escape to the wild has a special emotional meaning – beyond any economic reason – which helps the Evenki to stay Evenki.

Conclusion

Throughout this chapter we referred to rituals in various contexts, but have deliberately eschewed the task of proposing a theoretical definition of ritual. Aside from the presence of processes of complementary and symmetrical schismogenesis, what do the annual gathering, the 'high water' ritual, and the situation with the bear have in common?

In the situation with the bear, there was no recognition of this event as a ritual and no attempt to interpret its meanings, partly because the participants experienced it directly and did not need to articulate or narrate the experience. Many anthropologists might also not recognise it as a ritual because no specific 'ritualised actions' were performed. But we believe that as a highly charged emotional context that needed to be overcome, this situation presented itself as a ritual situation. We argue that the absence of ritualised performance was because no strangers were involved and there was no need to create a display or perform *pokazukha*. In the examples of the annual ritual and the Buryat ritual, strangers were explicitly or implicitly present and the rituals served as a form of *pokazukha*. These are the situations that Evenki themselves call rituals, and we believe this insight helps to explain why rituals are so often sites of culture contact.

Rituals provide a way of mediating contact with strangers by using performance to block direct communication and thus freeing participants from the need directly to communicate with and understand others. Culture contact is a paradoxical process. It is based, not on understanding and responding to the other, but rather on dismissing messages from the other. Each side has to interact as if they are exchanging messages and understand the other's perspective but when it is done they remain as before, retaining the same prejudices and stereotypes that they had prior to the interaction. In Evenki land, culture contact is unavoidable and the only thing that people can choose is the frame in which it occurs. Ritual is not the only stage for culture contact. Drinking sessions and aggressive confrontations also provide for the same possibility of interacting without

communicative exchange. At the annual ritual and in the 'high water' situation we witnessed examples of such interactions with strangers. The *pokazukha* of the annual ritual and the lethargic state of *manakan* as Evenki got drunk during the high water situation, were examples of just such a refusal of communication.

The main feature common to rituals, drinking, and outbursts of aggression is that in all three instances communication is broken in the manner we have described above. Children learn that violent behaviour has no particular intention, but is just an expression of what exists in the world and carries no concrete message about either the intentions of violent adults or the faults of children. For Evenki, violence is not a communicative act. Behaviour in a drunken state is also non-communicative because of the discrepancy between intentions and actions. These three forms of interaction – ritual, violence and drunkenness – often overlap. Almost without exception, interactions with strangers occur under the influence of one or more of these forms of interaction. As a result the flow of communication – as a process of mutual influence – is blocked and culture contact does not lead to a change in the ethos of either party. Such instances of culture contact can therefore freeze tendencies towards assimilation or acculturation and prevent conflict between different ethoses.

After the Evenki were collectivised and started breeding cattle like their neighbours the Buryats, and most of the surrounding forest was closed off as a nature reserve, they abandoned hunting as their main occupation. This change in livelihood, combined with the encroachment of hierarchical structures, threatened the ideal mode of Evenki sociality: companionship. Had the Evenki not found a way of adapting to these changes while at the same time preserving their companionship relations, their egalitarian ethos would have been lost and their community destroyed. It is in this context that participation in situations of risk, frequently involving alcohol and violence, helps to maintain companionship, while the performance of *pokazukha* in ritual helps to mediate culture contact by creating a buffer between Evenki and other peoples. Both companionship and *pokazukha* are fraught with tension and contradiction but by carefully balancing these schismogenic processes the Evenki are able to maintain their distinct egalitarian ethos. In cybernetic terms, companionship and *pokazukha* form a self-corrective system. Without this balance, we believe that factors driving towards either assimilation or isolation would ultimately destroy the Evenki community.

CHAPTER TWO

POKAZUKHA IN PUBLIC LIFE: THE BUGARIKTA HOUSE OF CULTURE

In 2006, Bugarikta district's House of Culture participated in the Altargana festival. The festival was intended to celebrate the different cultures of Baikal region and publicity for the festival, prominently displayed in the capital's central square, depicted stereotyped images of local ethnic groups – Russians, Buryats, Tatars, and Evenki – in traditional costume. All the Houses of Culture in Baikal region were involved in this festival and were busy making preparations to perform in front of a commission that had been sent by the Ministry of Culture of the Baikal region to evaluate each House of Culture's performance and reward the best of them. The villagers of Bugarikta began preparing for the evaluation a few days before the commission was due to arrive from the region's capital. Villagers and staff of the House of Culture assembled a cultural programme consisting of dance performances and singing by school children, local Russian and Buryat traditional ensembles, and other such cultural groups. Although the villagers worried that the performance would not be suitably impressive for the commission, they had too little time to prepare anything else. On the appointed day, however, the commission did not arrive and the performance took place without it. The festival became a local event, a rehearsal for the commission's actual arrival several weeks later when everyone was much better prepared.

In this chapter we examine the dynamics of the Altargana festival at the Bugarikta House of Culture. Having discussed *pokazukha* – 'putting on a show' – in chapter one as a means of maintaining Evenki ethos in situations of culture contact, we now extend our discussion to look at the role that *pokazukha* plays in the public life of Bugarikta district and how different groups relate differently to the performance of *pokazukha* in which they both participate.

Various scholars have underlined the role of performativity in Soviet contexts. This research has been succinctly summarised by Bruce Grant (2011), who makes reference to three authors that have examined various forms of performativity within Soviet and post-Soviet life (Ssorin-Chaikov 2003; Yurchak 2005; Humphrey 2008). These forms of performativity can be found at different levels, from late Soviet youth culture to party

bureaucrats, but what Grant underlines is the importance of paying attention to the common role of form, rather than the diverse contents of these behaviours (Grant 2011: 273).

In these studies, the term *pokazukha* appears from time to time to designate a form of performativity that illustrates most vividly the intimate relationship between proclaimed formal action and the spontaneous outcomes that were so typical of the Soviet system. For Grant, Yurchak, and Humphrey formality played an important role in establishing the boundary between the state and the people. Ssorin-Chaikov proposed that the very intention of conducting *pokazukha* is already an act of state-building, of constituting the state as a pre-existing actor. These observations are very productive for understanding the dynamics of the Soviet and post-Soviet state. We wish to extend this discussion by proposing that *pokazukha* performances don't merely serve to constitute the spectator of the performance, or even the relationship between performer and spectator, but that the performers themselves are constructed through such events.

In this book, we examine *pokazukha* not only as a show that constructs its audience – a state that watches and controls – but also as a form of communication between those who perform. The performances before auditing commissions could be described as *pokazukha*, a performance to prove that the proclaimed objectives have been reached. For example, before the commission comes buildings are painted to look tidy. But they are painted only on the faces that the commission would see during its guided tour around the site. The impression should be that all buildings are always tidy. The participants in these *pokazukha* displays have different backgrounds, and the *pokazukha* is very frequently an occasions for them to meet and collaborate with each other. The illusory and formal character of *pokazukha* provides fertile ground for the creation of an illusory and formal category of performers: equal citizens of a Soviet and subsequently post-Soviet state. In this respect *pokazukha* is a stage for the most intensive form of culture contact. Unsurprisingly, the main theme of *pokazukha* shows in Soviet Union was of 'friendship between nations' [*druzhba narodov*]. As Yurchak also hints, the fall of the Soviet Union was itself experienced as a crisis of this *pokazukha*, in which people lost the motivation and need to participate in it. In this chapter we propose to look at the continued existence of *pokazukha* in modern-day East Siberia. If it no longer works to create a strong state presence in the territory, then at least it operates as a form of culture contact between Russian, Buryat and Evenki groups of people.

In this chapter we argue that the Russians and Buryats in Bugarikta have different ethos (see glossary). Russians have a more irreverent and flexible attitude to public life than Buryats. For much of the year these ethos may not come into contact with each other, as people suppress their particular identities in daily interactions. But during the Altargana festival, at which participants must present a united display of their cultures to an outside audience, a clash of these ethos is inevitable and the *pokazukha* that emerges from this performance is a means of mediating the situation of culture contact. In this situation, *pokazukha* is effective because it provides form without prescribing content; participants may engage in a common performance but experience it in their own way. The *pokazukha* surrounding the Altargana festival therefore provides an excellent opportunity to observe the ethos of the two communities of Bugarikta and how these inflect local experiences of public life.

Bugarikta and its House of Culture

Bugarikta is an economically depressed rural district in Baikal region. Its ethnically mixed population of roughly 15,000 inhabitants – 7,000 of whom live in the village of Bugarikta itself – ekes out an existence by small-scale agriculture, poaching, and occupying a handful of public-sector positions as doctors, teachers, rangers, care-workers at the local nursing home, and as culture workers. These state-funded institutions still exhibit many characteristics of the Soviet institutions that existed in the era of the planned economy, but in their day-to-day workings they no longer foster the same sense of solidarity that they did in Soviet times. Russians live, work, and socialise among Russians, and Buryats live quite separate lives among Buryats. Although their children study at the same schools and they themselves encounter each other at their work places, in everyday life they try to avoid contact with each other and when Buryats and Russians meet they do not meet as Buryats and Russians but on neutral ground: they play down the markers of their culture, for example by not referring to features specific to one or the other group (such as Orthodox and Buddhist festivals). Nowadays the only occasions that bring people together are the official visits when commissions are sent from the capital to audit the work of state-funded organisations. At these times people pull together in an attempt to conduct *pokazukha*, to create the illusion that these organisations function smoothly and effectively when in fact they do not. People are afraid that if they were evaluated on the

basis of their actual output these islands of state subsidy would be cut off. These institutions offer people a sense of stability, employment, and a modest income, even if the salaries that the state provides are so small (between 1,500 and 3,000 roubles per month [in 2006]) and irregularly paid as to be virtually useless.

The House of Culture is one of the largest buildings in Bugarikta. It is the one place that can hold a large number of villagers within its walls, and this is its essential function. Ostensibly, the House of Culture was mandated to conduct trainings and workshops as well as cultural programmes to organise the leisure time of the villagers, however we found that in practice it had a much more problematic existence. While the House of Culture certainly existed as a physical building in Bugarikta, in everyday life it was difficult to identify what precisely made it a 'house' of 'culture'. For much of the year the House of Culture was one of the dirtiest and coldest places in the village. It was closed most of the time and its staff spent no more than a few hours each day at work in order to economise on electricity and firewood. On those occasions when the House of Culture was open and staff worked, it was not for official cultural events. Staff helped to put on a cosmetics fair where Chinese-made perfumes and clothes were traded and sold tickets on behalf of a group of opera singers or a visiting circus from Omsk that had leased the auditorium to conduct two performances. These activities were not connected to the official programme of the House of Culture, and the staff offered only limited support; they neither helped to organise the disco following the circus performance nor did they allow the House of Culture's electricity supply to be used because they did not consider this to be part of the work of the House of Culture. Hobby groups (*kruzhki*, Russian, 'circles') and classes covering such activities as dancing, music, singing, sewing, and local history, only existed on paper. The staff wrote fake reports about these paper groups and classes, whilst being aware that their real duplicates did exist in other organisations in Bugarikta (the school, the local museum, the music school, kindergarten and the Departments of Culture at the local and district administrations).

For most of the year, then, the House of Culture was a phantasm. No specific activities were held within its walls and the yard was so full of rubbish that it was impossible to enter the outhouse. However, once a year, when a commission arrived from the capital to evaluate it, the House of Culture would suddenly be transformed from a shabby, half-derelict building to one of the brightest and best decorated places in the village. Members of different groups and hobby circles would take part in the



Fig. 6. Bugarikta House of Culture, the biggest building in the village.

festival programme and present themselves as associated with the House of Culture. It seemed to us that the only observable function that the House of Culture served was to provide the place, the decorations, and sometimes the costumes for the *pokazukha* surrounding its own auditing. But why did these groups – which rarely, if ever, rehearsed in the House of Culture and were not directed by any of its staff – participate so enthusiastically and so seriously in the *pokazukha* surrounding its evaluation? In order to understand why the villagers of Bugarikta cooperated with the staff of the House of Culture and participated in this *pokazukha*, it is necessary to look at the place of the festival in the wider structure of public life in the region.

The Commission's Visit

The arrival of the evaluation commission brought cohesion and order to the existence of the House of Culture. Members of the House of Culture and all creative and artistic lay people of the village came together to help maintain the official fiction that the House of Culture operates the whole year round. In doing so they made it exist. Prior to the visit, villagers helped to clean the building, illuminate the rooms, and set up the stage for the performance. Groups rehearsed and spreads were laid out, but the

commission did not arrive. This was a deliberate strategy of the commission, which is not really expected to conduct a proper examination of the activities of the House of Culture but only to give cause for the organisation of an important event that serves to ratify and structure the lifecycle of the institution.¹ The commission's failure to arrive at the first performance therefore meant that the first event became a rehearsal and gave the villagers sufficient time to prepare for when the commission actually did arrive a few weeks later.

The event was held in the beginning of May 2006. People waited in the square for a long time, but finally the commission arrived. The commission was first welcomed in front of the House of Culture, then led past a spread of luxury foodstuffs and taken to their seats in the auditorium. The commission members then sat to watch the three hour long performance, after which they retired to the local spa-hotel where were staying while workers of the House of Culture and performers celebrated the end of the audit at after-parties. There were special Buryat and Russian sessions in the programme during which local folk ensembles performed traditional songs and dances. There were also numerous performances by schoolchildren, organised by their teachers. Members of staff acted as compères, sang in a choir, and busied themselves making sure the event went off smoothly. The show could not have been staged without lay performers, but the staff played the leading role in putting the performance together. In all, several hundred people participated and everyone in the village who could perform took to the stage. These performers also made up most of the audience. The House of Culture became a stage for the villagers. The atmosphere was filled with music and emotions, and in the course of putting on this performance the villagers experienced a real feeling of collective effervescence (Durkheim 1995).

The presence of the commission from the capital of Baikal region conferred public status on the event. The show was presented to the commission as though the Bugarikta House of Culture were competing against the performances of the other local Houses of Culture, but neither the identity of the members of the commission nor the results of this evaluation would be made known to anyone but the staff of the House of Culture. In fact, there was no real competition; the rankings of the various Houses of Culture in the region were decided politically, according to their relation

¹ In truth, the financial support that central state institutions are able to provide to the Houses of Culture is so limited that no-one can seriously expect them to function properly.

to the centre, not on the basis of the performances. The results of the audit were important only for the staff of the House of Culture. They had been trained by members of the commission in the capital of Baikal region, so in some ways the evaluation was more an examination of the staff by their trainers than an actual competition. Nevertheless, all the participants were nervous and the event caused a great deal of stress.

To describe the effect of the commission on Bugarikta we must examine how its House of Culture participates in a wider system of culture and public life in Baikal region. For cybernetics, systems – whether physical, biological, or social – work in the same way and are maintained by similar processes. We therefore find it useful to invoke the metaphor of a switch in an electrical network, which we borrow from Gregory Bateson (1979: 95). A switch is a gate in a circuit that exists only at the moment when the circuit changes from one state to another. In an electrical circuit, for example, the switch is irrelevant when it is in either the ‘on’ or ‘off’ position. It only has an effect on the network when it changes from one position to the other, and that change requires an external input. If one considers the House of Culture as a switch in a circuit, it is possible to see that this switch also requires an input of energy from outside the circuit to change its state. The cosmetics fair and the circus provided small currents of energy, giving the staff a reason to turn up to their workplace in the absence of official duties and keeping the House of Culture alive when its main source of energy was not coursing through it. But it is the public activity associated with the arrival of the evaluation commission that provides the House of Culture with its main source of energy and makes the House of Culture significant.

The House of Culture integrates Bugarikta into a circuit of public displays throughout the region, each associated with the presence of visitors from the capital. The brightness of costumes, the tidiness of the premises, the happiness and nervous excitement of the villagers is the moment of ‘culture’ in honour of which the House of Culture is named. This flow of public activity moves through Bugarikta only on the occasion of the evaluation. As soon as the commission leaves the House of Culture, the flow is redirected into other districts and the House of Culture becomes once more irrelevant in the system of public life that runs through Baikal region. It is as if each of the district centres is a lamp on a map. As the commission moves through the region conducting its evaluations, lamps are illuminated one at a time. Practically speaking, there is therefore only one House of Culture in Baikal region at any given time and this corresponds to the location of the commission. The opportunity to participate

in such a significant event – characterised by its atmosphere of regional importance – is what motivates lay performers from the village to cooperate with the staff of the House of Culture during the Altargana festival.

The atmosphere of an evaluation is the product of the emotional work of the performers. This emotional work is devoted to creating the momentary illusion that something actually depends on the performances on stage. What is particularly interesting is the investment that people put into these moments of illusion. Villagers throw themselves willingly into creating the illusion that the event is important, and they do not do it spontaneously. They make long preparations to enter this state and exit it afterwards by drinking and celebrating. We were asked to film the event in order to add gravitas to the *pokazukha*, but after the event no one was interested in seeing what we had filmed.

The investment of participants in creating and maintaining this illusion can be illustrated by their response to an accident that occurred during the evaluation. A Buryat yurt – the traditional home of Buryats, but not in this region – had been specially erected in front of the House of Culture. It was probably the first yurt that had ever been built in Bugarikta and it was particularly badly assembled: the whole construction was propped up on a rudimentary frame of scaffolding. At an unexpected moment when the guests were sitting at the table and hosts welcomed them with speeches, one of the panels of the yurt collapsed, almost falling onto a member of the commission. We witnessed the cognitive, interactive, and emotional work that all participants put into not disrupting the *pokazukha*: the commission-member tried hard to act as if nothing had happened, the Buryats managed to keep their own horror in check but their expressions of extreme concentration showed that the accident was not as minor as they tried to pretend. The only one who could save the situation was one local Buryat not associated with the House of Culture. He took up the fallen panel and propped it up until the commission left the yurt.

Participation in *pokazukha* requires some degree of censorship of one's reactions and rigid control over spontaneous expressions of emotion. From this point of view *pokazukha* is a special experience, and sometimes a very strong one, like participation in rituals or other collective events. The presence of presumably authoritative strangers and their cooperation in the presentation of *pokazukha* determines the context for such experiences, although different groups may respond to this situation in different ways.

The departure of the commission was a cause of great celebration, not because of the success of the competition but because the event was now

completed. The House of Culture reverted to its usual state of cold and quiet, and the villagers were relieved that the stress of the public situation was over. The Buryat director of the House of Culture drank for several days straight; we ran into him at the local canteen where he drank with everybody, celebrating the completion of the evaluation. Following this evaluation a new cycle of inertia and indifference would set in until the next arrival of the commission from the capital. Villagers felt that having participated in this *pokazukha* they had earned the right to celebrate, and then return to life as usual.

Why did the commission have such an emotional impact on staff members and performers? The commission has no real power to cut the budget or to take any other sanctions against the House of Culture. Members of the commission also participate in *pokazukha* by accepting the charade presented to them. Yet people invest real and strong emotions into the whole event. We have so far managed to explain why the villagers participated in the event – people were connected to the wider circuit of public life in Baikal region through their participation in this annual performance –, but to give a full account of the reason why performers felt such emotional tensions, we have to take a detailed look at how people relate to instances of *pokazukha*, and analyse the emotions, associations, and conflicts involved in such performances.

Hidden and Articulated Distinctions in Pokazukha

The publicity for the Altargana festival was reminiscent of Soviet propaganda promoting friendship between nations, in this case Russian and Buryat. The festival itself was supposed to demonstrate the unity of Buryats and Russians as they worked to produce performances in each House of Culture. But in practice the preparations at the Bugarikta House of Culture did not present such an occasion for interethnic cooperation. Instead they provoked competition between Russians and Buryats. When the commission arrived and the performances began, ethnic distinctions between Russians and Buryats were concealed and instead articulated as distinctions between neighbouring local Houses of Culture. This endeavour to manipulate distinctions and articulate them as something else created a very strong double bind: the real state of affairs – ethnic division and competition – was concealed by a proclaimed one – the competition between houses of culture of neighbouring villages and settlements –, and there was no way in which the reality could be expressed without bringing

down the whole show. This double bind, and the participants need somehow to resolve it, helps to explain the tense atmosphere of the festival and the behaviour of its participants.

As the cause of this double bind, the commission became a target for the locals. The interactions of performers and organisers with the commission can be seen as attempts to resolve the experience of contradiction between the reality that they were to present and the actual state of affairs. The commission worked hard to resist the efforts of villagers to get its members to identify with one group or the other. Despite the ethnic composition of the commission – three Buryats and a Russian –, its members only permitted themselves to be identified with their provenance; they were guests from the capital of Baikal region. The commission's apparent unity and neutrality was the product of intense work on the part of its members to avoid individual contact with local people and to maintain a united front throughout the occasion. Members of the commission stayed together and avoided speaking with locals. As a result, not a single member of the commission could be identified as the leading representative. Their efforts constructed the image of the House of Culture that they had come to audit as a unified and homogeneous space, and the event as a neutral public performance.

From the outset, villagers were persistent in their attempts to break down the unity of the commission and seduce its members with displays of hospitality. When the commission arrived, two groups representing the House of Culture welcomed their guests with traditional greetings. Both Russian and Buryat parties invited members of the commission to tables laden with traditional food in the Buryat yurt and in one of the rooms of House of Culture, decorated in Russian style. Although these offerings were only for show, both groups of hosts tried to break this convention by presenting the commissioners with plenty of food and drink and exhorting them to try them. If the members of the commission were to genuinely accept these offerings, it would have risked turning the whole situation into a genuine interaction rather than a display, thereby making the *pokazukha* untenable. The commission had to behave as if they did not notice these attempts at substitution and treat these offerings as unreal. The Buryats played their roles as hosts more appropriately than the Russians. They presented the commission with local delicacies, such as blood sausages, but did not supply the dinnerware with which to eat them. This made it impossible for the commission to actually partake of the food, and thus enabled the performance to be maintained. The Russians treated their guests in similar fashion, but they went a step further and presented

the commission with a bottle of wine and tiny glasses from which to drink it. Although more symbolic than generous, this act more closely resembled actual consumption and served to make the atmosphere less formal. The Russian commissioner was very pleased but quickly checked her reactions. The commission remained reserved and formal. They drank only small sips of the wine and acknowledged the appropriate toasts and greetings, but they did not taste anything else. These interactions were part of the programme of the festival – the performance of culture – and not to be confused with a genuine welcoming of proper guests by proper hosts.

After failing to break the tension by appealing to individual members of the commission, the staff led the commission into the main auditorium, where they took their seats and watch the performances. The two groups of locals abandoned their efforts to undermine the proclaimed unity of the commission, and turned their attention to making a convincing display of their own unity. Although the performances had been prepared by either Russians or Buryats and the two groups had not cooperated at all during the rehearsals, Russians and Buryats now frequently participated on stage in each other's performances. They took very minor roles, mostly they stood on the stage in their national costumes among the other performers, but by pretending that these performances were the result of collaborative work the locals managed to give a convincing display of ethnic unity to the commission. As the performance wore on, both locals and the commission began to show signs of fatigue and any remaining ethnic distinctions were erased by this common experience of suffering.

Russians and Buryats: A Clash of Ethoses

Pokazukha always creates a double bind in which form and content, illusion and reality, contradict each other. While the experience of performing together for the commission and the commission's firm impartiality in relation to both Russians and Buryats erased the feeling of ethnic division between Russians and Buryats, their differing responses to the *pokazukha* nevertheless reveals fundamental differences between the Russian and the Buryat ethos.

In the need to create an illusion of unity, the *pokazukha* became a real instance of collaboration between Russians and Buryats, but they responded very differently to it. The Russians found it much more difficult to maintain the formality of the occasion than did the Buryats. The only

Russian member of the committee could not hide her excitement when she entered the Russian room during the welcoming phase of the celebration. She smiled and was not as reserved as her Buryat colleagues. Likewise, the Russians tried to establish individual relations with commissioners, while the Buryats did not. On the other hand, the Buryats were much more embarrassed by hitches in the proceedings, such as when the yurt fell down, and they were more obviously concerned with the formalities of the occasion than the Russians. Russian performers were eager to drink together with the audience and the commissioners during the after-party, whereas Buryats kept their distance from the commission and did everything they could to send the commission off after the main performance, leading them to the cars as soon as it was over. These differences in behaviour indicate that performers from each group experienced the same situation differently. We propose that this reflects broader differences in the socialisation of Russians and Buryats and different attitudes – interpretations, associations, and emotions – to the experience of *pokazukha*. And here we come to the problem of the clash between Russian and Buryat ethos because, as a collaborative act, *pokazukha* is also a form of culture contact.

The idea of establishing relationships by concealing distinctions between parties is a very Russian one. As a pattern of communication in public life, *pokazukha* was introduced into Baikal region by Russians and the structure of *pokazukha* illustrates the ambiguity that Russians feel towards public events and the associated formal patterns of behaviour. In Russia the public sphere is a field of constraint in which formalised interactions inhibit personal relations. Russians frequently try to subvert or transform public situations as soon as practicable and thereby engender more personal interactions (Nielsen 2003). The best account of this Russian ethos, which we quote at length below, is Finn Sivert Nielsen's cybernetic analysis of Russianness, based on fieldwork in Leningrad during the 1980s. According to him,

In the *unmediated hierarchy* of Limbo [...] there are few intermediate levels, and movement between them is unpredictable and abrupt. There is little interpenetration of personal and public spheres, and what penetration there is, is often violent and usually contradictory. Mid-range institutions are far between. Private property does not exist, since [...] people cannot be "trusted" to follow the rules of "society as a whole". Indeed "privacy" itself is a misleading term in the Soviet context: Circumstances are either public or non-public (I therefore prefer to speak of "non-public" sphere as "intimate" rather than "private"). In Limbo, general and specific rules stand in glaring opposition, the tensions within acts remain very great, and society

offers little assistance in mastering them. As a result, only a very crude and simplified sorting of acts is possible, and even this succeeds only when the act is governed by rules that are *clearly* either intimate or public. Sorting therefore neutralizes polarization very incompletely, and the role system itself is split into opposed halves. Most roles are either “informal” or “formal”, “warm” or “cold”. There is no “art of compromise”. Instead, there is a “*balancing act*” between opposed roles and modes of behavior: between “cold” insistence on Barriers and “warm” subversion of them. Intimate roles make no claim to validity outside intimacy itself. They lack the implicit public content of “privacy” as practiced in the West, and are restricted more totally to personal contexts. For this reason they may be experienced as “warmer” than Western “privacy”. Conversely, public roles are not considered to have personal relevance. They apply to society in general, but to no one in particular. They seem “artificial”, “inhuman”, “cold”, since they emphatically exclude outsiders from the intimate circle. You either belong to our Island or not. But since most acts do not belong clearly to one category or the other, this insistent, “absolutist”, sorting tends to break down. In “intermediate” situations, one is frankly disoriented, for the split *remains in the act*, making it ambiguous and volatile: “role-less”. As a result, society is not *legitimate*, behavior not *polite*. There is one ethic of “warmth”, another of “coldness”, one morality for the individual, another for the state. Attaining a “balance” between these opposites is a difficult and hazardous enterprise, and one goes to great lengths to avoid engaging in it all, for this is Limbo in its most obvious form: contradictory, dangerous – a battlefield of nature and culture, people and state, *dvory* and *prospekty* (Nielsen 1986).

In a public interaction, as soon as it becomes clear that both parties are amenable to more personal relations, the situation takes on an informal character and the rules of formal interaction are concealed or forgotten momentarily. Public formality can subsequently be restored as easily as it was abandoned and the intimacy established in that moment will play no role in subsequent interactions.² The term Russians use to describe such a warm interaction is ‘*po chelovecheski*’ (‘humanly’, or ‘in a personable manner’). This ability to switch between formality and intimacy in public is very much part of the Russian ethos, as described by Nielsen, above. This ethos ensures that Russians do not take appearances too seriously and are able to switch between public and private frames with ease. Intensified formality entails the possibility of intensified intimacy at a subsequent

² The classic example is that of interactions on long train journeys. Train journeys bring together travellers from all parts of Russia and may take several days. During this time people establish very intense emotional relationships with their fellow travellers, and may tell the most intimate details about their lives without ever seeking contact with each other afterwards.

stage.³ As a result, *pokazukha* is never a rigid performance but is always imbued with the potential for informal communication. Russians therefore do not find *pokazukha* presentations as tiring as Buryats do, because they never thoroughly buy into them.

During the performance at the House of Culture, Russians looked forward to the after-party when they would get the chance to break the formality of the event and enjoy more familiar interactions with the commissioners. The primary means by which they intended to overcome this distinction was with alcohol.

The Russian manner of drinking has its classical description in literature and anecdotes (cf. for example Alexei Yurchak's [2005] discussion of *mit'kis*). A common feature of such accounts is the insistence on drinking and thereby transforming formal interactions into personal ones. Unlike Buryats, who insist on drinking in order to dominate the drunken guest, Russians insist on drinking to feel united. By drinking, Russians overcome hierarchy between participants and foster a more equal relationship.

There is a close parallel between the Russian way of drinking and the way in which the local Russians experienced interethnic unity during the Altargana festival. Although one cannot be equal with others if one controls the distribution of resources – this control over the resource already predetermines a relationship of inequality –, in the Russian ethos, caring about equality and being equal are closely connected. By insisting on drinking, Russians feel equal with their drinking partners. And in drinking and feeling this equality, they may feel that they have played the dominant role in creating such a wonderful situation of equality. This approach to equality corresponds to the idea of Russians as the *starshij brat* (Russian, 'big brother') of other ethnic groups in the Soviet Union.

³ This possibility of establishing intimacy in a formal context has sometimes been used strategically by anthropological researchers. Russian ethnographers and social researchers often employ such leaps to conduct unstructured, deep interviews about very intimate subjects immediately after their initial acquaintance with their informants. This strategy is usually disregarded by western scholars, whose understandings of intimacy and privacy are incorporated into their methodology, and who need several months of personal contact and involvement to initiate an interview on such private matters. In the frames of Russian social interaction, such strategies are not so effective, because if it is possible to establish intimate relations immediately after the initial acquaintance, it is also possible to lose such relationships immediately after the interest in them is gone. The reversibility of such leaps from public to private and back is a flexibility that does not easily map onto such western concepts as rapport. In Russia the form of interaction between individuals depends on moods, interests, and anticipated outcomes, not on mapped structures that maintain a boundary between public and private relations.

The same logic was at the core of the performances at the Altargana festival. The organisation of equality between different cultures was made possible by an institution of the Russian state. Russians will never feel upstaged during such performances because the proclaimed equality and unity of Russians and Buryats is made possible by Russian institutions and cultural devices, including the practice of *pokazukha* itself. The fact that the Altargana festival is organised according to Russian cultural forms makes participation in it a rather pleasant and unproblematic experience for Russians.

Nevertheless, *pokazukha* in the Bugarikta House of Culture was transformed by the presence of Buryats. The main characteristic of Buryat ethos is a focus on self-control and not fully giving oneself away (Empson 2007, 2011). For Buryats, maintaining self-control also means securing relationships with others. They would prefer not wholly to give away an object but need to keep a part of it back for themselves. When giving a horse or a sheep, for example, they will keep a hair or a tuft of wool from the animal. After a transaction, their profit should be bigger (even if the difference is minute) so as to maintain a relationship with a partner. To distribute everything equally for Buryats means to close the frame of interaction and to end the relationship.⁴

During the festival, we observed that this occasion was less entertaining and much more serious for Buryats than it was for Russians. Buryats were visibly concerned staging the welcoming rituals for the commission and ensuring that commissioners did not eat the delicacies that they were offered. It was very important to the Buryats that their investments would be returned immediately after the performance (they ate the meat by themselves as soon as the audit was over). The commission members were treated as if they were ancestor-spirits, and they were permitted to accept the sacrifice without actually consuming it.⁵ After the performance, the Russians drank and ate everything during the after-party but the Buryat staff did not use up all the delicacies they had put on display. Instead, they went to drink in the local bar and stayed there, discussing the event well into the next day.

⁴ This pattern of avoiding frame closure is typical of the distribution of property between children (which serves to keep the family integrated), sacrificial rituals (which serve to keep the community integrated), and other situations of everyday life in which sharing and distribution are involved.

⁵ During sacrifices, spirits or deities only take the life-force of the animal but do not consume the actual meat, which is left for people to consume after the sacrifice is over (cf. Humphrey 1996: 145).

Just as Buryats cannot say goodbye when they leave someone, they were not able to simply close this frame of interaction, but instead had to let it slowly dissipate into the rhythms of ordinary life. The fact that the Buryat staff and performers were emotionally involved in the event for much longer than Russians may be partly explained by the incompatibility between the Buryat commitment to self-control and maintaining stable frames of interaction with the frame-switching inherent to *pokazukha*. While Russians were already looking forward to private interactions during the public performance, Buryats were fully involved in the *pokazukha* and they could not leap from a formal frame of interaction into a more intimate frame. To the Buryats, the after-party was merely a continuation of the *pokazukha*. The Buryats were only able to enjoy the party once the commission had departed because in the presence of the commission Buryat performers felt unable to switch into a relaxed mode of sociability.

Although the whole *pokazukha* of the Altargana festival took place within a Russian cultural frame, Buryats affected its outcome. *Pokazukha* was inflected by the Buryat ethos insofar as the Buryats did not consume all the goods that they had brought to the display, but carried them back to their homes, and the Russians were constrained in their communicative strategies. The presence of Buryats hindered any possibility of private communication with commissioners both during the event and afterwards, and the Russians could not fully realise their position as simultaneously major and equal partners in the interaction.

This collaborative performance was the result of a combination of contradictory elements. The spontaneous and situational character of *pokazukha* performed by the Russians was in stark contrast to the formal and ritualistic staging of the Buryats. Even the most common features such as welcoming guests were performed to different ends. There was no shared reflection on the experience afterwards. The parties succeeded in coordinating their actions without transforming each other's ethos. Their mutual actions produced neither a Russian nor a Buryat event, but a moment of culture contact, in which both parties carried out their actions in accordance with their own ethos.

The House of Culture in Local Life

Pokazukha is a way of presenting unreal things as real. But why did participants feel the need to fake activities, and not simply report to the commission all the activities that had been conducted in the House of Culture.

While staff members created documents to certify groups and courses that did not in fact exist, they concealed or ignored many of the events that actually had occurred. On paper the House of Culture looked like an educational institution with a year long programme of activities in preparation for the Altargana festival. However, as we have discussed above, the performances were prepared at other institutions – such as the school, the music school, and the technical college – that had nothing to do with the House of Culture. Although it presented itself as a cultural institution, the House of Culture did not so much implement the state's cultural policy as provide a venue for the occasional local event and supply the community with a space for the realisation of local initiatives. The House of Culture was appropriated to serve local needs and the members of staff were gatekeepers, keeping this process of appropriation under control so as to have no problem fabricating evidence to demonstrate the proper functioning of the institution. This was not simply a question of corruption: the staff of the House of Culture did not use it to advance their own interests but were in fact proud of their part in this bureaucratic work. They were convinced that they were faithfully implementing the state's cultural policy and that their work – which was only occasionally visible to us – was devoted to the support and development of culture. The keenness with which the staff bought into this fiction had profitable results as they were highly convincing during evaluations.

In the House of Culture we witnessed a range of cultural activities that the staff regarded as not at all cultural. Since the staff of the House of Culture did not initiate these activities they were not associated with its official programme and were therefore not counted as 'cultural'. The members of staff did not initiate any programmes and, what is more, they were not expected to take any such initiatives. Several state-funded institutions in Bugarikta functioned in the same way; their employees were expected to do nothing so as to leave space for local initiatives and veil these initiatives with a written account of approved and officially supported activities. To identify something as not cultural was a strategy to remove the activity from supervision by the state institution. This is reminiscent of an old tradition of resistance to the intrusion of the state into local affairs.

Various non-'cultural' activities occurred in the Bugarikta House of Culture, from local market transactions to the activities of an alternative subculture of rockers in its boiler room. When attending a rehearsal at the House of Culture a stranger approached us and asked if we were interested in buying deer heads mounted onto wooden shields. He was a poacher trying to sell his trophies. Very often the foyer of the House of

Culture was used as a little marketplace for imported goods from China. Once or twice a week the janitor's daughter organised a disco at the House of Culture. These gatherings were conducted as if the management of the House of Culture was unaware of them. There were always electrical problems because the organisers could not apply for assistance from the House of Culture. In the backyard of the House of Culture there was a coal-fired-boiler room in which several stokers worked in shifts. We often heard rock music emanating from this room and witnessed an atmosphere reminiscent of Leningrad in the 1980s, where there was a big alternative music scene among stokers (Yurchak 2005). A small Buddhist altar was erected in the corner of the boiler room and used for private religious worship. The stokers were heavy drinkers and were largely ignored by the other staff members.

These activities were unproblematic for local residents, because nobody was pretending to be anything that they were not, unlike during the *pokazukha* at the Altargana festival. Buyers and sellers did not need to pretend to be other than they were. Even the stokers were allowed to be as they were. Staff members and other villagers preferred to conceal these activities from the state and not report them in official documents so as not to destroy this space of freedom and action unconstrained by the state's expectations. For the residents of Bugarikta, the official form of culture was connected to the experience of contradiction between a proclaimed social unity and the reality of ethnic division. In its fixed recognition of what was and was not culture, the House of Culture provided a buffer zone that both created and limited these double binds and allowed villagers to hold their own social events during the rest of the year without contradiction. Villagers had to suffer this contradiction only once a year during the *pokazukha* for the evaluation commission. The staff of the House of Culture routinely performed *pokazukha* by attending the work place all year around. Their secure positions, salaries, and the absence of real tasks in the Bugarikta District House of Culture compensated this uncomfortable role.

Pokazukha as a Feature of Public Life

As we have argued above, *pokazukha* is a collaborative practice of creating an illusion that is accepted as a reality. The staff-members of the House of Culture have faith in the reports they produce and the performances they put on, and the commissioners must accept these performances as real. But why do the commissioners participate in this *pokazukha*?

Over the course of our research, we observed that the performance of *pokazukha* was not limited to the House of Culture; it was frequent in all state-funded institutions in the region. While the commission visited the House of Culture during the Altargana festival, other commissions visited the nursing home and the local nature reserve. The order of events – a welcoming ceremony, a *pokazukha* presentation, and an after-party – was the same everywhere. These observations give us reason to make a generalisation about the meaning and workings of *pokazukha*, not just in the House of Culture but also in all of public life in Bugarikta, and probably beyond.

The everyday life of every state institution is full of smaller and larger evaluations conducted at different levels. There is a never-ending succession of encounters between commissioners and lower-level staff. Commissioners have to perform to their superiors, just as the staff-members of local institutions have to perform to them. Commissioners and local staff are therefore familiar with each other's perspectives, and there is a certain degree of solidarity between these groups. The commission has an interest in the smooth execution of *pokazukha* because a good performance by a subordinate can help bolster the commission's own performance when it faces evaluation. Here, the example of the local nature reserve is instructive. The reserve was staffed by Nadya, a local Evenki ranger (Irgichi's daughter), and her Buryat assistant, and periodically evaluated in a manner similar to the House of Culture. The ranger was checked up on, the authorities visited the ranger station, daily radio reports were monitored, and documents recording daily weather conditions were checked. These measures were mainly aimed at preventing rangers from going out into the taiga and poaching. However, in the case with which we were familiar at the local ranger station, all these procedures were falsified and took the form of *pokazukha*. The ranger reported that the road condition was so bad that the auditing commission should not risk venturing out to the ranger station. The stipulated daily radio communication was neither regular nor informative due to the poor state of equipment and the difficulty of establishing a good radio signal. Weather reports were filled in not by the ranger but by her elderly uncle, so that she was free of these duties. The supervising authorities accepted this *pokazukha* daily and made no further checks on her. It was obvious that both parties supported these breakdowns in communication in order to avoid having to interact as prescribed. When the time for an evaluation arose at the nature reserve, the authorities used the Evenki ranger to present an image of peaceful coexistence and cooperation between ethnic groups; they displayed photos with

staged episodes from the 'daily life' of the nature reserve. The lack of communication between the ranger and her superiors enabled both parties to co-exist without antagonism, provided that they submit to the occasional performance of ethnic unity. The same was expected of the staff of the House of Culture.

Whether taken seriously – as with the Buryat participants at the Altargana festival – or treated lightly – as with the Russian participants –, from the perspective of the bureaucratic institutions of the state, *pokazukha* is appreciated because it creates an impression of governability. Performances such as the Altargana festival create a stable image of a culture and community. Villagers engaged in the *pokazukha* surrounding the Altargana festival because it presented them with an opportunity to participate in a larger circuit of public life than that of the village. The need to create a stable and rather simple representation of one's culture in a performance for outsiders, and the necessity of doing it with other ethnic groups creates momentary instances of unity between the different ethnic groups in Baikal region. By engendering neighbourly cooperation in a highly mediated instance of culture contact, it permits them to continue in their studied indifference to each other throughout the rest of the year.

CHAPTER THREE

MANAKAN AND ANDAKI: GENDER DISTINCTIONS AND PERSONAL AUTONOMY AMONG EVENKI

Human cognition is organised in such a way that one tends to ascribe characteristics to an isolated object, although in practice these characteristics exist and show themselves only in interaction between the object and other objects. Stone is hard when it resists our attempts to crush it; its hardness is a quality of our relationship and the relationships between it and other objects, or the relationships between its molecular parts. As Gregory Bateson puts it,

Language continually asserts by the syntax of subject and predicate that “things” somehow “have” qualities and attributes. A more precise way of talking would insist on the fact that the “things” are produced, are seen as separate from other “things,” and are made “real” by their internal relations and by their behavior in relationship with other things and with the speaker (Bateson 1979: 64).

The study of gender distinctions is vulnerable to the same mistake of attribution, in which a property of the relationship between genders is attributed to only one particular side of it. In practice there are no men and women isolated from each other and the only possible way to be socially recognised as a woman or a man is to be in social relationships with other women and men. Any female (or male) character is the product of these relationships.

If we extend this logic further, we can posit that differences in gender distinctions between societies are not the results of the production of different types of women and men, but the results of different patterns of organisation of the relationships between them. In this chapter we discuss the way gender is produced within the frames of the egalitarian social organisation of the Evenki. We discuss several examples – notably those of Irgichi’s daughter Nadya, and Irgichi’s son Ivan and his wife Natasha – to describe how relationships between men and women are integrated into the egalitarian ethos of the Evenki and how this has been inflected over time by contact with outside cultures, such as Chinese, Russians, and Buryats.

Nadya: The Last Evenki

Nadya was famous locally as one of the last Evenki. She was the only Evenki in the region still living in the taiga – the deep coniferous forests of Siberia – where she almost single-handedly struggled against poachers in the local nature reserve. As the only female ranger that we knew of, Nadya was exceptional. But in what way should she be considered exceptional? Was she an emancipated woman holding a man's position in a state institution, or was she rather one of the 'Last Evenki' (Ssorin-Chaikov 2003), continuing a traditional hunter-gatherer way of life? In this section, we discuss Nadya's complex biography and position in the Evenki community to demonstrate the limited use of thinking about her in these terms, as either emancipated woman or traditional hunter.

Nadya was the middle daughter of Irgichi and Katya and lived two kilometres from their camp at the ranger's station on the perimeter of the nature reserve. She was something of a tomboy and looked very striking in her military-style clothes. Like most Evenki men, she was a heavy smoker and she would often go to the village to drink vodka. She was generally even-tempered but could become very aggressive. She carried a rifle and hunting knife, which she used both for hunting and in self-defence. She even once turned her knife on her brother Ivan after he tried to shame her for having sexual relations with a Russian geologist. She could be very flirtatious and had a string of romances with visitors to the nature reserve. When we met her she was also having an affair with her married colleague, a Buryat from the village.

As a child Nadya would frequently go into the taiga with her father. At boarding school she was nicknamed 'Kolya' (a diminutive of 'Nikolai') because she spent so much time with male friends. She rode horses, went hunting, and drank vodka. In itself this was not very different from other Evenki girls who had been brought up on winter camps. But Nadya did not grow out of these habits and applied to the local college (*institut*) to become a sports instructor. She was not admitted, partly because this was a male-dominated profession, and she then fell pregnant and went back to her parents. She started working as the assistant to the local ranger, an elderly Buryat, and when he died she became responsible for the 1,500 square kilometres of nature reserve that bordered Evenki farmland. Her fifteen-year-old daughter lives with Nadya's cousin in the village.

When we visited Nadya we frequently encountered other people at the ranger station, whether her aging uncle who assisted her in her duties, or her Buryat colleague, or other visitors to the reserve. She kept a bitch and

two puppies and a pregnant cat lived in the house. She also had a cow and several horses that were left to graze outside. Her salary permitted her freedom of movement between the taiga, the ranger station, and the village, and her smallholding was simple enough for her not to be bound to it. Nadya was constantly on the move and always knew the latest news about village events and the state of the roads and rivers in the area.

Nadya was not very talkative with us, but she did share anecdotes about her patrols and experiences in the taiga. In spite of her reserve, she was very hospitable. The sweets and biscuits that she offered us were a rare commodity in the region, and she once gave us meat that she claimed was mutton (but which we later discovered was game). She did this without expecting reciprocation. Her display of hospitality was inconsistent with her official position as a ranger at the ranger station.

On her way back from the village she would sometimes drop in to her parents' camp, where we were living. She would come in and sit for a while, drunk, passive, and asocial as if she was in a trance, unable to speak or hear. Then she would leave, able only to keep moving. We saw her in a similar state when she participated in the ostensibly male-only high water ritual commissioned by local Buryats (discussed in chapter one). Intoxicated after her drinking, Nadya would sit in a stupor, repeating the words "*Bi manakan bihim!*" (Evenki, "I am *manakan*").



Fig. 7. Nadya (centre) with (from left to right) Ivan, Nadya's colleague, Volodya and Natasha before the High Water Ritual.

Manakan: The Feeling of Personal Autonomy

Evenki cherish the feeling of personal autonomy, a feeling that they identify as being '*manakan*'. After the Evenki became sedentarised as a result of collectivisation, the Evenki stopped hunting and the experience of *manakan* was frequently sought in alcohol. For Evenki, the state of intoxication affords a sense of freedom from commitments to other people. Nadya's drunken declaration "*Bi manakan bihim!*" was an indicator of such a feeling. But we believe that Nadya's whole life trajectory as a ranger was conditioned by this need to feel *manakan*.

Nadya avoided close relationships throughout her life. Her constant resistance to building any kind of partnership in professional or intimate spheres assured her single status. She moved constantly between the taiga, the nature reserve and the village, and spent a lot of time with male co-workers and relatives. She would not have been able to maintain such a lifestyle if she were married with children. She was supposed to keep a daily weather log and check in with the main ranger station twice a day, but these duties were performed by her uncle and the poor radio signal ensured that her messages were usually incomprehensible. She seldom saw her superiors and would go into the village once a month to collect her salary from the village post office. Nadya's independence was both her choice and her own achievement. She clearly deserved to be thought of as *manakan*.

Because Nadya is such a striking embodiment of the Evenki ideal of *manakan*, locals and outsiders alike associate her with old Evenki traditions. This makes her vulnerable to the kind of mythmaking that springs up around such figures and makes them somehow representative of Evenki culture. When Nadya's independent way of life is recognised by others as exceptional, she is taken as one of the last surviving exemplars of traditional Evenki culture and is therefore entrapped by these expectations.¹ She was already a heroine of local myth and pictures of Nadya riding a horse were exhibited in the main nature reserve office seventy kilometres away from her station depicting her as a guide for scientists

¹ This is similar to the case described by Nancy Scheper-Hughes (1977) in which the role of the youngest son in Irish families – to look after his parents and the household – is subject to so much mythologising that he is trapped into assuming this role. Incidentally, the same assumptions about the role of the youngest son exist in Evenki communities. As Irgichi's youngest son, Ivan was also trapped into taking on the farm and maintaining Irgichi and Katya in their old age. These circumstances may explain a lot of his frustration and violent outbursts.

and tourists, a role that she assumed only reluctantly. The mythologising of Nadya's independent lifestyle is a constant nuisance to Nadya and she does everything to avoid contact with people who might associate her with 'real' Evenki culture. For this reason, she was absent from the annual ritual described in chapter one, which a group of Evenki intelligentsia from the city were filming for television. She was also very suspicious of our intentions and although she never explicitly refused, she avoided becoming our informant or guide.

To the local Evenki, Nadya's lifestyle aroused no controversy and was generally accepted. Although her lifestyle was very different from that of other Evenki, she was not regarded as in any way exceptional. She was unexceptional for two reasons. First, because the Evenki consider that everyone has his or her own way of being *manakan* there can be no general norm from which to deviate and there are consequently no exceptions to the norm. Second, insofar as being *manakan* is part of the Evenki ethos, everyone who shares a common socialisation has the potential to experience it. Every local Evenki wishes to avoid commitments and feel autonomous. Nadya's situation was therefore familiar to all Evenki, even if they were not able to experience it themselves.

Manakan and Relations between Genders

When Nadya participated in the high water ritual no one remarked on her presence, except when Irgichi later told us not to mention it to the Buryats. Her participation was only unusual to us because it did not match Irgichi's prior characterisation of the ritual as an exclusively male event. As we have discussed above, it was the fact that Nadya was single that permitted her to participate in male activities. In the following section we elaborate on this insight and discuss how distinctions between men and women are not intrinsic to their sex, but rather accrue steadily after marriage and childbirth. Gender distinctions are a function of the division of labour within the conjugal unit.

Gender identification varies throughout a person's life and is more articulated at certain times than at others. This is apparent in the physical appearance of Evenki. We observed very little difference in the behaviour of boys and girls before they attended school. Children wore the same clothes, had the same haircuts, and played the same games. The only observable difference in behaviour was a greater tendency for girls to flirt with strangers, and this was a function of their status as outsiders as

we discuss at length below. Young couples tend to carry out activities together without distinction between male and female work. Their appearance reflects this equality: they often wear similar clothes for practical activities. As children are born and the couple are forced to assume different duties, each person will incorporate elements linked to their specialisation. Women who no longer fish with their husbands, for instance, will wear something more elegant than rubber boots. This process of differentiation is most pronounced among the elderly. Elderly couples look very different from each other: elderly women wear skirts and scarves and men wear wadded jackets. These distinctions are not fixed, however. We knew a rather reserved widower with two young children who performed all the household duties including milking, cooking and washing. He would only be able to resume his main activities – fishing and hunting – when his eldest daughter was old enough to take charge of the household.

The division of labour begins with marriage and becomes more pronounced when children are born into the family. With the added work of caring for children, spouses do fewer tasks together and their roles as male and female become more articulated. Irgichi's youngest daughter Lena and her husband Bayir, who lived several kilometres from Irgichi's camp, were an example of just such a conjugal unit. They were seen everywhere together. They lived on the bank of the River Alama, and would often go fishing in its fast-flowing waters. They would load the boat together, launch it, and enjoy sharing the hazards of the river. Irgichi's youngest son Ivan and his wife Natasha lived with their three children on Irgichi and Katya's camp. Natasha accompanied Ivan everywhere and was permanently exhausted from assisting him in his duties while also performing her own. She was a notoriously bad cook but, as her sister once told us, this was the price to pay for helping her husband so much.

Natasha and Ivan worked together all day, but they could not maintain this routine and began to specialise in their activities. Natasha never took drinking water from the river when Ivan was home – that was his duty – and Ivan never milked cows when Natasha was home, although we saw him do it when she was away. This division of labour was more efficacious in terms of the time allotted to a given task, but it went against the ideal of companionship that Natasha worked hard to maintain. As the division of labour in their relationship becomes more pronounced, they might end up like Irgichi and Katya. These two were rarely seen together, and when they were together they were quarrelling, watching television, travelling, or drinking. Irgichi would pretend to be deaf in Katya's presence and acted as if he did not hear her scolding. She would respond to this provocation

with insults. They looked less like a married couple than two truculent strangers who had been forced to live under the same roof.

From the point of view of Evenki egalitarianism, the division of labour within a couple may have been effective but it was unpleasant and damaged communication and long-term relations between spouses, as well as between parents and children. The sharpest conflict we witnessed was between Irgichi and Ivan. Despite living in the same household they did not talk to each other. They seldom cooperated on the farm. Instead, Ivan performed the demanding physical tasks and Irgichi did lighter tasks such as clearing drainage ditches and repairing fences. To all intents and purposes, they were also strangers to each other. This 'estrangement' between intimates affords an important insight into Evenki sociality and the role of intimacy among Evenki.

The Evenki were very eager to engender fresh relationships on the rare occasions when this was possible, rather than do something with a permanent partner. Because the accumulated division of labour damages long-term relations, only short-term encounters can foster emotional pleasure and satisfaction. This means that rather than allowing intimacy to develop over time, Evenki prefer to build relationships around concrete activities. Relations with a history are socially problematic because they foreclose the possibility of acting together without specialisation. Unlike in Western societies, trust is not a necessary component of a pleasant relationship. On the contrary, Evenki need to have a feeling of unpredictability, risk and unfamiliarity with their partner. If partners do not know each other and cannot anticipate the other's thoughts and actions, they feel less burdened by commitments to each other. Unfamiliar partners can thus form pleasant relationships that do not disturb the feeling of being *manakan*. These instances of companionship are very precarious and highly appealing and when successful, participants recall them with satisfaction and sometimes a little surprise. After completing such a companionship, partners split-up and each continue on their own independent trajectory.

Nadya was a classic example of this Evenki ethos. She consistently protected herself from accumulating commitments or expectations from others. She organised her life so as to drift from one partnership, devoted to the accomplishment of a concrete task, to another. This lifestyle afforded Nadya a range of pleasant and sociable experiences, and ensured that she remained open to forming companionships with a wide range of possible partners and was not restricted to behaving in a female role. From the Evenki perspective, this self-sufficiency meant that Nadya was very well

integrated into society precisely because she was emancipated from social obligations.

When Nadya sat in her drunken state repeating that she was *manakan*, she was able to do so because she was not at that moment subject to any expectations on the part of others. Unlike in other drinking sessions, when women behave flirtatiously and men become aggressive, gender was not a salient factor in this situation. Nadya and her Evenki companions were instead partners in a companionship that was devoted to the accomplishment of one concrete task: to drink all the bottles of vodka that the Buryats had supplied for the ritual. Nadya's feeling of being *manakan* arose from her own experience of intoxication and none of the participants regarded this behaviour as flirtatious, or even as communicative. Nobody was interested in Nadya's declaration of *manakan* because they were all focused on the bottles and not on the individuals participating. Each participant aimed to drink as much as everyone else at the same time as everyone else. The rhythm was set by telling stories and anecdotes between rounds of drinking, and the drinking was balanced so that no one could claim to have drunk more. The feeling of companionability engendered by sharing the vodka, and in which people could feel *manakan* because there were no distinctions or expectations, was very pleasant for everyone. Although a female, Nadya's participation in this activity did not accentuate gender divisions but rather contributed to the common experience of individuality shared by all participants.

There is a contradiction between personal autonomy – feeling *manakan* – and the dependencies associated with relationships between genders. We have discussed above how the accumulating division of labour between spouses and differentiation between male and female tasks leads to a collapse in communication between partners. The same process endangers all companionships in which men and women are involved. During the drinking session at the high water ritual, gender distinction would have threatened the cohesion and integrity of the Evenki group. Nadya and her companions' ability to switch into a frame where her gender was not salient was a precondition for a successful collective action that enabled the whole group to feel *manakan*. When the vodka ran out and this stabilised competition between non-gendered individuals was over, Nadya switched to another frame and started to behave as a flirtatious woman. As everybody was so drunk, she could not find a partner for this, so she quarrelled with others.

It is very difficult to identify a gendered dimension to Nadya's lethargic experience of *manakan*. It seems that drunkenness enables one to feel

that such distinctions do not matter, that the self is so autonomous as to be free from any kind of identity that presupposes relationships with others. This state of consciousness has emotional potential because it is incorporated into an Evenki lifestyle which entails periods of solitude. For Evenki, *manakan* implies the ability to live alone without losing the ability to participate in companionship. This solitude is very social; it is framed by the constant possibility of establishing relations with others. In this sense, Nadya feels *manakan*, and this is an ungendered feeling that all Evenki men and women have the potential to experience.

Nadya's autonomy is endangered only by her addiction to the feeling of freedom. When she feels that her autonomy is compromised she needs to find a way of becoming *manakan*, frequently with the help of alcohol. The vodka that produces the feeling of being *manakan* constitutes the main paradox of Evenki life. Evenki are involved in strong and addictive relationships with a substance that provides a feeling of freedom and absence of commitment. Alcohol becomes the way to experience *manakan*, and Nadya, like other Evenki, cannot escape from contexts in which alcohol plays a crucial role. When non-Evenki males give her vodka, she is expected to behave like a woman. These gendered situations with strangers are different from the spontaneous companionships so appreciated in the Evenki community.

Manakan and Social Integration

Nadya's androgynous appearance does not imply that she assumes a particular role or enacts a certain kind of male identity. Her appearance is nevertheless connected to her feeling of *manakan* and the independence that she has maintained throughout her life. When other Evenki women are *manakan*, either as a result of intoxication or because they are free of personal commitments, they are also more male in their aspect and behaviour. But if *manakan* is not a role that one assumes, then how is it diffused in Evenki society and why is it so highly concentrated in Nadya?

Nadya seems to us to have a special position among Evenki, similar to that occupied by 'great men' in Melanesian societies. In Melanesia, a great man is perceived as a stranger in certain situations by his fellows and this temporarily makes him a powerful person (Godelier & Strathern 1991). This parallel leads us to consider that Nadya's position is a result of indigenous reflection on the kinds of relationship that bind society. Nadya is different precisely because she accumulates traits that are important for

everyone. She never claims to be different but only independent, like other Evenki. She drinks, smokes, laughs, flirts and threatens like other Evenki. She feels able to express her autonomy in just the same way as others do. But because she has avoided establishing long-term partnerships, she is open to a wider variety of brief and fresh relationships than other Evenki, relationships that do not threaten her sense of autonomy. The fact that Nadya can form companionship with everybody is what makes her different.

This ability to form companionship with anyone is a crucial mechanism for the integration of an Evenki community. Emergencies and other dangerous situations demand cooperation. Here we can describe a critical moment when a forest fire threatened to engulf Irgichi's winter camp. The fire was being driven towards the camp by a strong wind that made it impossible to extinguish in the usual way, by trampling the undergrowth around the fire. They therefore had to deploy a rather more elaborate strategy of setting a counter-fire to drive the first one away from the camp and towards the river.

What is interesting about this event is not what the Evenki did, but how they did it. There was no time to think and no instructions were given; everyone simply did their tasks. Whereas in Western cultures someone would have to take charge in such an emergency, this was impossible for the Evenki because no one would accept being told what to do. If someone attempted to take command in such a situation he would provoke the anger of other participants because he would be encroaching on their sense of autonomy and because of the risk that he might capitalise on this leadership later to claim the credit for resolving the crisis. Thus in coordinated action tasks can be divided but there can be no hierarchy.

People like Nadya immediately started coordinating the activities of the dozen or so other Evenki who were working to put out the fire. Nadya had already shared companionships with everyone at camp. She now switched from one common task to another, working with everyone in turn. By drifting from one companionship to another in this manner she connected everyone's activity to a common purpose. She did not distance herself from others or look on and instruct people. She showed no signs of authority, but her actions and movement between different jobs coordinated the whole process. She was present when the counter-fire was started, she helped extinguish the main fire, and came back to bring the counter-fire under control. She then appeared where the bushes were beginning to smoke. She had an embodied knowledge of which tasks should be initiated with which people and integrated everyone into these

tasks without direct commands. Her actions acted as metamessages for others to coordinate the collective action, relying not on verbal commands but on ostensive communication in which messages and actions are not separated from each other (Bateson 1979).

After the fire was extinguished everyone had a short rest and went on with their business. Nadya returned to the ranger station without receiving any recognition of her outstanding role in putting out the fire. In the long-term, she had no need for shows of appreciation. Rather, she needed and had earned the sincere respect from others that would allow her to maintain her personal autonomy.

The Endangered Autonomy of the Conjugal Unit

Evenki social organisation is very similar to that of other hunter-gatherer societies. Nurit Bird-David (1983) identified two main elements of the social organisation of the Nayaka of South India: the individual and the conjugal unit. Individuals constantly 'float' between each other and never establish a stable relationship, but instead retain their autonomy. According to Bird-David, the conjugal unit consists of two spouses who share everything equally and spend all their time together. We might observe a similar pattern among the Evenki. Children up to the age of seven – before they leave for school in the village – live with their parents and form part of this conjugal unit. At school, however, they constitute a separate unit as a single, drifting person without strong attachments. In this section we discuss the factors that endanger the integrity of the conjugal unit. We argue that encounters with the social environment of hierarchical societies impose gender distinctions on Evenki and that these distinctions work against the idea of companionship and thereby endanger the conjugal unit.

The division of labour between genders occurs as a result of the growth of the household and the need to divide tasks efficiently. No matter how economically rational such divisions may be, they are often undermined by emotional responses to these divisions because they are inconsistent with the Evenki ethos of preserving individual autonomy and avoiding long-term interdependence. For this reason Evenki rarely accumulate and manage wealth; this requires an unpalatable transformation of the conjugal unit into a family enterprise with differentiated roles and duties.

Gender distinction also occurs when Evenki are in unfamiliar contexts, such as in the presence of non-Evenki. When local Evenki go to

drink alcohol in Bugarikta – which is inhabited mostly by Buryats and Russians – males behave aggressively and females often flirt. We discuss below the reasons why the Evenki behave in such a gendered fashion in contexts where they are likely to meet outsiders and how this influences relationships between Evenki couples.

The survival of the Evenki conjugal unit may seem surprising as it depends on balancing two escalating processes; the process of subsistence and contacts with the outside world. If faced by only one of these processes, such as the need to maintain a large household and a stock of cattle, then the conjugal unit splits into two individual persons who cannot do anything together, like we saw with Irgichi and Katya. But, if from time to time the spouses rid themselves of their household obligations and become involved in the outside world, such as when searching for alcohol in the village, then they can secure the integrity of their conjugal unit. What might be seen as irresponsible behaviour from a Western point of view is actually a way for an Evenki couple to maintain their relationship and mutual affection, the feeling on which the conjugal unit is based. Switching from hard work in cattle breeding to hard drinking and back in spheres that are dominated by foreign – either Buryat or Russian – cultural patterns helps them to maintain their unity.

When new circuits of activity begin – such as when starting a journey, or hunting – Evenki are very enthusiastic and comfortable. These moments are full of novelty and potential for fresh companionships independent of externally imposed distinctions (such as gender). When they reach a moment of crisis in one circuit, this becomes the starting point for other circuits. When spouses tire of the monotony of their work on the farm they go drinking in the village and stay there until they lose the sense of fun and adventure. They then return home to start a new cycle of work. Drinking in the village balances working on the farm and vice versa.

When Evenki search for a scarce or important resource like petrol or alcohol, they prefer to behave as individuals to avoid having to share it. There is no guilt or shame in this as others are expected to behave in the same way. People are organised not by a shared morality but by a shared ethos, the synchronisation of their individual strategies and efforts. In other words, they are united not by the sense that such behaviours are prescribed, but by the feeling that everybody who behaves in this way shares similar preferences. This kind of understanding is not verbally expressed but is based on a tacit understanding of competition between individuals. When driving back from the village one day with Irgichi and Katya, we witnessed an example of such a synchronised ethos. Irgichi's

jeep broke down and Irgichi and István went outside to change the tyre. Katya immediately proposed to Tanya that they drink together from a bottle of vodka that we had opened together in the village. When the women later had to walk over the bridge and the men tried to ford the river by car, Irgichi also proposed to István that they drink from the vodka bottle. They initiated the same acts in secret from each other but within the same frame of action; Katya was very suspicious about what the men were doing while she was on the bridge.

We also observed this synchronised ethos among Evenki spouses when Ivan and Natasha went to the village to drink. Although they were always together on the farm, they went off to the village separately and tried to procure drink from Buryats and Russian acquaintances. They were competing over who could find and drink more. Natasha was much more successful because as a woman she could find more hospitable company with other women. But Ivan drank longer, returning to the winter camp three days after Natasha. In the village, Natasha was in a very good mood, she was laughing and flirting but without any concrete aim. In contrast, Ivan was very aggressive, behaved threateningly, and sought to provoke a scandal or a fight. Although they did not stay in each other's company in the village, having the other in mind as a competitive partner influenced the behaviour of each of them.

At camp, Natasha and Ivan's relationship was maintained by their synchrony and coordination of parallel activities. But in the village it was important to destroy this synchrony in order to achieve a new cycle of working on the farm. Only by disrupting their mutual coordination could Natasha and Ivan feel *manakan*, personal autonomy, instead of the everyday autonomy of their conjugal unit that they experienced in the course of shared work. When Ivan came home he was still very aggressive and quarrelled with Natasha because he expected her to be waiting for him with hot soup and tea. This quarrel was so severe that even Katya feared it would be the end of the relationship. However, in a few days, Ivan and Natasha migrated to the summer camp and a new cycle of household tasks started.

This pattern of aggressive and flirtatious behaviour that we witnessed was not confined to Ivan and Natasha's trip to the village. Evenki children responded to us with a mixture of aggression and flirtatiousness, and it was not always possible to distinguish between the two. There was no discernible difference between genders in this behaviour; girls and boys behaved in a manner that we perceived as a mix of affection and roughness. We witnessed similar behaviour between children and the dogs at

camp. Children would treat their dogs with great affection and then hit them a moment later. The main scheme incorporating these emotions was a game of 'catching and holding'. Children played with their dogs by catching and holding them in their arms. Then, depending on the reaction of their prey, they would either struggle roughly against the dog's attempts to escape or hug it tenderly. What made this activity into a game was its uncertainty: it was fun for the children to simply catch the dog, but holding it was full of ambivalence between the joy of possession and the need to let it go in order to create new excitement. As we have observed, this scheme and its associated emotional ambivalence featured in nearly all the interpersonal interactions that we witnessed between children, adults, and dogs. We propose that aggression and flirtation are part of the same phenomenon and correspond to the second stage of the catching and holding game, in which partners feel the need to destroy the relationship in order to have the opportunity to start a new one. All the emotions we witnessed in the village were part of the same play, involving adults in 'catching and holding' social relations with acquaintances from the village.

If Natasha and Ivan experienced the same cycle of emotions in the village, why did they differ so dramatically in their behaviours? Children's emotions and responses depend on the reactions of their play partners. Natasha and Ivan's emotions also depended on the reactions of strangers. Insofar as outsiders – Buryats and Russians – are the objects of Evenki behaviour, their reactions would define whether the Evenki behave aggressively or flirtatiously. Evenki behaviour in these situations depends not on gender distinctions among the Evenki, but on the understandings of gender that exist among outsiders. Russians and Buryats would expect men rather than women to be aggressive and react accordingly. In this situation, aggression begets aggression, and gentleness begets gentleness. If one responds aggressively or angrily to an Evenki man he will retaliate; and similarly with an Evenki woman, if treated kindly she will be kind.

The presence of non-Evenki affects the dynamics of other occasions in a similar way, by generating and supporting gender distinctions that otherwise would not appear in Evenki interactions. On one occasion, Natasha and Ivan needed help to shear their sheep. The only person free at that moment was Alena, the Buryat wife of Ivan's cousin. Because among Buryats the shearing of sheep is acknowledged as exclusively women's work, Ivan did not participate in this work and Nadya was called to help out instead. The three women worked together and behaved as they would in the village. They laughed, smoked, and chatted. It became a women's

occasion, although Natasha said that ordinarily she would shear sheep with anyone regardless of their gender. We can therefore assume that gender distinctions become relevant among Evenki only in the presence of outsiders.

Gender Distinction and Andaki

We have so far argued that gender distinction among Evenki is either the product of the necessity to allocate labour efficiently within a conjugal unit or the result of the expectations of outsiders. This observation enables us cast new light on historical materials relating to Evenki relationships with Russian, Buryat and Chinese trading partners. By looking at *andaki* relations (Evenki, 'trading partners' or 'business contacts') through a non-economic lens and by focusing instead on interactions between genders, it is possible to see that the history of cultural contact between Evenki and outsiders is a history of imposed gender distinction.

Ethel Lindgren has provided the most detailed description of *andaki* relationships. In her unpublished doctoral dissertation, Lindgren (1936) analysed trading partnerships established between Russian Cossacks and Evenki hunters in Manchuria between 1929 and 1931, just prior to the Japanese invasion.² Lindgren was very sensitive to gender issues and the development of *andaki* relationships. She was not involved in the popular kinship studies of those times and her description of *andaki* partnerships falls outside of the structural-functionalist paradigm prevalent in British anthropology of the period. For her contemporaries, her papers were incomprehensible due to the amount of detail concerning social and emotional aspects of Tungus (i.e. Evenki) life. Although these writings may have seemed chaotic and unscientific to her contemporaries, it is thanks to her materials that we can now reconstruct how *andaki* operated and exactly how Russians and Evenki participated in these relationships. *Andaki* partnerships ensured not only that Evenki could trade with Russians, but that they could also stay in their homes during their short

² Lindgren's thesis was never published, although she defended it at Cambridge while Gregory Bateson was there and when Shirokogoroff published his work on Evenki. Her methodological perspective was similar to Bateson's (cf. Lindgren 1938). This approach was not popular at the time and may explain why her works were neglected in favour of Shirokogoroff's functionalist monographs (e.g. Shirokogoroff 1929). She was also one of the first feminist researchers in this field, devoting most of her time to women, especially an Evenki female shaman named Olya.

visits to Russian villages. Evenki named their children after their Russian *andaki*, who sometimes served as godparents. In some instances, Russians adopted the Evenki children of their *andaki*. Economic activity, which was conducted mainly by Russian and Evenki men, also included the participation of women in hospitality and as foster mothers.

Lindgren describes numerous examples of interethnic marriage between Russians and Evenki. Although Shirokogoroff tended to associate interethnic marriages with *andaki* relationships and saw them as mechanisms of assimilation (Shirokogoroff 1929: 102, 222), Lindgren insisted that Evenki used *andaki* partnerships not as strategies to integrate into the outer world but, on the contrary, as a way of avoiding contact with the Chinese state. Russian *andaki* paid taxes to the Chinese on behalf of Evenki and helped to hide the unregistered arms of Evenki hunters. Practically, Russians acted as patrons, collecting furs and distributing goods necessary for hunting.

Lindgren also wrote that aggression and flirting were common behaviours at *bagjurs*, seasonal fairs at which important trading transactions were conducted. She indicates that these outbursts of sexuality and anger happened only at *bagjurs* and were not common in everyday Evenki life. Although Russians organised the *bagjurs* and supplied them with vodka, Lindgren reports that they were only rarely involved in these behaviours. Aggression and flirtation occurred only between Evenki from distant places who met each other at these occasions. Russians acted as observers and suppliers, using the chaos and emotional tension to their benefit. We can assume that the autonomy of the Evenki was much stronger at this time and that the gendered expression of emotions – aggression, flirtation –, which we take to be a way of resolving emotionally strained situations, happened only on these occasions.

Lindgren's materials shed important light on a situation in which Evenki managed to escape involvement in hierarchical relationships by reducing them to a few contacts with Russian business partners, rather than bureaucrats or state representatives. In this context, *andaki* relationships were instruments to maintain personal autonomy and did not endanger the egalitarian social organisation of the Evenki. The Evenki could only obtain vodka during these *bagjurs*, and it was absent from everyday life. As a result, alcohol addiction was rare and the experience of being *manakan* was more commonly realised in other settings.

Roberte Hamayon's (1981) analysis of Western Buryat epics provides us with further evidence to support our model of Evenki aggression and flirtation. Her analysis focuses on a set of relationships called *andlyata*

(Buryat, an exchange of sisters between equally poor men without any bridewealth payment), a cognate of the Evenki '*andaki*'. She argues that Western Buryats were formerly hunters and that their social organisation was based on the same relationship patterns as Evenki. In wedding ceremonies, during which people from faraway places come together, she identifies aggression and flirtation as essential parts of the occasion because during weddings such controversial topics as property and inheritance are articulated and often unsatisfactorily resolved. Although these categories refer to Buryat cultural patterns, the emotional tension of the weddings described by Hamayon appears similar to Lindgren's description of *bagjur*. Hamayon's analysis presents a very accurate reconstruction of the emotional aspects of hunter-gatherer behaviour, as also reflected in our fieldwork materials.

Our investigation of aggression and flirtation in situations of Evenki culture contact with outsiders may also shed further light on recent research by Heonik Kwon. Kwon worked among the Orochon (a Manchu-Tungus people close to the Evenki) in the beginning of the 1990s, by which time most indigenous people had lost their hunter-gatherer way of life (Kwon 1993). According to Kwon's description, *andaki* relationships took quite a new form as a result of their change in livelihood. Young women tried to exploit their previously acknowledged position as interethnic marriage partners to move away from their communities. But their strategies failed because Russian men working in neighbouring oilrigs were no longer interested in establishing long-term relationships with indigenous people. Orochon girls who flirted with these men usually returned to their parents unmarried and frequently pregnant. The community was split between Orochon men, as non-prestigious matrimonial partners, and women searching for very insecure possibilities of moving out. The aggressiveness of Orochon men was a typical explanation as to why Orochon women preferred to flirt with Russians but if this is similar to the Evenki case we have discussed above both reactions could be part of one process, mutually supporting and escalating each other.

Conclusion

Hierarchy can be found in the everyday life of the Evenki – as in the asymmetrical relations between Evenki and strangers or between men and women in family life –, but the experience of these distinctions is mediated by a very impressive state of personal autonomy, which is based on

the idea that an individual is free from any distinctions that presuppose relationships with other people. This feeling of personal autonomy, experienced as *manakan*, is important for establishing relationships with other people. To be able to go anywhere with somebody, a child has to be able to walk without assistance. As we showed in our discussion of Nadya's life trajectory, the more independent and autonomous one is the larger the repertoire of social relationships that one can have with other people. To find a marriage partner with whom to establish a family one needs to feel free from other obligations, because life in a conjugal unit presupposes that all duties and contexts are shared equally with one's partner. But as two people cannot in practice have identical personal contexts, the only possibility of such equal involvement in family life consists in denying the existence of other contexts and freeing oneself from other obligations.

Gender distinctions also appear in the context of culture contact with strangers. The structure of *andaki* partnerships described above shows that for Evenki to be able to establish a continuous relationship with non-Evenki it is important to feel free of commitments (for example, to be free to promise things that are not going to happen, to be able to escape from a relationship when it becomes too demanding, or to lose oneself in alcohol so as not to feel responsible for anything).

In the cases described above, there is a correlation between the level of dependence of Evenki people (and other hunter-gatherers of Siberia) on hierarchical societies and the intensity and frequency of differentiation between aggressive men and flirtatious women. Gender distinctions are a product of Evenki participation in other cultural patterns. Just as in Kwon's description there was no stigma attached to woman who tried and failed to marry out – this did not affect their status as autonomous persons –, the avoidance of fixed roles and statuses can help the Evenki to overcome their dependence on foreign cultural patterns, and mobilise their skills to be, or to feel, independent. We can see Nadya's *manakan* trajectory as closely related to the *andaki* of Ivan and Natasha and to the strategies of Orochon women. *Manakan* and *andaki* thus appear as two sides of the same coin, the expression of personal autonomy.

CHAPTER FOUR

EVENKI PEOPLE AND THEIR DOGS: COMMUNICATING BY SHARING CONTEXTS

The relationship between Evenki people and their dogs is a source of much speculation among the Evenki's Buryat neighbours. A Buryat shaman (Bargai, who features in chapter five) told us that he had never understood how Evenki hunters communicate with their dogs during hunting. It seemed to him that hunters and their dogs did not communicate at all but worked independently. He had never heard a hunter command his dog but he had witnessed the extraordinary harmony with which man and dog coordinated their actions, as if an unseen thread connected them. For Buryats, this coordination is considered to be one of a number of Evenki secrets, which they interpret by positing spiritual ties that connect the hunter and his dog. However, as we argue in this chapter, the secret lies not in the spiritual ties between man and animal but in the whole texture of Evenki social organisation and the basic skill of situated communication.

Evenki social organisation is inflected by an animistic epistemology that does not admit to strict boundaries or obstacles to communication between species (Bird-David 1991) and thus allows for successful interaction and coordination of the actions of humans and nonhumans. Evenki spiritual life shares common features with both animism and perspectivism, but does not absolutely correspond to the theoretical schemes elaborated by anthropologists working in other contexts. If the Amazonian version of perspectivism (Viveiros de Castro 1998) is based on the idea that people, animals, and spirits are equal but that a hierarchy is created by the perspective from which every creature sees the others (every creature sees itself as human and the others as either superior spirits or subordinated animals), Evenki see interaction between people, animals and spirits as a competition in which all participants are equal. The Evenki avoid hierarchies in their relationships with other species and spirits. Evenki dogs are therefore equal partners in hunting and they have their own hunting luck. However, when Evenki collaborate with non-Evenki they have to accommodate the hierarchical principles of these outsiders. How do the Evenki manage to negotiate such hierarchies without breaking their egalitarian

ethos? As we discuss further on, we found an answer to this questions with help from Evenki dogs.

If we are to paint a complete picture of Evenki communication, it is important to consider the ecological environment that shapes their way of life. Factors such as rhythm of life, intuition and experiences of emergency and risk constitute crucial contexts and frames for communication. Morten Pedersen (2011) theorises of the relation between landscape and ways of thinking by drawing a distinction between taiga and steppe modes of thought. We find this a useful distinction to make, especially if we consider thought as a communicative process that occurs either between persons or between different parts of a person's mind. We may thus consider the steppe and taiga modes of thought as two different regimes of communication; one predominated by verbal communication, the other by ostensive communication. The Buryat shaman identifies the difference between these two modes of communication as a 'secret'. We will return to the problem of secrets later when we expand our theory of communication to situations of cultural contact.

As Gregory Bateson explains, in communication, context is everything. A dog's playful nip is not the same as a warning bite, although the actions involved may be the same. To understand whether a dog is nipping or biting, we need to have further information that informs us how we should interpret the dog's message (Bateson 1972: 177–93). Meaningful communication must therefore consist of both messages and metamesages, messages about how the first type of message should be interpreted. To understand communication, then, it is necessary to reveal the metamesages that are embedded within any given communicative process.

In this chapter we use stories to explain the relationship between Evenki and their dogs. If we take the story to be the message, then the relationships between the actors which is revealed through these stories is the metamessage that we are attempting to communicate. After reading these stories, we hope that the reader will have an intuitive comprehension of the relationship between Evenki and dogs.

In choosing this approach, we take inspiration from Harvey Sacks's work on the transmission of culture, of which one of the mechanisms is storytelling (Sacks 1992). When parents tell a story to their children they also teach them to see relationships that are implicit in the story's plot. The classic example that Sacks uses to illustrate this is that of a child who witnesses an episode on the street. A baby is crying and a woman picks it up. The child then goes back to its mother and recounts this event as "Baby cried. Mummy picked it up". In this instance, the child recognised not just

behaviour, but also the relationship between woman and baby as between a mother and her child. The child could tell this as a story precisely because this detail was assumed. The ability of the child to build a comprehensible story depends upon its ability to experience episodes in life as stories, that is, to see the implied relationships alongside the behaviours in a given situation. Without learning to see stories within one's day-to-day experience one cannot comprehend stories. Conversely, without comprehending stories one cannot experience things as stories and, furthermore, without experience and comprehension one cannot tell stories.

Because Evenki culture is most probably not analogous to the culture of the reader, the relationship between Evenki and their dogs cannot be described by identifying particular analogues in western culture. The only way to give a sense of this relationship is by recounting stories. We tell stories about Evenki and dogs to highlight a relationship between them which cannot be explicitly pinpointed but which can nevertheless be understood through the story. In reading these stories the reader should be able to experience them and thereby understand the context of these stories, i.e. the relationships that are implied within them. In other words, we hope that by reading the content of these stories, the reader will perceive important metameessages about the relationships and skills of communication between Evenki and dogs that we ourselves learned from the Evenki during fieldwork.

The three stories that we witnessed during our fieldwork – an unsuccessful attempt by Irgichi the shaman to adopt a Russian dog, the training of young puppies by his daughter Nadya, and the burial of Irgichi's dog – both reveal the forms of communication between Evenki and their dogs and demonstrate that mutual understanding and coordination of joint actions depends on skills that are embedded within Evenki sociality. The inability of outsiders, such as Buryats, to perceive the full context within which Evenki communicate leads them to posit that the Evenki have secret or special knowledge. The Evenki do not attempt to disabuse Buryats of this notion because it provides a convenient way of mediating culture contact between these two groups.

Palma: A Russian Dog from the Television Tower

Our first story is about a dog from the television tower. Mid-way through our fieldwork we went on a trip with Irgichi across his former hunting territories to obtain petrol from the guards at a television tower. The journey

there took a day of walking through the dense taiga and so we stayed overnight. Petrol is precious and very hard to come by in this part of Siberia, and our attempt to get it this time was unsuccessful. The guards told us that as the tower was soon to be closed they were packing up and would not be able to transport any petrol to Irgichi's camp.

When we left the tower the next morning, the resident guard dog followed us down the path. We felt that she somehow knew the tower was to be shut down and was looking for a new home. She was a fine, well-behaved dog that went by the name of Palma. She proved herself to be a very good companion as we walked back to camp. She was quiet and independent, and happily explored the surrounding forest. When we stopped for tea, Irgichi shared bread and butter with Palma. Irgichi told us that she behaved like a very good hunting dog but that she was not raised among Evenki. At this point we did not understand why her socialisation was so important.

As we approached the camp the other dogs behaved aggressively and tried to drive her out. Irgichi did not stop them but continued talking to Palma in a calm manner as he had done on our journey. Without addressing the dog directly, he repeated phrases like "we are going together", "run, run with us". It seemed to us that he was happy; his own dog had died recently and he told us that he could not imagine spending the summer at camp alone with Katya. But when we awoke the next day the dog was gone. Katya told us that Ivan had banished her early in the morning, claiming that the dog was a danger to the children. Palma was not aggressive and Ivan's explanation could only be understood with reference to Irgichi's doubts about her socialisation.

According to Bargai, the Buryat shaman, although Evenki used to steal dogs from their neighbours they would only ever take puppies. It was a mystery to him why the Evenki paid so little attention to the heredity of a dog – the most important factor for Buryats – but were so concerned about the dog's socialisation. For the Evenki, socialisation is not a process of education or direct training. The three young puppies living on Irgichi's camp and at the ranger station where Nadya lived and worked were never trained by anyone. Instead, they would either have a feel for the important frames of interaction in Evenki society or be excluded from them. In this form of socialisation there is no place for mistakes. The Evenki would not excuse a young pup for attempting to catch and kill a chicken or a sheep. They believe that a dog that tastes the blood of domestic animals will repeat its attempts. If a dog makes such a mistake, confusing hunting in the forest with life at the camp, the Evenki do not punish the dog; they kill

it. Socialisation is not a process of gradual correction but rather a question of survival of the most intelligent individuals, those able to adapt to the appropriate frame of interaction. The only way to become an Evenki dog is to grow up with Evenki children and, likewise, to become an Evenki one must grow up with Evenki dogs.

Children could be very cruel when playing with dogs and puppies but nobody ever stopped them. It was both a way of ensuring a child's autonomy and at the same time giving him or her an opportunity to learn to be aggressive. Aggression is a social feeling which children have to learn and for which they need space for practice (Harrison 1989). Among the Evenki, dogs are partners in this process of mutual socialisation. At the same time as the children learn to be aggressive, dogs learn to bear this aggression and not withdraw from such interactions. Like Evenki people, Evenki dogs never interpret violence as punishment because their earliest experiences of aggression are not attempts to improve their behaviour but an ordinary and quite neutral expression of relation. A bite or a kick does not send a message of correction.

This frame in which violence is not associated with punishment is important because it permits Evenki people and their dogs to act independently and not to be afraid of each other. The dog from the television tower was different because she would never understand this kind of interaction



Fig. 8. Mira with Nadya's puppy.

and would either submit to or resist aggression. She was a danger to the children, because she might teach them to fear aggression (either by biting them or showing her own fear) and this posed a significant threat to Evenki sociality. Ivan was acting not to protect the children from physical harm, but from the schemes of interaction that she had learned by being brought up in Russian society.

It is curious that our Evenki hosts never worried about our influence on their children. We spent a lot of time with them but never became as close to them as they were to their dogs. The border between Evenki and their dogs was much thinner, one might say, than that which separated the Evenki and us. Our presence among the Evenki was similar to that of a strange dog, no more than a good companion for an occasional trip.

Nadya and her Puppies

In our next story we explore an episode between Irgichi's daughter Nadya and her dogs. As discussed above, Nadya worked as a ranger and lived on the perimeter of the local nature reserve two kilometres from her family's winter camp. The ranger station where Nadya lived was the last settlement in the taiga and she spent most of her time in the forest. She had a very nice dog, the mother of two puppies. The four of them were always together, separating only when Nadya went to the village.

To get to the village one had to cross several rivers. It was usually possible to cross the first of these rivers, the Sukhaya (meaning 'dry' in Russian) in rubber boots. But in late spring, at the time of the high water ritual, the river became unpredictable. Depending on the level of ice-melt from the mountains or the heaviness of the rains, the Sukhaya could quickly turn into a large and dangerous river. There was no bridge and we never knew when it was safe, or even possible, to cross.

On this particular occasion we were returning from the village to Irgichi's camp with Nadya, Irgichi and a few others. The family had been taken to the village for an obligatory annual X-ray examination to screen for tuberculosis. Locals often treat this as an excuse to leave their households and come to the village. In his capacity as a shaman, Irgichi had also been requested to perform a ritual (described in chapter one) on behalf of local Buryats. We were returning with a case of vodka that Irgichi had been given as payment for the ritual, and because the Sukhaya was in full flood we were forced to stop on the bank of the river.

On the opposite bank, Nadya's dogs were waiting for her. They had left the house and travelled several kilometres to meet her, but could not cross

the river. Nadya was already drunk and she cried when she saw them. They were very happy to see each other but could not be together. Then Nadya started to cry about her livestock that were left untended at home because of the river. She declared that she would cross the river. Considering the state of the river, this seemed like suicide and everybody tried to calm her down, but the only way to do so was to conduct a ritual; they threw cigarettes and vodka into the fire and began to drink more vodka. It was three days before we managed to cross the Sukhaya.

How did the dogs know where and when to meet Nadya? This was a mystery to us, just as the way an Evenki hunter and his dog coordinate their actions without seeing or hearing each other was a mystery to Bargai.

This story presents an opportunity to think about the form of communication Evenki use with their dogs. We propose that they communicate not by sharing messages, but by sharing contexts or 'frames', to use Gregory Bateson's term (Bateson 1972:177–93). When the Evenki travel with their dogs they never call or command them. We had the opportunity to see how Nadya walked with her puppies when we once went with her to inspect the damage caused by a forest fire. The puppies tried to imitate their mother and go ahead of Nadya but they frequently took the wrong path. Nadya never called them and never showed any sign of anxiety. The puppies had to learn to control their curiosity and to watch Nadya at all times. They learned to share the context of travelling together. When we saw Nadya walk with her grown-up dog we were amazed at how the dog managed to remain ahead of us and on the right path. It seemed that their mutual experience of sharing the context of travelling was so rich that they could feel each other's rhythms and knew where to go from the slightest of movements.

The type of communication we are describing is very close to the ostensive communication studied by Bateson (1979: 120–1). According to Bateson, this communication is essential for humans in language learning. All children must use ostensive communication before they can use words. Together, pointing and speaking constitute a process of learning contexts, and a process of learning words as speech acts in contexts. Ostensive communication, with words or without them, consists of explication of common and shared situational contexts.

When Nadya did not react to the mistakes of her puppies and continued along the correct path, she indicated the important context of action; she introduced the correct path as a frame for common action. Her puppies learned not to follow Nadya, but to develop their repertoire of

common contexts. When they were correct and chose the right path, it was they who chose the route and it was their decision that determined it. Walking for the Evenki and their dogs is a process of creating and sharing common contexts in which both parties are equally active. Some day, the decisions of these puppies will become crucial in hunting.

The Evenki do not try to train their dogs, punish them for wrongdoing, or even teach them to be subordinate to people. On the contrary, they need an independent creature that can act as a partner and can make its own decisions. By sharing contexts and by feeling the understanding that exists as a result of common experiences and mutual orientation to the behaviour of one another, the Evenki have a very strong relationship with their dogs.

The Death of Irgichi's Dog Durak

This last story revolves around the death of Irgichi's dog Durak, which occurred before our trip to the television tower. The dogs from camp never spent a night indoors and we frequently heard them running and barking outside. Katya told us that dogs become independent at night and they resolve all of their problems by themselves. On several occasions we awoke to find dogs bearing scratches and other marks of night-time hunting. The dogs frequently tried to catch the badger living on a neighbouring hill, but without success. Nadya somehow knew what the dogs were doing at night and she told us that on one particular night they were trying to catch a wild boar. She laughed about the puppies' attempts to catch it.

Dogs led a rather free existence at the camp. Pirat, the dog of Yekhe Bayir, Irgichi's son-in-law who lived in the village, came up to the camp for the summer. It was his own decision and nobody invited him; he just arrived and was not turned away. The dogs were never tied. They lived in parallel with the people at the camp. Katya and Irgichi fed them all once a day, putting their food into a special bowl. All the dogs were interested in hunting and although they rarely went with people they enjoyed it on their own at night. The night was a time of great risk, but it was also a time of real freedom. During the day the dogs were sleepy and very calm, tolerating the aggression of children without so much as a growl, but at night they proved themselves to be real hunting dogs, courageous and aggressive.

This risky nocturnal life served as a substitute for hunting with people. These risks help Evenki dogs to continue to act like hunters even in times when they cannot hunt. Evenki people also need such opportunities, which they can find in drinking and travelling. The risky activities that were common to Evenki people and their dogs are now replaced by separate activities. Dogs survive incidents with wild animals on their own, and people survive aggressive and drunken clashes with each other while travelling without their dogs. These are the adaptation strategies of Evenki and their dogs to a world without hunting. And the price of this adaptation is their occasional separation.

One morning, after listening to the sound of barking through the night we failed to find Durak. We saw no trace of him for several days until Irgichi found him lying in the bushes. He was unable to stand. Irgichi did not try to bring him home, but left him there. The next day Durak somehow managed to move himself to the centre of camp and collapsed near the path between the house and the stream. He died several hours later. There was no attempt to heal him and Irgichi said we should let him die. Durak's death was accepted without regret. It was just a fact. We went with Irgichi and his grandson Volodya to burn Durak's body and Irgichi told us, "What burns won't rot". This was his only act of sympathy towards old Durak, not to let his body rot and become food for other animals. Irgichi made a loop out of wire and tied it around the dog's neck. Then, using a stick as a handle, we dragged Durak's body in the same way as hunters drag a wolf that they have killed to the site where we were going to set the bonfire. We collected enough brushwood to burn everything including the wire with which we dragged him. The mood was not gloomy but even a little playful. Irgichi told us about Durak's life, how he had been good at hunting squirrels when he was young, and how a tractor had once knocked him down and left him lame. We lit the fire with Durak's body underneath, covered so we were unable to see it burning, and we left while the fire was still strong. Only the two of us anthropologists returned to look at Durak's body. Everything was burned except his skeleton, which still showed the broken ribs that had probably caused his death. After that, nobody seemed to remember him.

The life of a dog is shorter than the life of a man. Durak was neither the first nor the last of Irgichi's dogs but for the time they were together they were companions. They had travelled together and shared the same food. Durak was very strong and despite being lame was not in any way subordinate to other dogs at camp. At the same time he was not a leader, just as his owner – the oldest man at the camp – was not an authoritative figure.

Hunting Luck of Buryat and Evenki Dogs

If we accept the distinction that Pedersen (2001) makes between totemist and animist societies of Northern Asia, we could associate Buryats with the former and Evenki with the latter according to the respective importance placed on vertical and horizontal relations in these neighbouring societies. This distinction is perhaps too sharp, and at the end of the chapter we touch on the more interesting problem of how totemism and animism are connected within the frame of culture contact, but it is useful for reflecting on how these ways of thinking about the world determine the place of dogs in different societies.

An Evenki dog's character is a result of socialisation, which is in turn shaped by the epistemological concerns of Evenki society. Totemism and animism could probably be studied in the same way, as patterns of relations significant to a culture (Bird-David 1991). This 'pattern which connects' (Bateson 1979:12) is a generic epistemological principle that embeds skills and practices within a system of inter-balanced circuits. This means that by examining the basic patterns of a culture's epistemology we can predict how this translates into practice. The dog, as part of a system, adjusts to it and to some extent reveals the patterns of that system.

In animistic societies where the borderline between human and non-human is weakest, the most intensive interactions take place between creatures (Bird-David 1991; Willerslev 2004). Thus in an animistic epistemology, such as that of the Evenki, there is no necessary difference in kind between humans and nonhumans and if a dog and a man share situational contexts the fact that they are of different species is absolutely irrelevant. In contrast, totemic epistemology views a creature's origins as its most important attribute, and shared circumstances or commonalities cannot obliterate the importance of these origins. The only way for totemists to organise communication between species of different origins is to establish a relation between the original exemplars of that species, as Buryats do by using genealogies. From this, it is easy to see why egalitarianism tends to predominate in animist societies and hierarchical structures predominate in societies with a totemist epistemology.

By comparing the place of dogs in Evenki and Buryat communities we can see how well the models outlined above work in practice. Buryats say that the good qualities of a dog are inherited from its mother, and a dog's reputation is based, at least in narrative, on the qualities associated with its mother's pedigree. Luck in hunting depends on a number of complex factors, which are only possible to understand in hindsight. The dog's

behaviour does not play a crucial role in this process. If it does not do well in the forest but has the reputation of a good dog due to its heredity, a Buryat would not blame the dog but would seek an explanation in his own behaviour prior to hunting. For example, a Buryat would prefer to suppose that he had met someone on the way to the forest or ignored some other indicator of misfortune. The same occurs when the hunter is lucky in hunting; his luck is never directly associated with the work of the dog. In practice, however, the efficacy of a dog is estimated and the decision to keep or get rid of a dog is made on the basis of these reflections. A Buryat would sell an unsuccessful dog but nevertheless he would always claim that it had a very good reputation and good inheritance. A really successful dog will never be praised but kept without remark. A dog is never fully trusted by Buryats and hunters prefer to lead their dogs into the forest on a leash and free them only when it seems they have noticed something.¹ The hunting dog is considered merely as an instrument to assist the hunter. There are other types of dogs (such as guard dogs) that have nothing to do with hunting. Buryats prefer to control their dogs and provide all of their food without giving them the freedom to forage for their own food. They care for their dogs a great deal and will even let their dogs in the house, especially in winter. This attitude lies in a frame in which dogs are subordinated, obey commands, and are thoroughly dependent, acting more like the property of the hunter than his partner.

Among the Evenki, dogs play a quite different role. Evenki dogs never get such care from their masters and this lack of attention helps them to maintain their autonomy. In Bugarikta, they are never allowed inside the house and are left to run free at night. They are never fed enough and need to hunt for most of their food. Being so independent, the dogs share their hunting-luck with people. If we recall that the socialisation of dogs among Evenki is aimed at raising a partner that can make crucial decisions in the forest, we see that the luck of the hunt is shared by man and dog, just like the opportunities and hazards of the road.

Evenki dogs are not given a special place in Evenki society but people cannot imagine life without them. As lifelong companions, dogs are an extension of the man. Recall how Irgichi needed a new dog after the death of his old one. The Evenki are interested in dogs not as assistants or

¹ Among Evenki reindeer herders (in Mawut, for example) hunting dogs are also kept tied and on leashes, because reindeer as part-domestic, part-wild animals are immediately seen by a good hunting dog as a prey; and Evenki need this quality in the dog when hunting wild reindeer.

instruments of successful hunting but as attentive travelling companions. Having a dog is not a question of owning property but it is about having luck in hunting, even if people do not utilise this potential. This hunting luck is very important for Evenki, allowing them to feel comfortable in life. Hunting luck can be seen in what one has caught, but it can also be indicated by the absence of prey. There is a principle of circularity that the Evenki use in predicting and managing their everyday life. The absence of prey is a sign of future good luck, as if luck is a circuit that needs to fall in order to reach its peak. In contrast to Buryat manner of reconstructing bad or good luck in retrospect, Evenki luck in hunting is seen in relation to the present or the future. Luck is important for Buryats when they do not have it or when they think that they have not done something that they should have done to assure their luck. For the Evenki, hunting luck is part of everyday practice and is an element even in simple trips through hunting territories in order to monitor animal movements and clear paths. The fact that they do not capture prey during these trips is not a sign of misfortune but, on the contrary, is an important foundation for future luck. From this perspective, the immediate efficacy of a dog is not so important. Any dog that grew up with Evenki could be neither good nor bad and unless the dog did some kind of harm, nobody would get rid of it. In any case the dog would not survive without hunting skills so its fortune, so to speak, is in its own paws.

Conclusion: Secrets in Culture Contact

Evenki and Buryats have lived alongside each other for many centuries. The Western Buryats first obtained the skill of hunting from Evenki and, conversely, Evenki from Bugarikta region learned to breed cattle and speak Buryat. Yet how have they managed stably to maintain such interactions and exchanges over time? Contact between cultures involves processes of mutual adjustment to a situation of co-existence that could easily lead to rivalry or assimilation. In cybernetic terms, it is vulnerable to collapse through complementary or symmetrical schismogenesis (Bateson 1972).

In such a situation of stable interactions between two cultures we need to look at the circuits that help to keep them in balance. We propose that 'secrets' are employed as a mechanism of culture contact to allow the Evenki to retain their animist epistemology and the Buryats to retain their totemist epistemology. The process of generating a secret is circular, as can be illustrated with the example of the Evenki dogs.

Bargai, the Buryat shaman whom we introduced earlier in the chapter and who spent a lot of time hunting with Evenki people in the taiga, told us about what he regarded as an Evenki secret. He said that he had never been able to understand how the Evenki communicated with their dogs or how they coordinated their actions during hunting. Bargai was not able to grasp this because he lacked knowledge of the contexts within which communication between Evenki people and dogs is generated. He had hunted frequently with the Evenki since his childhood but he had never lived with them. As a Buryat, Bargai was not able to understand this process because Buryats train their dogs in a different manner. Instead of looking at the communicative contexts in which Evenki and their dogs operate, Bargai posited that the Evenki must have some secret knowledge about dogs that they do not reveal to Buryats. Bargai tried to interpret his experience of Evenki hunting from the perspective of Buryat totemist epistemology by constructing a relationship not between concrete creatures – Evenki hunters and their dogs – but between more abstract and prototypical ones – Evenki spirit masters and spirits. Bargai's impression of a magical link between hunter and dog and the mysterious communication between them both was the first step in the generation of a secret.

Irgichi made no pretence of having any special secrets about dogs. When his dog died he invited us to help him cremate it and did not perform any manner of esoteric ritual in celebration of the dog's soul. When we asked if he had any special knowledge about dogs, he was uncertain what we meant. What was clear was that he had no special esoteric knowledge about this particular dog. When we asked Irgichi about hunting luck and how it was connected with dogs, he explained this in elaborate terms that merely amounted to a translation of Buryat terminology into Evenki language. The Evenki frequently use the Buryat term *talan* to mean either 'prey' or 'routine tasks to get luck'. The account he gave us was a chaotic mass of Buryat and Evenki motifs. When we asked about the role of dogs as guardians, meaning how dogs save their masters from bad spirits, Irgichi's wife Katya told us that man is the worst spirit. It seems that Evenki took most of the figurative expressions we used to try to obtain secret knowledge about spiritual life as direct, practical questions. Irgichi and Katya's interest in concrete experience and their indifference to abstract musings were also present in their everyday communication. They were never interested in broad questions and avoided them by saying that the time had not yet come to talk about them. This was tricky, because they never directly denied that they had some specific knowledge but instead

avoided situations in which we might have expected them to reveal such knowledge.

This technique was not an attempt to manipulate but a way to not reject our advances or exclude us from communication. Irgichi was thoroughly aware that among Buryats – the referential environment of his shamanic activity – the shaman is expected to have special secret knowledge, such as genealogies or prayers. Irgichi had to deal with these expectations without destroying our relationship. If he said that he had no such knowledge at all, we – and probably, Buryats as well – would not believe him, and would think he was keeping a secret that he did not want to share. Sharing is very important for the Evenki. This is especially so for men, who are expected to share everything they have with their companions as the basis of successful companionship in hunting. In order not to spoil our companionship Irgichi did not destroy our expectations but instead tried his hardest to prevent direct communication on the matter. As a result of his efforts, we felt even more strongly that he was keeping a secret.

Secrets are forms without content, which those present at a moment of culture contact can fill as they wish without engendering the risk of destroying the communicative situation. The secret of the Evenki and their dogs was generated in the course of culture contact, when Buryat hunters tried to assimilate the skills of Evenki hunting without understanding the way in which Evenki dogs are socialised. The Evenki did not deny the existence of this secret, as it was an effective mechanism by which to maintain interaction even if it meant that there could be no complete understanding between the two parties.

Understandings of the relationship between owners and their dogs can be either metonymical in the totemist context of Buryats – as witnessed by the Buryat idea of a spiritual thread connecting the Evenki hunter and his dog – or quite concrete within the animistic epistemology of the Evenki – the Evenki hunter and his dogs are equal partners during hunting. The duality of meaning permitted by a secret helps to bridge cultures and provides an important illusion of common understanding, or rather the possibility of such understanding. In the frames of Buryat culture it is quite understandable why the Evenki do not reveal their secrets, and as a result keeping secrets is not considered to be inappropriate. For Evenki people, sharing situational contexts is crucial and by pretending to know something, they are able to integrate other people into their practices. Secrets are therefore interesting not because of their content but because of their role in culture contact.

CHAPTER FIVE

HUNTING: ETHOS AND ADAPTATION AMONG EVENKI AND BURYATS

The Evenki from Bugarikta posed a problem to us in our attempt to understand the meaning of hunting. Unlike in Mawut, the other area in which we conducted fieldwork, hunting has long since lost its dominant role in the economy of the region, mainly because of state policies of collectivisation, sedentarisation, and the cordoning off of the area as a nature reserve. Our informants were never predominantly hunters. Even their fathers were not remembered as having hunted intensively. Although we noticed some signs that the Evenki of Bugarikta did continue to hunt, we were never able to witness it or discuss the matter directly. It is clear that hunting was not the main occupation in the region but its influence was pervasive. Even without hunting the Evenki maintained the ethos of hunters.

A successful hunter has to become a part of the ecological system in which he acts. The hunter seeks not to change and control the environment. On the contrary, he is open to being affected by the environment, to feeling its rhythms and dynamics from within, to finding and chasing the prey. This giving of oneself to the environment brings risk and uncertainty, which the hunter should experience and even seek out. This is reflected in the hunter's character. Hunters are risky, curious, and spontaneous characters. They avoid planning and setting goals in advance, and remain open to the multiple possibilities that exist in an ever-uncertain environment. Evenki from Bugarikta were just like this, although they had little opportunity to demonstrate these character traits in the archetypical situation of hunting.

The hunting ethos, then, existed independent of its generative occupation, but does this mean that hunting as an occupation and hunting as an ethos are also independent entities? To answer this question we will discuss two cases in this chapter. The first explores the strategy by which Ekhirit Buryats living in the taiga incorporate hunting into their ethos. Despite living in the taiga for more than 300 years, the group of Ekhirit Buryats which we discuss has continued to identify with other Buryats, to breed cattle, and to speak Buryat language. Although hunting is an important factor in their survival, these 'taiga Buryats' do not accept this occupation easily. For Buryats, spontaneity and uncertainty are uncomfortable

aspects of the hunting experience and they need to undergo a certain transformation of their mind every time they go into the taiga to hunt. The Buryat shaman who helps them to achieve this employs cultural devices of Buryat origin, such as praying to ancestors, to compensate for the absence of a hunting ethos amongst Buryats. These rituals are effective and this particular case demonstrates that the practice of hunting can exist without socialisation and development of a hunting ethos within the community as a whole.

The other case demonstrates how the Evenki can maintain their hunting ethos in spheres that are not connected with hunting, such as business. We discuss one Evenki businessman who succeeded in building a nephrite-mining business on the basis of his hunting ethos. The way he generates and manages a multiplicity of business opportunities, communicates with business partners, and deals with profits parallels the strategies of Evenki hunters in their everyday life in the taiga.

Taken together these two cases speak in favour of the idea that hunting and the hunting ethos can be co-present but are not necessarily bound to each other. Ekhirit Buryats must adapt to the taiga environment within the frames of their own ethos, while the Evenki apply their hunting ethos to other environments without adaptation. After describing and comparing these cases we shall discuss their implications for the theory of ethos and the cybernetic model of cultural adaptation to the environment. This is an important issue in the study of culture contact; how do people live in the same environments and communicate with each other while maintaining their distinctive traits, dispositions and behaviours?

Buryat Hunters and the Shaman

The region in which our study took place shows how environmental circumstances affect a community. Under the pressures of Russian colonisation and occupation at the beginning of the eighteenth century, members of an Ekhirit Buryat lineage moved from their native steppe environment to the taiga. It was with such a group of 'taiga Buryats' that we conducted our fieldwork. These taiga Buryats now live on territories previously inhabited by Evenki, whose main occupation was hunting.

Buryat social organisation is based on cattle breeding and living in the steppe environment. Their emotional integration into society is based on the clan structure and the progressive integration of individuals as members of families, clans, and lineages. This 'vertical' or hierarchical structure

is typical of steppe societies but is not widespread among hunters (Pedersen 2001). In contrast, the structure of hunter-gatherer societies in the taiga is based on 'horizontal', egalitarian relations and encourages greater exposure to and management of risk. Spontaneity, flexibility, and quick reactions are cultivated and prove invaluable when hunting or in other situations of risk. These strategies require involvement in a different and sometimes-incompatible mode of thought from the Buryats, to which Pedersen refers as the 'taiga mode of thought'.

As relatively recent newcomers to Evenki land, taiga Buryats are faced with the challenge of adapting a cultural system that was evolved in the steppe to the environment of the taiga. While Buryats have found a way to continue breeding cattle in the forest, hunting is a crucial aspect of their livelihood and provides financial profit from furs and game. For local Buryats, the skills and knowledge necessary to survive in the steppe and the taiga are interconnected. The case of taiga Buryats living on Evenki land thus provides an unparalleled opportunity to investigate the adaptation of the steppe mode of thought to the taiga landscape.

Buryat social structure is rather rigid and is hierarchically organised according to one's lexical knowledge of genealogies and ancestors. The distribution of this knowledge equally depends on one's position within the hierarchy, so the more one knows the higher one's status and the more



Fig. 9. Taiga Buryats hunting for bears.

potential one has to acquire knowledge. Buryats are therefore very aware of hierarchy in their everyday interactions.¹ Yet they need to adapt themselves to a different set of circumstances when hunting. The outcome of hunting is always unpredictable and is based on chance. It requires engagement with one's environment and the ability to react spontaneously and appropriately to rapidly changing circumstances. When hunting, one has to forget all concerns of hierarchy and other distractions – household, family, health, and village – in order to immerse oneself in the situation. Taiga Buryats need to acquire this ability to act spontaneously and without hesitation, to lose the intense self-awareness that characterises social interactions within the Buryat community. Buryat hunters achieve this with the help of a shaman. The shaman helps hunters to concentrate on the activity of hunting and ensures that hunting can be framed as a distinct activity with a clearly delineated beginning and end. The rituals conducted by the shaman mark the hunter's entry into and exit from the frame of hunting and liberate the hunter from his fears that the uncertainty associated with hunting can enter his – highly controlled and planned – everyday family life in village or disrupt the Buryat system of values. The essence of these values is grasped by the concept of *utkha*, which regulates the distribution of knowledge and authority among Ekhirit Buryats.

Utkha and Socialisation

Utkha is a cognitive scheme through which an individual categorises his personal experiences and constructs his personal history based on his knowledge about and relations to ancestors, as gleaned from genealogies (cf. Humphrey 1983). Buryats use their knowledge of the ancestors as a sort of catalogue from which to make sense of their own experiences. But this knowledge can only be acquired by particular persons and in special contexts. Only those who have such knowledge are understood to have *utkha* and, as a result, personal history. The greater an individual's knowledge of ancestral history, the richer his repertoire of personal memories, and the greater his *utkha*.

It is through this incorporation of individual autobiographies into the biography of the clan through genealogy that a Buryat community is able

¹ People sometimes have two different versions of their genealogy, one which they use in their public life, and the other for use in their personal interactions with spirits.

to maintain its cohesion. But not every Buryat can present an autobiography that is integrated into his or her clan's history. The ability to demonstrate one's *utkha* – to reflect on one's own life experiences in terms of the biography of ancestors – requires special socialisation and lexical knowledge, as well as special language and concepts.

In the Buryat community, socialisation is a process of acquiring the skills of remembering. When a boy is born into a Buryat family, the grandparents conduct a special ritual during which they wish their grandson to inherit the characteristics of one of his ancestors (such as to become a shaman, a chief, or a storyteller). Not all families possess such skills and knowledge, in which case their members are unable to present their autobiographies and, as a result, fail to gain an authoritative position in the community. A boy is appreciated when he displays the traits of the legendary ancestor or demonstrates an inclination towards the career outlined by his *utkha*. Knowledge of the ancestors from which people with *utkha* are directly descended is a bank of possibilities, a store of cultural capital for the family. But the distribution of a family's cultural capital among its children is not equal. As regards the inheritance of *utkha*, the first-born boy is in a privileged position because the family fears that he might be the only heir to his father's *utkha*. A girl may possess *utkha* only if there is no boy to inherit the *utkha* of her father.

The distribution of a clan's knowledge about its ancestors – as the scheme through which personal experiences are interpreted – is also unequal between genders. Daughters are to some extent strangers in their own families because they will give birth to children in another lineage.² Hence, girls are usually excluded from learning *utkha* and cannot obtain higher status by reflecting on their biographies through the ancestral scheme. Furthermore, interest in ancestors varies with age. When men lose direct power over their children they participate more in shamanic rituals and demonstrate their mastery of genealogical knowledge at the community level. At the same time, aging women frequently visit their father's village and initiate rituals for themselves with the shamans of their paternal clan. Throughout life at their husband's clan these women are considered as strangers and excluded from spiritual practices. It is only when they become old women that they have this possibility of returning to their own communities.

² This is associated with the virilocal pattern of residence in Buryat culture. When women marry, they tend to follow the husband to live in the village of his father.

Bargai the Shaman

The shaman is a specialist who restores and interprets lost memories. His authority is based on his control over his own memories. The right of the shaman to perform rituals and articulate the memories of others is determined by his authoritative position in society, based on his *utkha*. Bargai, an elderly shaman who lives in a Buryat village on the borderland of taiga and steppe, is just such an authoritative figure.³ He possesses the most extensive catalogue of knowledge about the ancestors and bears the richest autobiography in the local community. He uses his 'memories' as the basis for rituals that he conducts for those who do not possess the knowledge and skill necessary to construct their own biographies and reflect on their personal experiences in the appropriate manner.

The shaman's position gives him the right to improvise stories. From this point of view, storytelling is a shamanic rite in itself: it is the ongoing retelling of the shaman's own biography associated with the legendary history of ancestors. Legendary tragedies and dramas are thus integrated into the shaman's own experience of risk and the shaman behaves in accordance with the character of his ancestors, thereby affirming his authority within the Buryat hierarchy.

Bargai is a special character. Like other Buryats, he inherited his (shamanic) *utkha* from his paternal grandfather, which allowed him to be emotionally and rationally involved in the history of his clan. But his father, who also conducted shamanic rituals, was friends with Evenki hunters and lived in the neighbouring taiga. When Bargai was six years old his father left him alone in the forest for a night. As a result, Bargai lost his fear of the forest and later became a good hunter. In addition to his ability to conduct rites connecting people with their ancestors, Bargai's extraordinary hunting skills provide the basis for his reputation among Ekhirit Buryats. He remembers stories not only about his but also about other people's ancestors, and narrates them perfectly. At the same time, Bargai tells stories about his catches and his failures in hunting. But he never talks about the actual process of successful hunting. Successful hunting never becomes a subject of narrative; the act of killing is an experience of participation that eschews narratives or clear-cut categories of

³ When we first met in 2000, Bargai was 69 years old and no longer participated in hunting trips. He was the shaman of his lineage and sometimes also conducted rituals for his clan members.

representation. Hunting is about being deeply involved in a situation from which it is impossible to take an external perspective.

Bargai also has a reputation for telling people's fortunes before the hunt. His predictions serve as diagnoses. If Bargai predicts an unlucky outcome for a hunt it is because he senses that the hunter is not calm but is preoccupied, and that will hinder his ability to focus and react quickly. Unlike other shamans, Bargai can use his shamanic ability based on his *utkha* in various spheres of life and in different environments, not only in the familiar steppe but also in unfamiliar taiga. As a hunter himself, Bargai can use his *utkha* in the taiga and can be a mediator for Buryats, bridging ordinary life and hunting.

Tragic Events and Dangerous Situations

The ability to present an autobiography packed with dangerous situations is essential for the shaman. Risk is the raw material for autobiography. It is most frequently through a tragic death that men become ancestors and acquire meaning for their descendants. Narratives about ancestors often revolve around such situations of danger, drama, and tragedy, and incorporating the personal experience of danger into narratives about one's own ancestors boosts an individual's reputation in the community. Bargai, for example, was able to tell a personal story of an incident that occurred at a holy place where two shamans had fought and killed each other and could thus relate to these ancestors in his rituals. This underlines the importance of remembering as a key component of Buryat culture.

For Buryats, remembering is a process of integrating one's own experience into legendary history. Through stories about dangerous situations, people like Bargai present their *utkha* and bind their personal circumstances to the general history of their clan and ancestors. Bargai once told a story about how his son fell asleep while driving drunk. Bargai, who was elsewhere at the time, sensed what had happened and immediately conducted a ritual. His son suddenly awoke just as his car was careening to the edge of the road and he barely managed to escape his own death. Bargai interprets this situation through his family's *zayan*, a spirit helper sent by the ancestors. The story takes on meaning for Bargai because it brings together the elements of danger and the ancestors.

Shamanic rituals usually consist of recollecting legends about the tragic deaths of ancestors. In shamanic practice, the experience of danger and speaking about it are synonymous because retelling is considered to be no less dangerous than the original experience. It is especially dangerous

for the shaman because he has to maintain control of the ritual process with clients – a process that tends to involve no small quantity of alcohol – without himself becoming drunk. Shamans may ask for more vodka than necessary or recommend unnecessary rituals and sacrifices, but in doing this and in becoming drunk and aggressive or alcoholic, they risk losing the trust of the community. This risk is generally sufficient to keep the shaman's behaviour in check.

Negen Hanaan: *Hunting and 'Forgetting'*

The transition from steppe to taiga is a movement between worlds respectively dominated by singularity and multiplicity. As Morten Pedersen describes it:

[T]he taiga constitutes everything that the steppe does not. [...] No entities or persons associated with the taiga – whether shamans, hunters, predators, berries or spirits – add up to a common point of unity, for every single one of them constitutes a unique entity or singularity, thus defining the taiga as a zone of pure multiplicity. Entities of the steppe, conversely, can be made equivalent to and hierarchically encompassed by one another (Pedersen 2011: 129).

According to the steppe ethos of the Buryats, life progresses in a strictly lineal and genealogical fashion; inheritance and *utkha* are passed down the generations from person to person.⁴ Taiga Buryats simultaneously seek this stability of hierarchical order and must adapt to the multiplicity of the forest environment. Awareness of this order and associated social obligations disturbs Buryats during hunting. That is why hunters have to forget and free themselves from the social obligations that constitute their personhood. In the following section we study how this 'forgetting' is organised.

Forgetting, like most cognitive processes, is influenced by the social environment in which it occurs. For Buryats, forgetting can be very difficult and may require special techniques. The shaman specialises in helping people to filter out and ignore contexts that disturb them in order to concentrate on particular tasks such as hunting. By being enabled temporarily to forget his position and responsibilities, the individual can take decisive action when hunting without losing control of himself or the

⁴ However, not everyone can claim to have a direct relationship to the clan and not all events can be interpreted according to lineal logic. This means that not all people have *utkha* and in such cases, they trust in the instructions of those who do have *utkha*, such as shamans and elders.

situation. This balance between being aware yet of being self-consciousness is an important part of successful hunting. Buryat hunters do not learn this within the frames of their socialisation because hunting is not integrated into the Buryat cultural system. Indeed one might say that when hunting, Buryats cease to be Buryats; they become Buryats again only when they return to the community.

'Forgetting' allows one to be active and to participate in highly intense situations that require a great deal of attention and emotional involvement. This is especially important for hunting, which depends on quick reactions, spontaneous use of embodied knowledge, and deployment of techniques developed through experience. As Buryats are traditionally cattle breeders – vested with the steppe mode of thought – they not brought up with the spontaneity and unselfconsciousness required for hunting and they therefore use special rituals to forget their responsibilities to family, household, and village. For Buryats, hunting is a moment of transition into an unfamiliar and dangerous state, both physically and mentally. The moment they enter the taiga is a moment of transition into an empty environment, void of the sacred places and landmarks that would otherwise give it meaning.

With his close relations to the Evenki, Bargai is ideally suited to help local Buryats to enter the state of forgetting. When a hunter feels uncertain about his ability to reach *negen hanaan* – the state of holding only one thought in the mind – because of a dream, an encounter on the way to the forest, an event in his family, or anything that could distract the hunter from his task, he goes to Bargai. The shaman then tells the man's fortune with stones and diagnoses the source of disquiet. Bargai interprets the stones as signs sent by the ancestors and he prescribes an appropriate ritual. According to Bargai, "in order to forget, one needs first to remember one's ancestors and perform a ritual of respect for them". This ritual consists of Bargai reflecting on and talking about Buryat ancestors. He begins by praying to legendary Buryat ancestors then progressively addresses ancestors of the tribe, clan, and lineage, and finishes by addressing the hunter as an individual. The individual is now able to step out of his community and enter the taiga as a hunter.

Hunting as an Ethos: an Evenki Businessman

Evenki business activities usually involve some form of companionship. The most lucrative business activities consist in a group of people

going into the taiga to obtain something for which they have no official license – nephrite, gold, timber, elk, deer. Because the Evenki are perhaps the only people who can conduct such dangerous trips into the taiga unaided, they frequently compete with the officially licensed companies. In the Bugarikta region for example, the illegal logging carried out by a team of Evenki is the only business enterprise that exists in the whole district. In Mawut region more than ten groups of Evenki are involved in activities such as logging, gold mining, and nephrite extraction. These unofficial expedition parties were extremely successful at the beginning of the 1990s when official mineral extraction and logging were practically non-existent. In these unstable times the Evenki took to doing business in the same way as they hunted: based not on regularities and long-term planning, but on situational flexibility, anticipation of risk, and other skills that they had acquired in the taiga.

During our time in the field, we became well acquainted with an Evenki businessman. At that time Dima, an Evenki whose father had migrated to Mawut from Bugarikta district, was the head of the local administration and therefore not formally permitted to run a business. He nevertheless ran Sunshine in partnership with his sister Ira and a few other Evenki families who were involved in its management. Dima's business strategy – his investment decisions, his style of communication, even his peripatetic lifestyle – was typically Evenki. The way in which he sought risk and pitted himself against a multiplicity of possible opportunities was analogous to the strategy of an Evenki hunter. In this section, we shall discuss how Dima's hunting ethos defined his attitude to business.

Sunshine: An Evenki Obshchina

Dima's business, Sunshine, has gained a rather powerful position in the region and is famous throughout the republic. Indeed Sunshine has become so successful that it has come to resemble a corporation instead of the indigenous *obshchina*⁵ as which it was founded. Sunshine initially specialised in hunting and gold mining but its main income now comes from nephrite extraction. Sunshine also supports traditional pursuits,

⁵ An *obshchina* is an indigenous enterprise based on state-approved traditional occupations, such as hunting and reindeer herding. It is a category of business permitted only for representatives of the indigenous peoples of the north. The profits of such companies are fully or partially exempt from taxation and the procedure for obtaining licences is simplified.

such as hunting and reindeer herding, as authentic Evenki occupations, as proof of its status as a local *obshchina* and to maintain rights over former Evenki territories. In recent years, Sunshine has also attempted to diversify its business and now owns a number of factories and small enterprises.

Nephrite is a hard pale green or white mineral that is one of the forms of jade and is thus highly valued as a sacred stone in China. Every home possesses a small jade sculpture and demand is so great that it cannot be met with existing Chinese deposits. Sunshine is the only company that has succeeded – through relations with Evenki in China – in developing and maintaining a good relationship with the Chinese buyers who are the main business partners in the nephrite trade.

The nephrite mine is situated deep in the taiga, 200 kilometres from the closest village. Miners stay there for the entire season from April to October and are supplied with food by security patrols – consist mainly of Buryats led by former Russian soldiers – that roam the area to deter poachers and would-be thieves of nephrite and gold. These security arrangements are frequently undermined by local Evenki who do not work in the mine, but – using their connections with hired workers – organise small expeditions to slag heaps or disused mines and extract nephrite. Because they use their own labour and never steal nephrite that has already been brought out of the ground, Dima does not go after them. Although he claims that he could order his security patrols to catch and punish thieves so “nobody would ever find a trace of their bodies”, the interaction between Sunshine’s security guards and locals is more of a game than a war. When these Evenki get caught they can pretend that Dima gave them permission to take nephrite from the mine as a part of his social policy in the region. These explanations are accepted even if they are received with scepticism. Illegal nephrite miners, on the other hand, try to avoid the security guards because no one knows whether Dima’s threats are real or not.

Generating Multiplicity: Evenki Business Strategy

Despite the high profits from nephrite and smaller profits from gold, Sunshine does not exclusively focus on mineral extraction. Dima bought up several factories that went bankrupt in the 1990s following the collapse of the Soviet Union and the planned economy. These businesses included the biggest dairy in the region, a complex of storehouses for vegetables and other foodstuffs, and a sausage factory. Somehow they still function,

but not as they used to. Each of these businesses requires long-term financial investment and none guarantees that it will generate an immediate (or even any) profit. Always with an eye for an opportunity, Dima bought the sausage factory because there was a shortage of meat in the city where he lived and it seemed like a sound investment. The plan was to import cheap meat from neighbouring Mongolia and process it with refurbished equipment from Hungary, but he did not count on the fact that the state official responsible for approving meat imports from Mongolia had his own private meat factory and was not interested in helping his competitors. The project ground to a halt. Sunshine's investments, though, go beyond transforming former Soviet factories. Shortages of bricks in the region inspired Dima to build a brick factory. Sunshine first sponsored a small factory to produce enough bricks to build a larger factory, which it then operated. With the building boom in the region, this investment has proved to be rather more successful than the sausage factory.

These investments do not represent a concrete programme of business development but are instead spontaneous and flexible reactions to arising opportunities. Dima tries to leave open the possibility of acquiring future profitable ventures and does not focus too much on any one of his company's activities. In this he acts according to the same ethos as an Evenki hunter, who sets out into the taiga without any preconception of what he intends to catch and is always ready to change his course if it should suddenly strike his fancy to go fishing or berry picking. All possible profits are good but most appealing is independence. Sunshine invests simultaneously in numerous projects without waiting for immediate returns. At any given moment only one project may prove profitable but this one profitable enterprise will ensure the stability and independence of the whole system. By investing in a wide range of industries, Dima secures Sunshine's autonomy and prevents the company from being swallowed up by a larger company or being destabilised in a crisis. This investment strategy does not stem from concern for the growth of the company and its profits, but from the idea – of utmost importance to an Evenki – of ensuring independence. The Evenki businessman's gaze resembles that of a hunter scanning the territory to evaluate and seize upon whatever opportunities arise.

Sunshine's independence can only be achieved if its interests are not perceived as threatening to those of the state. Paradoxically, Dima ensures this independence through performed dependence on the Kremlin itself. There is a uranium deposit on the Mawut territory. This is a federal concern but as head of the regional administration, Dima is obliged to

provide for its extraction and transportation. As long as he can ensure the necessary local infrastructure, keep the nature of the mine's activities concealed from locals, and guarantee that any conflicts are resolved appropriately, his position is secure. This direct subordination to federal authorities enabled Dima to avoid intrusion from local state organisations. Before the economic crisis of 2008 this was enough to maintain Sunshine's autonomy, but following the crisis the success of Dima's nephrite operation came to the attention of the Russian authorities. Sunshine's profits from the nephrite trade became visible even from Moscow and the Russian authorities have pushed the president of Baikal region to take control of the industry. The staff at the relevant ministry was changed, thereby breaking established relationships between local and republican administrators and Sunshine. Investigations were initiated and auditors from Moscow reported cases of illegal nephrite smuggling.

Managing Multiplicity: Business Communication, Lifestyle, Risk

In the way in which he negotiates different roles and identities to establish relations with various business partners, Dima is paradigmatically Evenki. He can associate himself with Evenki, Russian, Buryat, and Chinese networks. As an Evenki, he was raised to follow in his father's footsteps as a hunter and reindeer herder but he speaks fluent Russian and presents himself as a Buddhist and personal friend of the Dalai Lama. He was one of the main sponsors of the Buddhist temple in the capital and even presented an enormous Chinese-made gold sculpture of the Buddha to the Buddhist community of Baikal region. His wife comes from a local Buryat-Chinese family. His sister presents herself as an Orthodox Christian and sponsored the building of the only Orthodox church in Bugudaya, the district centre of Mawut. Their mother was Russian and worked as a schoolteacher, which gives them a good background to establish contacts with Russians. Many believe that Dima's Russian blood enables him to control his drinking. This is considered to be a great advantage as business negotiations are usually conducted during parties.

As the bosses of Sunshine, Dima and Ira use their gender identities to suit the circumstances. For example, Ira is especially good at negotiating compromises between differing interests among men. Their repertoire of identities and roles proves extremely useful in interactions with various people and organisations. Dima and Ira work interchangeably and according to the circumstances conduct negotiations with men, women,

Russians, Buryats, Buddhists, and so forth, deploying and highlighting those identities that seem most suited to the situation. These identities do not constrain or predetermine their behaviour but are used as resources to gain access to various unconnected networks simultaneously.

The way Dima cooperates with Ira and other business partners resembles the way the Evenki hunt with their dogs. Partners sniff out an opportunity and chase after it. If a small business faces a crisis and the owner needs capital to pay his debts, he would first approach Ira or her assistants for help. The owner's troubles and the resources he needs thus expose him to Sunshine in the same way as the prey is exposed to the hunter by its response to the dog. The hunter then uses his intuition to decide whether or not to accept the prey. Ultimately, Dima makes the decision but if he decides not to invest in a business he will never say so directly. Instead, he presents his decision as a postponement. He forgets the client's request – or pretends to – to keep his options open. This means that those involved with Sunshine never realise when their business dealings have ended, even if no concrete actions result from them. Like experienced hunters, Sunshine's bosses keep their eyes on the target only for a moment. They may be interested in bigger trophies but they also keep a look out for smaller possibilities in case of bad luck, hunger, or need.

Negotiations and business meetings do not take place in the office, but at various parties in the restaurants of the capital of Baikal region. Only Dima's secretary can be found at the office. Dima regularly changes his phone number, thereby controlling who can contact him via his assistants. This is common among other Evenki specialists such as shamans. For example, in Southern Yakutia in 2005, István observed how the shaman Saveliy's assistant Oktyabrina negotiated the organisation of rituals. The shaman stayed in the taiga and no one could find him without the help of his assistant, with whom he communicated in the same way as we have described Evenki hunters communicating with their dogs. Despite not having concrete instructions from the shaman, the assistant always knew when to act because they shared common, contextual interpretations of situations. Like a hunter's dogs, Dima's assistants also act as points of contact, allowing Dima to take on his prey in his own time.

Negotiations take place during a meal when business partners come together in an informal setting. Business partners are guests, and by presenting delicious food and various attractions (such as after-parties with alcohol and girls), Dima manipulates the dispositions of his guests as other

Evenki do when establishing *andaki* relationships. The guests become hostage to the host's generosity and are entangled in the alternately flirtatious and aggressive behaviour that balances and maintains initially asymmetrical relations with strangers (see chapter three).

Dima's actions are unpredictable. His plans change constantly and spontaneously. He has several apartments and houses around which he circulates, just as other Evenki circulate between the village and their summer and winter camps. Furthermore, in business Dima does not focus on the accumulation of wealth but on multiplying the opportunities for obtaining wealth. He tries to keep several irons in the fire at any given time and to create an alternative to nephrite mining as his primary source of profit. His main goal is to expand the routes along which his business flows (these presently include Moscow, a few European capitals and larger Chinese cities). Ideally, Dima says he would like to leave the world of business and embark on a pilgrimage to Nepal, or simply live on the road with the possibility of wandering from place to place.

Dima's everyday life involves a certain amount of risk. His main occupation consists in managing and harmonising – not reducing – those risks. Risk is what keeps the whole system moving. No investment takes place without risk and the high level of excitement that these risks generate is frequently redirected to alternative pursuits – such as gambling in a casino – to avoid becoming overly fixated on any single project. Dima rids himself of 'stress' in casinos according to the logic that the problem should be treated by the cause: the fear of losing time and money in business should be mitigated by the feeling of actual loss engendered in playing poker and roulette. Any opportunity to visit a casino is seized upon; they are the main targets of sightseeing in new cities. There is a limit – \$5,000 – on spending during one night. If someone wins, the prize should be spent or shared immediately. The casino is not the place to obtain, but rather to lose money in order to balance profits and losses. By losing in roulette, Dima teaches himself to lose money and not to be frustrated by this.

Like hunting for an Evenki, Dima does not determine the goals of his investments in advance. Profits are never seen as absolute aims but are the condition whereby he can continue making investments and taking risks. Even gambling in the casino is integrated into this strategy. From Dima's point of view, losing and gaining money are each the precondition of each other. When Buryats become involved in a situation it is important for them to forget the dangers and the possibility of failure. For Evenki, on the other hand, awareness of risk helps them to become fully immersed in a

situation. Risk is what motivates the Evenki to act. Dima continuously stimulates movement and change, jumping from one risky situation to another.

Conclusion

The Evenki hunting ethos was developed to work with the multiplicity of the taiga environment. When Evenki go to the forest they never have fixed plans to hunt and if their aim is verbalised at all, it is expressed as looking around for whatever might turn up. They search for any options and possibilities, however various and unpredictable, that might arise. Taiga Buryats on the other hand decide the aim of their expedition to the taiga in advance, and if they go hunting and conduct the ritual of *negen hanaan*, they cannot think about anything but hunting. They will not stop to gather berries or to go fishing. They will search for prey and will do it in those places that the shaman designated. The biases in these respective ethoses that make them more effective in particular environments of singularity (steppe) and multiplicity (taiga) are revealed in the way these ethoses are applied in other spheres. Taiga Buryats need to construct singularity to be effective in the taiga, and Evenki use their ability to work with multiplicity in spheres full of uncertainty and risk, such as the nephrite mining business.

The cases that we have presented above show that the hunting ethos can exist in spheres other than hunting – such as in business –, and that other ethoses – such as that of Buryat cattle breeders – can be adjusted to accommodate hunting activities. This implies that the relationship between any given ethos and the environment is flexible and people can adjust the way they live without necessarily provoking a change of ethos. When Buryats hunt they retain the same ethos that they have evolved over centuries of cattle breeding. They adjust to the hunting environment by separating hunting from everyday life, and thereby create a bounded space for uncertainty and multiplicity within an otherwise controllable and singular world. The creation of this special domain of experience and action requires special techniques such as *negen hanaan*, which are performed in shamanic rituals and allow taiga Buryats to become, for a short period, successful hunters. But they can never use this frame to interpret their everyday life outside hunting. Their perspective remains that of a non-hunter and the fact that they go hunting does not turn them into hunters.

Ethos is both a product of history – the accrued traits of adaptation to previous environments that persist through inertia – and an ongoing process of adaptation. Every ethos has its own unique trajectory that determines the perspective from which people view and act in their environment. This chapter has shown how groups of people who share the same environment and even conduct the same tasks together do not necessarily share the same ethos. In and of itself, contact between these groups does not facilitate mutual understanding or provide common grounds for action.

An ethos can preserve patterns of behaviour and thought that are not suited to new tasks. In the case of taiga Buryats these patterns cannot simply be ignored and they even interfere with the process of learning new skills. This inertia of taiga Buryat ethos can be explained by studying the development of ethos as an open system. Following the work of psychologist Jean Piaget on child learning, we argue that the development of ethos is a process whereby the external world is assimilated into the schemas of the ethos while at the same time the ethos accommodates the schemas of the external world.⁶ As Piaget puts it:

A stable equilibrium between assimilation and accommodation results in properly intelligent adaptation. But if the subject's schemas of action are modified by the external world without his utilizing this external world, i.e., if there is primacy of accommodation over assimilation, the activity tends to become imitation (Piaget 1962: 5).

If taiga Buryats had managed to include patterns of hunting into their ethos, this would have entailed profound change in their ethos; the Buryat ethos would have become a hunting ethos and would reflect that of the Evenki. Taiga Buryats have clearly rejected the possibility of changing their ethos – they have lived in the taiga for generations without *becoming* hunters – and their attitude to hunting is thus a form of imitation in Piaget's sense.

⁶ Piaget studied the development of sensory-motor intelligence in children as a process of adaptation and formulated principles of interaction between the external world and the system of intelligence. We assume that sensory-motor intelligence is a form of mind in the Batesonian sense, and its principles can therefore be extrapolated to other processes of cultural adaptation.

⁷ "If every act of intelligence is an equilibrium between assimilation and accommodation, while imitation is a continuation of accommodation for its own sake, it may be said conversely that play is essentially assimilation, or the primacy of assimilation over accommodation" (Piaget 1962: 87).

Whilst taiga Buryats may imitate hunting ethos, the case of Dima reveals the Evenki 'at play'. The Evenki assimilate the world of business into the schemas of their own ethos, applying skills developed in the taiga to business activities without incurring change in their ethos.⁷ How long and under what conditions this phase of play will last is impossible to say. At the moment these strategies are effective, but there is no evidence that this success is not merely a temporary coincidence of various factors. For as long as Evenki operate within the frames of their hunting ethos and dabble in the world of business without becoming too deeply involved in its patterns – an integration that would inevitably require them to adjust themselves to the global market economy –, their risky and unaccountable activities, sporadic investments and absence of long-term planning are just so many elements of play: hunting without hunting.

CHAPTER SIX

PERPETUAL OUTSIDERS: LOCAL CHINESE ETHOS IN BAIKAL REGION

The nephrite trade with China had such a tremendous effect on the local economy of Mawut district that it remained sheltered from the global financial crisis of 2008. The Beijing Olympic Games even caused something of a boom in the nephrite market as Chinese traders eagerly bought all sorts of nephrite – even the least valuable – for large sums of money with the intention of selling it to tourists. In 2007 and 2008 nearly all residents of Mawut were somehow involved in legal or illegal nephrite mining, transportation, or reselling. The Evenki *obshchina* Sunshine that we discussed in the previous chapter is one of the main actors in this domain. Sunshine is the only enterprise in Baikal region that is officially licensed to mine and trade in nephrite.

Faced with seemingly endless demand on the Chinese market, Sunshine's profits and the scale of mining in Mawut region have increase exponentially. Although this may have insulated the economy of Mawut district from the global financial crisis, it did not protect Mawut from the measures put in place by Russian authorities in response to the crisis. As Russian immigration policy changed, most of the recent Chinese immigrants who had come to Baikal region as traders or workers were forced to return to China and, as a result, businesses based on their cheap labour closed. Only those newcomers who had married local women were able to stay.

Mawut district has a long history of such influxes and expulsions of Chinese people. Although Chinese, Russians, and Evenki have co-existed on the taiga for centuries, the Chinese in this part of Russia have historically occupied a semi-legal position in the eyes of the state. First attracted by gold deposits in this area, Chinese miners extracted gold and took it over the border to sell illegally on the Chinese market. Many Chinese were unable to return to China after the border was closed in the 1930s. These 'local Chinese' spent the rest of their lives in the region and continued to occupy a semi-legal position and involvement in the black market. Having come as gold miners and traders, they quickly adapted their talents to the new economy and either became workers in the new Soviet mining industry, supplied local hunters with food and ammunition, cultivated opium,

or illegally harboured international currency. Their children and grandchildren became Soviet citizens and when the Soviet Union collapsed the next generation adjusted accordingly, setting up businesses in the newly privatised mining industry and as traders.

After the fall of the Soviet Union, local Chinese organised small mining *artels*,¹ which survived the 2008 global financial crisis because their size and the fact that they were unlicensed allowed them to remain free from debt. They also sold gold directly on the black market to Chinese buyers who bought it at the market price rather than at the fixed state price. Local Chinese were the first to establish business partnerships with newly arrived Chinese in the 1990s partly because of their common roots and these Chinese traders remain the primary buyers of fur, musk and illegally panned gold. These are an important source of profit for local people, especially Evenki and local Chinese.

Having been trading partners for over 150 years, the Evenki and Chinese have developed a particular form of relationship that is always fraught. Although it ensures the autonomy of both sides, the success of any trade relationship cannot be taken for granted. In this chapter we describe incidents of successful and unsuccessful collaboration between Evenki and Chinese people to examine the ethos of the local Chinese and show why certain interactions ultimately failed and some of them proved to be much more resilient.

Local Chinese Ethos

If the present generation has inherited the wheeler-dealer skills of its forebears, it is in part because these 'local Chinese' have developed a particular ethos: that of perpetual outsiders who must work hard to maintain their hard-won independence. The three local Chinese protagonists of this chapter, Liuvej, Vankuj and Sasha, occupy very different walks of life but they share a common ethos that has emerged out of the ambiguous position that Chinese people hold in Baikal region. This local Chinese ethos presents itself as a series of strategies to retain one's material independence from others. It is characterised by a preference for interactions in the short-term that prevents the accrual of commitments in the

¹ An *artel'* is a form of organising seasonal enterprise – fishing, gold mining, hunting and such like – in Russia that has existed in this region for over 200 years. Members of an *artel'* use their own tools and supplies and divide their profits equally.

long-term. Relationships with local Chinese can therefore be both pleasant and frustrating for Evenki but are equally compatible with the Evenki ethos, which values emotional autonomy over material autonomy. Local Chinese ethos therefore fits a special niche within the local ecology of ethos.

The Chinese who live in Mawut district are both local and foreign. They are almost entirely integrated into the local population, they work, and have friendships with other locals, but their different origin is evident in their family names and, as we shall describe, in their ethos. This double position affects how local Chinese relate to non-Chinese. In this section, we discuss the ambivalent relationship that the local Chinese entertain with non-Chinese by looking at the kinds of reciprocity in which parties to the relationship engage. If we take as a starting point Marshall Sahlins's (1972) distinction between different kinds of reciprocity and his implicit argument that social distance determines the character of reciprocity between actors, then by examining the kinds of reciprocity that the local Chinese – as simultaneously local and foreign – have established with other locals we can gain a sense of the social distance that obtains between them.

We witnessed two situations of exchange between local Chinese and Evenki on the basis of their close relationship. As this exchange was between intimates – former classmates and partners respectively – these might be expected to occur within the frame of generalised reciprocity according to which exchange partners share unconditionally. However, in each case we observed that the frame of interaction was switched. An instance of generalised reciprocity (sharing) was interpreted as one of balanced reciprocity (*quid pro quo*) or even 'negative' reciprocity (theft). In contrast with Sahlins's understanding that reciprocity is a function of social distance, we found that this switching between different kinds of reciprocity did not affect the social distance between the local Chinese and Evenki partners to these relationships.

Liuvej: Business and Friendship Between Local Chinese and Evenki

Oksana and Petya lived on the bank of the River Ilatala in Mawut district. They herded reindeer and hunted and when we first met them they had recently tried to supplement their livelihood by panning for gold in the river. They worked for two weeks and found several grams of gold. This was an illegal activity and they had to find someone with connections to the

black market whom they could trust to sell it. They decided to turn to Liuvej, a local Chinese classmate of Oksana's from her time at boarding school. Liuvej owned a small gold-mining *artel'* with connections to gold merchants in China. He was happy to accept the gold, but as he was not a trader, he did not pay Oksana and Petya for it. They were disappointed and felt that he was cheating them so they tried to obtain something else for the gold. Liuvej agreed to bring them from the village to their winter camp by car "for free". It was just before New Year, and at this time of year the snows meant that the camp was all but inaccessible except by vehicle. They travelled seventy kilometres through the taiga to their summer camp but Liuvej's car could not make the final section of the route and Liuvej accompanied them on foot for the last eight kilometres up the mountain to the winter camp. Oksana and Petya gave Liuvej several wild reindeer carcasses as a friendly gesture and brought them back down to the summer camp using reindeer. Liuvej promised to return in early spring to take Oksana's parents to the village for an annual medical examination. They arranged to meet at the summer camp, which would still be accessible by vehicle.

In March, several weeks before their appointed meeting, Petya and Oksana prepared meat to pay for the transport. They brought several more wild deer carcasses to the summer camp and left them there, but they did not return to the rendezvous at the appointed time. Liuvej, on the other hand, arrived at the camp with a bottle of vodka for Oksana and Petya. He waited for them overnight and when they did not appear the next day he took the meat as payment for his time and petrol, left the bottle of vodka and drove back to the village. Petya came several days later to see if Liuvej had arrived, found the bottle of vodka, drank it alone, and returned the next day to Oksana and her parents bringing the news that Liuvej had already gone. The family then travelled to the summer camp and waited for Liuvej, whom they somehow expected would return. Two weeks passed and when no one came they were very disappointed and accused Liuvej of being a thief. At this time we arrived at the summer camp and Oksana's parents used the horses we had hired to travel to the village for their medical examination. We expected the Evenki to cause a scandal when they met Liuvej in the village but they did not mention the incident at all. Despite their bitter censuring, they did not broach the situation with Liuvej but instead waited for his help the next time they needed to go to the village.

At first we could not understand why the Evenki complained about Liuvej's behaviour whilst at the same time initiating a new cycle of

exchange with him. It is clear that Sahlins's model would be difficult to apply to this case: we witnessed generalised, balanced, and negative reciprocity at various moments and they did not involve a change in the status of either party to the relationship. In other words, although the type of reciprocity changed this did not affect Oksana, Petya and Liuvej's relationship; their social distance remained unchanged.

The situation we have recounted above parallels that discussed by Alberto Corsín Jiménez and Rane Willerslev in their study of the relationship between Yukaghir hunters (another hunter-gatherer group indigenous to Siberia) and their suppliers in which they also find that reciprocity among hunters differs substantially from Sahlins's model (Corsín Jiménez & Willerslev 2007). Among the Yukaghir, elk meat and sable pelts are distributed in separate spheres of exchange. Elk meat is usually shared unconditionally between members of the same community and as such is part of an affective realm of friendship and kinship (generalised reciprocity). On the other hand, sable is a tradable commodity without the same affective connotations as elk meat. It can be exchanged for other goods and implies no commitments beyond the obligation to complete the exchange (balanced reciprocity). As Yukaghir hunters often take hunting supplies in advance and because there is a risk that they might not be able to repay this advance with sable pelts, they are obliged to give elk meat to the suppliers throughout the season. While the Yukaghir hunters accede to these demands for elk meat, they nevertheless mark a difference in the status of the supplier according to the kind of exchange that they have initiated with him. When they exchange elk meat for provisions, the Yukaghir will refer to the supplying partner as a sponsor or *khozyain* (Russian, 'master'). But when they have exchanged pelts for provisions they will refer to him as *brat* (Russian, 'brother') to indicate that they have a more equal relationship to him than with a *khozyain*.

Corsín Jiménez and Willerslev's case-study is a good example of the ways in which parties may set the frames of a relationship, switching between affective ties and impersonal exchange as necessary. It is possible to observe the same behaviour among Evenki and local Chinese, but with a few crucial differences. Local Chinese are simultaneously locals and outsiders, and this enables both local Chinese and Evenki to switch the frame of interaction according to the situation. In the above case, the two Evenki switched between considering Liuvej as an intimate – a classmate and friend – and an outsider, a business partner. The possibility of switching between these two identities is what enabled the contradictory forms of reciprocity that Oksana and Petya tried to establish between themselves

and Liuvej. This switching between disinterested friendship and business-oriented behaviour produces a double bind that is at the core of the Evenki-Chinese long-term relationship. The contradictory efforts to make a profit from friendship and to remain friends after unsatisfying business interactions creates a relationship that continues because both sides are dissatisfied – Oksana and Petya because they have not got what they wanted, Liuvej because he has been slandered yet remains obliged to them – and seek further mutual contact. Oksana and Petya's relationship to Liuvej continues because unsuccessful deals create, rather than terminate, the potential for further interactions.²

Sociality between Evenki and local Chinese is based on this continual and paradoxical flow of expectations, interactions and disappointments that provoke new expectations. If we take the relationship between Evenki and local Chinese as a system of interaction then we need to demonstrate how it is maintained and why it does not just disintegrate. What are the self-corrective circuits through which this system regulates itself? If, as Gregory Bateson argues, paradox is always present in self-corrective circuits (Bateson 1979: 58–59), then we can see that the possibility of self-correction in this case lies in the contradictory identities of the local Chinese.

According to Bateson, paradox occurs when one cannot discriminate between contradictory information of two different logical levels (Bateson 1979: 116). A double bind is a form of paradox in which messages and metamessages act to reclassify and contradict each other. On the basis of this understanding, we shall treat Oksana, Petya and Liuvej's story as paradigmatic of the Evenki-Chinese system of interaction and recount it in a cybernetic way. By looking at the system diachronically it is possible to see how the paradoxes present in it at any one moment are resolved in subsequent interactions and produce an ultimately self-corrective system (*ibid.* 125).

Oksana and Petya chose to give their gold to Liuvej on the basis of their friendship. This happened in the village where they were drinking together as old friends. Liuvej seems not to have interpreted this act as a deal, and consequently did not pay them for their gold. His interpretation could be based on the fact that he himself was cradling gold and knew how difficult

² This is similar to Mauss's argument that gift exchange creates relationships in the long-term because no gift can equate to, and therefore nullify, the previous one (Mauss 1954). In this case, however, it is the unsuccessfulness of the transaction that ensures that exchange is never balanced and obliges participants to continue the relationship.

it was to sell it illegally for a good price. The amount of gold that Oksana and Petya gave him could well have been less valuable than the price of such an illegal transaction. At this point, the Evenki changed their metamessage and began to interpret their relationship with Liuvej not as a friendship but as business. From this perspective their act of giving gold to Liuvej may be seen not as generalised reciprocity but as an unsuccessful instance of balanced reciprocity, which closely resembles negative reciprocity, theft. This switch in the frames of the relationship from friendship to business did not provoke a collapse in the system but instead Liuvej responded to the Evenki complaints and took them to the winter camp. This service was now "in payment" for the gold and supported the business frame in which Evenki and local Chinese are able to interact with each other. At this moment, the Evenki again switched frames, interpreted Liuvej's act as a manifestation of friendship and shared wild deer meat with him. Once again Liuvej accepted this new frame and reacted symmetrically toward the Evenki; he promised to come in early spring and take Oksana's parents to the village. But when Liuvej arrived at the appointed time the Evenki had again changed the frame. They had prepared wild meat as payment for the parents' transport and left it at the place where they planned to meet Liuvej. It was not quite clear why they did not arrive on time for the meeting, but when Liuvej once again accepted the proposed frame of payment for services and took the meat as remuneration for his time and petrol, the Evenki again switched frame and felt annoyed. This moment is structurally identical to the first situation in which the frame of reciprocity was unclear and the Evenki were offended by the fact that Liuvej did not pay for the gold. After all these misunderstandings, Oksana and Petya still expected that Liuvej would not refuse to help them in the future, even if they had called him a thief.

This story has a clear circular structure with a repeating sequence of events. Returning to Bateson, "every metacommunicative or metalinguistic message defines, either explicitly or implicitly, the set of messages about which it communicates, i.e., every metacommunicative message is or defines a psychological frame" (Bateson 1972: 188–9). Oksana and Petya created a frame of friendship by making a friendly gesture, and Liuvej accepted this frame by reacting as a friend. But then the Evenki switched the frame to business and from within this new frame, they considered his reaction to be inappropriate. Liuvej again adjusts his interpretation and acts as a business partner of the Evenki, who then behave as friends. The paradox that Oksana and Petya create by changing the frame is a double bind: no matter what Liuvej does, it will be wrong. Bateson saw this same

pattern of interaction between parent and child when the child responds to a frame proposed by the parent only to find that the parent does not accept this response, as a cause of schizophrenia (Bateson 1979: 173 et seq.). In the present case, though, the double bind intrinsic to Evenki and local Chinese friendship/business is balanced by the double bind experienced by local Chinese as local outsiders: the behaviour of the local Chinese can be interpreted as either that of a local or an outsider. Local Chinese are skilled at reacting to Evenki metamessages in a short-term perspective. They keep very short frames of interaction and avoid controversial commitments that either business or friendship would put upon them. This ability is extremely important because it permits both local Chinese and Evenki to establish flexible relationships that can switch from business partnership to friendship according to the situation.

These instances of reciprocity between Evenki and local Chinese, which can be seen as both generalised and negative, demonstrate the need to describe reciprocity not as a single act but as a process that exists through time, a self-corrective circuit in which reciprocation is only one phase. In the cases we describe, both parties were able to interpret their roles and obligations rather differently and it was this discrepancy in their interpretations of the situation that helped them to maintain and secure their good relations. The switching from one type of reciprocity to another and the attendant fluctuation in the social distance between partners stabilised their relationship.

Vankuj and Vera: Disruption of Local Chinese Ethos

The cycle of business/friendship interactions is not the only form that relationships between Evenki and local Chinese take. We observed a similar pattern between an Evenki family and a local Chinese man by the name of Vankuj who was in a relationship with one of the daughters in the family. This particular cycle ended in collapse, but it is possible that the relationship has been restored since we left the field. After Vankuj and Vera began living together, Vera's sister used her contacts to find Vankuj a seasonal job at the opencast nephrite mine, one of the best-paid jobs in the region. Despite the family's expectations, Vankuj did not give all of his salary to Vera but instead considered it to be his own and used part of it to buy alcohol. Vera then sent Vankuj to her mother's village to work at his mother-in-law's smallholding. Vankuj spent several weeks helping the family slaughter their livestock. For his labours he was given meat, which

he interpreted as payment for his work and gave to Vera as his contribution to the household. Vera thought differently. Instead of accepting it as a gift from Vankuj, she saw him as the messenger passing on meat from her parents. The next season, Vankuj ran away from the mine to celebrate Vera's birthday. Vera was not pleased and tried to send him back to work. Vankuj started to drink and insisted that he wanted to stay at home with his wife. In the end, Vankuj was dismissed from the mine for absence and Vera turned him out of her house.

This story also has a circular structure of frames that are imposed and switched by Evenki and accepted by the local Chinese respondent. Here we see that Vankuj, like Liuvej, did not simply accept the Evenki frame of interaction but also used it in the short-term to appropriate things. Like Liuvej, who accepted the gold and meat as a friendly gesture, Vankuj interpreted his salary as his own property, disregarding the fact that he received the job because he is a member of an Evenki family. He had the same attitude towards the meat he received from his mother-in-law. Meanwhile the Evenki family thought of his work as compensation for the part of his salary that he spent on alcohol and the meat as a gift to their younger daughter. The Evenki resisted Vankuj's strategy of short-term appropriation by switching from family to business relationships. Each time Vankuj responded as a husband Vera responded to him as to a waged worker, and likewise when Vankuj acted in the frame of a work transaction at the home of Vera's mother they saw him as a member of the family and did not allocate a share of meat to him personally.

The breakdown of their relationship happened after Vankuj was fired for his absence on the mine. At this point, Vankuj and Vera lost the possibility of alternating between the frames of family relationships and work, and the system collapsed. What distinguishes Vankuj's case from that of Liuvej is the degree of autonomy that each one was able to maintain. Liuvej's economic autonomy enabled him to manage his relationship with Oksana and Petya whereas Vankuj's lack of autonomy led to the collapse of his relationship with Vera.

Liuvej's independence was guaranteed by his financial investments and strategies. He led his own small gold-panning *artel'*, a business which is not as profitable as nephrite mining and therefore leads to fewer conflicts with other active businessmen in the region. His *artel'* possessed all the necessary equipment and worked deep in the taiga, far from the gaze of the authorities. As a result of this small, relatively invisible and cost-effective operation he was able to sell gold to Chinese buyers with a good profit margin.

In comparison to Liujej, Vankuj was a much more dependent figure. Not only did he have no economic autonomy, but also his alcoholism led him to spend his money on alcohol instead of investing his resources into those things that would secure his autonomy. This only deepened his dependency. Vankuj is atypical in this regard. Other local Chinese focus on building and maintaining their personal autonomy and therefore keep their relationships with locals to a short-term basis. Vankuj appropriated the resources of his Evenki family, not to become independent from them but in order to spend these resources on alcohol. He could not respond to the frames his Evenki family proposed because he had a commitment – alcoholism – that disturbed this self-correcting circuit.

It is difficult to recognise either balanced or generalised reciprocity in these cases because reciprocation occurs over time and is never acknowledged as reciprocation for the initial act. Reciprocity between Evenki and local Chinese is not determined by the social distance between givers and takers because participants manipulate the frame (and thus the implied social distance) in which these exchanges occur. Relationships work because of their ambiguity: participants can manipulate implied social distance and the concomitant expectations of each partner according to the situation.³ This form of reciprocity might be better described as a self-corrective circuit, a system that reacts to changes within the system itself. As a model, the buzzer circuit described by Bateson allows us to assemble most of the features of this system of reciprocity:

The buzzer circuit is rigged so that a current will pass around the circuit when the armature makes contact with the electrode at A. But the passage of the current activates the electromagnet that will draw the armature away, breaking the contact at A. The current will then cease to pass around the circuit, the electromagnet will become inactive, and the armature will return to make contact at A and so repeat the cycle (Bateson 1979: 62).

The same paradoxical intentions can be seen in both Liujej's and Vankuj's interactions with Evenki. The Evenki begin an interaction in one frame and the local Chinese respond accordingly. But this response provokes a switch in frame to which the local Chinese respond, thereby provoking another switch. The Evenki are therefore similar to the electromagnet in

³ This is somewhat different from Sahlins's implicit hypothesis that reciprocity acts as an indicator of social distance. This may obtain in the stable relationships that he describes – as between parents and children, neighbours, enemies, and so forth –, but not in the dynamic and processual situations that we encountered, where the aim is to manipulate the responses of partners by switching frames situationally.

the buzzer circuit: when the stream of energy switches it on, it switches the energy off, which turns the energy back on, and so on. Local Chinese resemble the armature, which does not break or restore the connection, but only reacts to the messages the electromagnet sends. Reciprocity, then, cannot merely be seen as a flow of goods – this is only one element in the process – but as a communicative system. In relationships between Evenki and local Chinese, the double position that the local Chinese seek to maintain as both locals and outsiders, depending on the context, is balanced by the Evenki strategy of continuously switching their relationship from friendship or kinship to business and back, and allows both parties to operate and retain their independence. Not only does this ensure a certain stability to the system – unless affected by outside factors which destabilise it, such as in Vankuj's case – it is also very convenient for both parties because it enables them to avoid clear patron-client relations that they might find with other partners.

In the long term, the cycles through which Evenki and local Chinese friendship/business relationships pass is what maintains them. Partners in these relationships must stay in contact and get feedback from each other to establish the basis for future common projects. Yet neither side seeks the extremes of either friendship, family, or business because, given the different ethoses of local Chinese and Evenki, a pure friendship or business interaction would immediately cause the relationship to collapse. Local Chinese seek to secure their material autonomy using the resources that Evenki can provide, such as land, access to networks, and local knowledge. If local Chinese were accepted in the frame of pure family or friendship relations they would use these connections to appropriate whatever they could and this would cause the relationship to collapse. This would amount to a situation of complementary schismogenesis in which there would be an accelerating differentiation in the position of Evenki and local Chinese. A pure business frame cannot save the parties from schismogenesis either, because the struggle for profit would lead to an instance of symmetrical schismogenesis in which both parties would compete with each other until the relationship broke down. Only perpetual and paradoxical shifts from friendship to business and vice versa save the system from collapse.

Sasha: Local Chinese in the Nephrite Trade

In the 1980s a comprehensive geological exploration of Mawut district was conducted and the first deposits of nephrite were found. In the late 1990s

locals began to collect the nephrite pebbles that they found naturally polished in mountain streams and sell them to Chinese buyers. The Evenki *obshchina* Sunshine began to mine and sell nephrite to the Chinese and became a successful enterprise. Nowadays most of Sunshine's profits come from nephrite extraction.

Local Chinese were excluded from this business because as outsiders they did not know where in the taiga nephrite was found. But when Sunshine began mining and received a license to extract white 'mutton fat' nephrite (the most precious kind) from one deposit a few local Chinese started working at Sunshine. To get to market, nephrite must be transported to China and sold to Chinese resellers. This is done through the local Chinese. In order to negotiate stable relations with Chinese buyers the Evenki need local Chinese – able to relate on equal terms with both communities – as mediators. The father-in-law of Sunshine's boss Dima was a local Chinese so Dima's wife's relatives were given jobs escorting nephrite from the mine to a warehouse in the capital of Baikal region. Chinese buyers would come to this warehouse to examine and select the nephrite and they were always escorted by these local Chinese men.

If someone with local Chinese ethos finds a suitable niche for himself he can operate very effectively and become an important figure. Because the local Chinese ethos is somewhat different from the ethoses of Buryats, Russians, and Evenki it can provide a balance between them. Over the course of our research we observed one such successful coincidence between the local Chinese ethos and that of the Evenki. This was the case of Sasha, a local Chinese who was employed by Sunshine.

Sasha was one of the longest-standing staff members at Sunshine. We first met him in 2004 and we thought for a long time that he was one of the owners of the *obshchina*. He was always abreast of every situation. When we returned in 2008 he was the only person except Dima and Ira – the Evenki bosses – whom we still knew at Sunshine. The previous heads of departments had been dismissed because most of them had been caught stealing nephrite. Sasha's duties were never quite clear to us. On the one hand, he could always be found wherever the nephrite was. On the other hand, he did not conduct inspections and was not officially responsible for guarding or transporting the nephrite. He was the only person who could make profitable contracts with non-local Chinese and he was very firm in his negotiations with them. None of the other members of Sunshine could obtain as good a price as him, in part, because nobody knew the market price for nephrite. Sunshine was absolutely dependent

on Chinese buyers because only they were interested in nephrite and only they knew the price at which they could resell it in China. Under such circumstances, Sasha's ability to advocate for Sunshine's interests was extremely valuable.

Sasha grew up in *Shangkhajka*, a formerly Chinese part of a Buryat village in Bugarikta district. In the early 1990s he moved to Mawut and started working at Sunshine, which at that time specialised in gold mining. But the newly opened Chinese market was hungry for fresh commodities and Sasha was with Sunshine when it shifted to nephrite extraction as its primary source of income. Sasha was very friendly and we had many chats with him, which we initially interpreted as the beginning of our friendship. But we were mistaken. Over the course of the following year and a half we met him occasionally and in the summer of 2009 we met approximately once a week when he was escorting nephrite from the taiga and the convoy of *vezdekhods* passed by the Evenki reindeer farm where we stayed. The farm belonged to Sunshine and the *vezdekhods* would bring building materials, petrol, and supplies of food. Every time we met Sasha we discussed the same topics as if we had never discussed them before. There was no progress in our relationship even though we had known each other for several years.



Fig. 10. Evenki driver preparing a *vezdekhod* to transport nephrite from the mine.

This situation was not unique to us. But even though none of Sunshine's workers (not even Dima) had a close relationship with Sasha, nobody had a bad word to say about him. What was very remarkable about him was his ability to avoid any kind of schismogenesis in his social relations. He did not drink, cheat, or take risks. He was the only person at Sunshine who did not drink at the funeral of Dima and Ira's mother. He was never caught stealing nephrite and never assisted anyone else to do so. Even if we suppose that Sasha was well paid by Sunshine, he could still have earned much more by selling nephrite to the Chinese. Although he was unrelated to Dima's wife he was the most trusted person to escort the nephrite along its way from the opencast mine through the capital of Baikal region to China but he never abused this position, an opportunity which none of the other members of Sunshine would have been able to resist.

Sasha's local Chinese ethos made him an irreplaceable member of Sunshine. As other local Chinese, Sasha easily resolved difficult double bind situations and was able to discriminate between contradictory messages and react only to the most salient frame. He kept his involvement with nephrite brief, only escorting it from the mine to the point of sale. Sasha avoided potential conflicts and neither made friends at work nor intervened in conflicts between other members of the *obshchina*. He limited his interactions to brief episodes so as to prevent becoming over-familiar with anyone, and to avoid accumulating any commitments. He always did as he said he would, and as a result he was very careful about making promises. Even if he was always at the centre of the action – with the nephrite – he remained an observer at Sunshine. He knew everything that was going on but did not use this information to improve his own position. Although Sasha was the only person with access to everyone on the staff, no one could use him to communicate with Dima or other senior staff members. He never connected the different contexts across which he moved. He was able to conduct successful negotiations with Chinese outside of Sunshine because he represented only the interests of the *obshchina* and did not have to mediate between Sunshine's interests and his own.

Sasha's story shows how local Chinese can adjust and find their own niche in the local ecology of ethoses. Sasha and Dima are simultaneously friends and business partners but their relations are less personal and emotional than Liuvej or Vankuj's relations with other Evenki. Even though Dima and Sasha in practice avoid personal contact, they both participate in Sunshine and their behaviour according to their different ethoses assures the success of the enterprise.

The Evolution of Local Chinese Ethos

Having discussed concrete instances of local Chinese ethos and how this enables certain relations and exchanges to occur between Evenki and Chinese, we would like to conclude by making a few observations about the historical development of this ethos. The ethos of local Chinese in Baikal region has been shaped in the course of Chinese adaptations to the local environment (understood as both social and ecological). Several accounts exist that describe the relationship between Evenki, Russian and Chinese from the beginning of the twentieth century. Most interesting is the contradictory data that anthropologists of the time gathered in Russia and Manchuria. In Russia, Chinese people were much more cautious and reserved and did not impose their cultural norms on others. Shirokogoroff writes on the subject:

It is interesting to note that the Tungus living in the Russian territory behave towards the Chinese much better than they do in the regions of Manchuria. It depends, I think, on the Chinese themselves, who do not dare to apply the same methods in business as they use in Chinese territory, for the Tungus are protected by the Russian authorities (Shirokogoroff 1929: 103).

We also have accounts that the first interactions between Evenki and Chinese were full of distrust and oriented to very short-term transactions:

The differences between the Tungus and the Chinese references to customs, language, and general attitude were so great that the Tungus have always refused any contact with them. [...] Owing to the differences in their attitude, the Tungus, who enter into contact with the Chinese do not allow them any shifts or deceptions, but adopt the principle that nothing be done for a Chinese without payment or other compensation (ibid. 101, 103).

It is clear from these accounts that the Chinese who remained in the taiga following the closure of the border had to develop better relations with the region's other inhabitants. The pattern of behaviour that we call the local Chinese ethos was the result of such adaptations of Chinese ethos to these changing circumstances.

The first local Chinese were single men who were suddenly cut off from their trading networks abroad, had no land rights, and were viewed as suspect by Soviet authorities. The only way for them to integrate was through marriage and informal partnerships with local people (*andaki*). Nevertheless, as outsiders these local Chinese were not trusted and the Evenki restricted their interactions with them to short-term exchanges (Shirokogoroff 1929; Arsenev 2004). Local Chinese had to pay attention to ensuring their independence and invested all of their energies into

building small businesses and developing social networks, local knowledge, and skills. As a result, only the cultural knowledge and skills applicable to their situation were actualised by the local Chinese: they farmed and planted vegetables to supply themselves with food, they made and sold bricks to locals, they established an independent – and illegal – trading network, and they made use of their traditional knowledge in medicine.

The socialisation of subsequent generations of Chinese was rather peculiar. Young local Chinese experienced only those aspects of Chinese culture that were actualised in these circumstances, foremost of which was their fathers' concern to support their autonomy. From a very early age these children observed their fathers trading with Evenki and Russians, and learned to participate in short-term interactions and maintain a balance between controversial commitments by creating short-term interactions within a long-term perspective. A fragmented form of Chinese culture thus became a basic matrix for the evolution of local Chinese ethos. This fragmentary culture was exclusively male. As all the initial local Chinese immigrants were male their female children had no pattern of behaviour to follow other than that of their Russian, Evenki, or Buryat mothers. Female descendants of local Chinese often repeat the trajectories of their mothers and become intermediaries between Chinese relatives and local people through intermarriage.

In the taiga, autonomy is a primary condition for survival. There are no roads, very few communication networks, and money plays only secondary role. Both Evenki and local Chinese seek to maintain their autonomy, but their conception of it is qualitatively different in each case. Whereas the Evenki seek emotional autonomy – manifested in the feeling of being *manakan* –, the local Chinese strive to maintain their economic autonomy – they work with each other in small *artel's* and seek to avoid any forms of dependency.

The enactment of this ethos – as with any process of adaptation – is not always successful. Pathologies can emerge in the course of interaction with the environment. Among the local Chinese, alcoholism emerges as a pathology because it provides an illusion of autonomy whilst fostering dependency and inhibiting the practical activities that would ensure autonomy for a local Chinese person. Instead of securing the material foundations for his autonomy, Vankuj was compelled to spend his money on vodka. This addiction – even if it helped him to gain a feeling of autonomy – undermined his actual economic autonomy. This is quite different from the role that alcohol plays in relation to the

Evenki ethos. The Evenki use of alcohol affords a feeling of autonomy but does not conflict with a need to build the infrastructure that would ensure economic autonomy. Unlike for the local Chinese, even if alcohol damages the health of the Evenki, it does not destroy their ethos.

Epilogue: The Failure of the Chinese Brick Factory

In describing the relationships between Evenki and local Chinese we have not yet mentioned the discrepancy that exists between the long-term frame of relations which Evenki attempt to engender and the short-term frames of exchanges in which local Chinese operate. This discrepancy creates an opportunity for flexibility in the mode of relationship, from friendship to business and back, but, as in the case below, if partners to an exchange wish to build a long-term relationship, the discrepancy in ethos can lead to deep misunderstandings and disappointment.

As we have already discussed, Sunshine is dependent on Chinese because it cannot sell nephrite to anyone else. This is not a satisfying situation for the Evenki bosses of Sunshine, who have invested money in various other enterprises to try to break their dependence on the nephrite market. Most of these investments were only successful in the short-term. Intent on diversifying into regional construction, Sunshine bought the equipment to make a brick factory from China and hired Chinese migrants to work there. But the equipment was of poor quality and in three years the brick factory had closed. Sunshine recouped the money it had spent on equipment but did not make a profit. Dima's hopes to establish a business that was independent from the Chinese and would be profitable in the long-term were dashed. The Chinese equipment was produced for short-term exploitation, and was not of sufficient quality to develop production in the long-term. Sunshine was trapped in the Chinese short-term framing of relationships and could not find an alternative partner, despite making efforts to do so (Sunshine bought very effective mining equipment from Sweden but it was impossible to service or get replacement parts).

Sunshine, like other big enterprises in the region, is inextricably dependent on the Chinese market. In this context local Chinese people living in the region play an important role because of their ability to mediate between Evenki and Chinese partners in business transactions. The recent interest of Russian authorities in the nephrite business will only increase

the influence of China because Russian bureaucrats and businessmen who come to Baikal region for easy profits will be involved in short-term relationships with Chinese traders. Chinese capital will dominate and incoming businessmen from Moscow will be as dependent on the Chinese market as Sunshine is now.

CHAPTER SEVEN

EVENKI LAND AND WALKING MIND

When walking on our own from Irgichi's winter camp, we saw some Russian tourists approach a group of fishermen on the River Alama and ask them where the road across the river led. One of the fishermen looked over to our side of the river and with a gesture towards the forest said "Oh, that is Evenki land!". This term, 'Evenki land', echoes our own experience of living in an environment in which the Evenki way of being was the dominant one. We felt that the whole landscape was adjusted to the Evenki ethos. We take our sense of Evenki land to be a geographical component of the 'walking mind', a pattern which connects all the distinct experiences of companionship, *pokazukha*, *manakan*, *andaki*, hunting, and culture contact that we describe in this book. This chapter is our attempt to describe this pattern which connects, and how it connects the elements of Evenki land.

We consider Evenki land to be an open system that evolves and retains its stability as a result of communication between the elements of this system. We use two approaches to describe and analyse this open system.

First, we describe the pattern which connects in its various instances. As we discuss below, walking was the generic principle that connected the components of Evenki land. We accordingly examine instances of Evenki walking; how Irgichi walks, how children learn to walk, how Evenki walk with dog, how the Evenki experience walking, and how in Evenki epistemology creatures only become persons through walking.

The second strategy that we employ is to attempt to visualise the relationships between the elements of Evenki land and to identify the rhythms whereby the system tends to self-correction. We use maps to compare the two Evenki communities in which we did fieldwork according to their topography, infrastructure, routes of movement, locations of companionship and *pokazukha* experiences, and the movement of children and dogs. This comparison permits us to consider Evenki land at a higher level of abstraction than in the first section, and to examine the difference that helps us to understand the way walking mind adapts to such factors as distance, transportation, population density, involvement of the region in market economy, and so forth.

In the conclusion of this chapter we reintegrate these two attempts at describing the system and elaborate on the idea of landscape as the environment in which the walking mind develops itself.

I. *Walking Mind: The Pattern which Connects*

Anthropologists of landscape have made important contributions to the cross-cultural understanding of the relationship between people and their habitats. Collectively these studies have revealed that landscape is itself a cultural process (Hirsch & O'Hanlon 1995). This insight is valuable in that it allows us to include environmental factors as important variables in the study of cultural processes. Caroline Humphrey has studied how prelinguistic categories that develop in a child before it learns to articulate its experiences in words later become core sources of numinous experience in rituals. She describes how during rituals the Daur of Inner Mongolia re-experience the categories of sky and mountains not only symbolically but also physically. This conjunction of the mental and the physical inspires a specific attitude that makes a person not only see the landscape, but also feel it (Humphrey 1996: 84–89).

Feelings about the environment are embedded in the socialisation process. Children learn to see not just objects, but the possibilities associated with them. In North American culture, for instance, children learn to see things as either possessables or possessives (Sacks 1992: 605–609). This distinction is naturalised and is even used in professional spheres, as when policemen distinguish between parked and abandoned cars (ibid.). Different cultural landscapes are the result of different practices and the kinds of possibility associated with these practices. Our vision of and feelings towards landscapes are the product of our awareness of the salient relationships between objects. The Evenki landscape is no exception to this rule and several researchers have demonstrated the relationship between Evenki practices and their experience of landscape.

Heonik Kwon has studied the experience of landscape among Orochon reindeer herders, a Manchu-Tungus people culturally similar to the Evenki. For these reindeer herders, the crucial distinction that affects their actions is that between wild and domestic reindeer (Kwon 1992). This distinction is never clear-cut; any reindeer might possess attributes of both domesticity and wildness. According to Kwon, a herder's recognition of reindeer as either domestic or wild determines whether the landscape itself is perceived as domestic, wild, or intermediate. The wild and domestic aspects

of the reindeer landscape need always to be kept in balance and contact between wild and domestic reindeer should be kept to a minimum, although it is impossible to exclude it entirely.

As Kwon describes, such narratives about the landscape are embodied in the cognitive maps of individual persons. These maps may contain landmarks of natural or human origin and be layered by one's historical awareness or the memory of past activities such as intensive logging of the taiga during Soviet times. They may also contain spiritual landmarks: sacred places for rituals, hunting in the forest, and such like. Cognitive maps, however, are repositories of knowledge not templates for action; they do not contain precise stipulations about how to walk in the taiga, how to avoid getting lost, or how to hunt.¹

David G. Anderson describes how the Evenki (*tundroviki* [Russian, 'people of the tundra'] in his book) first developed 'knowledge' of the land when they were sedentarised in the early Soviet period and were allotted particular territories for hunting (Anderson 2000: 147). Instead of a general relationship to the landscape, the Evenki developed specific knowledge about particular territories on the taiga. The emergence of a settled lifestyle also contributed to the rise of an Evenki nationalist movement and resulted in subsequent reforms and changes in land use.² Anderson's Evenki informants were well aware of this change and compared their confinement with the times when their grandfathers were free to roam throughout the taiga. Anderson underlines that the Evenki at that time moved in the taiga not because of hunger, as Soviet ethnographers assumed, but so as not to be hungry:

A competent *tundrovik* who could effect a proper relationship within the sentient ecology of the lower Yenisei valley would have the knowledge and indeed the entitlement to travel extensively. The taking of animals for fur or meat, as well as the taking of opportunities for trade as well as autonomy, can be considered not so much as a chance possibility, but as an imperative. Rather than interpreting an extensive land-use system as the result of a vulnerability to hunger and poverty, it is better to understand Evenki movements as being the product of a multiplicity of strategies each meaningful in its own right (ibid. 147).

¹ Willerslev also states that this narrative knowledge is not determinative of action. According to him, hunting as a practice and as a subject of narrative in storytelling exist in parallel. He posits that for the Evenki, mental navigation is not based on cognitive maps but on habits and practical attachment to the landscape (Willerslev 2007: 167).

² Gail A. Fondahl (1998) also describes how the relationship between Evenki and land has been mediated by the state.

The bond between the Evenki and their land, then, is based on maintaining abundance within the system, which in turn implies maintaining equilibrium between the *tundroviki* and their environment. Attachment to a specific territory, belonging to it as one belongs to a national territory, was a product of Tsarist and Soviet policies and does not constitute the typical Evenki way of experiencing the land. The way that Evenki orientate themselves in the taiga today is still based on the pattern described by Shirokogoroff in 1935: territory is perceived as a field of open possibilities, of potential directions always in relation to the person's location at any given moment (Shirokogoroff 1935: 66).

Although researchers have recognised the importance of mechanisms that guide the relationship between the Evenki and their environment and ensure equilibrium, it remains to be shown how these mechanisms are embedded in concrete practices.³ If in any self-corrective system (and equilibrium is the hallmark of such a system) there is a pattern that connects the behaviour of its elements and is recognisable in all parts of the system (Bateson 1979: 11), then we propose that walking constitutes this metapattern. It is through walking that mind and landscape find their unity.

Evenki Walking

Walking is a highly diverse cultural practice. Techniques of walking – the routes followed and the rhythm of movement – are particular to each culture (Ingold & Vergunst 2008). When two persons walk together they must communicate by mutually coordinating their actions and decisions. When two persons from different cultures walk together, they have to adjust to each other's rhythms, movements, and the width and speed of their pace. In so doing, each party is involved in a process of culture contact. This experience may not change the way they walk but it does give them an embodied sense that their way of walking is not universally shared.

Walking Like An Evenki. Bargai, the Ekhirit Buryat shaman who spoke to us about Evenki secrets, told us that the Evenki way of walking was a mystery to him. For Buryats, the ability to walk is less important than the ability to stand; a child becomes a person when it can stand on his own.

³ For reasons we discuss in the conclusion, certain questions – such as what provokes the decision to go hunting – may be intractable to cybernetic analysis. In any event, our observations indicate that this decision depends more on the atmosphere at camp than any calculations, strategic behaviour, or rules.

Conversely, an Evenki child becomes a person when it can walk on his own. This difference in socialisation crucially affects the way people walk. In the area where we did our fieldwork, local Evenki did not own bicycles and preferred to travel on foot. Even if they started a journey by car, they found some excuse to walk for at least part of the route. Buryats, on the other hand, preferred to ride or cycle to their destinations. Our Buryat neighbour Bayir, for instance, would always ride a horse or bicycle when going to the village. The Evenki step softly compared to Buryats, whose footsteps are easily heard in the forest. Bargai expressed his perplexity at how the Evenki managed to walk great distances with only a packhorse and not show any signs of fatigue. In contrast, Buryats would travel by horse for as long as possible and even ride into the taiga to go hunting. Footwear also differs between Evenki and Buryats. Buryats wear heavy shoes that keep their legs warm and protected. Evenki prefer light and flexible shoes in which they can easily feel the surface of the ground. Evenki often travel with several pairs of shoes, each designed for a different terrain.

Despite having hunted and spent a great deal of time with Evenki in his youth, Bargai never learned to walk like an Evenki. The Evenki would try to explain it to him verbally, but they also told him that if he were born Evenki he would know it all already. In their willingness to explain how to walk, the Evenki appear open to outsiders, but in reality such explanations enable the Evenki to not teach their way of walking to an outsider. One cannot learn through words what is only learned through practice. Bargai could marvel at, but never attain, the Evenki way of walking.

We also tried and failed to learn this embodied knowledge. After inspecting recordings that we made of Irgichi walking through the taiga, we noticed several features of Evenki walking. Irgichi followed an animal's trail as if it were a tunnel through the thicket. In his right hand he carried a stick that he used to balance and propel himself through the taiga, like a punter with his pole. When branches obstructed his path, he would transfer the stick to his left hand and snap the branch with his right hand, thus always maintaining four points of balance. His pace was so light that only the cracking of twigs and branches marked the rhythm of his movement. These trails of broken branches would prove useful in winter when the ground is covered in snow. Irgichi told us how important it is to clear paths for future luck in hunting; animals also prefer to use clear paths, which means more prey for the hunter.

Irgichi moved smoothly by keeping his balance and coordinating his actions in a way that involved all of his muscles. This kind of walking is



Fig. 1. Stills from video footage of Irgichi walking (note the breaking of twigs with his right hand).

similar to Nordic walking but in Irgichi's case, even at seventy years old, his movements were more balanced and light. He wore rubber boots through which he could feel the ground over which he passed. When we left the forest and walked along the old service road built for the construction of Baikal-Amur Mainline (BAM) railway, Irgichi found the metalled surface of the road uncomfortable and walked through the bushes and grass alongside it. Feeling the path with his feet meant that Irgichi's eyes were free to take in his surroundings and he was able to walk without having constantly to look at the ground in front of him.

Getting Lost. We asked Irgichi if the Evenki ever got lost in the taiga. He laughed and told us that Evenki could only become lost if they were injured and lost their minds. Even drunk people do not get lost. This ability always to find their way comes not as a result of knowing the territory over which they walk, but from the Evenki manner of walking itself. The summer before our arrival two young Evenki were hired as guides and equerries for a party of geologists. These boys were paid a good sum of money to guide the geologists through an area of the taiga far from their home. They were hired because the geologists were sure that the boys had

known the territory since their childhood, but in fact this was the first time in their lives that they had entered this territory. Their walking skills worked well, and the Russian geologists never learned of this deceit.

The egalitarian social organisation of the Evenki explains why they never lose their way in the forest. Being lost implies losing one's orientation and not being able to reconstruct one's whereabouts; it evokes fear and uncertainty. These feelings are heightened in cultures where one needs to know where one is and where one is going in order to feel comfortable. In an ideal model of egalitarian society, along with the a rather simple set of social distinctions and roles that are not supported by strict internalised rules of conduct, routine activities such as walking are not shaped by pre-existing routes and purposes. When Evenki walk somewhere they can easily change their destination or have no destination at all; they walk for fun or out of curiosity. The absence of a prescribed route means that when people walk they are free to change their route at any given moment. As they never know in advance where they will go, it is very difficult to lose their way. For Buryats, on the other hand, situations when experience does not correspond to one's aims (such as getting lost) can be rather painful. Their need to have a predetermined destination is usually so strong that if they do not know the place, they avoid it and express no desire to venture there.

The Evenki never lose their way not only because they do not have a prescribed purpose when walking but also because they never stop being involved in the actual process of walking. For the Evenki walking occurs in the moment, in frames that allow no place for thoughts unrelated to the road. Walking with Evenki can be a very pleasant experience as walking companions become fully immersed in the situation and share stories about the forest and other places. The Evenki learn from an early age to be interested in, rather than frightened by, risky situations and the possibility of exploring new territories. For them, seeking out new places offers a wonderful opportunity to experience companionship and, as a result, it is common to go somewhere just for the sake of exploration. In company or alone, a journey into unknown territory can also provide the experience of being *manakan* because even with someone else, one perceives places in a unique way.

Walking Without Purpose. During the annual ritual in which Evenki walked between secret places in the forest we observed that there was no obvious organisation of movement from one place to the next. Everyone walked separately but eventually came together at the end, like hunters and their dogs in search of prey. They would continuously make their

routes more difficult, walking around in circles, making loops, and thereby improving their chances of coming across someone or something. The way the Evenki navigate mirrors their social organisation. Individuals float freely but are eager for contact with each other; they unite for a moment but split again to continue their free movement from place to place.

The presence or absence of a concrete purpose for a trip determines the emotions of the travellers. More than once we witnessed how excited and happy Evenki were when travelling without purpose or into new places, taking risks that might alter the original purpose of the journey. Breakdowns, river crossings, drunken encounters, and so forth all liberate the traveller from the prescriptiveness of the initial purpose of a journey and allow him or her spontaneously to change the route, and combine different tasks and possible outcomes. This sense of having multiple possibilities fills the situation with joy. In contrast, having a set purpose – such as when one must return from the village to camp to take up one's household duties – spoils the pleasure of being on the road and prevents one from being fully involved in the journey. Whenever possible, Evenki avoid travelling in such conditions; they find reasons to stay in the village even if they have no place to stay and no money to spend. When they finally start their journey home, the first chance encounter will stop them in their tracks and they will accompany whomever they met back to the village. If there is no chance of escaping from a trip with a predetermined aim they will be sullen and uncommunicative, as if the existence of this concrete purpose prevents them from feeling free and accepting the pleasure of the trip.

Walking Mind

The Evenki landscape – the Evenki perception of the environment and their way of being in it – is united by a 'pattern which connects' that we refer to as the walking mind.⁴ Evenki landscape is perceived according to the possibility of companionship. Walking long distances through hazardous places unites people and creates context-specific social bonds.

⁴ The term 'mind' is taken from the work of Gregory Bateson. We use it to designate an aggregate of interacting parts that responds to information about the state of the environment and its parts and is self-corrective, either towards homeostasis or the maximisation of certain variables. The responsiveness of a self-corrective system, its capacity to distinguish information of different logical types, is the core of what Bateson terms its 'mental process'. Bateson argued that thought, evolution, ecology, life and learning are all similar in this respect (Bateson 1979: 92).

The Evenki need to maintain a rhythm between experiences of companionship and *manakan*, and the Evenki landscape provides the condition and stage for both. Evenki land lies on the periphery of hierarchical societies and thereby allows the Evenki to maintain a nomadic way of life. The nomadic and relational Evenki person needs space through which to walk, company with whom to cooperate, and moments of isolation and silence during which there are no social obligations. The Evenki landscape provides just such conditions of connection and isolation and the walking mind is the pattern which connects Evenki land and personhood.⁵

For Evenki, the ability to walk is more important to the establishment of personhood than the ability to speak and think, exchange and reciprocate, or fulfil social obligations. It divides the animate from the inanimate. From this point of view, animism is part of Evenki social organisation. All creatures have the capacity to become persons by participating in companionship, and the ability to form companionships depends on that ability to move. Walking together or meeting someone on a journey are the principal and basic modes of companionships that constitute the Evenki community. As a result, all creatures – humans, bears, dogs, even prey – are part of the Evenki community. An individual who cannot fully participate in walking is considered both lost and mad.⁶ Irgichi's wife Katya was considered to be mad and not fully a person because she could not walk long distances.⁷ Ivan and Natalya's three-year-old daughter Mira was not yet able to travel long distances and was also not considered to be a full person. On the other hand, dogs accompanying their owners on journeys were considered to be persons because they shared the experience of travelling. For Irgichi, having a dog was very important because his wife Katya could not accompany him. The bear living on the neighbouring hill that Nadya encountered several times during the spring we spent on camp was also a person whom one could occasionally meet.

⁵ Australian biologist-anthropologist Peter Dwyer described the 'Etolo-ecology' of the Etolo people in Papua New Guinea. He found that "time, place, and rain: these givens of Etolo existence were subsumed by a single word – *sege*. They were the innate, the root imperatives of the ecological and social conditions within which people were, the springboard of their intellectual explorations, aspirations, and motivations. Nor was this all. The *segesado*, the "people of time, place, and rain" – the forest spirits – were till recently just as concrete" (Dwyer 1990:13). His study is a good example of the cybernetic approach landscape.

⁶ Walking is therefore essential for an anthropologist wishing to conduct fieldwork among the Evenki.

⁷ Indeed, her supposed madness may have been the result of her inability to be a full Evenki person by walking.

From the Evenki perspective, persons seek and contact each other through walking. Hunting is a prime example of the walking mind as a pattern which connects. The mutual coordination of the actions of hunter and dog, and the ostensive communication between them is a condition of their mutual recognition as active partners and persons. When hunting, man and dog do not stay together but separate and reunite. The dog chases the prey and brings it into companionship with both dog and hunter. The prey becomes involved in the situation in the same way that *andaki* partners become involved in companionship with Evenki spouses (the wife seduces the stranger and involves him in interaction with the husband who seeks to intimidate the stranger in an attempt to neutralise the initially higher position of the newcomer). The dog helps the hunter to involve the animal in the chase by forcing the initially independent animal to coordinate its actions with the man. If the hunted animal does not respond to the hunter's provocation to engage with him, then it does not become involved in the situation as a person. It is not a concrete creature with which the hunter and the dog can communicate, but a part of the surroundings and a representative of its species. This animal is sacred.

For the Evenki, killing is an encounter between man and beast during which both show and establish their own involvement in a common situation, for example, by displaying fear. If the prey does not respond to the hunter's provocation this prevents the hunter and his dog from becoming emotionally involved in the situation. Bears usually avoid hunters and as they rarely react to provocations they are perceived as sacred. Hunters consider bear hunting to be dangerous because the bear does not fully participate in the situation. Buryat hunters hold a similar view but for different reasons. If an animal does not move before the hunter has counted to eighteen, the creature is believed to be an ancestor and killing it would bring about the death of the hunter's own child.

For the Evenki, moving, walking alone, chasing, and meeting are properties of persons who can potentially interact with each other. Hunting is a therefore a social practice and unlike the Buryat hunter, the Evenki hunter does not risk losing his sense of himself as a social and human being to the hunt. The search for prey and communication with both dog and prey occur according to the same logic as other social interactions, such as with *andaki* business partners, conjugal companionships, and the like. Unlike among Buryats, there is nothing marginal or asocial about the actions of the hunter; at no point does he lose or regain his personhood. Through walking, hunting is embedded in the very fabric of Evenki personhood.

Walking and Socialisation

During socialisation, a child becomes a person by initiating and participating in companionship. A child's first steps open up the possibility of participating in companionship and becoming a person. Children are already full Evenki persons before they start school, a fact that may explain why the Evenki have ultimately proven so resistant to cultural assimilation. On the other hand, when Evenki leave their land and move to towns in which they cannot constantly move from place to place and experience the rhythms of isolation and companionship, they lose their identity and fully accept the main elements of the surrounding culture. The only Evenki who can retain their culture in these circumstances are those who can circulate between residences, like Dima when he stays in the capital of Baikal region (discussed in chapter five). But Dima is an exception; only his wealth permits him to impose such nomadic pathways onto the infrastructure of a city. For most Evenki, walking through Evenki land and being Evenki are one and the same.

Following the migration of Irgichi's family to the summer camp, we attended a ritual during which the adults became so drunk that they were unwilling and unable to perform the required actions. Their state of *manakan* itself gave the moment a feeling of sacredness. But when they sobered up, they felt the need to do something together and decided to walk to a sacred place with the children. Volodya, a six-year-old, took the lead. He held his grandfather's hand and led him to the sacred place. For Irgichi and Ivan it was very important to emphasise that Volodya had never been to this place before and that he was led by intuition. They said that as he was born Evenki, he knew everything already and had no need of instructions. Volodya walked confidently and used his stick just like his grandfather did. The walkers were exhausted from several days of drinking, but they followed the direction indicated by Volodya along their own parallel paths. Although Irgichi said that Volodya knew the place without having been there before, the whole party moved simultaneously and we could not see if they followed Volodya or if he coordinated his movements with those of the others. Perhaps there was no actual sacred place. Nevertheless, at some point the whole party – under the guidance of Volodya – climbed a rather picturesque rock from which they obtained a panoramic view of the taiga. This was the sacred place where they conducted the ritual.

It was important for Irgichi to state that Volodya knew the place in advance, not so as to introduce magic into the situation, but rather to prevent others from trying to tell Volodya where to go. It is very important

for the Evenki that they do not explicitly direct their children, but instead ensure that they are constantly attentive to the movements of others in order that they learn where to go according to their perception of the context. As we discussed in chapter four using the example of Nadya walking with her dogs, these elements of ostensive communication are an important way in which Evenki coordinate their actions in the frames of companionship. Contextual and even embodied knowledge of where to go is connected with the unconscious process of walking itself.

The particularities of Evenki socialisation may also help to explain the difference in Evenki and Buryat behaviours when drunk. When compared across cultures, reactions to alcohol reveal distinct patterns of unconsciously produced behaviour. Different reactions to alcohol can therefore be understood as evidence of differences in socialisation. Buryats consider that the effects of alcohol on the self vary according to its provenance. Russian vodka clouds thinking and impedes coordination of movement and self control – an important precondition for acceptable behaviour. When a man seeks to hide from responsibility for his own actions, he drinks vodka. In a drunken state, he is free from responsibility and is not considered blameworthy because he is not quite a person.⁸ Buryat *togonoi* (alcohol distilled from fermented cow's milk), on the other hand, clears the mind but leaves one unable to stand straight. In such states, Buryats prefer riding horses to walking. In either case, Buryats frequently find themselves unable to walk when drunk.

In contrast, Evenki can, and frequently do, walk when drunk. Alcohol also offers them an escape from responsibility, but of a quite different kind. The availability or even the absence of alcohol provides a good reason for Evenki to ignore their household duties in order to seek it. Alcohol is a prize to be acquired and consumed. The state of drunkenness helps the Evenki to feel alive, to seek risks, to walk without concrete purpose, and to have new encounters. Evenki people can walk for tens of kilometres when drunk and not get lost. Drunkenness does not affect their navigational skills in the forest, on the river, or even driving a car at night. Alcohol does not lead to loss of self but intensifies the feeling of *manakan*. It thereby accelerates circuits of self-correction present in the Evenki

⁸ In 2000, during fieldwork among Buryats, we heard the story of several policemen that at that moment were in jail. They had raped and murdered the cleaner at the police station. They then drank so much that in court their actions were accepted as unintentional and they were given only a one year sentence. Locals said that the policemen got drunk deliberately, knowing that if they drank they would receive a more lenient sentence.

mind at all times, balancing autonomy and openness to involvement in a multiplicity of companionships.

II. *Mapping Evenki Land and Walking Mind*

In the above section, we have discussed different aspects of Evenki walking and how companionship, *manakan*, personhood, hunting, and socialisation are linked in the 'walking mind', a pattern that connects the Evenki to the open system that we call Evenki land. Having discussed the walking mind as a pattern that keeps the Evenki system together, we can now return to the problem of how this system unfolds in relation to the particular ecologies of two neighbouring areas.

Evenki land is less a fixed territory than it is an organism that makes the objects of the environment recognisable through its very activity. The Evenki wander not between geographical coordinates but between situations or events that provoke and intensify circuits of companionship and experiences of being *manakan*. It is therefore a real challenge to describe Evenki land on an ordinary map with symbols superimposed onto a continuous space. But if we inverse the main object of mapmaking – i.e. the concern with imposing fixity on space – in accordance with the logic of Evenki social organisation we can create a representation of Evenki land that also reveals important traits of the walking mind. The task is easier than it seems; the network of paths covering Evenki land, for instance, is analogous to the switches – *manakan* experiences during walking – from one companionship to another. Mapping Evenki land according to the logic of walking mind can help us to find other such connections between place and social interaction.

In the following section, we present and discuss maps pertaining to the two neighbouring areas in which we did fieldwork. Although they may be distantly related, the Evenki living in these two places do not have strong relationships with each other. The regions are separated by a high mountain range, which means that people wishing to go from one region to the other must travel by bus via the city. In constructing these maps, we focused on the activities and life circumstances of two Evenki families living in the taiga.

The first district we discuss, Bugarikta, is that of Irgichi and his family (who feature prominently in the first part of this book). It is characterised by patches of flat grassland surrounded by taiga forests and transected by numerous mountain rivers that eventually flow into the River Alama.

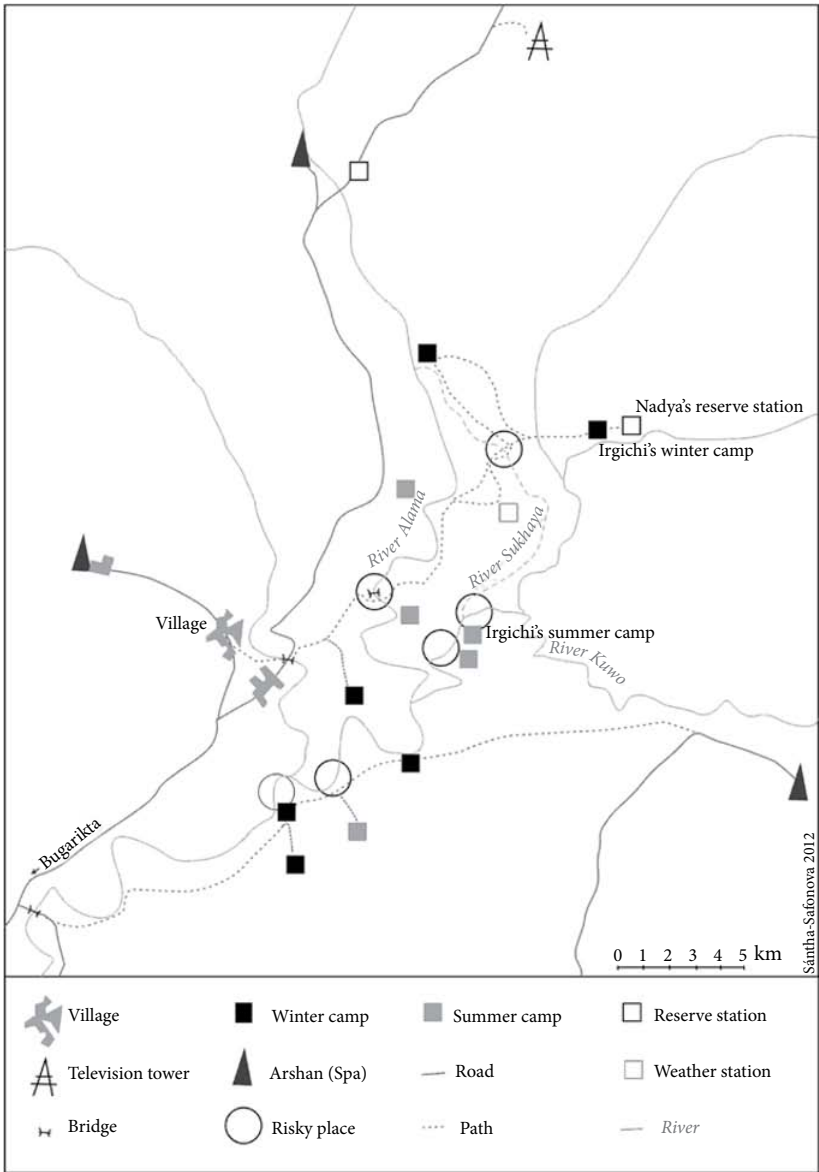
The Evenki with whom we stayed live within fifteen kilometres of the village of Ulukit – a rather undeveloped and gloomy place – and breed horses and cattle. The second district of Mawut, which features in chapters five and six, is home to Pele the reindeer herder and his family. They live more than 100 kilometres from the closest village (which is also the district centre) but their summer camp is near the track along which the *vezdekhods* (large all-terrain vehicles) run between Mawut and the nephrite mines. This area is characterised by mountainous taiga, fast-flowing rivers and treacherous roads.

Topography and Infrastructure

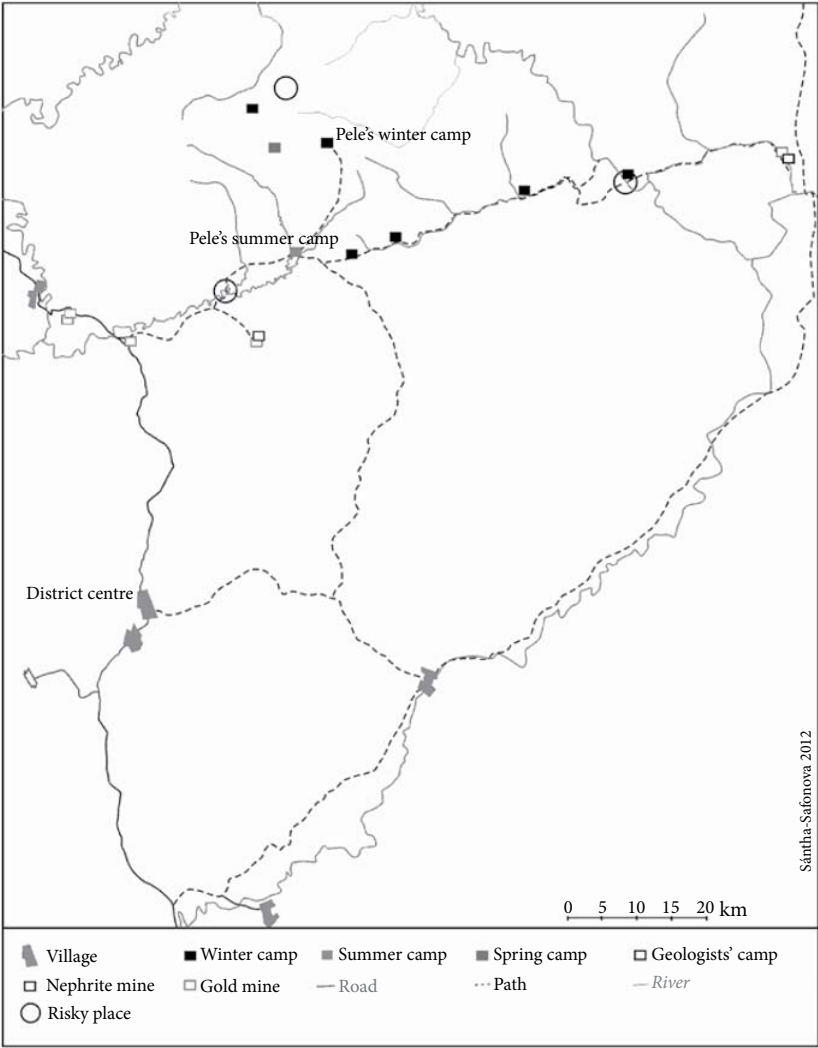
In the first set of maps (Maps 1.1 and 1.2), we depict the main roads, tracks, rivers, and summer and winter habitations to provide an overview of the environment in which Evenki live and to examine how the size of the territory affects how these landmarks relate to each other. When travelling longer distances, people must be highly independent because they deal with serious risks. During a trip that involves several days out of contact with the outside world one cannot afford to make a mistake or have an accident that cannot be resolved without help. To minimise risks one must concentrate on the journey and eschew other frames of activity, such as hunting. The greater distance between landmarks in Mawut is revealed in the greater coordination between roads and rivers and much more direct lines of communication than are found in Bugarikta.

It is also possible to detect characteristic features of Soviet-era land management from the map of Bugarikta. In Bugarikta roads were not necessarily built according to the needs of locals, but in support of state infrastructure projects. The main road in Bugarikta district was built to facilitate construction of the Baikal-Amur Mainline (BAM), the northern alternative to the Tran-Siberian Railroad, and is of little use to local people. Numerous small roads were built to help construct the BAM, but they do not connect important local features. To get from one place to another, people have to weave their way along and between existing roads. A further difficulty exists in that roads have not been built to cross rivers. As a result, although people do not have to travel such long distances as in Mawut district, their routes are necessarily much more complicated and potentially dangerous.

In Mawut district, people use the few roads in this area to plot their routes through the taiga. The infrastructure depicted in Map 1.2 shows a system of roads and rivers connected to provide routes between



Map 1.1. Topography and Infrastructure in Bugarikta.



Map 1.2. Topography and Infrastructure in Mawut.

important landmarks: villages, summer camps and nephrite deposits. This network of routes is constructed within the Evenki framework. Routes that are nowadays connected by the requirements of nephrite extraction were themselves built over paths that were previously used by Evenki reindeer herders. Groups of people travelling along these routes are autonomous and can deal with potential risks without external help.

The other important difference between these districts is the position of Evenki people and their attitude to contact with outsiders. In Bugarikta, because of the proximity of the village and the existence of numerous roads, Evenki are not cut off from the outside world and may even try to limit their contact with it. Evenki may exaggerate the complexity of travelling in this area in order to prevent the intrusion of strangers (as Nadya would do to minimise official visits). In the Mawut district, however, Evenki live far from the village and are much more restricted in their possibilities for interaction. They are keen to have contact with outsiders.

Roads and Paths

The next set of maps depicts the seasonal migration patterns and the routes people take between different sites of activity in Bugarikta and Mawut. Evenki live in places accessible to outsiders during one season but stay far from the reach of the outside world during another. Although these rhythms of communication and avoidance are common in both regions, the yearly cycle of movements in Bugarikta and Mawut are the inverse of each other. In Bugarikta they seek company in winter, in Mawut in summer.

Map 2.1 depicts the seasonal movements of Irgichi's family and other Evenki. In winter Irgichi's family stays at the winter camp, which is connected to the village by road. This road is usually unproblematic for drivers in winter due to the solidity of the ice on the rivers that cross it. During this time Evenki inhabitants go to the village at least once a week. In summer the family migrates to the summer camp, separated from the mainland by the River Kuwo, which can only be crossed by boat. Travels in summer are restricted to short trips between summer and winter camps.

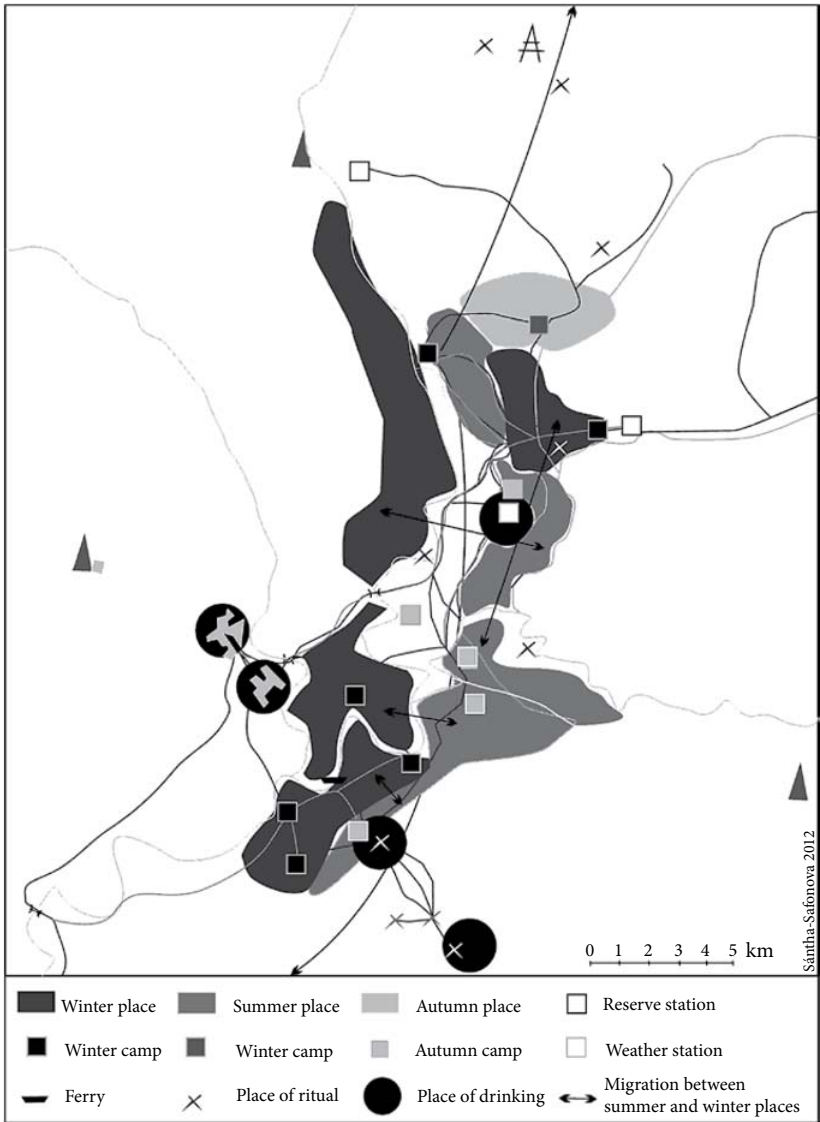
Ivan's family goes to the summer camp and tends to the cattle. Irgichi and Katya – who are both too old to travel – stay at the winter camp, which becomes a kind of the summer camp for the children of relatives living in the village. For Ivan, summer becomes a season of isolation, autonomy, and hard work in contrast to winter, which is associated with intense contact and heavy drinking.

Map 2.2 indicates the seasonal movements of Pele's family. In summer they live along the main mining route approximately midway between the district centre and the nephrite deposit. They play host to various groups travelling between the deposit and the village, mostly official brigades or poachers. The brigades bring food and other supplies, especially vodka, which the Evenki request in advance. Whereas in Bugarikta the Evenki themselves go to the village in winter, in Mawut they receive guests in summer with the same frequency, approximately once a week. This open season during which time they seek contact with strangers is unconnected to the patterns of their economic activities. Reindeer should be taken to higher altitudes in summer to avoid the heat and insects but the Evenki plan according to the calendar of outsiders, not the needs of their reindeer. In winter, when there is no nephrite extraction, they migrate to the winter camp to find lichen for the reindeer. This is ten kilometres from the main road and is still accessible by vehicle but visitors at this time of year are rare.

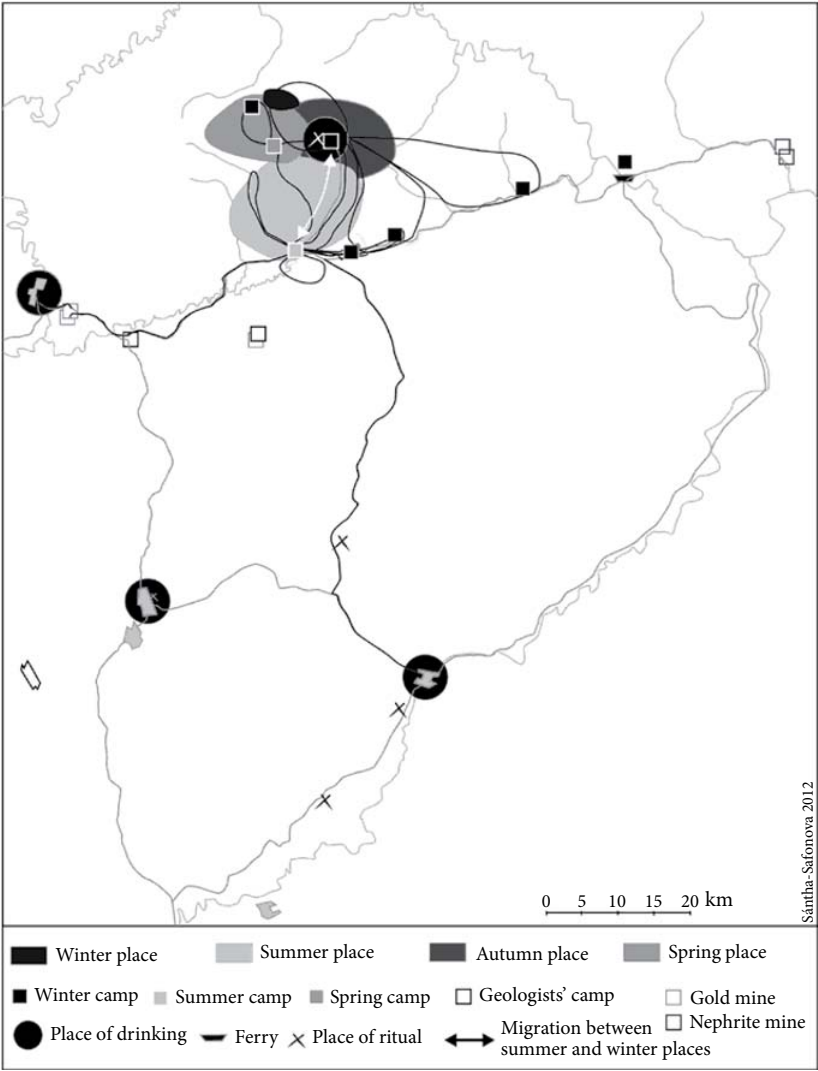
As we can see from the maps, in both cases, the season of communication for Evenki is predetermined by external factors, such as the timetable of workers or the state of the roads. This schedule is not absolute and can be manipulated at will, but in both areas these seasons last approximately seven months from October until April. In Bugarikta Irgichi's family can migrate to the summer camp later to prolong the season of leisure, or in Mawut they can move to the winter camp earlier if they are tired of intensive interaction and frequent visits by strangers. Evenki use the needs of their animals as an excuse for these manipulations, but they can easily go back on these decisions and return to the camp or unexpectedly leave it. They thus have considerable flexibility in their attempts to balance periods of solitude with periods of intense communication. These observations lead us to conclude that Evenki economic activities serve as an instrument in managing communication. Their lifestyle and calendar of migration is not in fact determined by their economic activities or traditions – whether connected with cattle breeding or reindeer herding –, but is instead a function of their communicative strategy. The success of an Evenki household is not based on the number of reindeer or cattle that it owns, but on its flexibility and ability to maintain the fragile balance between involvement in and avoidance of communication with the outer world.

Companionship and Pokazukha

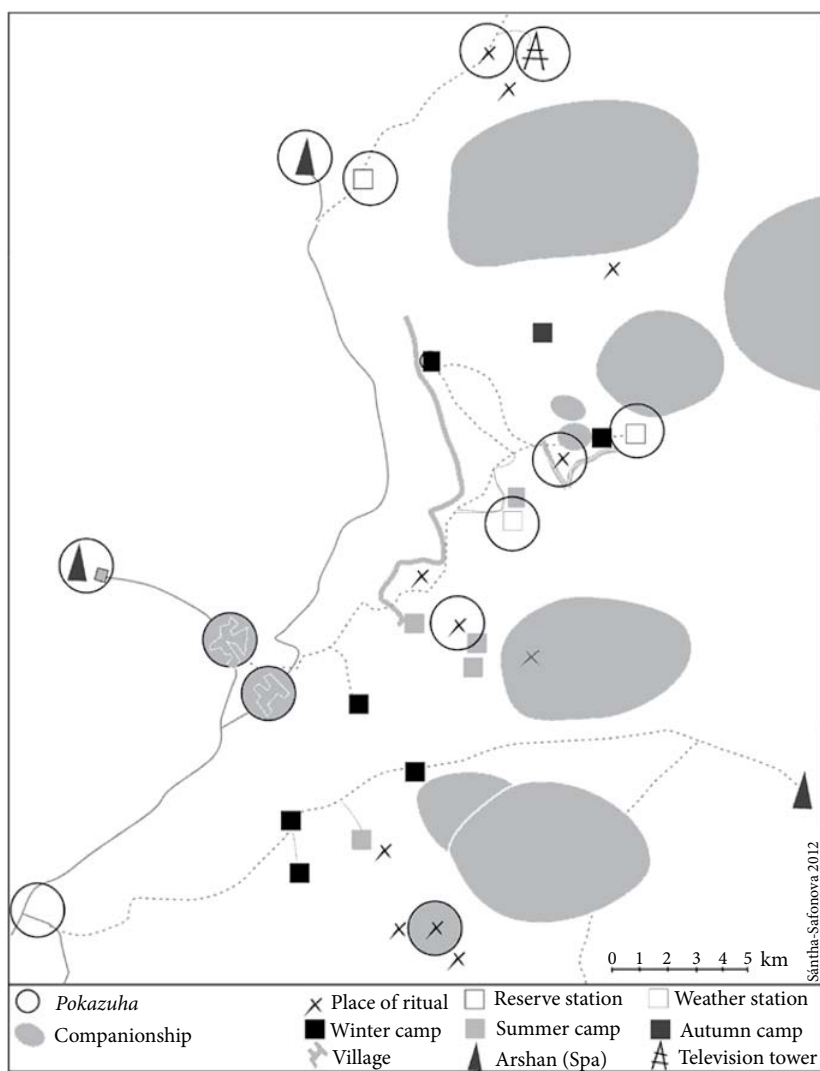
Maps 3.1 and 3.2 depict the zones in which Evenki participate in companionship and *pokazukha*, the pattern of behaviour based on appropriate



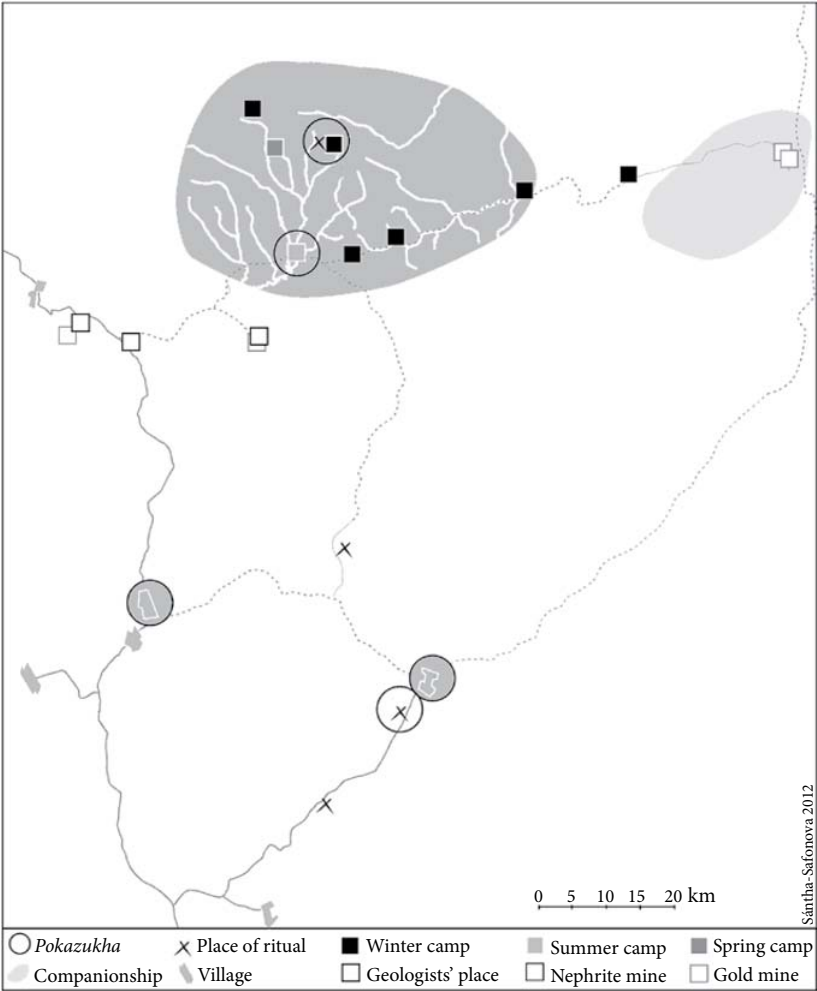
Map 2.1. Roads and Paths in Bugarikta.



Map 2.2. Roads and Paths in Mawut.



Map 3.1. Companionship and Pokazukha in Bugarikta.



Map 3.2. Companionship and Pokazukha in Mawut.

responses to outsider's expectations that we have discussed in chapters one and two. Zones of companionship differ in shape and cover a great deal of space in both regions, but they are not bound to infrastructure. In these zones Evenki can hunt, fish, travel, and perform other tasks, coordinating their activities through partnership and ostensive communication. We have placed circles on the map to indicate events and places during which Evenki cannot avoid contact with strangers or behaving according to outside expectations. It is not possible to establish companionship in places dominated by *pokazukha*. Such places include sites of interaction with local Buryats and other outsiders: the ranger station and houses that formerly belonged to the *kolkhoz*, the television tower and local spas. Outsiders can usually access these places and this precludes the ability of the Evenki to operate autonomously. In Bugarikta, *pokazukha* and companionship coexist only in the main villages. These spaces are buffer zones between the realm of outsiders and that of the Evenki and most *andaki* relationships are formed here. *Pokazukha* is always a counterpoint to the possibility of establishing companionships. Like a point on the map, *pokazukha* is not continuous and has no relationship to the world outside of its performance. On the other hand, the frontiers of the zone of companionship are not strictly delineated and are deeply connected to the overall context of landscape, routes, and time of year.

Movement of Evenki Children and Dogs

Maps 4.1 and 4.2 show the movements of Evenki children of different ages. Children stay with their mother or relatives in the village until the age of two or three. As soon as they can walk they will join their parents at the winter camp in Bugarikta or at the summer camp in Mawut, and return to the village during the season of isolation. Between the ages of three and seven, children stay with their parents in the taiga and migrate with them to summer and winter camps. From the age of seven, when children start at boarding school, their independent life begins. After that they stay at the boarding school and join their parents for the summer (but can easily leave them to visit friends or go elsewhere). Evenki children from the village follow similar patterns, they stay with their parents until the age of seven, at which time they start school and migrate to the winter camps to live with their elderly relatives during summer vacation. They follow trajectories similar to children from the town who spend their summer vacations with grandparents in the village.

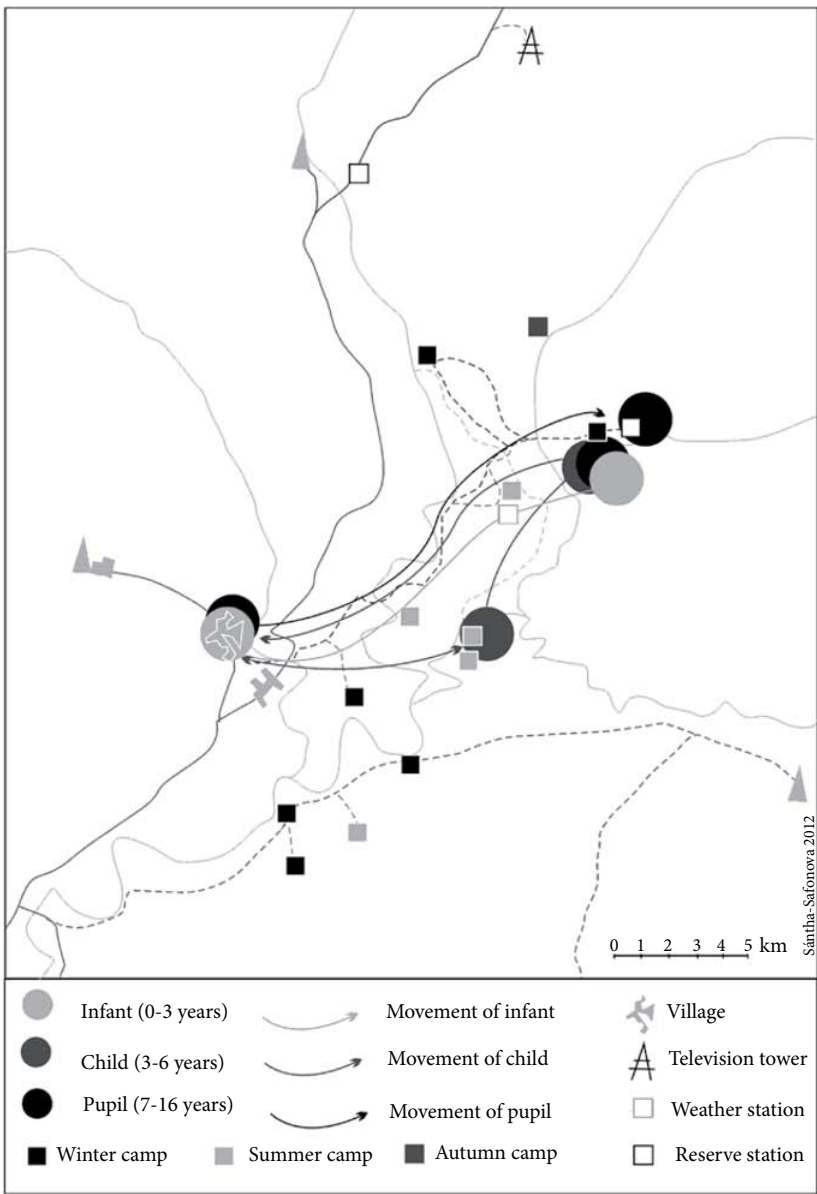
All of the Evenki families that we met have lived for different periods in the city, the village, and the taiga (in summer and winter camps). This

constant movement from early childhood is a crucial element in their nomadic socialisation. Evenki children living in the taiga experiences three distinct periods in their lives. The first period is spent in the village before the child can walk and participate with adults in its first and most important companionship, walking together. The second period occurs as soon as the child can walk with adults. The child goes to live with its parents in the taiga. During this phase the child is separated from the village and spends his or her time at the summer and winter camps learning to participate in a wide range of companionships. The child becomes an integral part of the family unit. The third phase occurs at the age of seven with the first experience of *pokazukha* at school. The child becomes relatively autonomous from his or her parents, sharing fewer and fewer companionships with them and establishing companionships with other people.

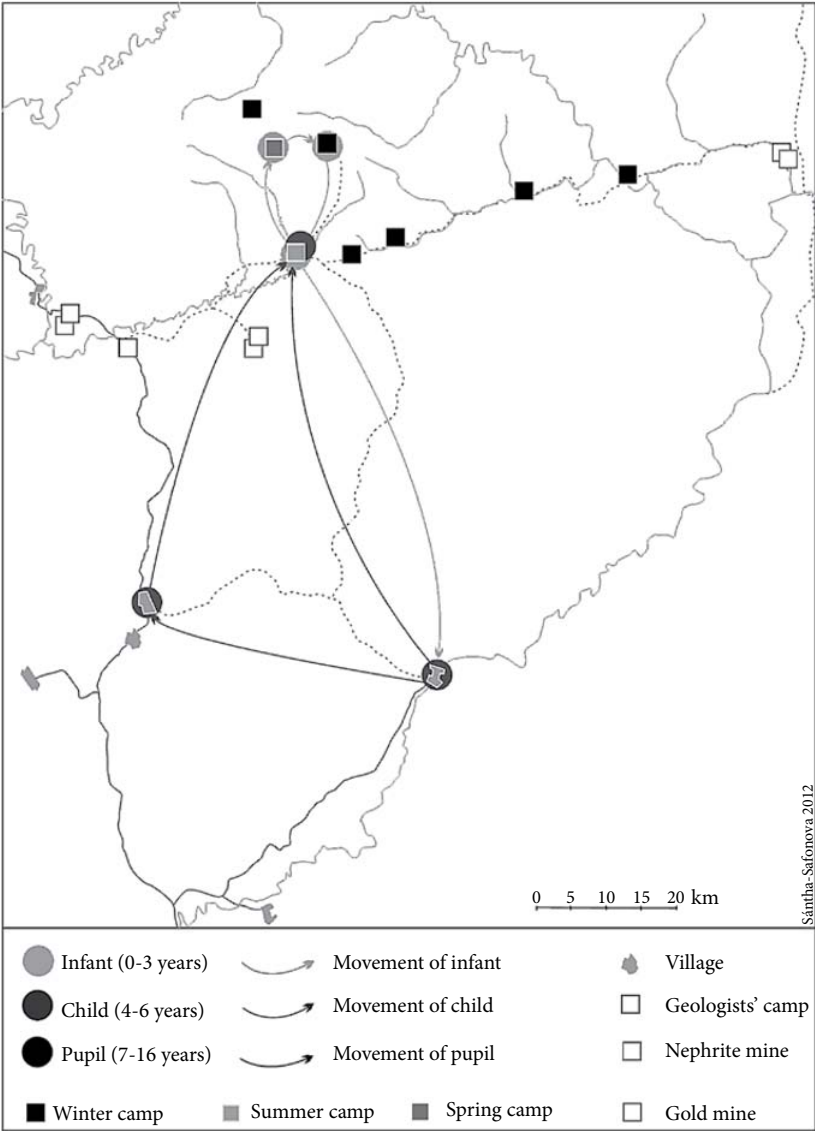
The autonomy that a child develops from the age of seven comes from the ability to walk and travel alone. This experience of autonomy – *manakan* – is crucial for the development of Evenki ethos. Landscape also plays an integral part in this ethos, because the areas through which one can walk alone determine the extent and intensity of *manakan* experiences. Evenki land in Bugarikta district is much less extensive than in Mawut and although distances can be covered much more easily, the experience of *manakan* is less intense than in Mawut, where travel from the summer camp to the village consists of several days of risky solitude.

The Evenki ethos also applies to the character of Evenki dogs, which share a great deal with their human companions. Maps 5.1 and 5.2 depict the places in which we found Evenki dogs living and the routes they took. In Bugarikta the routes of Evenki dogs are identical to the routes of Evenki children age seven and older. Here, dogs freely travel from the village to the winter camps, as the trip is neither difficult nor dangerous. Although some dogs prefer not to go to the village and wait for their human companions in the taiga, they still show traits of autonomy. In Mawut, Evenki dogs are much more like Evenki children between three and seven years old; both groups try to stay with their human companions at all times. This can be explained by the great distance between the village and the camp, which is impossible for the dog to cover alone.

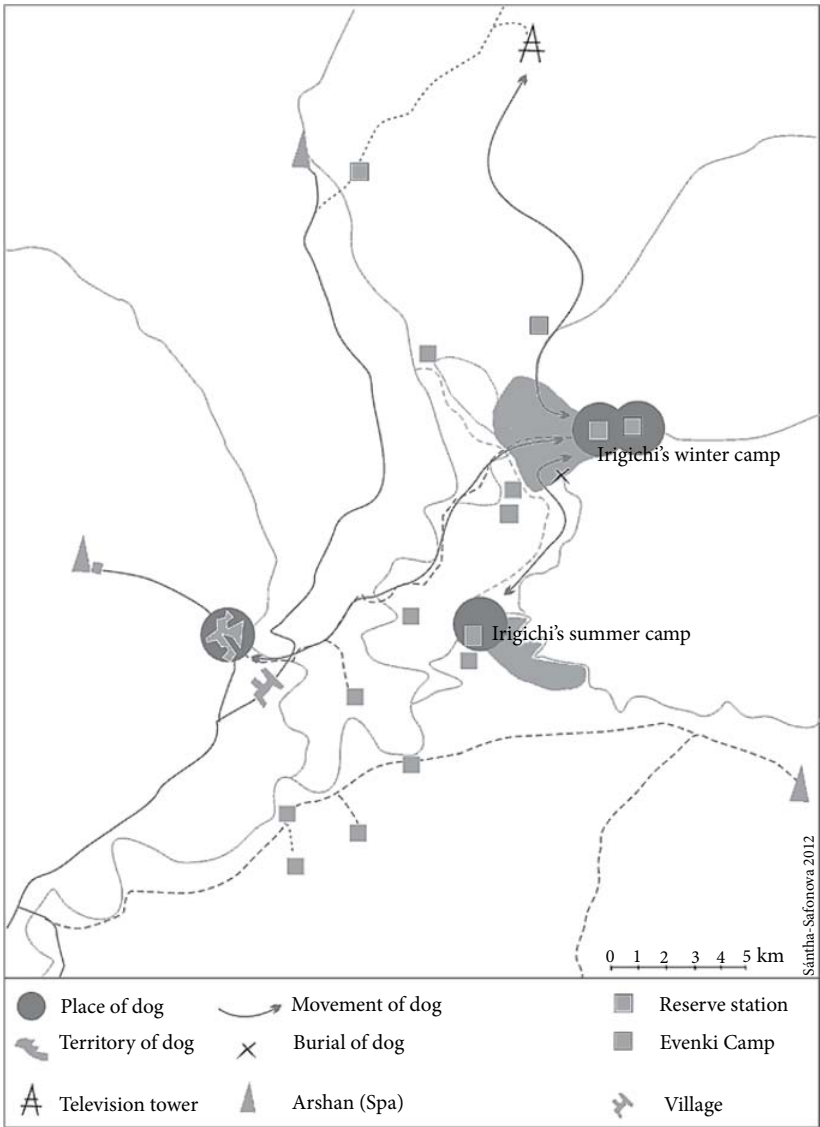
These observations highlight the difference between how Evenki from Bugarikta and Evenki from Mawut experience their initially common ethos. Evenki in Bugarikta become autonomous in their environment much earlier than their Mawut neighbours, but their experiences are less impressive. Their autonomy does not give them satisfaction and they



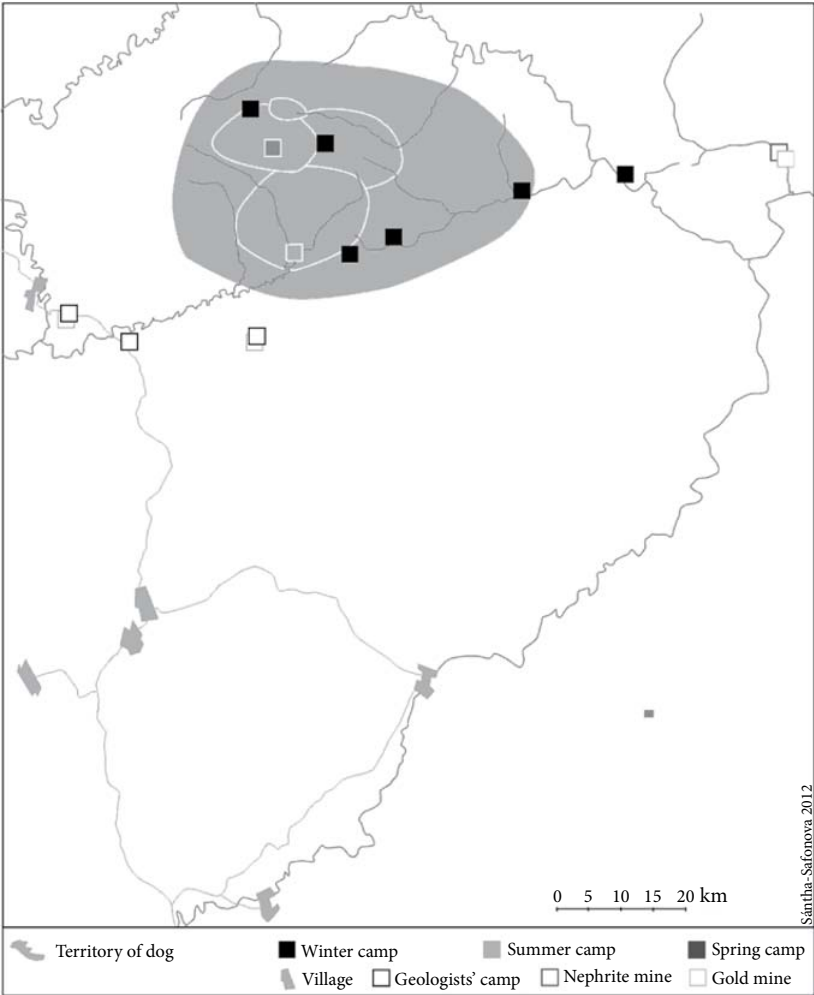
Map 4.1. Movement of Evenki Children in Bugarikta.



Map 4.2. Movement of Evenki Children in Mawut.



Map 5.1. Movement of Evenki Dogs in Bugarikta.



Map 5.2. Movement of Evenki Dogs in Mawut.

compensate for the absence of risk by drinking. In Mawut, those Evenki who remain in the village the whole year are in the same position as Evenki in Bugarikta. Those who live in the taiga, however, strive for and experience their autonomy in more challenging circumstances. This makes them less dependent on alcohol, although they can also be deeply affected by it.

If we think of Mawut and Bugarikta as having evolved self-corrective systems, we can see that these are wonderfully counterbalanced. Children's movements balance the movements of their parents. The autonomy of dogs balances the addictions of people. Spots of *pokazukha* exist with zones of companionship. The intensity of contact or solitude follows similar seasonal timeframes in both regions. The difference in distances between places affects the extent of isolation or interaction with strangers. The patterns that evolve are the same, but are adapted to the particular social and geographical landscapes within which these two groups live.

Conclusion

Walking mind and Evenki land are in continual and dynamic relationship. From the maps we discuss above, it is possible to observe how certain elements of mind change in accordance with differences in the physical properties of the land. The fundamental and mutually balancing components of this system are companionship and *manakan*, both of which are enabled by the process of walking. Incidents of companionship are separated by moments of isolation as people move to new companionships, oscillating rhythmically between experiences of autonomy and unity. Through the experience of walking between companionships (and even sometimes within highly successful companionships) the Evenki experience themselves within the landscape and feel a profound and most intimate sense of *manakan*. This circuit of self-correction holds for different Evenki communities as it is based on the same pattern that connects Evenki land as a self-corrective system. This process is as fragile as maintaining life within an organism.

Eric Hirsch and Michael O'Hanlon (1995) propose that the schemata for perception of the landscape is universal and people from all cultures distinguish between a certain number of basic variables, such as foreground and background. However, the content of this distinction, what exactly is perceived to be foreground and background, is a function of culture. This means that although the structure of perception is the same, what is actually seen depends on previous cultural experiences and

socialisation. Furthermore, we would add that the process of perception is always contextualised by the activity in which the perceiver is involved. The perceiver's primary interests and activities determine the particular objects that will be distinguished as figures against a background.

James J. Gibson, who has developed an ecological approach to perception, argues that animals (including humans) perceive substance through its various affordances (Gibson 1986).⁹ What the Evenki see, hear and feel kinaesthetically when they are walking through their land is mainly the affordance of hunting. Although they cannot practice hunting as an occupation they can still see prey or feel its presence and absence. They also feel the spirit of hunting as an ambience that, even if it does not materialise into a concrete situation of hunting, still carries this potential.

According to our observations, such openness to hunting without actually hunting plays an important role in the synchronisation of Evenki everyday life with the natural rhythms of their environment, such as when the Evenki in Bugarikta started to look for signs of bears – their footprints and claw-marks on trees – to switch to the summer regime and migrate to the summer camp (as described in chapter one). Hunting was the first thing that one of Irgichi's sons did when he visited the winter camp. He was entirely drunk but nevertheless he took a gun and went to the forest. It was clear for everybody at the winter camp that to go hunting was not an action with purpose, it was an action in and of itself that needed no articulation or explanation.

In this chapter we have shown that Evenki patterns of migration, the seasons of isolation and contact as well as the frequency of their trips and journeys, represents an adjustment of walking mind to the intensity of contacts with strangers. It is an open question whether the world of strangers that surrounds Evenki land itself constitutes a self-corrective system, or if it is instead a fragmented colony of small-scale self-corrective systems. In truth, it is unlikely that one could ever firmly state that there is a local culture that exists as an autonomous system and includes Evenki ethos as one of its elements. We were only able to see that the ethoses of the various other people we met – Buryat, Russian, local Chinese – collided with the Evenki ethos and that these contacts happened in various contexts on an almost everyday basis.

⁹ "The affordances of the environment are what it *offers* the animal, what it *provides* or *furnishes*, either for good or ill. [...] It implies the complementarity of the animal and the environment." (Gibson 1986: 127, original emphasis).

The way that Evenki behave in the world of strangers takes two main forms. They either passively agree with the expectations of strangers (perform *pokazukha*) or they form *andaki* partnerships and hunt for objects of interest to them, such as vodka. In the latter case they extend Evenki land into the world of strangers and do so within the frame of hunting. The Evenki landscape of the village in this case can be imagined as a set of obstacles and challenges that conceal interesting objects (vodka, cigarettes, sweets, flour, etc.) from the perceiver and the quest is to finally see, drink, and taste it. To find it, the Evenki walk. They walk from one house where the objects may be hidden to another and in doing so they feel as if they are in the taiga, walking from one salt marsh to another in search of the concealed prey.

Finding objects in the village takes place according to the same logic as finding prey when hunting and *andaki* partners in culture contact. The primary reason for the endurance of the Evenki in the face of the steady transformation of their land and encroachment of outsiders is the strength and versatility of the pattern that connects these elements of Evenki land. The metapattern that we have termed 'walking mind' incorporates the particular hunting ethos of the Evenki with their sense of the landscape. From this perspective the intensity and rhythms of culture contact in Evenki land – and the village is also transformed into Evenki land when the Evenki are 'hunting' there – occur within the same self-corrective circuit that regulates hunting and Evenki social life in general.

CONCLUSION

In the writing of these chapters we hit on numerous epistemological and representational problems inherent to the use of cybernetics. When working through our field materials we found ourselves unable to follow cybernetic premises in our thinking, such as when trying to discriminate between communication of different logical types or when we formulated arguments in a cybernetic way we found that they contradicted each other at particular moments. These issues have led us to question the heuristic efficacy of the cybernetic approach. To what extent can the cybernetic method produce new knowledge about socio-cultural phenomena? In this conclusion we present a critique of the cybernetic approach that is based on our practical experience of applying it. We deal with the following points: the relative involvement of groups in processes of what we term 'cybernetic wisdom', the problem of examining culture contact as a communicative process, the latent essentialism of the descriptive enterprise, and the epistemological dilemma inherent to a description of an animistic society in the terms of Western scientific discourse.

Cybernetic Wisdom

Purpose is a basic character of open systems. The whole existence of an open system is oriented towards maintaining feedback so as to achieve a given goal, be this homeostasis or the maximising of a particular element within the system. But only systems of higher types – such as organisms, cultures or ecologies – are able to change these goals. According to Anthony Wilden,

[...] since goalseeking is characteristic of any kind of feedback system, it seems clear that it is not the manifestation of goals or purposes that is specific to higher-order systems such as human beings, but rather the desire for purposefulness itself (Wilden 1972: 148).

This desire for purposefulness, the goal-centred rationality that characterises human behaviour and has hitherto ensured our evolutionary success,

is necessarily in conflict with the purpose of the system, its self-corrective adaptation in the long-term.¹

The mode of thinking which inclines us to see things instead of relations and orient ourselves to short-term results rather than long-term feedback (Bateson 1972: 426–439) is present in all cultures. Nevertheless, there are areas of human action in which purposeful thinking does not predominate and where, according to Bateson, “wisdom can be obtained” (ibid. 446). To Bateson, these areas include love and affection, art, poetry, music, the humanities, contact between man and animals and between man and the natural world, and religion. In these spheres “man must experience himself – his total self – as a cybernetic model” (Bateson 1972: 438). Bateson used the term ‘wisdom’ to indicate the “recognition of and guidance by a knowledge of the total systemic creature” (ibid. 434) – be that an individual, a culture, or an ecology – that can be gained by such intuitive practices. Because we consider that the intuitive appreciation of the wider system that corrects for the biases of purposeful consciousness is not the only form of wisdom, we propose to refer to it here as ‘cybernetic wisdom’. We follow Bateson in considering that consciousness is largely oriented towards purposeful actions but we also posit that all cultures differ according to the way in which this purposeful thinking is counterbalanced by involvement in the processes of cybernetic wisdom described above.

Indigenous thinkers such as Bargai, the Ekhirit Buryat shaman whom we encountered in earlier chapters, have their own theories of thinking and action. Bargai describes his theory in reference to his shamanic practices. The rites that he conducts can be interpreted as strategies to reduce uncertainty, formulate purposes, and prescribe actions in spheres that are normally out of human control (e.g. birth, death, and madness). But he openly accepts that his shamanic techniques are not efficacious in such spheres of human experience as love affairs, alcoholism, or drug addiction. People simply have to deal with these experiences themselves. They are spheres of intuition that counterbalance areas of purposeful thinking in Buryat culture.

Purposeful thinking is conscious and logical. It may involve different cultural instruments and repertoires of knowledge but the logic itself is explicit and can be transmitted from one culture to another. Those spheres

¹ The dominance in contemporary culture of purposeful thinking, which cannot apprehend the complexity of the whole system in which it acts, and the technological capacity that we now have to impacts environment with this purposeful thinking are, according to Bateson, the fundamental cause of our present ecological crisis (Bateson 1972: 488–493).

that are not characterised by purposefulness but by the dominance of intuition differ from culture to culture. The information that resides therein can be communicated only with great difficulty and by trying to find equivalent concepts in the other culture.² In his book *The Invention of Culture*, anthropologist Roy Wagner sheds light on the consequences of this situation for the possibility of intercultural understanding. According to Wagner, people think that they understand and exert influence on the world around them, but through a whole range of conventional controls – such as “our ‘knowledge’, our literatures of scientific and artistic achievement, our arsenal of productive technique” (Wagner 1981: 71) – actually invent the natural and phenomenal world while not recognising their own involvement in this process. Culture “provides a relativistic basis for the understanding of other people” (ibid. 35), but it is based on the creation of an illusion of the nature of those other people in situations that are misrecognised as communication.

In spite of Bargai’s experience of life with the Evenki he could not understand them. He could not integrate into his conscious understanding of the world the way that the Evenki experienced and acted when they walked in the taiga, hunted with their dogs, conducted their own shamanic rituals, or took unreasonable risks. All these were spheres of cybernetic wisdom and intuitive action, but they were perceived in the frames of Buryat culture as Evenki secrets. Following Bargai’s lead we tried to analyse them and came to the conclusion that the cybernetic methodology was fruitful in so far as it provided the conceptual tools with which to describe how Evenki – but also Buryat, Russian and Chinese – ethoses were connected to these specific spheres of intuitive behaviour. Unfortunately, we realised that the more we experienced these spheres of intuitive behaviour the less able we became to translate our embodied experience of these states into scientific discourse. We had learned in some way to be Evenki. Consequently, some of the assertions we have made about the Evenki – based on our presence in and intuitive sense of the situation – were not accepted by colleagues. They required more evidence; evidence that we were unable to translate into another sphere.

Another issue that we faced was how to determine the extent to which the Evenki could be considered more involved than their neighbours in spheres of cybernetic wisdom. It is a common idea – and one supported

² For this reason it is almost impossible to translate and retain the impressive effect of poetry.

both by our impressions and those of our Buryat informants – that the Evenki are closer to nature and much more sensitive to processes occurring in their natural environment than us and our Buryat respondents. This greater involvement in cybernetic wisdom may explain the ease with which certain anthropologists have applied cybernetics to their discussions of the Evenki and other Manchu-Tungus people (Anderson 2000; Kwon 1993). The idea that Evenki culture embraces more fields of intuitive action, such as communication with elements of the natural habitat, than other cultures might be true, but it requires further comparative research. This may not be possible, mainly because it is hard to imagine a plausible methodology by which one could compare the extent and sources of cybernetic wisdom in different cultures.

A topic that has potential to be further studied within the cybernetic approach is the remarkable tolerance for self-destruction that we noticed among Evenki and which was evidenced in their drinking, risk-taking, and the prevalence of homicide and suicide. This behaviour may have its sources in Evenki involvement in cybernetic wisdom. It may seem irrational in a short-term perspective but in the long-term it might have a corrective effect on the whole system as a way of maintaining negentropy, the degree of ordering within a self-corrective system (Wilden 1972: 209). Simply put, the casual attitude of the Evenki with regard to life may be an important factor in the balancing of the wider ecology of Evenki land.

Finally, we must discuss the various 'black boxes' that we encountered when trying to understand our field experiences through the lens of cybernetics. One such example was found in considering the Evenki synchronisation of their actions with those of a local bear, described in the first chapter. Scientists have not found the same forms of synchronisation outside of human communities (Dwyer 1990: 169). The question that emerges here is why this synchronisation appears in human societies in the first place? Ecological constraints do not provide a sufficient explanation for the tendency of people to do certain tasks simultaneously. Why did the Evenki drink after crossing the river or why did they seek contact with other people even if this contact brought them more problems than profits? It is impossible to answer these questions only in the frames of cybernetics because we cannot identify the levels at and systems within which these actions are performed (within the particular group of Evenki, within the local ecology, within the wider system of local culture contact, etc.).

Culture Contact and Non-Communication

In this book we have considered culture contact as itself a kind of synchronisation. It triggers changes within the system of Evenki sociality – regeneration of conjugal relations, new companionships, and so forth – not as result of the transfer of information but as a result of non-communication. The instances when Evenki, Buryat, Russian and local Chinese ethoses come into contact with each other resemble the ethnomethodological thought experiment in which one is asked to clap to the beat of metronome (Garfinkel and Rawls 2002: 98). To succeed, one should not be able to hear the metronome but instead make time by clapping simultaneously. If one hears the metronome, one has failed to clap in time. Culture contact is a similar process.

People synchronise with each other by coming into contact and not recognising the different position of their interlocutor. They clap in time without exchanging information, without communicating. When Buryats commissioned the high water ritual from Irgichi they did it to address their own anxieties about drought and living on Evenki land. It was important that an Evenki perform the ritual, but they did not get any experience of the Evenki way of living. The same was true for the Evenki. Irgichi obtained vodka from Buryats to experience the numinous feeling of *manakan*, but was not required to know anything of their idea of genealogy, ancestor-spirits, or *utkha*. Both groups were able to persist in their own radically different epistemologies and beliefs, and even to share in a ritual, without altering their own perspective.

The model of culture contact that we present here is quite different from that described by Bateson (1972: 61–72). Bateson's provoking essay sketched a cybernetic method by which culture contact might be studied, and posited that it could be understood as a form of communication. The culture contact that we experienced and describe in this book was a process of 'communicative non-communication' in which people communicated but did not exchange crucial information about the way in which that communication should be understood (they exchanged messages without sharing the metamessage).

This model leaves open the question of how groups "communicate with themselves" (Rappaport 1979: 192–193) during such situations of culture contact. We would have liked to explore how the Evenki communicated with themselves during culture contacts with Buryats, but it is not practically possible to discriminate the processes of communication between

people with different ethoses (culture contact) and communication between those who share the same ethos (autocommunication). This requires information of a higher logical type than is possible to discern in practice. At this point cybernetics generates a paradox that can only be resolved by labelling this phenomenon as a 'black box', which amounts to an "agreement between scientists to stop trying to explain things at a certain point" (1972: 39–40). If we assume that all processes are communicative then we cannot understand processes whereby the absence or presence of communication also operates as a message.

Essentialism

When presenting the material for this book at conferences, we frequently received cautions that our discussion of Evenki, Buryat and other ethoses verged on essentialism. We believe that this is in part because of our incapacity fully to depict the materials we collected, an incapacity that lies at the heart of the descriptive enterprise. When we describe Evenki as violent and unreasonably risk-seeking we make no assertions about the 'core' and 'stable' features of Evenki character, but about the relationship between the particular Evenki whom we met and their social and natural environment. To continually describe this in relational terms, we would have had to present detailed accounts of each aspect of the situations in which we experienced the Evenki as aggressive or courageous. We would have had to describe not only the Evenki, but also the people (and other entities) they came into contact with, and how the features we described developed in relation to these counterparts. This would lead to a never-ending train of description. Scientific description necessarily involves simplification and readability entails that we do not write constant caveats and injunctions to our readers!

The main reason, however, that we could not avoid a degree of essentialism in our work is that we the authors inhabit a world of purposeful thinking in which we naturally tend to attribute qualities to objects and subjects rather than seeing the relationships that produce them. Even if anthropological writing frequently consists in the attempt to overcome this tendency, it is almost impossible to do so in the day-to-day of participant observation and fieldwork. We naturally made false attributions and it was only during analysis that we were able to repack them and identify the particular sets of relationships that produced the characters we were describing. In such a manner, we were able to formulate our

understanding of Evenki, Buryat, Russian and Chinese ethoses, but when we tried to put our findings into the frame of scientific narrative we found ourselves falling back into essentialism. We absolutely agree with our critics at the various occasions that we have had to present our work that this is a problem that we have not managed to resolve. This is a difficult issue even for the Evenki. Alexia Bloch described how she worked with Evenki in the context of a teaching course to present a flexible image of their culture, but they failed and the presentation resulted in a description of the 'core essence' of Evenki culture. An inspired attempt to have the Evenki represent their own culture resulted in the very model of stability that she wished to avoid (Bloch 2004: 158). The only way we can resolve this problem in the present work is to ask our readers to understand that the ethoses we describe were always the result of interaction with other ethoses and should never be understood as stable and fixed objects.

Living on Evenki Land

The natural question that occurs to anthropologists during fieldwork is "who are these people?" We became troubled when completing this manuscript because we could not provide a conclusive answer to this question. Instead, we were left questioning the very term 'Evenki' that we have used so intensively throughout the text. Although the people living on the other side of the River Alama were identified by local Buryats as Evenki, these people were not interested in giving us an account of their origins or identity. They were more interested in the possibility of travelling together than in investigating genealogies or sharing traditional knowledge. The people with whom we lived were not particularly interested in associating with other Evenki on the basis of a shared identity, even if they were open to companionship with them. The absence of verbal confirmation of their Evenki-ness made understanding them on the basis of their ethnicity problematic. To resolve this problem we attempted to identify them sociologically, according to their main occupation: hunter-gatherers, former hunter-gatherers or cattle-breeders. This strategy also failed because we could not identify any one dominant occupation. These people fished, hunted, bred cattle and horses, herded reindeer, foraged and acquired in equal measure. The freedom to choose between different tasks, to avoid commitments, specialisation and dependency on one occupation was far more important than the economic profit that might come with professionalisation. As a result we freely admit that the categorisations that we

use in this book to describe the people with whom we lived are wrong. They are not Evenki, hunter-gatherers, cattle-breeders or anything of the sort; they are people who live on Evenki land.

The problems of identification that we experienced are symptomatic of an epistemological dilemma in the description of other cultures. Culture contact can be seen in different ways according to the epistemology of the perceiver. Within a totemist epistemology, it can be described as a relationship between persons of different groups each with a distinct nature. Contact between different persons may produce a structure in which relationships between these totemic groups are organised so as not to fundamentally alter the nature of these persons. Such an interpretation of culture contact would be common for representatives of hierarchical societies: Buryats, Russians, and western anthropologists.³ An Evenki interpretation would instead be based on an animist epistemology and would describe culture contact as a relationship, or companionship, which does not lead to any kind of restructuring, but to situated coordination between autonomous persons. There would be no idea of these persons representing larger groups or social entities, and no thought of distinct 'cultures' pertaining to these groups. The moment of culture contact could be seen as a moment of culture in itself, because it is the only moment when different creatures (persons, dogs, bears, prey) can express their characters in equal collaboration. According to this animistic interpretation, we did not study the culture of 'Evenki' people but we studied a situated culture that was created by contact between particular people from Evenki land and ourselves, two people who stayed on this Evenki land for some time. The unique culture that was produced between our companions and us was both flexible and stable because it was based on the accomplishment of numerous activities together. If we look at our study from such a perspective we cannot avoid turning the tables and asking who were we, the strangers that came in contact with people from the Evenki land?

³ We owe this observation to Nikolai Ssorin-Chaikov, who remarked after one of our presentations that our interpretation of relationship between Buryats and Evenki was similar to the way Buryats would understand it.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Almasy, Georg von (Álmásy, György). 1902. "Centralasien die Urheimat der Turkvölker". *Keleti Szemle* 3: 179–207. Budapest.
- . 1911. "Der Abschied des Helden manas von seinem Soshne Sémétj". *Keleti Szemle* 12: 216–23. Budapest.
- Anderson, David G. 2000. *Identity and Ecology in Arctic Siberia: The Number One Reindeer Brigade*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Anisimov, A.F. 1971. *Istoricheskie osobennosti prevobytnogo myshleniya*. Leningrad: Izdatelstvo "Nauka".
- Arsenev, V.K. / Fridtjof Nansen. 2004. *Kitajtsy v Ussurijskom krae / V stranu budushchego*. Moscow: Kraft+.
- Arsenev, V.K., and E.I. Titov. 1928. *Byt i kharakter narodnostej dal'nevostochnogo kraja*. Khabarovsk & Vladivostok.
- Artemova, O. Yu. 2004. "Hunter-Gatherer Studies in Russia and the Soviet Union". In *Hunter-Gatherers in History, Archeology and Anthropology*, edited by Alan Barnard, pp. 77–88. Oxford: Berg.
- Baráthosi Balogh, B. 1910. *Bolyongások mandsur népek között*. Budapest.
- . 1996. *Távoli utakon*. Budapest: Néprajzi Múzeum.
- Barth, Frederik. 1961. *Nomads of South Persia: The Basseri Tribe of the Khamseh Confederacy*. London: Allen & Unwin.
- Bateson, Gregory. 1958. *Naven: A Survey of the Problems Suggested by a Composite Picture of the Culture of a New Guinea Tribe Drawn from Three Points of View*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- . 1972. *Steps to an Ecology of Mind*. New York: Ballantine Books.
- . 1979. *Mind and Nature: A Necessary Unity*. New York: Dutton.
- Bateson, Gregory, and Mary C. Bateson. 1987. *Angels Fear: Towards an Epistemology of the Sacred*. New York: Macmillan.
- Bateson, Gregory, and Margaret Mead. 1942. *Balinese Character: A Photographic Analysis*. New York: New York Academy of Sciences.
- Bird-David, Nurit. 1983. "Conjugal Families and Single Persons: An Analysis of the Naiken Social System". Ph.D. diss., University of Cambridge.
- . 1991. "'Animism' Revisited: Personhood, Environment, and Relational epistemology". *Current Anthropology* 40: 67–91.
- . 1994. "Sociality and Immediacy: Or, Past and Present Conversations on Bands". *Man* (n.s.) 29: 583–603.
- Bloch, Alexia. 2004. *Red Ties and Residential Schools: Indigenous Siberians in a Post-Soviet State*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Bogoras, Waldemar (Bogoraz, Vladimir Germanovich). 1904–9. *The Chukchee*, edited by F. Boas. Memoir of the American Museum of Natural History, vol. 7. New York: American Museum of Natural History.
- Buneev, Boris (Dir.). 1981. "Zloy dukh Yambuya". USSR: Kinostudiya im. Maksima Gorkogo.
- Clastres, Pierre. 1989 [1974]. *Society Against the State: Essays in Political Anthropology*. Translated by Robert Hurely and Abe Stein. New York: Zone Books.
- Corsín Jiminéz, Alberto, and Rane Willerslev. 2007. "An Anthropological Concept of the Concept: Reversibility among the Siberian Yukaghirs". *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 13: 527–44.
- Crook, Tony. 2007. *Exchanging Skin: Anthropological Knowledge, Secrecy and Bolivip, Papua New Guinea*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Diószegi, Vilmos. 1968. "The Three-Grade Amulets among the Nanai (Golds)". In *Popular Beliefs and Folklore Tradition in Siberia*, edited by Vilmos Diószegi, pp. 387–405. Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó.
- . 1972. "Nanai Shaman Song Sung at Healing Rites". *Acta Orientalia* XXV: 115–28. Budapest.
- Durkheim, Émile. 1933. *The Division of Labor in Society*. Translated by George Simpson. New York: The Free Press.
- . 1995. *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*. Translated by Karen E. Fields. New York: The Free Press.
- Dwyer, Peter D. 1990. *The Pigs That Ate The Garden. A Human Ecology from Papua New Guinea*. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press.
- Empson, Rebecca M. 2007. "Separating and Containing People and Things in Mongolia". In *Thinking Through Things: Theorising Artefacts Ethnographically*, edited by Amiria J.M. Henare, Martin Holbraad, and Sari Wastell, pp. 113–41. London: Routledge.
- . 2011. *Harnessing Fortune. Personhood, Memory, and Place in Mongolia*. Oxford: Oxford University Press/British Academy Postdoctoral Fellowship Monographs.
- Fondahl, G.A. 1998. *Gaining Ground? Evenkis, Land and Reform in Southeastern Siberia*. Boston: Allan and Bacon.
- Garfinkel, H., and A.W. Rawls. 2002. *Ethnomethodology's Program: Working Out Durkheim's Aphorism*. Boulder, Colo.: Rowman and Littlefield Press.
- Gibson, Thomas. 1985. "The Sharing of Substance Versus the Sharing of Activity Among the Buid". *Man* (n.s.) 20: 391–411.
- Gibson, James J., 1986. *The Ecological Approach to Visual Perception*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Godelier, Maurice, and Marilyn Strathern. 1991. *Big Men and Great Men: Personifications of Power in Melanesia*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Grant, Bruce. 2011. "Recognizing Soviet Culture". In *Reconstructing the House of Culture: Community, Self, and the Makings of Culture in Russia and Beyond*, edited by Brian Donahoe and Joachim Otto Habeck, pp. 263–276. Oxford: Berghahn.
- Hamayon, Roberte. 1981. "Tricks and Turns of Legitimate Perpetuation". In *Fragen der Mongolischen Heldendichtung*, Vol. I, edited by Walter Heissig, pp. 90–140. Wiesbaden: Harrossowitz.
- Harrison, Simon. 1989. "The Symbolic Construction of Aggression and War in a Sepik River Society". *Man* (n.s.) 24: 583–99.
- Helmreich, Stefan. 2007. "An anthropologist underwater: Immersive soundscapes, submarine cyborgs, and transductive ethnography". *American Ethnologist* 34 (4): 621–41.
- Hirsch, E. and M. O'Hanlon. 1995. *The Anthropology of Landscape*. London: Routledge.
- Humphrey, Caroline. 1983. *Karl Marx Collective: Economy, Society and Religion in a Siberian Collective Farm*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- . (with Urgunge Onon). 1996. *Shamans and Elders: Experience, Knowledge and Power among the Daur Mongols*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- . 2008. "The 'Creative Bureaucrat': Conflicts in the Production of Soviet Communist Party Discourse". *Inner Asia* 10 (1): 5–35.
- Humphrey, Caroline, and James Laidlaw. 1994. *The Archetypal Actions of Ritual illustrated by the Jain rite of worship*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Ingold, Timothy. 1987. *The Appropriation of Nature. Essays on Human Ecology and Social Relations*. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press.
- . 1999. "On the Social Relations of the Hunter-Gatherer Band". In *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Hunters and Gatherers*, edited by Richard. B. Lee and Richard Daly, pp. 399–440. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ingold, Timothy and Jo L. Vergunst. 2008. *Ways of Walking. Ethnography and Practice on Foot*. Aldershot: Ashgate.

- Jochelson, Vladimir. 1905–8. *The Koryak*. Jesup North Pacific Expedition Publications, Vol. 6, and American Museum of Natural History, New York, Memoir, Vol. 10, Parts 1–2. Leiden: Brill; New York: Stechert.
- Kara, György. 2006. “Solon Ewenki in Mongolian Script. In *Tumen Jalafun Jecen Akū: Manchu Studies in Honour of Giovanni Stary*, edited by Alessandra Pozzi, pp. 133–48. Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz Verlag.
- Kelly, Robert L. 1995. *The Foraging Spectrum: Diversity in Hunter-Gatherer Lifeways*. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press.
- Keptuke, Galina I. 1991. *Malen'kaya Amerika*. Moscow: Izdatelstvo “Sovremennik”.
- Kimono, Dzhanisi. 1950. *Tam gde bezhit Sukpai*. Khabarovsk: Izdatelstvo “Khabarovsk”.
- Kreinovich, Erukhim A. 1973. *Nivhgu: Zagodachnye obitateli Sahalina i Amura*. Moscow: Izdatelstvo “Nauka”.
- Kurosawa, Akio. 1975. “Dersu Uzala”. USSR: Kinostudiya Mos'Film.
- Kwon, Heonik. 1993. “Maps and Actions: Nomadic and Sedentary Space in a Siberian Reindeer Farm”. Ph.D. diss., University of Cambridge.
- Kwon 1998. “The Saddle and the Sledge: Hunting as Comparative Narrative in Siberia and Beyond”. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* (n.s.) 4 (1): 115–27.
- Lave, Jean, and Etienne Wenger. 1991. *Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Lee, Richard B. and Richard Daly (eds). 1999. *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Hunters and Gatherers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Legat, Allice. 2008. In *Ways of Walking: Ethnography and Practice on Foot*, edited by Tim Ingold and Jo Lee Vergunst, pp. 35–50. Aldershot: Ashgate Publishers.
- Ligeti, L. 1933 “Rapport Préliminaire d'un voyage d'exploration fait en Mongolie Chinoise 1928–1931” *Keleti Szemle*. Budapest. Reprinted 1977, Budapest: Société Kőrösi-Csoma.
- Lindgren, Ethel J. 1936. “Notes on the Reindeer Tungus of Manchuria. Their Names, Groups, Administration and Shamans”. Ph.D. diss., University of Cambridge.
- . 1938. “An Example of Culture Contact without Conflict: Reindeer Tungus and Cossacks of Northwestern Manchuria”. *American Anthropologist* 40: 605–21.
- Lopatin, Ivan A. 1922. *Gol'dy amurskie, ussurskie i sungarijskie*. Vladivostok.
- Luria, A.R. 1976 *The Cognitive Development: Its Cultural and Social Foundations*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.
- Mauss, Marcel. 1954. *The Gift: Forms and Functions of Exchange in Archaic Societies*. Translated by Ian Cunnison. Glencoe, Ill: Free Press.
- Mandler, Peter. 2009. “One World, Many Cultures: Margaret Mead and the Limits to Cold War Anthropology”. *History Workshop Journal* 68 (1): 149–172.
- Mazin, A.I. 1984. *Tradicionnye verovanie i onrjady evenkov-orochonov (Konets XIX – nachalo XX veka)*. Novosibirsk: Izdatelstvo “Nauka”.
- Mead, Margaret. 1968. “Cybernetics of Cybernetics”. In *Purposive Systems*, edited by H. von Foerster, J. White, L. Peterson and J. Russell, pp. 1–11. New York: Spartan Books.
- NECEP (Non European Components of European Patrimony). 2012. “Evenk”. Available online (25 Aug 2012): http://www.necep.net/society.php?id_soc=4.
- Nedyalkov, Igor V. 1997. *Evenki*. London: Routledge.
- Nielsen, Finn. S. 2004. *Glaz Buri*. Saint Petersburg: Aletheia.
- . 1986. *The Eye of the Whirlwind. Russian Identity and Soviet Nation-Building. Quests for Meaning in a Soviet Metropolis*. Available online (25 Aug 2012): http://www.anthrobase.com/Txt/N/Nielsen_F_S_03.htm.
- Nitochkin, Anatoliy (Dir.). 1970. “Drug Tymanchi”. USSR: Kinostudiya “Mosfil'm”.
- Odulok, Tekki. 1934. *Zhizn' Imteurgina*. Leningrad: OGIZ.
- Pedersen, Morten Axel. 2001. “Totemism, Animism and North Asian Indigenous Ontologies”. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* (n.s.) 7: 411–27.
- . 2011. *Not Quite Shamans. Spirit Worlds and Political Lives in Northern Mongolia*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

- Petri, B.E. 1930. *Okhota i olenevodstvo u Tuturskikh tungusov v svyazi s organizaciej okhotok-hozjajstva*. Irkutsk.
- Piaget, Jean. 1962. *Play, Dreams and Imitation in Childhood*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company.
- Rappaport, R.A. 1979. *Ecology, Meaning and Religion*. Richmond: North Atlantic Books.
- Romanova A.V. and A.N. Myreeva. 1962. *Ocherki tokkinskogo i tommotskogo govorov*. Leningrad: Izdatelstvo "Nauka".
- . 1964. *Ocherki uchurskogo, majsokogo i tottinskogo govorov*. Leningrad: Izdatelstvo "Nauka".
- Roscoe, Paul B. 1996. "War and Society in Sepik New Guinea". *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* (n.s.) 2: 645–66.
- Ruesch, J., and G. Bateson. 1951. *Communication: The Social Matrix of Psychiatry*. W.W. Norton & Company.
- Sacks, Harvey. 1992. *Lectures on Conversation*, Vols. I and II. Edited by Gail Jefferson with introductions by Emanuel A. Schegloff. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Safonova, Tatiana, and István Sántha. 2007. "Companionship among Evenki of Eastern Buryatia: The Study of Flexible and Stable Elements of Culture". *Working Papers of the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology* № 99.
- . 2010a. "Being Local Outsiders: a Study of Chinese Ethos in East Siberia". *Inner Asia* 12 (2): 347–64.
- . 2010b. "Different Risks, Different Biographies: The Roles of Reversibility for Buryats and Circularity for Evenki people". In *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung / Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, special issue "Biography, Risk and Uncertainty/Biographical Coping with Risk and Uncertainty" 11 (1). Available online (25 August 2012): <http://nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:0114-fqs100111>.
- . 2010c. "Gender Distinctions in an Egalitarian Society: The Case of Evenki People of the Baikal Region". *Anthropology of East Europe Review*, special issue: "Gender Shift in the North of Russia" 28 (2): 120–39.
- . 2010d. "Walking Mind: The Pattern that Connects Evenki Land, Companionship and Person". In *Yearbook 2009 of the Institute for Advanced Studies on Science, Technology and Society*, edited by A. Bammé, G. Getzinger and B. Wieser, pp. 31–23. Munich: Profil.
- . 2011. "Pokazukha in the House of Culture: The Pattern of Behavior in Kurumkan of Eastern Buryatia". In *Reconstructing the House of Culture: Community, Self and the Makings of Culture in Russia and Beyond*, edited by Brian Donahoe and Joachim Otto Habeck, pp. 75–96. New York: Berghahn.
- . 2011. "Mapping Evenki Land: The Study of Mobility Patterns in Eastern Siberia". *Folklore* 49: 71–96. Available online (25 August 2012): <http://www.folklore.ee/folklore/vol49/evenki.pdf>.
- . 2012. "Stories about Evenki People and their Dogs: Communication through Sharing of Contexts". In *Animism in Rainforest and Tundra Personhood, Animals, Plants and Things in Contemporary Amazonia and Siberia*, edited by M. Brightman, V.E. Grotti and O. Ulturgasheva, pp. 82–95. Oxford: Berghahn Books.
- Sahlins, Marshall. 1972. *Stone Age Economics*. London, New York: Routledge.
- Scheper-Hughes, Nancy. 1977. *Saints, Scholars, and Schizophrenic. Mental Illness in Rural Ireland*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- . 1992. *Death Without Weeping: The Violence of Everyday Life in Brazil*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Schutz, Alfred. 1945. "On Multiple Realities". *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 5: 533–76.
- Semenov, Yu. I. 1966. *Kak vzniklo chelovechestvo?* Moscow: Izdatelstvo "Nauka".
- Shirokogoroff, S.M. 1919. *Opyt issledovaniya shamanstva u tungusov*. Vladivostok.
- . 1929. *Social Organization of the Northern Tungus: with Introductory Chapters Concerning the Geographical Distribution and History of These Groups*. Shanghai: The Commercial Press Ltd. Reprinted 1979, New York: Garland Publishing Inc.

- . 1935. *Psychomental Complex of the Tungus*. London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co. Reprinted 1999, Berlin: Reinhold Schletzer Verlag.
- Singer, Merrill. 1978. "Pygmies and Their Dogs: A Note on Culturally Constituted Defense Mechanisms". *Ethos* 6: 270–7.
- Sirina Anna A. 2004. *Soviet Tradition in the Study of Siberian Hunter-Gatherer Society*. In *Hunter-Gatherers in History, Archaeology and Anthropology*, edited by Alan Barnard, pp. 89–103. Oxford: Berg.
- . 2006. *Katanga Evenkis of the 20th Century and the Ordering of their Life-World*. Edmonton: Canadian Circumpolar Institute Press (Northern Hunter-Gatherer Research Series, 2).
- Ssorin-Chaikov, Nikolai V. 2003. *The Social Life of the State in Subarctic Siberia*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- . 2008. "The Black Box: Notes on the Anthropology of the Enemy". *Inner Asia* 10 (1): 37–63.
- Sternberg, L. Ya. 1999. *The Social Organization of the Gilyak*. New York: The American Museum of Natural History.
- Suslov, I.M. 1931. "Shamanstvo borba s nim". *Sovetskij Sever* (otdel. ottisk). Moscow.
- Titov, E.I. 1926. *Tungussko-Russkij slovar s prilozheniem knigi M.A. Kastrena "Osnovy izucheniya Tungusskogo yazyka*. Irkutsk: Izdanie Chitinskogo kraevogo gosudarstvennogo muzeya im. A.K. Kuznetsova.
- Toren, Christina. 1999. *Mind, Materiality and History: Explorations in Fijian Ethnography*. London: Routledge.
- . 2001. "The Child in Mind". In *The Debated Mind: Evolutionary Psychology Versus Ethnography*, edited by Harvey Whitehouse, pp. 155–80. Oxford: Berg.
- Tuck-Po, Lye. 2008. "Before a step too far: Walking with Batek hunter-gatherers in the forests of Pahang, Malaysia". In *Ways of Walking: Ethnography and Practice on Foot*, edited by Tim Ingold and Jo Lee Vergunst, pp. 21–34. Aldershot: Ashgate Publishers.
- Tugolukov V.A. 1985. *Tungusy (evenki i eveny) Srednej i zapadnoj Sibiri*. Moscow: Izdatelstvo "Nauka".
- Turov, M.G. 2008. *Evenki : Osnovnye problemy ethnogeneza i etnicheskoi istorii*. Irkutsk: Amtera.
- Turov, M.G. 2010. *Evenki Economy in the Central Siberian Taiga at the Turn of the 20th Century: Principles of Land Use*. Edmonton: Canadian Circumpolar Institute Press (Northern Hunter-Gatherer Research Series, 5).
- Uray-Kóhalmi, Katalin. 1959. "Der mongolisch-kamniganische Dialekt von Dadal Sum und die Frage der Mongolisierung der Tungusen in der Nordmongolei und in Transbaikalien". *Acta Orientalia Hungarica* IX. S: 163–204. Budapest.
- . 1997. *Die Mythologie der mandschu-tungusischen Völker*. Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta.
- Vasilevich, G.M. 1958. *Evenkijsko-russkij slovar'. S prilozhenijami i grammaticheskimi ocherkami evenkijskogo jazyka*. Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo inostrannykh i natsional'nykh slovarej.
- . 1969. *Evenki. Istoriko-etnograficheskie ocherki (XVIII – nachalo XX vekov)*. Leningrad: Izdatelstvo "Nauka".
- Viveiros De Castro, Eduardo. 1998. "Cosmological Deixis and Amerindian Perspectivism". *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* (n.s.) 4 (3): 469–88.
- Voskoboinikov, M.G. 1958. *Fol'klor evenkov Buryatii*. Ulan-Ude.
- . 1960. *Evenkijskij fol'klor*. Leningrad.
- . 1967. *Fol'klor evenkov Pribajkal'ja*. Ulan-Ude.
- Wagner, Roy. 1981. *The Invention of Culture*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Widlok, T. 2008. "Landscape Unbounded. Space, Place, and Orientation in #Akhoë Hai//om and Beyond". *Language Sciences* 30 (2–3): 362–80.
- Wilden, Anthony. 1972. *System and Structure: Essays in Communication and Exchange*. London: Tavistock Publications.
- Wilhelm, Gábor. 1999. "Benedek Baráthosi Balogh's Collection in the Museum of Ethnography, Budapest. Artifacts, Manuscripts and Photos". In *Museum of Ethnography*

- Budapest Baráthosi Balogh Collection*, edited by T. Kohara and G. Wilhelm, pp. 85–91. Budapest: Museum of Ethnography.
- Willerslev, Rane. 2004. "Not Animal, Not Not-Animal: Hunting, Imitation and Empathetic Knowledge Among the Siberian Yukaghirs". *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* (n.s.) 10: 629–52.
- . 2007. *Soul Hunters. Hunting, Animism, and Personhood among the Siberian Yukaghirs*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Yurchak, Alexei. 2005. *Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No More: The Last Soviet Generation*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

INDEX OF AUTHORS

- Almasy, Georg von the same as Almásy,
 György 8, 175
 Anderson 9, 138, 170, 175
 Anisimov 7, 175
 Arsenev 7, 132, 175
 Artemova 8, 175

 Baráthosi 8, 9, 175, 180
 Barth 45, 46, 175
 Bateson, Gregory 1, 4, 5, 10, 11, 12, 12n10, 13,
 14, 14n11, 17n13, 19n14, 20n, 26, 27, 29, 30,
 31, 32, 54, 78, 82, 82n, 92, 95, 97, 116n6,
 123, 125, 127, 139, 139n4, 168, 168n1, 171,
 175, 178
 Bird-David 9, 78, 86, 95, 175
 Bloch 173, 175
 Bogoras the same as Bogoraz 7, 175
 Buneev 6, 175

 Clastres 41, 175
 Crook 19, 176

 Diószegi 9, 176
 Durkheim 29, 39, 53, 176
 Dwyer 45, 144n5, 170, 176

 Empson 62, 176

 Fondahl 138n2, 176

 Garfinkel 171, 176
 Gibson, Thomas 27, 30n, 176
 Gibson, James J. 165, 165n, 176
 Godelier and Strathern 76, 176
 Grant 48, 49, 176

 Hamayon 9, 83, 84, 176
 Harrison 41, 90, 176
 Helmreich 16, 176
 Hirsch and O'Hanlon 137, 164, 176
 Humphrey 9, 31, 32, 48, 49, 49n5, 103,
 137, 176

 Ingold 41, 139, 176–7, 179

 Jochelson 7, 177

 Kara 9, 177
 Kelly 3, 177

 Keptuke 6n, 177
 Kimonko 6n, 177
 Kreinovich 7, 177
 Kurosawa 6n, 177
 Kwon 3, 9, 84, 85, 137, 138, 170, 177

 Laidlaw 31, 32, 176
 Lave and Wenger 4, 177
 Lee and Daly 2, 177
 Legat 3, 177
 Ligeti 9, 177
 Lindgren 5, 82, 83, 84, 177
 Lopatin 7, 177
 Luria 7, 177

 Mauss 123n, 177
 Mandler 14n, 177
 Mazin 8, 177
 Mead 14n, 15n, 17n, 20n, 175, 177

 Nedyalkov 8, 177
 Nielsen 9, 59, 60, 178
 Nitochkin 6n, 178

 Odulok 6n, 178

 Pedersen 87, 95, 102, 107, 178
 Petri 7, 178
 Piaget 116, 116n6, 116n7, 178

 Rappaport 171, 178
 Romanova and Myreeva 7, 178
 Roscoe 42, 178
 Ruesch 31, 178

 Sacks 82, 87, 137
 Sahlins 120, 122, 127, 178
 Scheper-Hughes 41, 71n, 179
 Schutz 32, 179
 Semenov 7, 179
 Shirokogoroff 3, 5, 7, 31, 82, 83, 132,
 139, 179
 Sirina 8, 179
 Ssorin-Chaikov 2, 9, 14n, 33, 48, 174n, 179
 Sternberg the same as Shternberg 7, 179

 Titov 7, 175, 179
 Toren 42n, 179
 Tuck-Po 4, 179

Tugolukov 8, 179

Turov 7, 8, 179

Uray-Köhalmi 9, 179

Vasilevich 7, 7n, 179

Viveiros De Castro 86, 180

Voskoboynikov 8, 180

Wagner 169, 180

Widlök 4, 180

Wilden 15, 167, 170, 180

Wilhelm 180

Willerslev 95, 122, 138n,
175, 180

Yurchak 48, 49, 61, 65, 180

INDEX OF SUBJECTS

- Accommodation *n6, n6n7*
 Aggression 6, 23, 39–42, 44, 80–1, 83–4, 90–1, 93
 Alcohol 3–6, 6n, 22–3, 34, 36, 40–2, 44, 46–7, 55, 61, 70–1, 73–6, 79, 83, 85, 94, 107, 112–3, 123, 125–7, 133–4, 147, 152, 164, 168, 170
Andaki 68, 82–5, 114, 132, 136, 145, 158, 166
 Animism 5, 10, 86, 95, 144
 Assimilation 5–6, 26, 47, 83, 97, *n6, n6n7*
 Authority 5, 77, 103, 105
- Black box 170, 172
 Boarding school 5, 69, 121, 158
 Buryats (in Bugarikta district) everywhere especially 48–67
 Taiga Buryats (west of Lake Baikal) 95–99, 100–9, 115–7, 139–40, 168–71
- Cattle-breeding 18–9, 26, 38, 42–4, 47, 79, 97, 100–2, 108, 115, 149, 152–3, 169, 173–4
 Children frequented use, everywhere especially 17–20, 32–33, 47, 87–91, 158–161, see also Learning and Socialisation
 Chinese 5, 15, 24, 26, 51, 68, 82–3, 109–15, 118–35, 165, 169, 171, 173
 Communication 12, 27, 31–2, 46–9, 66–7, 78, 86–99, 149–153, 167–72
 Autocommunication 172
 Human–nonhuman communication 24, 86, 95
 Ostensive communication 3, 5, 78, 87, 92, 145, 147, 158
 Companionship 3, 16, 21, 26–47, 73–79, 99, 108, 136, 142–8, 153–9, 164, 171, 173–74
 Consciousness 76, 108, 168
 Culture contact 1, 5–6, 10, 12, 26–7, 31, 46–50, 97–99, 171–2, 174
 Cybernetics 1, 10–6, 144n5, 24, 26–7, 29–32, 45, 47, 54, 59, 97, 101, 123, 139n, 144n5, 167–72
 Cybernetic wisdom 167–70
- Dogs 17, 24, 80–1, 86–99, 113, 136, 142–7, 158–64, 169, 174
 Double bind 12–3, 32, 41, 56–8, 65, 123–5, 131
- Ecology 1, 120, 131, 138, 143n, 144n5, 168, 170
 Egalitarian relations 1–3, 5, 10–1, 27–8, 30, 41, 43, 47, 68, 74, 83, 86, 95, 102, 142
 Emotions IX, 2–3, 6, 6n5, 10, 13, 20, 27, 34, 39, 40, 44–6, 53, 56, 59, 60n, 63, 74, 76, 78, 81–4, 101, 105, 108, 120, 131, 133, 143, 145
 Ethos (key term frequented use everywhere) especially 13, 48–67, 100–17, 116–7, 118–35
 Evenki land 4, 24, 38, 40, 46, 102, 106, 136–166, 170–4
- Feedback 13, 15, 128, 167–8
 Film 6n, 8n, 16–7, 21–3, 31, 35–7, 55, 72, Flirting 37, 69–85, 114
 Friendship 22–4, 33, 41, 49, 56, 69, 105, 112, 120–34, 158
 Fur 44, 83, 102, 119, 138
- Gender 23, 30, 68–85, 104, 112
 Gold 109–130
- Hierarchy 2–3, 5, 10–1, 13, 16, 24, 28–31, 38–40, 47, 59, 61, 77–8, 83–6, 95, 101–7, 144, 174
 Horses 4, 18, 62, 69–70, 121, 140, 147, 149, 173
 House of Culture 32, 37
 Hunting luck 86, 95–98, 106, 113, 140
- Intuition 87, 113, 146, 168–9
- Local Intelligentsia,
 Representatives 30–37, 43, 57, 67, 71–2, 93, 106, 109n, 145, 148, 167, 174
 Land, Landscape 4, 8, 18, 24, 28, 35, 40, 44, 46, 69, 87, 102, 105, 108, 128, 132, 136–66, 170–4
 ‘Last Evenki’ 33, 35, 69–71, 91
 Learning 14, 88, 92, 104, 116, 143n, 159
- Manakan* 41, 47, 68–81, 84–5, 133, 136, 142, 144, 146–8, 159, 164, 171
 Map 11, 17, 24, 54, 61n, 136, 138, 138n1, 148–164
 Meat 34, 62, 62n, 70, 111, 121–6, 138
 Metacommunication 13, 32, 124
 Metamessage 12–3, 32, 78, 87–8, 123–5, 171

- Mind 4, 24, 87, 101, 108, 116n6, 136–48, 143n, 164–66
- Nature reserve 33, 47, 66–71, 91, 100
Negen haanan 107.8, 115, 170
 Nephrite 101, 109–18, 125–35, 149, 152–3
 Non-illustrative ethnography 16–7
- Observation 22, 25, 49, 66, 82, 132, 139n, 153, 159, 165, 172, 174n
- Paradox (see double bind) 12, 46, 76, 123, 128, 172
- Participation 21–2, 47, 55–6, 62, 72–3, 75, 83, 85, 105
- Pattern 4, 6, 10–3, 16–7, 24–5, 31–32, 39n, 43–4, 59, 62n4, 69, 78–81, 84–5, 95, 116–7, 125, 132–3, 136, 139, 143, 144–8, 152–3, 158, 164–6
- Perspectivism 86
- Phenomenology 32
- Photography 16–7, 66
- Pokazukha* 5, 16–7, 26–47, 48–67, 136, 153–9, 164, 166
- Purposeful action 168
- Reindeer 1, 4, 5, 18, 96n, 109–10, 109n, 112, 120–1, 130, 137–8, 149, 152–3, 173
- Risk 11, 22–3, 35–6, 40–3, 47, 57, 66, 74, 77, 87, 93, 94, 99, 100–17, 122, 131, 142–52, 159, 164, 169–172
 Danger 40–44, 77, 89, 91, 106–109, 114, 145, 149, 159
 Tragedy 105–6
- Ritual 1, 6, 16, 20–7, 31–47, 55, 62–3, 62n4, 70–75, 91–2, 98–108, 113–115, 137–38, 142, 146, 169, 171
- Russians frequented use everywhere, especially 48–67
- Schismogenesis 13, 19–20, 29–30, 40, 42, 46, 97, 128, 131
- Secrets 5, 39n, 40n, 80, 86–88, 97–99, 139, 142, 169
- Self-corrective circuit, self-corrective system 10–1, 13, 23, 26–7, 47, 123–7, 136, 139, 143n, 147, 164–70
- Shaman 5–6, 9, 9n8, 16, 18, 21, 24, 30–40, 43–46, 82n, 86–91, 98, 100–17, 139, 168–9
- Situatedness 86, 174
- Skills 3, 30, 32, 85–8, 95–105, 109, 116–9, 125, 133, 142, 147
- Socialisation 41, 59, 72, 89–90, 95–6, 101, 103–4, 108, 133, 137, 140, 146–8, 159, 165
- System 1–6, 10–6, 24–32, 39, 41, 43, 45, 47, 54, 60, 95, 100, 102–3, 108, 111, 114, 116, 116n6, 123–8, 136–9, 143n4, 148–9, 164–5, 167–70
- Totemism 95
- Travelling 3, 4, 21, 28, 39, 46, 73, 92, 94, 97, 143, 144, 149, 152, 153, 173
- Utkha* 103–7, 171
- Village 2–3, 18, 32–7, 42, 48–67, 69–71, 78–83, 91, 93, 103–5, 108–10, 114, 121–5, 130, 140, 143, 149, 152–3, 158–9, 164–6
- Walking 4, 6, 17, 24, 89, 93, 136–148, 159, 164–6
 Walking mind 136–7, 143–5, 148–9, 164–6